

# The Lives of the First Three Ministers of Walpole Old Chapel

## SAMUEL HABERGHAM (1647-1652)

Samuel Habergham was the first minister at Walpole Congregational Chapel. He entered this position in 1647 and preached there for over five years.

Habergham held responsibility for the congregations in Cookley and Heveningam.<sup>1</sup> From 1650 to 1651, he also acted as a preacher in Wingfield. The act of caring for multiple churches at once was a common practice. Later, during his time at Walpole, he served as a minister at Syleham.<sup>2</sup>

Habergham was evidently much sought after. Edmund Calamy, a historian writing in the decades after his death, particularly noted his reputation. “[H]is [p]reaching was with great life and power” and he “had a full congregation, which provoked many to envy.”<sup>3</sup> The Great Yarmouth church book records that the congregation there entreated him twice, in 1650 and in 1651, to leave his position at Walpole and become an associate preacher alongside his friend and eminent minister William Bridge. Habergham declined as neither the Walpole nor the Syleham congregation were satisfied with this arrangement.<sup>4</sup> He continued his post at Walpole for another year. In January of 1652, he left his post at Walpole permanently and moved to Syleham where he continued to preach until his death.

Habergham came from a respected and propertied family. His father was the rector of Framlingham. He was baptised there on November 5, 1626.<sup>5</sup> Calamy describes him as “a zealous young man.”<sup>6</sup> At Emmanuel College, Cambridge, he became part of a set of young Puritan ministers who had been heavily influenced by the Congregational professors teaching there in the 1630s and 1640s. Unlike the older generation of ministers who had went into exile in the early years of the century, Habergham and his peers began preaching during the period of the Civil War. They were more inclined to radical and militant ideas.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> John Browne, *History of Congregationalism and Memorials of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk* (Norwich: Jarrold and Sons, 1877), 487.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-2* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 240.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Calamy and Samuel Palmer, *The Non-Conformist's Memorial: Being an Account of the Lives, Sufferings, and Printed Works of the Two Thousand Ministers Ejected from the Church of England, chiefly by the Act of Uniformity. Abridged with many additional anecdotes and several new lives by Samuel Palmer* (London: J. Harris, 1775-1777), 436.

<sup>4</sup> *Great Yarmouth Church book, 1642-1855*, NRO FC 31/1.

<sup>5</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 240.

<sup>6</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 436.

<sup>7</sup> Joel Halcomb, “‘Companions in sufferings both in our owne & a strange land’: Norfolk Exiles in the Low Countries and the Formation of East Anglian Nonconformity,” *History* 110, no. 390: 274-275.

Habergham was a prominent East Anglian member of such a militant sect, the millennialist Fifth Monarchists. Fifth Monarchy Men believed that the death of Charles I had signaled the final coming of Christ predicted in the Book of Daniel. Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector represented a barrier to the prophesied events.<sup>8</sup>

The government saw this sect as a serious threat. In 1661, the Fifth Monarchists had staged a uprising in London.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Cromwell received updates on its' members. Administrator Hezekiah Haynes reported regularly to him from East Anglia. In one letter dated April 9 of 1656, Haynes wrote of a suspicious meeting held by "Mr. Habegen" and his associates. Haynes extracted from them their plans to petition for Cromwell's resignation. He warned the Fifth Monarchists from taking any dramatic action.<sup>10</sup>

Habergham continued to voice his protest against Cromwell beyond the pulpit and participated in a rally that same month.<sup>11</sup> Along with Walpole associates Samuel Petto and John and Samuel Manning, he helped to preserve the works of Fifth Monarchist John Tillinghast. While he was likely ejected from Syleham as a result of the Act of Uniformity, there is no evidence that Habergham was ever prosecuted for his beliefs before the law.<sup>12</sup> This may be a result of Haynes leniency with the sect due to his own conservative background.<sup>13</sup> Habergham also seemingly evaded imprisonment under Charles II. Many of his fellow Fifth Monarchy Men did not share the same fate.<sup>14</sup> While he was said to have experienced "trouble" during this period no sources shed light on further details.<sup>15</sup>

During his years at Syleham, Habergham had five children by his wife Grace.<sup>16</sup> He died of "apoplexy," a term frequently used to signify a stroke, in 1665.<sup>17</sup> Although he was not a founding member of the Walpole Chapel, as its first minister, Samuel Habergham undoubtedly helped to establish its reputation and began its history as a center of radical Congregational activity in the seventeenth century.

