Contested Spaces in Sacred Places: Re-forming the English Parish Church under Mary I

ABSTRACT

The Reformation in England dramatically changed the physical characteristics of parish churches within the diocese of Norwich, like many others across the country, especially under the rule of Edward VI (1547-1553) – Henry VIII’s only son. Images were removed and/or destroyed from side altars, chancels, rood screens, windows and walls. The high altar, along with its associated Latin services and liturgical plate, was also thrown out, and replaced with the reformed communion table, its equally reformed communion paten and cup and the Book of Common Prayer. In short, a faith based on a sensory experience was replaced with a faith that was predominantly experienced though understanding and the Word. Within six years Edward VI had died and the work of reform was cut short. His half-sister Mary Tudor succeeded him to the throne in 1553 and with her returned the Catholic faith of her childhood. With as much determination as her brother, Mary sought to restore parish churches to their rightful state whereby her subjects could worship God with a true faith. Parish congregations had just gone through several years of constructing their parish churches for protestant worship. Now they were being commanded to restore what they had just destroyed. Some parishes were faced with the conundrum of how to respond to these requests, being torn between loyalty to the crown and loyalty to their new found faith. Others took hold of this providential opportunity to re-form their churches so that they could once again practice the faith of their Fathers. Thus the parish church was re-established as a contested space, as parishioners sought to re-affirm their faith experience through the use of object, space and ceremony within the Marian Church.
BIOGRAPHY

Irena Larking completed a Masters Degree (First Class) in History at the University of Auckland in 2004. She is currently in the last year of her PhD in History at the University of Queensland, where she is undertaking an interdisciplinary research project of the English Reformation. The thesis addresses the theme of change in worship practice in parish churches within the diocese of Norwich, c. 1450 – 1662, using material culture as a methodological trajectory.
CONTESTED SPACES IN SACRED PLACES: RE-FORMING THE ENGLISH PARISH CHURCH UNDER MARY I

In 1557, four years after Mary I came to the throne and Catholicism was reinstated, the churchwardens of the parish of Cratfield paid 6d. for the ‘fetchyng of [the] table [that] is at the alter from [the] vycaryage bearne’ and drink for those that ’set [it].’1 At some time during the religious changes of Edward VI during 1547 – 1553, the stone altar and perhaps a reredos was removed from the sacred space of the chancel within the church and stored in the vicarage barn.2 In the restoring of this object into the chancel, those parishioners who were sympathetic to the Catholic faith were asserting their legitimate right under Mary I to celebrate the Mass on a stone altar. However, its late return to the parish church in 1557 suggests that there were also those within the parish that were reticent to reorder their church for Catholic worship.

When Mary I came to the throne in 1553, parishes across the country, like Cratfield, were confronted with the directive to re-form their faith and beliefs and consequently re-order their churches and its objects for Catholic worship. Previously, under Edward VI, those same congregations undertook the process of reforming their churches for Protestant worship. These dramatic changes were curtailed by the early death of Edward in 1553 and the succession of his older and Catholic half-sister Mary Tudor. Mary returned England to Catholicism and ordered parish churches to reinstate its liturgy and trappings within the parish church. As a result of this directive, parish churches continued to be contested sites of community worship.

This paper will explore the religious experiences of three Suffolk parishes – Long Melford, Boxford and Cratfield (plates 1, 2 and 3 respectively) – during the period of Mary’s reign (1553 – 1558) as seen through the transcribed churchwardens’ accounts and the material remains of the church.3 These sources suggest that both Catholic and Protestant parishioners may have confronted each other over the directive to re-order their church space through the objects within it.4 It must be acknowledged that religious tension may not have been the only reason why some liturgical objects were not reinstated into the parish church. A lack of finances or the uncertainty of the times could equally have made parishes hesitant to reorder their churches. It is quite possible that all three reasons influenced the restoration work of the parish. In the process of re-forming the sacred space of the church by the returning or replacing of stone altars, chalices, vestments and images to their pre-Reformation locations within the church, parishes were actively responding to both legal requirements and local priorities. We cannot be certain from the accounts and material remains that disagreement did occur. Nevertheless what is certain is that the dramatic and turbulent changes of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation significantly altered the space in which community worship took place, which forced congregations, or influential parishioners, to make decisions over how that worship ought to be conducted. For the most part, the accounts reveal little about the individuals who were involved in making or implementing such decisions. Nevertheless, by exploring how church spaces and the objects within them were re-ordered, we are able to get a sense of how such decisions were made and thus an insight into the conflicts that may have occurred.

