The Chapel-of-Ease:
Symbol of Local Identity and Ambition

DAVID DYMOND

In recent years important studies have been published on the origins and early history of the English parish. A major conclusion of this new research is that the parochial system, while strong, was by no means unchanging or monolithic. The medieval parish was increasingly complicated by the involvement of lay men and women who created many satellite institutions such as special funds or 'stocks', 'lights', gilds and other looser associations, 'obits' or anniversaries, chantries and chapels. Each chapel, for example, represented considerable initiative and investment by an individual, family or group of neighbours. Its foundation meant not only the erection and liturgically correct furnishing of a building, but also the financial support of a priest who could perform masses and say the divine office.

Chapels abounded in medieval England and may have outnumbered parish churches. One modern historian claims that they were almost as numerous as nonconformist chapels in the nineteenth century. Many were short-lived; others have survived until modern times. Chapels also varied considerably in their original purposes whether public, private or a mixture of the two. To categorise them historians have used labels such as 'manorial', 'demesne', 'cult', 'chuchyard', 'wayside', 'bridge', 'free', 'hamlet', 'dependent' and 'parochial'. This limited study concentrates on one group which from the early 1500s became known as 'chapels-of-ease'. Throughout the middle ages they were created for the 'ease' or convenience of parishioners who lived distant from a parish church, or for those within a town who sought more choice and differentiation. In practice, therefore, the distance between such a chapel and its mother church varied from a few yards to twenty miles or more, and socio-economic factors could be


as important as geographical. A case could be made for creating a chapel-of-ease wherever the journey to a parish church seemed too long and time-consuming, or too arduous in rugged or marshy terrain; or wherever new developments strained the traditional monopoly of a parish church.4

Chapels-of-ease were commonplace in northern and western England, where parishes tended to be large and many inhabitants lived in small hamlets and isolated farmsteads. As a result the outer zones of such parishes were frequently subdivided into chapelries, townships and other units. For example, Lancashire had fifty-eight parishes containing over a hundred dependent chapellies. Over England generally, medieval chapels-of-ease were often associated with new or rapidly growing communities. Some arose in rural areas, especially where new farmland was being won from marsh, forest or moorland, and others were built in market centres, emerging towns, ports and new suburbs. All these places had expanding populations and growing wealth which unbalanced the old parochial structure, and stimulated a demand for additional places of worship.5

To have a chapel of this kind meant that groups of neighbours could hear mass nearer their homes on Sundays, most feast-days and perhaps the occasional weekday. On the other hand, they had to accept severe limitations because bishops, when licensing chapels, assiduously protected the status of the mother church and the income of its incumbent. Although licences (recorded in bishops' registers) varied in detail, the inhabitants of new chapellies had to pay their tithes and other dues to the incumbent as before, were usually expected to attend the parish church on major festivals, and frequently had to go to church for personal services such as baptism and burial.

Such restrictions, however, were not necessarily permanent. Over time, subordinate chapellies might win new privileges and offer wider religious benefits. They might, for instance, get the right to baptise, which meant installing a font. Or they might acquire the right of burial and consecrate a graveyard. Sometimes this applied only to the poor, and richer inhabitants had still to be buried at the church.6 To support a priest, glebeland might be allowed, or the right to retain locally gathered alms, fees and tithes. Furthermore, the great majority of chapels-of-ease survived the Reformation unscathed. The Act of 1547, which dissolved other features of the parish such as chantries and gilds, exempted those chapels 'ordained for the ease of the people dwelling distant from the parish church'.7 At various dates before and after the Reformation,

7 Statutes of the Realm, IV, Pt 1, London 1819, 1963, p. 28.
many chapels-of-ease, legally or by stealth, became parish churches with all normal privileges. But it could take centuries to gain full freedom, and some chapelries have remained subordinate to this day.8