---

<sup>8</sup> Halcomb, "'Companions in sufferings,'" 274.

<sup>9</sup> John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2000), 171.

<sup>10</sup> Hezekial Haynes to Oliver Cromwell, 9 April 1656, in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*. Volume 4, Sept 1655 - May 1656, ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1742): 687-8.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), 111.

<sup>12</sup> Calamy, *The Non-Conformist's Memorial*, 436.

<sup>13</sup> David Farr, *Major-General Hezekiah Haynes and the Failure of Oliver Cromwell's Godly Revolution, 1594-1704* (London: Routledge, 2020), 164.

<sup>14</sup> Coffey, *Persecution*, 167.

<sup>15</sup> Calamy, *The Non-Conformist's Memorial*, 436.

<sup>16</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 240.

<sup>17</sup> Calamy, *The Non-Conformist's Memorial*, 436.

---

## JOHN MANNING (1652-1654)

John Manning was a founding member of the Chapel. On the 21st of June 1649, he was one of six Independent preachers who gathered and ‘embodied’ the new Walpole Congregation.<sup>18</sup> In 1652, he became its second minister.

Manning was born in Cockfield, Suffolk. He was one of three brothers (Samuel, John, and William), all of whom went on to become preachers of note in the area. Like Habergham, Manning attended Emmanuel College, Cambridge in the late 1630s and adopted many similar views.<sup>19</sup>

As a member of the Fifth Monarchist Movement, Manning was politically active. While minister at Walpole in 1653, he signed his name on a letter to Cromwell petitioning religious toleration.<sup>20</sup>

In 1654, Manning left his role as minister at Walpole and moved to a nearby congregation in Peasenhall. In 1662, he was ejected as a Dissenter against a new religious law. However, he continued to work with his successor and brother Samuel along with other Fifth Monarchists. He was also important in preserving the writings of Tillinghast. Manning gathered manuscripts of his friend’s sermons and treatises and published them allowing Tillinghast’s ideas to continue to circulate.<sup>21</sup>

In 1672, Charles II issued the Declaration of Indulgence offering a brief respite from religious persecution which had pervaded the previous decade. Dissenting ministers could now legally receive a license to preach. Nearly 1,500 licenses were granted.<sup>22</sup> Amongst them was John Manning who began to preach in his own home at Peasenhall.

John Manning suffered often for his beliefs. He was prosecuted more than any other early Walpole minister. Calamy writes that he “spent the greatest part of his time in confinement.” In particular, it is said he was imprisoned most frequently in the later part of his life.<sup>23</sup> This period likely occurred during what is known as the Royalist Revenge. Between 1681 and 1686,

---

<sup>18</sup> *Great Yarmouth Church book*, 1642-1855, NRO FC 31/1.

<sup>19</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 336.

<sup>20</sup> Churches in Suffolk to Oliver Cromwell, 9 May 1653, in *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, ed. John Nicholls (London: Bowyer, 1746): 94.

<sup>21</sup> Halcomb, “‘Companions in sufferings,’” 274.

<sup>22</sup> David L. Wykes, “After 1662: Ejected Ministers and the Support for Nonconformity, the first decade revisited,” *The Seventeenth Century* 38, no. 6: 1001.

<sup>23</sup> Calamy, *The Non-Conformist’s Memorial*, 435.

Dissenters like Manning were imprisoned in the thousands in what became one of the worst periods of seventeenth century religious persecution.<sup>24</sup>

Experiences in prison could vary wildly. Some were tightly packed, with poor ventilation, vermin, and disease. Others could be relatively hospitable. In some cases, comforts from home, like one's own bed could be brought into the jail. Sympathetic keepers could improve the experience.<sup>25</sup> Manning would likely have been familiar with a range of these experiences. He was said to have spent time in nearly every jail in Suffolk including Blythburgh, Bury St. Edmunds, and Ipswich. However, Manning's personality was such that he "got such favor with his jailors, that they sometimes trusted him to go home to visit his family and people."<sup>26</sup>

