

# The Rector's Funeral Bill 1732

## Title

As part of my research in to the residents of Manor Farm, Stoneleigh, I have been looking at the Farmer Family who lived there for 171 years from 1715 to 1886. In the archives stored at Warwick Record Office are papers from solicitors Rotherhams of Kenilworth and amongst all the various legal documents, there is a handwritten, itemised bill dated 1732 for "Mr Farmer's Funeral Goods" amounting to £20 5s and 7 pence.

## Stoneleigh & Ashow

The Mr Farmer who paid the bill was Richard Farmer who in 1715 had married Elizabeth Randall of Preston Baggot and had moved in to Manor Farm Stoneleigh, the first of the Farmer family at Manor Farm.

Richard Farmer's parents were the Reverend Richard Farmer, Rector of Ashow and his wife Jane Clark, and the bill for £20 5s 7d is from a funeral outfitter, which the rector's son Richard of Stonely was paying for the burial of his father the Rector of Ashow. He must have considered this an important bill to have filed it at his solicitors. At this time Richard of Stonely's half-yearly rent payment to Lord Leigh was £20 increasing to £20 8s a year later in 1733. So rather a large bill, equivalent to about £3,000 today.

Before looking more closely at the bill itself, a little more information I have found out about the Rector of Ashow who died in 1732.

## Ashow Board

The board in Ashow Church listing the Rectors, shows Richard Farmer taking over from Thomas Allestree in 1696 and being succeeded by Robert Bree in 1733.

Further research has found that Richard the Rector was the son of yet another Richard Farmer, this time from Repton and he went to Repton School in Derbyshire.

## Repton School

The Archivist at Repton School was most helpful with my enquiries and sent me a long and fascinating document about an exact contemporary of Richard's called Peter Bold, including references to all the books Peter and Richard had to read as part of their education. A rare if not unique account of a 17th Century education syllabus.

Richard & Peter from 1667-1670 had been under the guidance of Headmaster Joseph Sedgwick, a post-Commonwealth Educational Reformer who had been at St Paul's School in London and later at Christ's Cambridge.

## The Rector's Funeral Bill 1732



Richard Farmer moved to Manor Farm Stoneleigh in 1715  
his big house here in Ashow

His father was Richard Farmer  
the Rector of Ashow Church,  
who died in 1732



The Board in Ashow Church  
shows Richard Farmer  
as the Rector in 1696



## Richard the Rector



Repton School, Derbyshire

## Christ's College Cambridge

Headmaster Sedgwick assisted Richard to get into his Alma Mater and in 1670 Richard was admitted to Christ's College Cambridge age 17, as a sizar, a student who receives some form of assistance such as meals, lower fees or lodging during his period of study.

He graduated in 1673 with a B.A.

In 1675 he was ordained deacon by Thomas Wood in the diocese of Coventry & Lichfield.

## Cleric Portrait

A year later, in September 1676 he married Jane Clark at Holy Trinity Coventry, then in December of that year 1676, is listed as Curate at Ashow. (In 1678 he was ordained priest.)

He and Jane had three children, all baptised in Ashow - two daughters Jane and Frances and a son Richard

So, by the time Richard the Rector died in 1732 he was 79 years old and had been in Ashow for 56 years - as a young newly married Curate then as Rector.

## Bill Title

Now, on to the Funeral Goods Bill itself.

Making some sense out of this 280 year old handwritten document 16" (40 cms) long was quite a challenge for a novice researcher:-

Firstly trying to read the letters of the handwriting without having undertaken a lengthy course in calligraphy deciphering -

For example it appears to be titled

**Mr Harmors Hunorall Goods 7 October 1732**

but -- With ornate capital F and even more wonderfully ornate capital G and allowing for the handwriting of Richard Ward the funeral outfitter, who had a similar way of writing the letters 'o' and 'e' where the 'e' looks like an 'o' with a squiggle actually translates to

**Mr Farmers Funeral Goods 7 October 1732**

Secondly, deciphering the words given that spelling in this period was still sometimes phonetic and certainly quite different from nowadays.

