

GREAT MIGRATION TOUR TO ENGLAND
5 TO 15 AUGUST 2008

TOUR TALK

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PARISH CHURCH ARCHITECTURE – THE ICONOCLASTS

In the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the devotional activities of the English laity proliferated in many directions. The centrality of the Eucharist to the Mass led to a wide variety of rituals, including processions around the churchyard and around the village and worship of the host at the moment of transubstantiation. Associated with these rituals were such objects as the monstrance, which held the host for adoration, and the pyx, where the host was housed.

Veneration of the saints was raised to new levels. More and more holy days were declared in honor of a large number of saints. Extensive participation in church services on these holy days made serious inroads in the daily routines of parishioners at all social and economic levels, with the result that much working time was lost, especially at harvest season.

Eamon Duffy has prepared a massive, detailed account of these phenomena, the first half of his book covering the years before the English Reformation of the 1530s, and the second half describing the results of the early decades of the Reformation [*The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven, 1992, 2005)].

The physical manifestations of these pious practices were seen everywhere in the parish churches. Most prominently, every church had a rood screen and associated rood loft dividing the nave from the chancel. The rood, or cross, was mounted on the nave side of the wall above the chancel arch. A wooden screen filled much of the space between the nave and chancel, and on this screen might be painted images of various saints. The worship of these saints involved the placement of candles before the images on certain days of the liturgical year.

The walls of the churches would be covered with paintings of Biblical scenes, as an aid to the devotions of the parishioners. In a period when most of the congregation were illiterate, and when everything was in Latin, these painted images served as “laymen’s books.”

When Henry VIII and his ministers broke with Rome in the 1530s, they took many actions to carry out this separation. Most famous, of course, was the dissolution of the monasteries. At the same time Cromwell and Cranmer attempted to expunge those features of lay piety which they felt were associated with the church at Rome, and which

were not supported by scripture. They attempted to outlaw the veneration of the saints, and so discontinued many of the holy days. This was in part a practical matter, in hopes of regaining some of the economic productivity which had been lost to the endless fast days and processions and other interruptions.

They also tried to remove the physical concomitants of these pious practices. Roods and rood screens were torn down. Wall paintings were scraped off or painted over. Statues were removed or defaced. Stained glass windows were broken up.

These iconoclastic activities were not immediately successful in all places and occurred in waves of destruction. Even at the time of the break with Rome, the traditional forces were still strong. In some dioceses the destruction of images was widespread, while in others little was done. When Cromwell was overthrown, the traditionalists were able to slow down the work of the reformers. Iconoclastic activities increased again during the brief reign of Edward VI, then were reversed upon the accession of Queen Mary. Then again, the work of destruction resumed when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, but she tempered the work of the reformers in all their activities.

So, by the 1620s and 1630s, when the Puritan reformers were again on the rise, there was still work for the iconoclasts to do. Thus, the Great Migration immigrants to New England would have experienced parish churches relatively impoverished in their religious decorations and imagery, by comparison with their ancestors three or four generations earlier. But there were still some manifestations of the old ways in those years, so that when another Cromwell came to power in the 1640s, the iconoclasts were unleashed one more time.

In our visits to several churches during the tour, we will search out the remaining evidence for these old features of the medieval pious activities of the churchgoers. In many churches, including Fairsted and Widford on our travels, some of the paintings have been uncovered and may still be seen. In other churches we will find the cramped stairways that led up to the rood loft, but little or no sign of the rood loft itself. At our first stop on 5 August, at Bishops Stortford, the Boars Head, where we will have lunch, claims that the lintel over their main fireplace was formerly the main beam supporting the rood loft of the church across the street, St. Michael.

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

Nikolaus Pevsner was born in Leipzig in 1902 and was educated in Germany as an art and architecture historian. In 1933 he departed Nazi Germany for England and resumed his career there. After the war he began work on a series of volumes which surveyed the architectural history of England, county by county, under the series title *The Buildings of England*. By 1974 all the counties of England had been covered, most of the volumes written by Pevsner himself.