The significance of these chapels, beyond mere convenience, is still debatable. Gervase Rosser argues that they were not created in 'an atmosphere of freedom' and do not represent 'wholesale secession from the parish'. Only occasionally, he suggests, should chapels-of-ease be seen as part of a drive for political independence and identity. Rather they were 'a diversification and enrichment of opportunities to exercise a degree of choice'.9 It is true that residents of a chapelry might still prefer to attend the parish church, and to be buried there, while people who normally attended the church, or others travelling and working away from their homes, might sometimes attend mass at a convenient chapel. In other words, parochial chapels and mother churches were never mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, it seems perverse to deny that a widespread motive for founding, maintaining and striving to upgrade chapels was a localised sense of identity, pride and independence. Within the medieval English parish, as Katherine French and R.N. Swanson have shown, we must surely expect not only diversity and choice, but also rivalries and tensions which could generate separatist ambitions.10

An East Anglian example

In south Suffolk the adjacent communities of Nayland and Stoke-by-Nayland, one and a half miles apart, illustrate well the uneasy and shifting relationship that might exist for centuries between a chapelry and its mother parish. Nayland, the name of which means 'at the island', lies mainly on a low ridge between two arms of the River Stout.11 Stoke, whose name probably means 'holy place', was a hilltop settlement which by the tenth century contained a monastery under powerful aristocratic patronage.12 Around it extended a large parish that included outlying hamlets such as Withernash, Thorington and Nayland itself (map 1). At the time of the Norman Conquest, both communities belonged to an Anglo-Danish magnate called Swein of Essex. Stoke had a recorded population of seventy-seven and Nayland was already showing economic potential with thirty-two.13

8 Kumin, Shaping, pp. 174—79.
11 For the place-name, M. Gelling, Place-Names in the Landscape, London and Melbourne, 1984, p. 40. The northern arm of the river was later used as a mill-lade or leat (map 2).
13 A. Rumble, Domesday Book, Suffolk, pt 2, Chichester 1986, no. 27.3—6.
The benefice of Stoke was impressively rich, no doubt because of its early status as a monastery or 'minster'. Its medieval endowments, when recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were worth a total of £57 a year, and its glebe measured over a hundred acres. Being wealthy it had been appropriated by a religious house short of income: the Cluniac monks of Prittlewell, Essex, took over the whole glebe of Stoke and £40 of its annual revenue, including the tithe of nine mills. The vicar was left with a smaller but, by contemporary standards, comfortable income of £16.

Sited at a crossing of the navigable River Stour, medieval Nayland thrived commercially and became a recognisable 'town'. It possessed a weekly market by 1227/8, and seasonal fairs from at least 1303, and later became a centre for the manufacture of woollen cloth. Its economic and demographic growth is well demonstrated in tax-returns. In 1327 the large parish of Stoke with its main village, several hamlets and many isolated farms had forty taxpayers

14 Taxatio Ecclesiastica, 1291, 1802, p. 122; Nonarum Inquisitiones, 1807, p. 104.
15 In 1535 the vicar received £20 12s. 6d. in tithes and offerings, but still had no glebe: Valor Ecclesiasticus, 6 vols, 1810–34, vol. 3, p. 451.
16 By 1291 Stoke was distinguished as 'Stokeneylaunde': Taxatio Eccles., p. 122. Stoke's charters for a market and fairs were significantly later than Nayland's, N. Scarfe: 'Medieval and later markets' and 'Medieval and later fairs' in D. Dymond and E. Martin, eds, An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Ipswich 1999, pp. 76–79.
paying a total of £3 3s. 3d., but already the tight little town of Nayland mustered twenty-two taxpayers contributing £2 11s. 4d.\textsuperscript{17} Two centuries later, in 1524, Nayland was obviously the wealthier place: its ninety-nine taxpayers, many in the cloth trade, paid the large sum of £58 13s. 4d. This was almost twice as much as Stoke, whose 117 taxpayers paid only £31 1s. 0d.\textsuperscript{18} Nayland now ranked as forty-second wealthiest town in England, and four of its clothiers alone had moveable possessions worth £933. By 1546 its adult population was said to be 560 ("28 score housing people") which implies a total population of about one thousand.\textsuperscript{19}