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1 William Holland (Ed.), Cratfield: A Transcript of the Accounts of the Parish from A. D. 1490 to A. D. 1642, with Notes (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1895), 83.
3 Plate 1: Long Melford from the south. Plate 2: Boxford from the south east. Plate 3: Cratfield from the north-east. Author’s own photographs.
4 I have used the transcribed churchwardens’ accounts for the three churches under discussion. These are: Holland, Cratfield: A Transcript of the Accounts of the Parish; Peter Northeast (Ed.), Boxford Churchwardens’ Accounts 1530 – 1561 (Woodbridge: Suffolk Record Society, 1982); David Dymond and Clive Paine (Eds.), The Spoil of Melford Church: The Reformation in a Suffolk Parish, (Suffolk: Salient, 1989).
THE Pillars of the Reformation and their Material Markers

In order to understand the changes under Mary I, it is necessary to briefly review the religious reforms that were instigated in parish churches under Edward VI. The theological and liturgical changes that were implemented during the English Reformation dramatically changed the pre-Reformation demarcations of space within the parish church. In addition to the re-ordering of spaces within the church, the objects that played important liturgical roles within those spaces also changed. Thus the nature of a collective faith experience within the parish church changed from one that was multi-sensory (seeing, hearing, smelling) to one that emphasised the understanding of belief and doctrine through hearing the Word of God. Doreen Rosman states that Protestantism fostered a strong corporate identity through ‘[g]athering together to read the Bible [in the home and in the church], fighting side by side to remove images and other relics, sharing a common vision of a brave new world as yet unrecognised by others’. Through the reordering of church space and the objects within it, the pillars of the Reformation – sola scriptura meaning the Bible alone, the rejection of transubstantiation and the rejection of images and popish ceremonies – were to find a very real physical presence within the parish church.

The first pillar was the doctrine of sola scriptura, or the Bible alone. The emphasis placed on the English Bible by both English reformers and the Crown led to Henry VIII, in both 1538 and 1541, ordering every parish church to purchase an English Bible. For the first time the nave became the privileged site of this sacred text. In this single re-ordering of church space the focus was removed from the altar and placed onto the Word.

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English Reformers, access to an English Bible was imperative to a true faith experience. Even though both Henry VIII and Edward VI tried to control the use of the English Bible, its importance nevertheless permeated their legislation and the Edwardian Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552. In the 1547 visitation articles, parish priests were asked: ‘Whether thei haue moued the people to read and heare scripture in Englishe, & haue not discouraged them from readyng and hearing of the same suche as be not prohibited so to do.’

The centrality of the Word of God to the English Reformation led to the reordering of the church space and the objects within it to give pride of place to the Bible. As a result, parishes like Boxford and Cratfield invested parish funds to purchase new Bibles for their parishioners to access and to read. In 1541 the churchwardens of both Boxford and Cratfield purchased Bibles for their fellow parishioners. In addition to this purchase, the Boxford churchwardens, John Porter and Walter Gossnold, also purchased a new lectern for its new Bible and a chain to keep it secure.

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Gathering around a lectern to read the Bible or hear it being read was not the only way in which parishioners could access the Word. Biblical texts could also be depicted on church walls. The use of text in churches was not new, but during the Reformation the use of text was re-formed. English text was no longer used to request prayers from the faithful, but to proclaim the Word of God. Its voluntary implementation by parish churches demonstrated their commitment to the Reformation. Long Melford, Boxford and Cratfield all undertook the task of whitewashing the walls inside their churches. In the parish of Boxford a joint venture was undertaken in 1548 between priest and people to whitewash their walls and replace the images with scripture texts. The Boxford churchwardens spent a total of 25s. 6d. for the ‘wrytynge of bothe sydys of the churche,’ paid the sexton Thomas Forbye ‘for helpynge of the Wryghter of the churche to make hys stagynge’ and for getting permission from their parson, Thomas Ryvet, ‘for whytynge of the chancell’. Similarly, the churchwardens of Long Melford undertook the process of ‘making of the stagys for the painter & wryter’ and ‘wrytyng of chyrche & chappelles’ in its expansive interior, at the considerable cost of £2 0s. 8d. There were five chapels at Long Melford and at least two belonged to the powerful Clopton family – the Clopton family and the Martyn family being primarily responsible for funding the rebuilding of the Long Melford Church during the fifteenth century.