In his final years, Manning continued preaching at Sibton. However, the congregation could only provide him with an impoverished yearly salary of £15. His wife contributed £12 a year, but their financial state was strained by their son's considerable borrowing.<sup>27</sup> As a result, he received a small sum from the Common Fund, a joint holding set up by Independents and Presbyterians to fund poor clergy members.<sup>28</sup>

John Manning died in 1694, forty years after leaving his position at Walpole.<sup>29</sup>

---

### **SAMUEL MANNING (1654-1690?)**

Samuel Manning was one of the six founding members and the third minister of Walpole Chapel. He had acted as the rector of the congregations in Walpole and Cookley since 1650. From 1654, he took on his brother's charge as minister.<sup>30</sup> He continued his Walpole curacy for approximately forty years.

As minister, Manning was paid £15 a year for his services at Walpole and £25 a year from the members of Cookley.<sup>31</sup> This sum of £40 would have been a lesser to middling amount for a minister to receive in this period. A recent survey of ministers in Lancashire concluded that a

---

<sup>24</sup> Coffey, *Persecution*, 172.

<sup>25</sup> Coffey, *Persecution*, 175.

<sup>26</sup> Calamy, *The Non-Conformist's Memorial*, 435.

<sup>27</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 336-337.

<sup>28</sup> David L. Wykes, "Dissent and Charity," in *Protestant Dissent and Philanthropy in Britain, 1660-1914*, ed. Clyde Binfield, G. M. Ditchfield, and David L. Wykes (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2019): 28-29.

<sup>29</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 337.

<sup>30</sup> Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 337.

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Manning to Oliver Cromwell, 1654, in *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, ed. John Nicholls (London: Bowyer, 1746): 155.

typical minister could expect to be paid £50 or more per annum.<sup>32</sup> In their nearby ministries, both Habergham and John Manning were similarly paid £40. Evidently, this was insufficient, for all three petitioned the State for an augmentation of funds. A 1654 letter explains that Samuel Manning was “greatly streightened[strained]” to provide for his wife and their four young children.<sup>33</sup>

Samuel Manning shares many other commonalities with his brother John and with Habergham. He was an Emmanuel College graduate and a Fifth Monarchist. Like his brother, Manning was issued a 1672 license to preach in his own home at Peasehall.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, as briefly raised earlier, all three men were ejected from their ministries.

During his time at Walpole, Manning was one of more than two thousand ministers across England and Wales who were forced out of their posts during The Great Ejection. The 1662 Act of Uniformity legislated under Charles II required, amongst other rules, for all preachers to become Episcopally ordained. Those who disobeyed the Act could be heavily fined, imprisoned, and even transported for seven years for repeat offenses.<sup>35</sup>

Manning openly refused to comply and was ejected from Walpole. That same year he was imprisoned, likely for continuing to preach. He is said to have returned from his six-month stint as healthy as he went in.<sup>36</sup>

Immediately afterwards, Manning continued to tend to the Congregationalists in Walpole as an active Dissenter. There is no record that he was imprisoned or convicted again. This likely the result of the Act of Uniformity’s highly localised and often spotty enforcement.<sup>37</sup>

A particularly unusual detail which survives about Manning is his bewitchment. During his time at Walpole he believed himself to have been tormented by a local poor woman, Abre Grinset. The 1665 incident is fully detailed in a pamphlet written by Independent minister and friend, Samuel Petto. Both Manning and another Walpole founding father, Thomas Spatchett, were believed to have been under the influence of Grinset’s magic. The pamphlet goes into precise

---

<sup>32</sup> Alex Craven, “Ministers of State: The Established Church in Lancashire during the English Revolution, 1642-1660,” *Northern History* 45, no. 1: 59

<sup>33</sup> ; Samuel Manning to Oliver Cromwell, *Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, 155; John Manning to Oliver Cromwell, 1654, in *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, ed. John Nicholls (London: Bowyer, 1746): 156; Samuel Habergham to Oliver Cromwell, 1654, in *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, ed. John Nicholls (London: Bowyer, 1746): 157.

<sup>34</sup> Matthews, Calamy Revised, 337.

<sup>35</sup> Coffey, *Persecution*, 168-168.

<sup>36</sup> Matthews, Calamy Revised, 337.