The people of Nayland, like those in other towns, soon wanted their own place of worship. At an early date they must have convinced the bishop of Norwich that they deserved this privilege, for the western tower and north aisle of St James’s chapel (the parish church of today) contain fourteenth-century masonry.\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, a chapel at 'le Neylaund' was mentioned in 1281 and must have existed earlier.\textsuperscript{21} These origins are shadowy, and do not reveal the relative importance of lordly as opposed to communal initiative, but from the start Nayland’s chapelry was indisputably dependent on Stoke. This meant that all tithes went to Stoke’s monastic rector or to its vicar and, when anyone died in the town, the corpse had to be carried one and a half miles uphill to the large two-acre churchyard at Stoke.\textsuperscript{22}

The latter practice, however, ended abruptly in the early fifteenth century. On 5 July 1429, Henry VI licensed Lord John Scrope to create a half-acre graveyard around St James’s chapel in Nayland, which was described as a ‘populous hamlet’ within the ‘vill’ of Stoke.\textsuperscript{23} Scrope was lord of Nayland manor and owned the land (and the chapel on it), but he needed the king’s permission to overrule the Statute of Mortmain forbidding gifts into the ‘dead hand’ of a permanent religious institution. So, for a heavy fee of £4 6s. 8d.,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Suffolk in 1327}, Suffolk Green Books, ix, vol. 2, pp. 147–48, 153–54.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{Suffolk in 1524}, Suffolk Green Book, x, pp. 7–12.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{CPR}, 1272–81, p. 465.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} The situation is complicated by the existence of a second chapel in Nayland, described as ‘free’ and therefore of a private nature: first mentioned in 1392 and dissolved in 1546, it probably lay within the manorial earthwork of Court Knoll (map 2): \textit{Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem}, vol. 16, p. 112; \textit{Valor Eccles.}, vol. 3, p. 451; \textit{Letters and Papers HVI}, vol. 21, pt 2, p. 243; \textit{CPR}, 1547–8, pp. 209–10; 1575–8, pp. 169, 234; P. Morant, \textit{History of Estoe}, vol. 2, London 1768, p. 233n.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{CPR}, 1422–29, p. 544. ‘Hamlet’ betokens a subordinate community within a larger parish. Yet, by then, Nayland must have had greater economic significance than Stoke.
\end{itemize}
Plate 1: Lord John Scrope’s grant of half an acre for a graveyard around St James’s chapel, Nayland, 1429; translated in Appendix (SROB, GB 12/1/33). 

the king ordered that the men of Nayland be recognised as a corporate body, which was empowered to elect two wardens who could then legally receive the half-acre.

Although the distance to Stoke was stated accurately, the case for a new graveyard was, as usual, exaggerated.²⁴ It was claimed that ‘in winter no foot passenger can pass to carry a corpse to the parish church ... so that corpses sometimes have remained at the hamlet unburied for six days and more’. This hardly rings true for, although the road involved a few right-angled bends (now ironed out), a minor stream and a steep knap near Stoke church, it only rose 150 feet and was not especially treacherous. One cannot conceive that the route was impassable every winter, as the licence implies. Scrope and his tenants were no doubt quoting an exceptionally hard year, and deliberately exploiting it to their advantage.

Lord Scrope’s grant of the half-acre also survives. It is dated 6 July 1429, one day after the king’s licence (appendix, below, and plate 1). The closeness of the two dates proves that royal permission was a long-awaited formality: the graveyard had been planned for some time, and the two wardens were already elected. Scrope stated that, with royal permission, he gave the land ‘in perpetual alms’ to the wardens who were named as John Joseph and John Ewell. Interestingly, neither document mentioned the rights of Stoke, which were seriously curtailed. No longer could the vicar of Stoke demand burial fees from the townsmen, or expect them to contribute towards the upkeep

²⁴ Pounds, English Parish, pp. 91–96.
of his churchyard. Though no documentary confirmation has been found, it can be presumed that the new graveyard, half the normal God's Acre, was consecrated in July 1429 or soon afterwards. For the first time, the dead of Nayland were buried close to their living relatives and neighbours: the tie between the living and dead, so important to medieval thinking, was now a physical reality.