Each county volume proceeds through the parishes and towns in alphabetical order. The account of each parish begins with a detailed description of the church, providing the age of each element of the structure and discussion of ornaments and monuments. In larger parishes other private and public buildings are also treated.

An updated third edition of the volume for Essex, published in 2007, will guide us in August and will be included in the Great Migration Tour Travelling Library.

GREAT MIGRATION IMMIGRANTS FROM NAZEING

On Thursday, 7 August, our first stop will be the parish of Nazeing, Essex, the place of origin of many of the early settlers of Roxbury, Massachusetts. The parish lies on the westernmost edge of Essex, being bordered on the west with the Lea River, which forms the boundary with Hertfordshire.

The importance of this parish derives from the presence there of John Eliot, who, although he was never minister at Nazeing, was a powerful religious influence on the rest of his family and on many other residents of the parish and vicinity. Just across the county border to the northwest were the parishes of Great Amwell, Ware and Widford, with whom the families of Nazeing had many connections. Some of the families from these latter places moved briefly to Nazeing before sailing for New England. If we have missed your favorite Nazeing immigrant in the lists in this issue, let us know and we will correct the deficiency.

- 1) **Lydia Eliot** was baptized at Nazeing on 1 July 1610, daughter of Bennet Eliot [NEHGR 162:136]. She married at High Laver, Essex, on 26 July 1631 **James Penniman**, who came to Roxbury in late 1631 [GMB 3:1426-30; see also Tour Talk #4].
- 2) **Francis Eliot** was baptized at Nazeing on 10 April 1615, son of Bennet Eliot [NEHGR 162:136-38]. He came to New England about 1640, married Mary Saunders, daughter of Martin Saunders, and settled at Braintree, where the couple had five children.
- 3) **William Curtis** was baptized at Nazeing on 12 November 1592, son of William Curtis. On 6 August 1618, he married at Nazeing, as his second wife, **Sarah Eliot**, daughter of Bennet Eliot [NEHGR 162:135]. They had several children baptized at Nazeing, came to Roxbury in 1632, and had three more children there [GMB 1:499-501].
- 4) **Edward Payson** was baptized at Nazeing on 3 October 1613 and had arrived at Roxbury by 1634. He married twice at Roxbury, had twelve children and removed late in life to Dorchester [GM 2:5:389-95]. His second wife was **Mary Eliot**, baptized at Nazeing on 11 March 1620/1, the youngest of the seven children of Bennet Eliot [NEHGR 162:138].
- 5) **Giles Payson** was baptized at Nazeing on 14 May 1609 and sailed to New England in 1635. He married Elizabeth Dowell at Roxbury in April 1637 and had four children there

[GM 2:5:396-400]. Elizabeth Dowell was baptized at Ware, Hertfordshire, on 10 December 1609, daughter of Thomas Dowell [NEHGR 148:56-57].

6) **Edward Riggs** married Elizabeth Holmes at Nazeing on 16 September 1618 and had five children born there. He moved to Roxbury in 1633 and died there in 1672 [GMB 3:1583-85]. Edward may have been born in the neighboring parish of Roydon and certainly derived from the Rigg or Riggs family of Hawkshead, Lancashire [TAG 82:120-29].

7) **George Holmes** was baptized at Nazeing on 21 July 1594, probably son of George Holmes. His sister Elizabeth had married Edward Riggs. George Holmes and his family had settled in Roxbury by 1638 and he died there in 1646 [TG forthcoming].

8) **John Ruggles**, aged 44, sailed for New England in 1635 with a wife and one son. The ship's passenger list gave his residence in 1635 as Nazeing. He settled in Roxbury and died there in 1663 [GM 2:6:forthcoming].

9) **Thomas Ruggles** "came to New England in the year 1637, he was elder brother to John Ruggles," according to Rev. John Eliot's church record [RChR 82]. His son John had come to New England in 1635 with Philip Eliot. Thomas Ruggles died in 1644, leaving a wife, two sons and a daughter.