For example the simple difference in Funerall and Funeral.

## Richard the Rector



Christ's College, Cambridge

FARMOR, RICHARD. Adm. sizar (age 17) at Christ's, June 23, 1670. S. of Richard. B. at Eington, Dorset. School, Bampton (St. Andrew's). Bachel. 1673; B.A. 1674-5. Ord. Deacon (Lichfield) Sept. 1675. (1686, II, 30.)

## Richard the Rector ?



Portrait of an Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Cleric

## The Title of the Bill



Mr Harmors Hunorall Goods 7 October 1732

Mr Farmers Funeral Goods 7 October 1732

## Coffin Dressings

The first 3 items on the bill appear to be for the coffin itself:-

**Item 1:** 7 yds Black fine mildi flannell at 15pence = 8s 9d

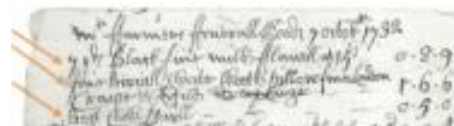
Having failed to google an answer for what “mildi flannell” might be, I contacted the Norwich Textile Museum. They also could find no reference to ‘mildi’ flannell in their archives despite their knowledge of many, many differently named flannels. However, further deciphering, research and correspondence seems to have come up with a good result. The mildi is most probably mild, with an end flourish on the ‘d’ and a spot on the paper and would be a variation on a traditional woollen fabric with an open textured weave and a fine nap

Furthermore, The 7 yds of Black fine mild flannell would be the Shroud, a compulsory woollen burial cloth following on from the ‘Burial in Woollen Parliamentary Acts 1666-80’ which required the dead, (except Plague victims and Paupers), to be buried in pure English woollen shrouds to the exclusion of any foreign textiles. And also required a signed and sworn affidavit that this had been done. Hence the frequently cited texts in the Church Registers of the time, “Buried in Woollen”, and Aff. for Affidavit. The Act was designed to be of economic benefit to the sheep farmers and the British wool trade rather than being something of religious significance.

Then there is **Item 2:** Fine Buriall Shuite ... sheet & pillow fine London. Crape & Ruffills very Large = £1 6s 6d. Probably white linen with additional ornamentation but possibly wool. The peculiar word after Fine Buriall may be some form of the word Suite, as in a suite of furniture, a word recently arrived in England from the French. So this could be a suite or Shuite of coffin linen?

**Item 3:** Best Cloth Paull = 5s. This would be a cloth pall, either black or white to cover the whole coffin. A standard practice of the period.

The Coffin Dressings



## Chief Mourners

The next section of the bill covers the essential items for the chief mourners

**Item 4:** Mr Farmer, Mr Reave 2 Hattbands 6s 2 pare Black gloves at 3s 4d = 9s 4d

With this item, Mr Farmer (the rector's son Richard from Stoneleigh who is paying the bill) and Mr Reave (the rector's son-in-law John Reave from Rowington who had married the rector's daughter Frances) are provided with hatbands and black gloves

**Item 5:** Mr Lee (looks like Mr. Loo) silke hatband at 5s 4d and Black gloves at 1s 8d

Mr Lee is also provided with the same price black gloves but a more expensive silk hatband. And another lovely ornate capital G

**Item 6:** Mr Farmer Jnr gloves & Hatband 3s 8d, Cris Corbitt gloves 14d = 4s 10d

Mr Farmer Junior was the rector's grandson, Richard from Stoneleigh's 11 year old son.

The Chief Mourners



I have not yet pinned down Chief Mourners Mr Lee and Cris Corbitt but further research continues.