The graveyard today is a rough rectangle, bounded by buildings and narrow roads (map 2). It lies behind Nayland's triangular market-place, and adjacent to the manorial centre represented by Alston Court and the earthwork of Court Knoll. The double-aisled church (once chapel) of St James fills the southern end of the graveyard, and the great majority of burials must always have lain to its north. But what was this half-acre before Scrope granted it in 1429? Was it an enclosed field or yard easily adapted to burials, or perhaps covered by buildings which had to be dismantled? The most likely answer is that it was open ground, and part of a once larger market-place whose outlines are still detectable in the right-angled course of Church Lane. If so, St James's chapel (then without a graveyard) was probably the first encroachment on that space in the thirteenth century. At various times thereafter, secular buildings appear to have colonised other parts of the market-place, and after 1429 may even have encroached on the western and northern edges of the new graveyard itself. Space in this little town, on its natural 'island', was always at a premium — for both the living and the dead.

The creation of this graveyard had important consequences. In 1462 John Joseph, one of the original chapel-wardens of 1429, chose in his will to be buried 'in the parish church of St James'. Indeed, after the 1420s virtually all local testators refer to St James as 'the parish church'. The corporate community of 1429 had become a new defacto parish (though not a benefice), and its elected wardens, holding property in perpetuity, had the same authority as churchwardens in a normal parish. We should not be surprised, therefore, that by 1538 the two communities had grown apart in religious temperament. The people of Nayland were described as 'well inclined and nothing Papist'; in other words they were adjusting to the Reformation flexibly and with little fuss. Their neighbours at Stoke, where the lord of the manor was that notable

25 The tithe map of 1838 shows a graveyard smaller than today's: SROB, T 79/2. The north-eastern corner is a later extension.
26 Architectural evidence supports this: L. Alston, A Walk around Historic Nayland, Nayland 2000, p. 6. Indeed, the market-place may have extended as far north as Fen Lane (map 2). Many towns originally had larger market-places than we see today.
27 Nayland did, however, expand on the edge of the upland, along Bear Street and Birch Street (map 2).
28 Norwich Consistory Court, Brosyard 287–8.
29 Ex inf. P. Northeast. From at least 1556 Nayland kept its own registers: SROB, FB 64/D1/1.
DAVID DYMOND

conservative, Thomas Howard third duke of Norfolk, were 'not of so good inclination'.

St James's chapel survived the Reformation intact, but its liturgical fittings underwent the usual changes demanded by central government. For example, in 1548, early in Edward VI's reign, liturgical plate and a bell were sold for £179. By contrast, when Mary came to the throne, the churchwardens bought traditional Catholic 'ornaments' including a censer, incense boat and sanctus bell. They also restored the rood-screen and images, spending £1 6s. 8d. on 'the rood, Mary and John, and the James, and fetching home of them'. In 1561, after Elizabeth had succeeded her sister, the rood and rood-loft were again pulled down and stone altars demolished.

Meanwhile an important new body had appeared, known as the Nayland Feoffees. This trust, which may have originated in the 1530s, raised money by selling redundant liturgical equipment and by private donations, and bought back the lands of local gilds after their dissolution in 1547. It received later endowments and built up a Town Estate. Although the feoffees elected their own officers (bailiff, receiver and fen-keepers), they were inextricably bound up with the parish and vestry. They put their income to various secular and religious uses, mainly to education, the relief of poverty, and church repairs. Some of their property was earmarked for Nayland's curate: deeds of 1574 recorded rents which went solely to the salary of Nayland's minister, for ever.

The events of 1429 did not lead to the division of tithes or the establishment of a new benefice. In spite of the town's strong desire for independence and its clear presumption of parochial status, it remained a mere curacy. In 1644, when the 'grave' vicar of Stoke and an 'able' curate were trying to serve both communities on an income of £50 a year, Nayland saw an opportunity of undoing the effects of medieval appropriation. It suggested that two-thirds