The Clotop chantry chapel, located on the north side of the chancel, contains a significant amount of text in its walls. This text includes prayers, Bible verses, and other religious texts. The use of text in this way was not new, but during the Reformation it was re-formed. The centrality of the Word of God to the English Reformation led to the reordering of the church space and the objects within it to give pride of place to the Bible. As a result, parishes like Boxford and Cratfield invested parish funds to purchase new Bibles for their parishioners to access and to read.

The Church and the Book: Papers read at the 2000 Summer Meeting and the 2001 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Society, R. N. Swanson (Ed.) (Suffolk and New York: Boydell Press, 2004), 143-152.


Northeast, Boxford...Accounts, 35, 37; Holland, Crafield...Accounts, 58, 56.

Holland, Crafield...Accounts, 73.


Northeast, Boxford...Accounts, 9, 27, 53, 54, 81.

Dymond and Paine, The Spoil of Melford Church, 40, 41. Authors’ italics.

standing at the north side of the Table, shall say the Lord's prayer, with the Collects following.

either in the chancel or in the nave, the people's part of the church, and it was at the communion table that both priest and people came together to commemorate this sacred meal. The 1552 Prayer Book stipulated: “The Table haung at the Communion tyme a fayre white lynnen clothe upon it, shall stande in the body of the Churche, or in the chauncell, where the Morning prayer and Evening Prayer be appointed to bee sayde. And the Priest standing by the north side of the Table, shall say the Lords prayer, with the Collects folowinge.” The sacrificial stone altar was replaced with a plain wooden table, the heavily embroidered altar cloths were replaced by a white linen cloth, the chalice was replaced with a communion cup, and the priests’ elaborate vestments were replaced by a simple white surplice.

This shift from sacrificial mass to commemorative meal brought about a dramatic simplification of the liturgy, furniture and accoutrements used to commemorate Holy Communion. The stone altar was fixed into the chancel floor at the east end of the church. The shift from mass to meal resulted in the rejection of the sacrificial stone altar that was replaced with a movable wooden communion table. The communion table could be positioned either in the chancel or in the nave, the people's part of the church, and it was at the communion table that both priest and people came together to commemorate this sacred meal. The 1552 Prayer Book stipulated: “The Table haung at the Communion tyme a fayre white lynnen clothe upon it, shall stande in the body of the Churche, or in the chauncell, where the Morning prayer and Evening Prayer be appointed to bee sayde. And the Priest standing by the north side of the Table, shall say the Lords prayer, with the Collects folowinge.” The sacrificial stone altar was replaced with a plain wooden table, the heavily embroidered altar cloths were replaced by a white linen cloth, the chalice was replaced with a communion cup, and the priests’ elaborate vestments were replaced by a simple white surplice.

As the purchase of Bibles and lecterns made the Word of God a reality in parish churches, so too did the purchase of wooden communion tables establish the doctrine of remembrance in the collective worship experience of the parish. In the 1550 visitation articles for the diocese of London, Bishop John Ridley specified that all stone altars be removed and replaced with wooden tables so that ‘godly unity ... be observed in all our diocese.’ Yet some parishes did not need a mandate from the Crown and had already moved to replace their stone altars with wooden communion tables. Several London parishes had already taken such pre-emptive action, as had several parishes within the diocese of Norwich, who received no directive at all. Boxford was one such parish that was not going to lag behind the crown’s decision to tread carefully. Thus, in 1549, the churchwardens paid Robert Halle, a dyer, 2d. for ‘ii trestells & a bourde’ to be placed ‘in the chauncell’.

The third pillar of the Reformation was the condemnation of images. Like the central role of the Bible and the doctrine of remembrance, the reclassification of image adoration as idolatry dramatically re-ordered the church space and its decoration.

