TOUR TALK

MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMPANY: THE PRECURSORS [PART I]

The story of the Winthrop Fleet is just a part of the larger story of the Massachusetts Bay Company. We will explore this history in a series of articles in *Tour Talk*, beginning here with an account of the different groups which were establishing settlements in New England, prior to the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

When the Leiden Pilgrims began their planning for the move to the New World, they approached the Virginia Company for a patent to lands across the Atlantic. The Pilgrims had already learned that they would not be successful if they applied for such a patent in their own names, so they sought out middlemen for the job. In fact, they acquired two patents, one issued on 19 June 1619 to "Mr. John Wincop (a religious gentleman then belonging to the Countess of Lincoln)," and one on 2 February 1619/20 granted to John Peirce.

Although the Pilgrims eventually sailed under the authority of the second of these patents, the first is of interest because of the involvement of the Earl of Lincoln. John Wincop served the Earl of Lincoln as tutor or chaplain, and probably both. He would then have been in regular contact with Arbella and Susan Fiennes-Clinton, daughters of the third Earl and sisters of the fourth. In 1623 Arbella would marry Isaac Johnson and about 1632 Susan would marry John Humfrey. Both of these men would become leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

While the Pilgrims were at sea in the latter half of 1620, the Virginia Company was divided into two patent-issuing authorities, with the northern Atlantic seaboard coming under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Council for New England. John Peirce and his associates soon applied for a new patent, which was duly issued on 1 June 1621. Peirce and his associates became the Adventurers, with whom the Pilgrims wrangled endlessly over financial matters.

On 18 December 1624, the Adventurers wrote to William Bradford and others at Plymouth, announcing that the business arrangements between the London Adventurers and those in Plymouth had been terminated. After consultations among themselves, the Plymouth settlers sent Isaac Allerton to England as their agent, to bring these affairs to an end. On 15 November 1626, a formal agreement was reached, in which the Plymouth settlers bought out the holdings of the London Adventurers. Among the forty-two Adventurers who signed this agreement at London were five men who would later be

investors in the Massachusetts Bay Company: Thomas Goffe, Richard Andrews, John Revell, Samuel Sharp and Robert Keayne. Revell and Sharp would in 1630 sail with the Winthrop Fleet, and Keayne would follow them to New England in 1635.

In the next installment, we will examine the Dorchester Company, another of the precursors of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

Recommended Reading

Frances Rose-Troup, *The Massachusetts Bay Company and Its Precursors* (New York, 1930). Although now outdated in some aspects, this little volume is still the best summary of the subject available. Rose-Troup did not always make her chronology clear, and, like so many scholars working before the days of Perry Miller and Samuel Eliot Morison, her understanding of the different varieties of Puritanism was deficient. (This book is not easy to find. There are a few copies available on Amazon; the original hardcover may be had for quite high prices, but the paperback reprint can be purchased more cheaply. The book description on Amazon is hilariously inappropriate and irrelevant.)

BURY ST. EDMUNDS RESTAURANTS

On four of the evenings of the tour, we will be dining at the Angel Hotel, and on a fifth evening, if all goes according to plan, we will be dining in London at the Globe Theatre. All five of these dinners are covered by the tour registration fee. On the remaining five evenings, you will be on your own for dinner in Bury St. Edmunds. You may, of course, dine in the restaurant at the Angel Hotel, but most will desire some gastronomic variety for those meals. We have expended considerable effort in patronizing as many Bury St. Edmunds restaurants as possible, and present our recommendations here.

As you leave the Angel Hotel by the front door, you find yourself at the bottom of Angel Hill, facing the ruins of the abbey. Behind the hotel, as you climb the gentle slope of Angel Hill, you will enter the old center of town, with a multitude of shops and restaurants.

So, if you turn left upon leaving the Angel Hotel, the first turning on the left is Abbeygate Street. Along this street are many restaurants and coffee shops. In the first block or two of Abbeygate are two eating places which we have found more than acceptable.

Prezzo, 35-36 Abbeygate, Italian. Prezzo is a chain of restaurants, something like our Olive Garden. My standard test is spaghetti Bolognese, and they passed the test. http://www.prezzorestaurants.co.uk/restaurant/bury-st-edmunds

La Tasca, 23 Abbeygate, Spanish Tapas. These are not the same tapas that you would find on a sidewalk restaurant in Seville. After two visits, though, and sampling six

different dishes, we can say that a meal here is more than acceptable. http://www.latasca.co.uk/bury-st-edmunds/

If you return to the front of the Angel Hotel, and turn right instead of left, you will pass along a small alley and come out on Churchgate Street. There are several restaurants here, although not so many as on Abbeygate. We have two establishments to recommend on this street as well.