10) **Thomas Ufford** had children baptized at Nazeing in 1623 and 1626. He came to New England in 1632 and settled first in Roxbury, but soon moved on to Springfield, Wethersfield and Milford [GMB 3:1857-58].

GREAT MIGRATION IMMIGRANTS FROM WIDFORD

Widford lies about six miles due north of Nazeing, across the Stort River in Hertfordshire. This will be our second stop on 7 August, before we head for lunch and a tour at Hatfield House.

On 30 October 1598 Bennet Eliot married Lettice Algar at Widford. Lettice herself was from Nazeing. This couple had eight children baptized at Widford and Nazeing, one of whom died young, while the other seven all came to New England. We list here the four children who were baptized at Widford [NEHGR 160:181-84, 161:85-91, 186-98, 250-59, 162:65-72, 128-39].

1) **Sarah Eliot** was baptized at Widford on 13 January 1599/1600 and married at Nazeing on 6 August 1618 **William Curtis** (see above).

2) **Philip Eliot** was baptized at Widford on 25 April 1602 and married in 1624 Elizabeth Sibthorpe of Little Hallingbury, Essex. They had four children in England, the first three baptized at Nazeing, and sailed for New England in 1635, settling at Roxbury [GM 2:2:413-16; NEHGR 162:136].

3) **John Eliot** was baptized at Widford on 5 August 1604 and attended Cambridge University in 1619. He was associated with Thomas Hooker while still in England, and came to Roxbury in late 1631 [GMB 1:630-32; NEHGR 162:136]. We will be visiting several sites associated with the English portion of his life.

4) **Jacob Eliot** was baptized at Widford on 21 September 1606 and came to New England in 1631, settling in Boston. At about the time of his migration, he married Margaret _____ and had eight children born at Boston [GMB 1:626-30; NEHGR 162:136].

GREAT MIGRATION IMMIGRANTS FROM WARE AND GREAT AMWELL

Ware lies immediately to the west of Widford and Great Amwell adjoins Ware on the south. Several families in these two parishes are related to or associated with Nazeing families. We will not be stopping in either Ware or Great Amwell, but we will be passing through them on our way to and from Widford.

1) **Isaac Morris** was baptized at Ware on 3 February 1625/6, son of Edward Morris. He sailed for New England in 1635, but no records have been found for him in New England [GM 2:5:156; NEHGR 146:275-78].

2) **Elizabeth Morris[on]** was baptized at Great Amwell on 11 February 1623/4, daughter of Edward Morris[on]. She sailed for New England in 1635, settled at Roxbury and married by 1663 Edward Cartwright [GM 2:5:156-59; NEHGR 146:275-78].

3) **Edward Morris** was baptized at Great Amwell on 22 January 1631/2, son of Edward Morris. He was a resident of Roxbury by 1652 and on 20 November 1655 married Grace Bett at Boston. The couple had eight children born at Roxbury [NEHGR 146:275-78].

4) **Isaac Heath** was baptized at Ware on 13 February 1586/7, son of William Heath. He married Elizabeth Miller there on 14 January 1628/9 and had two children baptized in that parish. The family sailed for New England in 1635 and settled at Roxbury [GM 2:3:299-302].

5) **William Heath** was born about 1591, son of William Heath of Ware. He married Mary Cramphorne at Great Amwell on 10 February 1616/7 and had two children baptized there. After marrying a second time in 1623, to Mary Perry of Sawbridgeworth, he moved to Nazeing and had three children baptized there before moving to Roxbury in 1632 [GMB 2:901-4].

6) **John Johnson** married Mary Heath at Ware on 21 September 1613 and their first child was baptized there in the following year. By 1616 the couple had moved to Ware End in Great Amwell and had nine more children baptized there. In 1630 the family settled in Roxbury [GMB 2:1105-10].

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