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19 Whiting, Reformation of the English Parish Church, 21.
20 Davies, A religion of the Word, 31.
23 Freer and Kennedy, Visitation Articles and Injunctions, II: 243.
25 Northeast, Boxford...Accounts, 55, 87.
commandment that forbade the making of images that bore any likeness to any other creature and the worshiping of that image. Like the Mass, images were seen as anathema to a true faith experience that was based on the Word of God. Stuart Clark argues:

Late medieval piety invested heavily in the sense of sight, supported by visual theories that gave eye-contact with objects of devotion a virtually tactile quality. Seeing the elevated host, the crucifix, or other sacred images meant touching them with one’s own visual rays or being touched by theirs. Sight itself became spiritually efficacious, a direct and immediate engagement with the sacred.\(^{27}\)

The belief that images could have a powerful influence over people led some reformers to assert that their removal was imperative.\(^{28}\) It was under Edward VI that the directive was given to remove images from churches. The 1547 injunctions ordered parishes to ‘take down, or cause to be taken down, and destroy the same ... that they shall take away, utterly extinct, and destroy ... so that there remain no memory of the same.’\(^{29}\)

With iconoclastic zeal, Protestant reformers took to removing and/or destroying images in all their forms from their churches. The parish churches of Long Melford, Boxford and Cratfield were no exception. Prior to the Reformation, images were ubiquitous; thus, their removal was equally city thorough. Not all destruction required funding by the parish church. Consequently, it is difficult to date when such iconoclasm took place. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that such destruction could have taken place during Edward’s reign. In Boxford parish church, at the east end of the south aisle, was a chapel. This chapel was home to four images in canopied niches, which were removed as part of the reforming of this sacred space (plate 4).\(^{30}\) Similarly, the parishioners of Cratfield also acted with reforming zeal in the defacement of its seven-sacrament font. Even though traces of paint remain, all of the faces and some of the hands have been chiselled off. On two of the panels, the entire scenes – one of which was probably the elevation of the Host – have been removed (plate 5).\(^{31}\) As Joseph Koerner remarks: ‘[d]effacement leaves behind a face. ... The erased eyes, mouth, and hands display the objects’ impotence, as blind, mute and anonymous stone.’\(^{32}\)

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Hughes and Larkin, Tudor Royal Proclamations, 1: 395, 401.

Chapel at the east end of the south aisle, Boxford. Author’s own photograph.

Seven sacrament font, looking south-east. Author’s own photograph.

With the ascent of Mary I to the throne in 1553 and the return to Catholic worship, the parishioners of Long Melford, Boxford and Cratfield, like congregations across the country, faced the reality of having to re-form their faith and reorder their churches. It was a reality that brought with it the potential for disagreement, resulting from both Catholic and Protestant parishioners negotiating the reordering of their shared sacred space. The potential for such disagreement was not just a product of the Marian regime. The diverging faith agendas in the parish of Long Melford, when the churchwardens undertook the process of whitewashing the walls in their church and chapels under Edward, were demonstrative of this. In the churchwardens’ accounts of Long Melford, Boxford and Cratfield that record the expenses for re-establishing the trappings of Catholic worship, we can get a glimpse of potential moments of disagreement between those who supported the return to Catholicism and those who did not.

In 1554, Mary I issued her rather brief injunctions for the restoration of ‘the laudable and honest ceremonies which were wont to be used.’  For reasons that are not clear, the specific details for the reordering of parish churches for Catholic worship were not outlined by Mary but by Bishop Edmund Bonner. Bonner’s visitation articles of 1554 and 1555 for the diocese of London became a template for other diocesan articles. It appears that articles were written for the Norwich diocese in 1554 but have not survived. Parishes were required to refurbish their churches with the necessary plate, Latin service books, cloths, vestments and stone altar that were necessary for Catholic worship. The restoration of the rood and whitewashing of walls was also required. For the most part, parishes complied and these items were duly restored. In the diocese of Norwich, we know that some Norwich city churches were slow to respond. However, there was no requirement to restore the multitude of images that had adorned the windows, walls, aisles and chancels. According to Robert Whiting, the restoration of these objects happened only slowly. There was also no requirement to restore relics and the vessels that contained them, or to re-establish chanctries. Interestingly, the 1555 injunctions for the London diocese required that the bidding of the beads be restored and celebrated in a ‘decent uniform fashion.’ At the same time, Mary, through Bonner, did not appear to have her father’s restrained enthusiasm for the English Bible, although Bonner did enquire as to whether churches had seats and pews ‘for parishioners to sit in ... after the old usage and custom.’ In the following year of 1555, Mary reiterated the 1553 order to the remove all English service books and theological texts. Interestingly, no mention was made of the English Bible in the injunctions, but Eamon Duffy remarks that these were also removed from churches.