Then the above mentioned are provided with additional gloves – black, black Chamois (spelt Shame) and white kidd. So an interesting gloves change at some time during the Funeral

**Item 7:** 2 Mr Farmers Stonley & 1 Mr Reave 3 pair black gloves = 5s

**Item 8:** Mr Farmer Black Shame gloves = 3s 6d

**Item 9:** 2 Mr Corbitts white kidd (presumably gloves) = 4s

Now the costs really start mounting as Richard Farmer goes on to provide more hatbands and gloves, and surprisingly, YARDS and YARDS of ribbon to tie the hats of about 50 named male mourners.

Before looking at the names of these men let's have a look at these be-ribboned hats the men were expected to wear.

## Slides Hats

1732 is well after the period of the tall-crown Puritan hat and the wide-brimmed Cavalier style, and before the later 18th and 19th century Tricorn and Top hats.



## 3 Hats Paintings

Contemporary paintings of this time show men's hats had low crowns and wide brims, particularly in the country and away from fashion in London

### Men's Hats from mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century



Enclosure Surveyors at work

### Men's Hats from mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century



George Stubbs "Haymaking"

### Men's Hats from mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century



Henry Singleton "The Ale House Door"

## Hats

So the men could have been dressed in hats something like this.  
Be-ribboned hat

### Men's Hats from mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century



Black Wool



Black Felt



Brown Felt



Brown Felt

Complete with ribbons, and some could also have worn wigs.

### Man's hat be-ribboned for a funeral ???





## Funeral Procession

I did come across an engraving of an early 18th Century Funeral Procession which includes the aforementioned Coffin Pall, topped by feathers or crepe and also shows the men in be-ribboned hats.

Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Funeral Procession



## Male Congregation

Here is the list by name of men to be supplied with Funeral Goods

Even with spelling and transcription variations, a brief browse through the Ashow registers over the following 20 years did find that many of these were Ashow parishioners, being provided, at Richard Farmer's expense, for clothing accessories for a village funeral. The list also includes the important local families who were assigned specific pew seats in the Sunday church services as shown in later Ashow Church seating diagrams.

The first 14 men named are provided with Kidd gloves and Silk Hatbands each 2 yards long, at the same price as Mr Lee's above (Then there are 5 additional pairs of gloves)

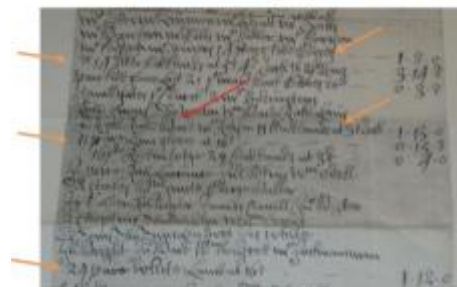
The next 11 named are given less expensive non-silke Hatbands and lam gloves

Then an additional 16 yards of ribbon to tie 29 hatbands – that is about 20 inches per hat

The final 24 are provided with white lamb presumably gloves. Providing an interesting variant of the black gloves for the congregation also.

and among the men is Richard Ward the funeral outfitter who drew up the bill.

The Male Congregation



And it's on to 30 named Ladies

## Ladies

Some of them with the same surnames as the men, some referred to as Mrs and others with their Firstname as well.

All 30 of them receive a pair at 14 pence, presumably a pair of gloves.

The Female Congregation



## Haberdashery

16-1

The last items on the bill, form an additional haberdashery list of different qualities, types and prices including:-

26 yards Fine Crape, 14 yards Other crape,

There is Stuf, Black Silke, Drugitt

Broad fine Shalune, Dimaty

1 Ell of Fustin (an ell being a tailors measure of about a yard and a quarter)

Additional Haberdashery



1 doz coat buttons and 2 dozen breast buttons

Items of Mohair, Silk, Tape, Canvis, Ferritt, Bukrom, Lutestrin

Apart from the buttons- probably for a man's suit, these could be tapes and ribbons for the ladies bonnets, hats or dresses?

Most of which materials I have managed to track down a definition for, should anyone be particularly interested

-> arrow1

And FINALLY 1 pare Storkins or Stockins at 2s 2pence.