<sup>37</sup> Coffey, *Persecution*, 170.

detail as it describes the “benumbing,” “shaking,” and “[r]oaring [f]its” Spatchett experienced.<sup>38</sup> Eventually, Grinset confesses, admitting she had been “beguiled” into an “agreement” with the Devil who had at first appeared to her as a handsome young man. She swore that the Devil had forced her into sending the men fits via a familiar. In the end, Grinset went unpunished before the law and lived freely.<sup>39</sup> However, Petto writes that she continued afflicting the men for some years afterwards until about the time of her death.<sup>40</sup>

While Petto’s pamphlet provides less direct information on how the witchcraft had affected Manning, it is possible that he similarly believed it manifested in ill health. Across sources, there is a sense that he had been ill throughout his life. The earlier financial petition had highlighted that in his early years at Walpole, Manning experienced “about seven yeeres of sickness.”<sup>41</sup> Calamy also describes Manning as a “very tender and sickly [m]an not able to stand while he [p]reach’d...”<sup>42</sup>

Regardless, Manning was active throughout his life. In addition to his preaching and political activity, he wrote books and pamphlets on Congregational theology. One of Manning’s works can be found preserved with commentary in the 1823 *The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Harmer*.<sup>43</sup>

Samuel Manning continued preaching at Walpole until at least 1690. He died sometime before 1698 when it is evident that his successor, a Mr. Robertson (or possibly Mr. Robinson) was already curate in his place.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Petto, “A faithful narrative of the wonderful and extraordinary fits which Mr. Tho. Spatchet” (London: John Harris, 1693): 2-7.

<sup>39</sup> Petto, “A faithful narrative,” 17-20.

<sup>40</sup> Petto, “A faithful narrative,” 27-29.

<sup>41</sup> Samuel Manning to Oliver Cromwell, *Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, 155.

<sup>42</sup> Calamy, *The Non-Conformist’s Memorial*, 438.

<sup>43</sup> Samuel Habbergham and Thomas Harmer, “Address II,” *The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Harmer* (London: Baynes and Youngman, 1823): 299-324.

<sup>44</sup> Browne, *History of Congregationalism*, 439.

## **Bibliography**

### **Primary Sources**

- Birch, Thomas ed. *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*. Volume 4, Sept 1655 - May 1656." London, 1742.
- Browne, John. *History of Congregationalism and Memorials of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk*. Norwich: Jarrold and Sons, 1877.
- Calamy, Edmund and Samuel Palmer. *The Non-Conformist's Memorial: Being an Account of the Lives, Sufferings, and Printed Works of the Two Thousand Ministers Ejected from the Church of England, chiefly by the Act of Uniformity. Abridged with many additional anecdotes and several new lives by Samuel Palmer*. London: J. Harris, 1775-177.
- Great Yarmouth Church Book*. 1642-1855. FC 31/1. Records of Great Yarmouth, Middlegate Congregational Church. Norfolk Record Office. Norwich, Norfolk.
- Habergham and Thomas Harmer. "Address II." *The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Harmer*. Edited by Thomas Harmer. London: Baynes and Youngman, 1823.
- Matthews, A.G.. *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-2*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934.
- Nicholls, John, ed. *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*. London: Bowyer, 1746.
- Petto, Samuel. "A faithful narrative of the wonderful and extraordinary fits which Mr. Tho. Spatchet." Pamphlet. London: John Harris, 1693.

### **Secondary**

- Capp, Bernard. *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism*. London: Faber & Faber, 1972.
- Coffey, John. *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2000.
- Craven, Alex. "Ministers of State: The Established Church in Lancashire during the English Revolution, 1642–1660." *Northern History* 45, no. 1: 51–69.
- Farr, David. *Major-General Hezekiah Haynes and the Failure of Oliver Cromwell's Godly Revolution, 1594-1704*. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Halcomb, Joel. "'Companions in sufferings both in our owne & a strange land': Norfolk Exiles in the Low Countries and the Formation of East Anglian Nonconformity." *History* 110, no. 390: 261-283.
- Wykes, David L. "Dissent and Charity." In *Protestant Dissent and Philanthropy in Britain*,

*1660-1914*. Edited by Clyde Binfield, G. M. Ditchfield, and David L. Wykes. London: Boydell & Brewer, 2019.

Wykes, David L. "After 1662: ejected ministers and the support for nonconformity, the first decade revisited." *The Seventeenth Century* 38, no. 6: 989-1006.