31 St James' chapel was not mentioned in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535. In the later 19th century, the chapel was mistakenly known as St Stephen's.
32 Feoffees' accounts, SROB, GB12/3/1. 'Fetching home' may imply that medieval fittings had not been destroyed in Edward's reign, but merely secreted away.
34 Most of this property belonged to one particularly wealthy gild of St Mary: ibid., pp. 226–28.
35 This estate was principally in Nayland, Stoke, Wissington and Great Horkesley (Essex).
36 In the 17th-18th centuries, the feoffees supported a workhouse, pesthouse, several townhouses and two or three schools.
37 SROB, GB 12/4/83; GB 12/1/39.
38 In 1522 Nayland was served by an unbenefficed 'parish priest' and another priest, both non-graduates: Pound, Military Survey, p. 30.
of the rectorial income, which Parliament had sequestrated from the recusant Sir Francis Mannock, should be given back to the clergy.39 Nothing happened. Furthermore, in 1672, the vicar of Stoke refused to perform divine service in Nayland's chapel, and permission was sought to appoint two clergy who could officiate on alternate Sundays.40

Understandably, therefore, Nayland made another dash for freedom in 1715. This time the object was full independence and a separate benefice. The vestry and feoffees voted £20 to obtain an Act of Parliament 'for separating this parish from the parish of Stoke, and also for settling the great and small tithes upon trustees for the maintenance of a minister to officiate in the said church for ever'.41 The attempt must have failed, perhaps because the costs were too high, or because Stoke fought it off. So a terrier of 1723 described the chapelry as still having 'no mansion house, glebe [or] tithes', while another of 1725 reiterated that 'the parish church of Nayland is a parochial chapel dependant on the church of Stoke'.42 As late as 1839, indeed, the great tithes were still being paid to the lay rector of Stoke (Patrick Mannock who had inherited the rights of Prittlewell Priory), and small tithes to the vicar of Stoke who provocatively styled himself 'vicar of Nayland'. In the critical matter of tithes nothing had changed since the thirteenth century.43

The clergy of Nayland took differing views of their pastoral responsibilities. Having a common patron, the perpetual curate of Nayland and the vicar of Stoke were sometimes the same person. For example, for about thirty years until his death in 1755, John White was 'minister' of both communities, and also held a living in Kent.44 In the 1770s John Gent held the two offices, but chose to appoint a curate at Nayland. Another curate, from 1776, was the famous William Jones, FRS.45 Much therefore depended on the attitude of the patron, who might make two separate appointments or leave the fate of Nayland to the vicar of Stoke. Any cleric might, of course, live elsewhere,
appoint a substitute, and hold other livings. These aberrations could happen anywhere, but were more likely in relatively poorly-paid curacies. They help to explain why the townsfolk complained bitterly of uncertainty and irregularity in their 'parish church'.

Nayland failed to create a separate benefice in 1715, but later in the century did succeed in raising its minister's income. In 1723 and c.1790 the living was augmented by two grants from Queen Anne's Bounty, each of £400: the first was invested in stock and the second was used, after a delay, to purchase land. By the 1760s money from the Bounty and from individual subscriptions enabled a significant block of farmland to be purchased. Then, between 1774 and 1786, two benefactors provided property in the town and another £400 of stock, so that regular services could be performed in Nayland church. Such endowments patently improved the curate's income, although the value of rents and investments must have fluctuated somewhat. By 1835, the total had stabilised at £139 per annum, which was higher than most perpetual curacies and compared favourably with some lower-paid rectories and vicarages.

Meanwhile the feoffees continued to support the curacy, though less consistently. By the eighteenth century nonconformity was strong within Nayland, and sectarian controversy made decision-taking more difficult. Legal opinion was taken on at least two occasions. In 1761 a barrister agreed that the feoffees should set aside the old guildhall for a 'minister to be resident', and argued that they should devote £49 a year to help the curacy. Uncompromisingly he believed that the trust, 'now happily restored from the superstitious uses to which Popery had once applied it', existed 'for the church of Nayland'. In reality, the feoffees continued to vacillate and argue about their obligations. It is symptomatic that in 1766 their chest in the church was fitted with six different locks! In the 1790s they 'voluntarily' paid the curate annual sums

---

46 These problems persisted. William Sims, perpetual curate c.1800 until 1846, held not only Nayland worth £139 but also the rectories of West Bergholt in Essex (£454) and West Tofts in Norfolk (£110), and the perpetual curacy of Santon Downham in north Suffolk (£59). In 1841 his total income stood at a very respectable £762. By 1835 at the latest, he had placed a curate at Nayland, and may have lived elsewhere himself. See Clergy List, London 1841, p. 179 (clergy).