## Bill Total

With the bill total for £20 5s 7d. Fortunately Rector Farmer's Inventory of Goods and Chattels taken later in the month amounted to over £250. The majority of which was accounted for by farm animals and harvested crops. Fascinating details but that is for another time.

## Overcharges

and perhaps the eagle-eyed mathematicians amongst you may have spotted that Mr Ward overcharged 1s for the 11 pare Lam gloves at 16d and another shilling for the 14 yds other Crape.

## Favours

Further reading has established that Funeral Customs of that time called for the deceased's next of kin to give out small items to the mourners to be worn during the funeral procession and/or displayed as tokens of remembrance.

These were usually gloves (wool, chamois and kid), hatbands, and other small presents or "favours". The idea of "Mourning Favours" reaching a peak in the Victorian era, when the gloves and hatbands and ribbons were extended to include jewellery, often black jet, and even locket enclosing hair of the deceased.

So it looks like Mr. Richard Farmer of Stoneley did his father the Rector proud at his funeral in 1732. A fitting finale for the 79 year old Rector after his 56 years in Ashow.

HOWEVER

There are also 2 postscripts to this story.

## Clerk

Firstly, it may be an apocryphal tale but in the Victoria County History series

("A History of the county of Warwick Volume 6 The Knightlow Hundred"),

the section for Ashow states:-

"The Parish registers begin in 1733, the earlier registers having been converted into spills by a former parish clerk who was a publican"

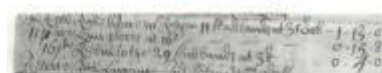
So the church registers of Rector Farmer's long incumbency at Ashow apparently went up in smoke.

### The Total for the Bill

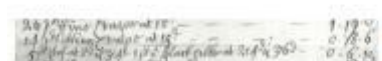


Recd of Mr Farmer 10 October 1732 £20 5s 7d  
Ye full content of this Bill & all Demands  
by me Richard Ward

### The Overcharging



Should be 14s 8d



Should be 17s 6d



### Mourning "Favours"



The Parish Clerk & Publican !!!!!  
with a 'churchwarden' pipe



'Ye Clerk' is one of those listed in the Bill

## Bree Register

To be followed by a new Rector and a new church register book meticulously maintained by Rector Robert Bree from 1733, the year after Rector Richard Farmer died.

Rector Robert Bree's New Church Register 1733



## Ashow Church

The 2nd postscript is that in the 1730 2nd edition of Dugdale's "The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated" there is a mention of a stone in Ashow Church.

"On flat stone in the Chancell. Here lieth the body of Mrs Jane Farmer, the wife of Mr. Richard Farmer, Rector of Ashow. She departed this life; 27th year of her age 1707".

Now she may have died in 1707 but she could not possibly have been 27 years old as that would mean she was born in 1680, the same year her son Richard Farmer of Stoneleigh was born. So perhaps a Dugdale contributor in the church with a candle on a dark day mis-transcribed the age or date, or more likely the 1730 printer has made a typo. Further hands-on research with permission from the Vicar and Churchwardens of Ashow necessitated the partial rolling-back of the carpet in the chancel.

The Chancel is the part before the communion rails and the raised altar step.

Full rolling-back of the carpet would have involved moving the piano, which had been forbidden as this would have required expensive payment for retuning. The results were interesting!

Ashow Church



"On flat stone in the Chancell. Here lieth the body of Mrs Jane Farmer, the wife of Mr. Richard Farmer, Rector of Ashow. She departed this life; 27th year of her age 1707"

The Carpet, The Piano  
The Stone  
???



## Stone

Beneath the matting are some very worn engraved stones, including one right up by the piano, which might just be where Jane Farmer the Rector's wife was buried.

## Oct

AND also, just possibly where the Rector himself joined her as there is a faint but legible OCT – the month he died in October 1732.

So next time Ashow removes or replaces the matting I am hoping an expert can help with a better job deciphering this very worn stone!

October ???





Finally here is the cast list for the suitably attired congregation at the Rector's funeral in 1732.