Now, under the rulership of a Catholic queen and Catholic churchwardens, Roger Martyn and Richard Clopton, the interior of their church was fully restored for Catholic worship. It was only about five years earlier that Long Melford was being actively re-formed for reform worship. For those in favour of Protestant reform, the tables had now turned. It was now them and not their fellow Catholic parishioners that watched their beloved church be reordered for Catholic worship.

No doubt both Martyn and Clopton took great pride in making their sizeable purchases of vestments, altars cloths, service books, church plate and stone altar on behalf of the parish. Other items that may have been stored away came to light once again. There is no record of a chalice and paten being purchased, so it is possible that the priest had continued to use the parish’s pre-Reformation chalice through Edward’s reign, or it may have been sold to a local or kept and returned to the parish. In 1556, the churchwardens of Long Melford paid a nun

33 Hughes and Larkin, Tudor Royal Proclamations, 2: 37.
34 Frere and Kennedy, Visitation Articles and Injunctions, II: 322-329 (Royal Injunctions), 330-359 (Articles for London diocese), 360-372 (Injunctions for London diocese); Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, 543.
35 Ralph Houlbrooke, “The Clergy, the Church Courts and the Marian Restoration in Norwich”, in The Church of Mary Tudor, Eamon Duffy and David Loades (Eds.) (Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 2006), 124-146.
37 Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, 545-547.
38 Houlbrooke, “The Clergy, the Church Courts and the Marian Restoration,” 130.
39 Whiting, Reformation of the English Parish Church, 160.
40 Frere and Kennedy, Visitation Articles and Injunctions, II: 369, 370, quote on 370.
41 Ibid., 346.
42 Ibid., 530.
43 Dymond and Paine, Spoil of Melford Church, 57-62.
It is possible that these were pre-Reformation vestments that were retained during Edward’s reign, and were either stored away or had remained in use.

Plate 6: Long Melford, Suffolk, tomb of John Clopton, looking from the chancel (July 2011).
Author’s own photograph

Perhaps the most interesting purchases of all at Long Melford are the images and objects of devotion that were replaced. In 1554, Martyn and Clopton made a part payment of 2s. to replace the Easter Sepulchre. The Easter Sepulchre, ‘finely garnished,’ was located on the north side of the chancel on top of the tomb of John Clopton (plate 6). This replacement suggests that it was either removed or destroyed by iconoclasts during Edward’s reign. Such an act would have been a very bold move by Protestant reformers. If the Easter Sepulchre was destroyed, it would have simultaneously challenged both the most sacred event on the church calendar, being Easter, and one of the most powerful families in Long Melford, the Clopton family. Thus the restoration of the Easter Sepulchre reinstated both this sacred event into the liturgical life of the church, as well as the influence of the Clopton family in shaping the collective faith experience of the parish. The year 1555 saw a part payment of 11d. for ‘wasshyng of the ymages.’ We know that during Edward’s reign, the parish paid for whitewashing the walls in the church and chancel. This payment for the washing of the images may have been a payment to remove the whitewash. A year later, in 1556, the churchwardens paid 9s. ‘for making of the ymags of Marye and John.’ It is highly likely that these were to flank the rood, a large three-dimensional crucified Christ, which was also made this year at a cost of 9s. 10d. Prior to the Reformation, the rood was located in the centre of the roodscreen and was one of the most dominant images within the church. Like the Easter Sepulchre, the rood was ceremoniously veiled and unveiled during Easter. Thus its restoration made a profound symbolic statement that Catholicism had returned to the parish.

