

## CARDINAL WOLSEY ET AL

By Mary Skinner, 2010

In 1530 Southwell had an important visitor, though no-one expected him to be very popular! Cardinal Archbishop Thomas Wolsey, having fallen out of favour with King Henry VIII and having lost everything, travelled to the north and when he reached Southwell he stayed here for several weeks.

A pamphlet was published six years later which gave an account of how the Archbishop discharged his duties while he was here: "Who was less beloved in the north than my Lord Cardinal before he was among them? Who better loved after he had been there awhile? He gave bishops a right good example how they might win men's hearts. There were few holy days but he would ride five or six miles from his house, now to this parish, now to that, and there cause one or other of his doctors to make a sermon unto the people. He sat amongst them and said mass before all the parish; he saw why churches were made; he began to restore them to their right and proper use; he brought his dinner with him, and bade diverse of the parish to it He inquired whether there were any debate or grudge between any of them. If there was, after dinner, he sent for the parties to the church, and made them all one".

George Cavendish, his gentleman usher, speaks to a similar effect of his kindness to rich and poor, and his endeavour to patch up quarrels:

"He made many agreements and concords between gentleman and gentleman, and their wives that had long been asunder and in great trouble, and diverse other agreements between other persons; making great assemblies for the same purpose, and feasting of them, not sparing for any costs, where he might make a peace and amity, which purchased him much love and friendship in the country".

By September 1620 not everyone was happy with the way the Chapter were running things. One Gervase Lee esquire made no less than 14 complaints against the Chapter of Southwell Minster. These included church services being neglected, Prebendaries not being in residence when they should have been, lack of hospitality, the catechism was not being taught on Sunday afternoons; and there were financial criticisms a — plenty - lands were being lost, properties demolished, rents were not being collected, the choir wasn't being paid, accounts were not being audited, and the Vicars Choral were being very shabbily treated!

In addition, the church itself was not supposed to be in good repair. The Chapter defended themselves earnestly about all this. There is also an account of a libellous poem which Gervase Lee wrote about the Canons, and that cost him £500 in the Court of the Star Chamber.

The Journals of George Hodgkinson contain some interesting details of events in 1781: "17th June. The Archbishop (William Markham) confirms here today. Walked down with my Father and Mr Banks to church in the morning, when we had a very crowded congregation. The Archbishop did not attend, through his indisposition, either the morning or afternoon prayers. Dr Heathcote gave us an excellent discourse which was aimed at the Dissenters in **general and particularly against Mr P.....d**. The Archbishop came to the church before 1pm, when he confirmed near 600 which he finished by half past one". That was pretty quick going for someone who was feeling ill, though he was well enough to dine at the Residence later in the day!

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