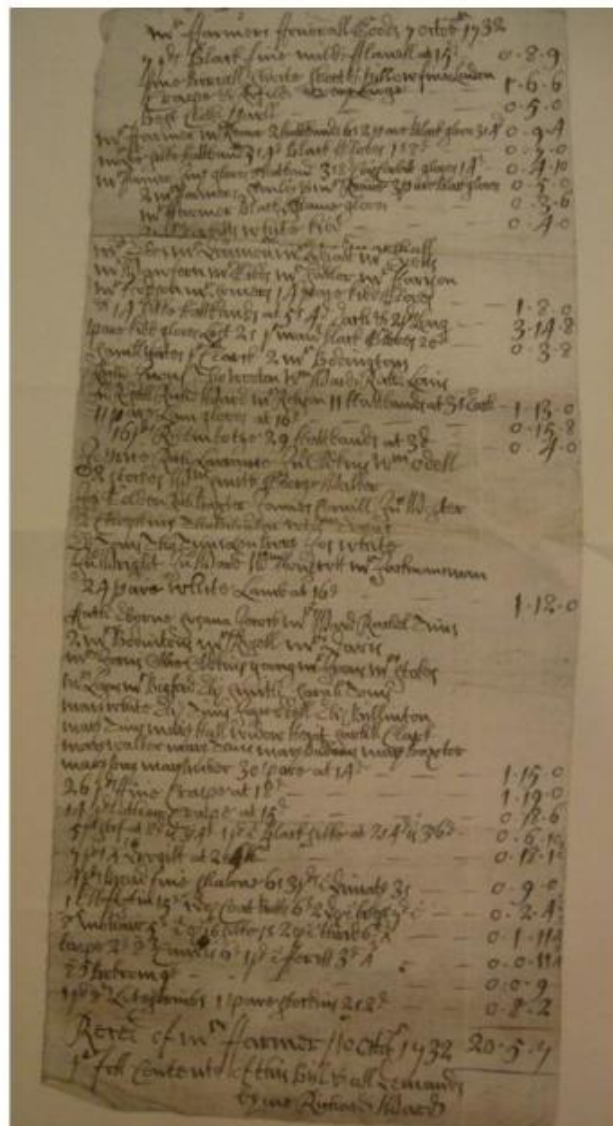
Finale

## The Congregation October 1732

Mr Farmer, Mr Reave, Mr Lee, Mr Farmer Jnr,  
Cris Corbitt, 2 Mr Corbitts,

Mr Eddes, Mr Dunmon, Mr Lydiatt, Mr Evetts,  
Mr Hawforn, Mr Gibbs, Mr Sadler, Mr Harison,  
Mr Husson, Mr Sumers, Samll Yates, ye Clark, 2  
Mr Bodingtons, Richd Irons, Tho Wooton, Wm  
Ward, Richd Lonis, Jno Rusell, Richd Ward, Mr  
Rolison, Jo Price, Rich Laurance, Jno Adkins,  
Wm Odell, 2 Storkes, Wm Smith, George  
Walker, Jos Golden, Rich Baxter, James Cornill,  
Jno Wosten, 2 Chaplins, Tho Bilinton, Willm  
Evens, Ed Toms, Tho Tims, Len Bury, Jos White,  
Jno Wright, Jno Ward, Wm Hunseutt, Mr  
Jarkmans man

Kath Eborne, Susana Jorork, Mrs Ward, Rachel  
Tims, 2 Mrs Bodingtons, Mrs Rusell, Mrs Davis,  
Mrs Iorns, Ahe Adkins, young Mrs Irons, Mrs  
Stokes, Mrs Loyns, Mrs Bigford, Eliz Smith,  
Sarah Toms, Mary White, Eliz Tims, Joyce Odell,  
Eliz Billinton, Mary Tims, Mary Hall, Widow  
Hewit, Sarah Clark, Mary Walker, Mary Tain,  
Mary Badams, Mary Baxtor



Pam Baker, Stoneleigh History Society, September 2012