Not only were images restored in Long Melford but English scripture texts were also removed. The churchwardens paid 8s. 4d. in 1555 ‘for puttyng owte the vayn scrybylyng upon the churche walles’ and ‘for puttyng owte the scripture upon the roodelofte.’ Perhaps the 1555 visitation articles for the diocese of London that stipulated this directive influenced Long Melford. Churches were required to whitewash over the English scripture texts on their walls. Yet the inclusion of the phrase ‘vayn scryblyng’ strongly suggests that Martyn and Clopton, at least, enjoyed this moment of Catholic restoration as they carried out their own version of iconoclasm. At the same time, this iconoclastic act may have been keenly felt by those who were committed to the Protestant faith. This same year saw the burning of one of their own from Long Melford, Roger Coo, in the

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44 Ibid., 62.
46 Whiting, Reformation of the English Parish Church, 104; Dymond and Paine, Spoil of Melford Church, 4.
47 Dymond and Paine, Spoil of Melford Church, 59.
48 Ibid., 60.
49 Ibid., 2, 60, 61.
51 Ibid., 60.
Like Long Melford, the parishioners of Boxford had proven themselves committed to the Reformation under Edward VI, and had reordered their church accordingly. When Mary came to the throne in 1553, the parish was resigned, for the most part, to comply. Under the leadership of its churchwardens and their parson, the parish now faced the financial reality of having to re-furbish its church for Catholic worship. However, the task of reordering their church for Catholic worship may also have created some tension within the parish. Unlike Long Melford, the complete reordering of the parish church in Boxford for Catholic worship was not a likely probability. The parish no longer had funds from traditional collective fundraising events, such as church ales, to finance the maintenance of the church.\(^{53}\) The last church ale was held in 1546 and there was a gathering for Plough Monday in 1547.\(^{54}\) This parish did not hold a church ale or corporate gathering until 1560 when they held an impressive six ales and collected a total of £4 11s. 3d. Yet in 1561 Boxford held only two church ales.

In 1554, the churchwardens, Richard Brond and William Coe, purchased the required new vestments, service books and plate, including a paten.\(^{55}\) Interestingly, no purchase was made for a new altar. So it is possible that the pre-Reformation altar had been hidden during Edward’s reign by those faithful to Catholicism and restored to the chancel. Unfortunately the accounts are silent as to who this might have been. Those sympathetic to Catholicism had to wait a further two years before the parish agreed to adopt the directive of the London diocese injunctions to whitewash the English scripture texts that had been written on the church walls. The churchwardens, Thomas Osborn and Thomas Yong, paid 2s. in 1556 for ‘puttyng owte of the writing in the Chyrche’ – a fraction of the cost of writing the scriptures on the wall.\(^{56}\) For at least three years, parishioners were hearing largely Latin services but their walls displayed a different message. The decision to belatedly heed the London injunctions to whitewash the English texts on the walls suggests that Yong and Osborne took a cautious approach in order to avoid potential conflict between Catholics and Reformers.

The tension between the Boxford parishioners who were in favour of Catholic restoration and those who sought to resist it may have continued into the following year. In 1557, the churchwardens, William Brond and Thomas Coke, made a sizeable payment of 20x. ‘for the making of Images.’\(^{57}\) The accounts do not specify where these images were to be placed within the church and what form they took. Yet one clue may be found in the accounts for 1561. In this year the churchwardens, Thomas Whiting and Rychard Walton, paid 12s. 10d. for ‘whytyng the chorche.’\(^{58}\) It is possible that this payment was to cover the cost of removing the images that may have been painted on the church walls in 1557. A second object that may have been included in the payment of 20x. for images, could have been the rood. There was no directive as to the role or position of images other than the rood to be replaced. Yet there is no separate record of the rood being replaced in Boxford, even though it was required by Mary I.\(^{59}\) It is possible that the rood was removed but not destroyed, and its restoration required no financial cost. It does appear that the roodloft was replaced as there is a payment in 1559 of 6s. 8d. for removing the roodloft a second time.\(^{60}\) On the other hand, it is equally possible that the rood was not replaced at all. Nevertheless, this late payment for images suggests that there may have been tension within the parish over the degree of Catholic restoration.