Maison Bleue, 30-31 Churchgate, French Seafood. The proprietors and staff are all from France, and the food, service and ambience are all excellent. Not surprisingly, this translates to prices somewhat higher than at the other places recommended here. If you choose to eat at Maison Bleue, you should plan ahead and make reservations a day in advance. www.maisonbleue.co.uk

Valley Connection, 42 Churchgate, Indian. Above-average British Indian fare, with good service and clean and pleasant surroundings. www.valley-connection.com

Finally, if you walk a few blocks along Crown Street, also to the right as you leave the Angel Hotel, you will come to an excellent pub.

Dog and Partridge, 29 Crown Street, Standard English Pub. This is a very popular pub, and can become quite noisy later in the evening, especially if you take an inside table close to the bar. If the weather is good, find a table in the patio in the rear of the pub. http://gkpubs.co.uk/pubs-in-bury-st-edmunds/dog-and-partridge-pub/

There are, of course, many other places to eat in the evening in Bury St. Edmunds, also within easy walking distance, but those named above are the only ones that have been tested by the tour directors. For a map showing the locations of dozens of Bury St. Edmunds restaurants, go to www.millionplaces.com/eatingout

PARISH CHURCH ARCHITECTURE – THE BASICS

On almost every day of the Great Migration Tour, we will be visiting one or more parish churches in Suffolk or Essex. Apart from the intrinsic importance of these buildings as the places of baptism and marriage of so many of our immigrant ancestors, we will want to know something of the meaning of these buildings in the lives of our ancestors. In this issue of *Tour Talk* we will take a look at the basic features of the layout and construction of these churches. In the next issue we will discuss the internal ornamentation and furnishings of the churches, the importance of these features in the lives of the parishioners, and the attacks on these decorations during periodic episodes of iconoclastic activity.

Our guide to the basic architecture will be Hugh Braun, *Parish Churches: Their Architectural Development in England* (London, 1970, 1974). Braun's approach is refreshing, in that it challenges some of the traditional categories of church architecture.

For example, in describing the Gothic period of construction, he does not adhere rigidly to the older trifold division of the period into Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular. He notes that these phases were not clearly separated in time, and are frequently mingled in construction of a single period. Also, he argues that what were often referred to as Norman elements in church design may sometimes more properly be termed Saxon.

The fundamental organizing feature of church architecture, from the grandest to the simplest, is the requirement to orient the church with respect to Jerusalem, so that the church is laid down on an east-west axis, with the chancel, containing the altar, at the east end of the building. All else flows from this alignment of the floor plan.

Braun argues that the most important model for most of the parish churches we see now was the older churches of Byzantium. In these, the main body of the church, the nave, was separated from the chancel by a crossing, with a tower or steeple being built over the crossing. In most English parish churches, the tower ceased to be erected over the crossing, and eventually migrated to the west end of the church. As a result, in many smaller churches there may be no crossing.

There were usually three entrances to the church, on the south, west and north sides. When all three of these entrances were present and in use, processions on some feast days would leave the church through the north door, move around the church in a clockwise direction, and reenter through the west door. As the west tower also incorporated bells and perhaps an organ, the west door in many churches fell into disuse. Also, because of the climate, the north door also became less frequently a main point of access. As we move from parish to parish, take note of the relative frequency of the employment of the south door rather than the north door as the main point of entrance, and see if you can figure out why the north door sometimes took precedence over the south.

A second important feature of the church was its height, both as an aspiration toward heaven and as an attempt to tower over the rest of the buildings in the village. In most early English parishes, this latter goal was not difficult to achieve. The tower usually took the form of a wooden spire, first over the eastern crossing, and then later on the western tower. These wooden spires, of course, were frequently the victims of fire, from lightning strikes or otherwise. As lead replaced thatch as a roofing material, towers were often capped in lead, and the spire was omitted. But, as protection against lightning strikes came into use, towers were rebuilt. Some of the steeples that we will see are of relatively recent construction, but probably replace any number of earlier steeples.

As parishes increased in size, the main options for expansion were only to the north and south, with growth to the east prevented by the chancel and to the west by the tower. Most churches would expand first to the north, adding a north aisle, and then after that a south aisle. If this expansion were undertaken during the period when the church was still roofed in thatch, this could cause some engineering problems, as the thatched roofs had to be more high-pitched than the later lead roofs. In some churches the changeover from thatched to leaded roofs may still be seen in scars on the outside of the nave.

The final form of a fully-developed parish church, then, would include a central nave, flanked by a chancel to the east, a tower (perhaps with spire) to the west, and aisles to the north and south. There would be a main entrance through the south porch, or, less frequently, the north porch; the west door would be present but probably not used. There might be some remnant of a crossing, or transept. As we move around on our tour compare, for example, Lavenham, an excellent example of a fully-developed church in an affluent cloth town, to Boxted, which never grew much beyond its medieval size.

In the second installment of this article, we will look at such internal features as wall paintings, the rood loft and rood screen, the piscina and other functional and decorative additions.

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