Like both Long Melford and Boxford, the parish of Cratfield was committed to reforming its church for Protestant reformed worship. When confronted with the Marian legislation to reorder its church for Catholic worship, the parishioners of Cratfield, like those in Boxford, seemed to have experienced a degree of tension. The Cratfield accounts for this period are relatively brief, thus making it difficult to know for certain where its parishioners collectively stood. The 1555 inventory gives a detailed list of the plate, Latin service books and vestments in its possession at this time. Many of these items do not appear as purchases, so it is likely that they

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54 Northeast, Boxford...Accounts 1530 – 1561, 46, 48.
55 Ibid., 64.
56 Ibid., 67.
57 Ibid., 68.
58 Ibid., 76.
59 Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, 546.
60 Northeast, Boxford...Accounts 1530 – 1561, 70.
were hidden during Edward’s reign and returned under Mary.\textsuperscript{61} At the very least we can gather from the inventory that there were individuals within Cratfield who were sympathetic to the Catholic faith, even if we may not know who they were.

At the same time, the accounts suggest that there were also some individuals who were dragging their feet back to Rome. According to William Holland’s transcriptions for the Marian period, there are two undated loose sheets of paper, both of which record the ‘fetching of [the] table [that] is at [the] altar from [the] vycarage beame’ and drink for those that “set [it]” at a cost of 6d. Both of these loose sheets also record a payment of 2s. to the ‘stayner for making of [the] Roode,’ and a payment of 12d. to one George Rowse ‘for making of a pully for [the raising up and down of the] Sacrament’.\textsuperscript{62} Holland, I believe, correctly dates these undated documents to Mary’s reign. But puzzlingly, he has inserted one sheet under the year 1553 and another under the year 1557. The question as to whether the payments were made in 1553 or 1557 is substantial: a 1553 date would indicate that Cratfield was supportive of the move back to Catholicism, while a 1557 date would show a parish that was reluctant to retreat back to Catholicism. A clue to which of these dates is correct is provided in the accounts for 1557 where the churchwardens paid 6d. “for help to have up the roode.”\textsuperscript{63} This would suggest that the churchwardens commissioned the making of the rood in 1557. Given this payment, it is possible that the undated sheet dates to 1557, thus indicating the presence of a cohort that was reluctant to re-form its church for Catholic worship.\textsuperscript{64}

Granting that these accounts date to 1557, it was only then that the stone altar was fetched from the vicarage barn and returned into the chancel. Eamon Duffy suggests that the ‘table’ was the reredos that was returned to the chancel.\textsuperscript{65} If this is the case, the altar must have been restored at the same time as the churchwardens paid to have it removed in 1559.\textsuperscript{66} The churchwardens’ accounts do not record a payment to remove a reredos, so it is possible that this may have been destroyed at no cost to the parish. Having the altar in the vicarage barn must have been heart wrenching for its parishioners who remained faithful to the Catholic faith. On the other hand, perhaps Cratfield’s priest – and possibly some of his parishioners – was dragging his feet in the hope that all this theological oscillation would just stop, preferably on the side of the Reformation. For him, perhaps, dragging a heavy altar and maybe the reredos back to the church from where it was triumphantly removed was a backwards step.

For the parishioners of Long Melford, Boxford and Cratfield, the brief period of Catholic restoration under Mary I revealed the contested nature of worship within the public setting of the parish church. It was contested because within each parish there were individuals who were sympathetic towards Catholicism and individuals who were sympathetic towards Protestantism. During Mary’s reign, both groups were vying to influence the form of the parish’s collective faith experience within the shared sacred space of their parish church. The means by which that was done was through encouraging or hindering the reordering of that space and the objects within it. This was not just a renovation of nails, lead and paint, but rather of theology, faith and its material markers. Object, space and ceremony were as important to the reformed yeoman sitting near the front of the nave by the pulpit, as it was to the local gentry family who had established a chapel in the north aisle and was coming to terms with the fact that it was ordered to be dismantled. Consequently, the Marian reforms, like the Edwardian reforms before it, became ‘quite literally, part of the furniture.’\textsuperscript{67} Little did these parishes know that Mary I was to die in 1558 and would be succeeded by her Protestant half-sister Elizabeth I. The dust had yet to settle on the floor of the parish church and any possible tensions had yet to be resolved. Consequently, no one could foresee what brand of faith would ultimately prevail, and the spiritual goal of ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism’ was yet to become a reality.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{61} Holland, \textit{Cratfield...Accounts}, 46-7.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 83, 85.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 85.
\textsuperscript{65} Duffy, \textit{Stripping of the Altars}, 569.
\textsuperscript{66} Holland, \textit{Cratfield...Accounts}, 91.
\textsuperscript{68} Ephesians 4: 5 (K. J. V.).