47 A farm of 25 acres in Great Waldingfield and Acton, later exchanged for 34 acres in Polstead: terrier of 1760, SROB, 806/1/112.

48 Revd William Garrard and Sarah Quarles, widow: terriers of 1777 and 1784, SROB, 806/1/112. In 1817, Leavenheath's enclosure gave thirteen perches to the curacy: SROB, Q/R1 34, p. 18.


50 Halliday, 'Three Nayland clerics', pp. 11–12; in 1806 Nayland had 798 Anglicans and 83 dissenters (9.4%), SRO, GB 12/3/4.

51 Opinion of Charles Gray, SROB, GB 12/4/10. (In 1902 a Roman Catholic church was dedicated at Nayland!)
ranging from £10 to £14, but admitted that 'some years ago' they had given £25. From 1805 they gave £10 as a mere 'gratuity'. Continuing disagreements led, in 1818, to a case in Chancery which revealed that the gildhall had been sold in 1782, and property meant for the curate's benefit 'could not now be distinguished'. The Master's report confirmed the trust's responsibilities towards the curacy, including a £20 annual grant and income from specified lands and investments. By 1844 the feoffees were paying £38 to the curate annually, £6 6s. 0d. to the parish clerk, and £15 towards church repairs; the rest of their income of over £200 was spent on poor relief and education.

Nayland went on to achieve two other long-held ambitions. By the late 1840s, a 'glebe house fit for residence' was provided in the High Street. At last the minister had a permanent official residence, though not purpose-built. Then, as the result of an Act of 1868, his status was changed from perpetual curate to vicar, and the glebe house became 'The Vicarage'. Two decades later, in 1887, the Revd John Gray built a 'handsome' new vicarage on high

---

Map 2: The riverside town of Nayland, 1904 (based on OS 25-inch map, 2nd edn).

---

52 Terrier of 1794, SROB, 806/1/112; feoffees' accounts, SROB, GB 12/3/4–5.
54 White's Directory of Suffolk, Sheffield 1844, pp. 562–64.
ground to the north-west of the town; the site was given by the patron, and
the large cost of over £2000 was mainly met by a local solicitor. 57 Thus Nayland
followed a nationwide trend, and showed that its former perpetual curate
deserved as much respect as any other incumbent.

The graveyard of 1429 served Nayland for many generations. By the early
1800s, like most urban churchyards, it was grossly overcrowded. The sexton,
it was reported, 'seldom makes a new [grave] without breaking in upon one
or more old ones'. In 1809 the feoffees voted £15 a year for a new site, 'the
present Burial Ground being too small'. 58 Nothing happened, though, until
1887 when a new walled and gated cemetery was consecrated on the edge of
town, on land given by the patron. 59 It too was half an acre, but has since
been extended and is still used today. Nearby are two vicarages, the 'handsome'
one of 1887 and a more modest one of 1970, both important symbols of
Nayland's hard-fought ecclesiastical independence.

To sum up, for centuries Nayland's ecclesiastical status was subordinate
yet contested. It remained within the parish of Stoke and paid tithes to its
rector and vicar, but nevertheless acquired its own chapel-of-ease probably in
the early thirteenth century. Then in 1429, thanks to royal and lordly inter-
vention, the chapel was provided with a graveyard. Thereafter Nayland acted
as a de facto parish with its own 'parish church', registers, wardens and, later,
officers such as overseers and surveyors. Furthermore, from the sixteenth
century onwards the feoffees and individual benefactors, usually local people
of substance, considerably improved the curacy: they assembled an income
from investments and an unofficial glebe of respectable size, and ultimately
provided an official dwelling. Never, however, did they retain their own tithes,
and in total they constructed only a modest living. 60 The struggle against the
forces of conservatism lasted for some six centuries and was won, at least
symbolically, in 1868 when the curate became vicar. 61 Ironically, Nayland
enjoyed only a brief independence for it was amalgamated with neighbouring
Wissington for civil purposes in 1884, and ecclesiastically in 1924. 62

58 S. Slade and M. Syrett, 'History of Nayland' (typescript, 1913–19), SROB, 942.64
NAy; feoffees' accounts, SROB, GB 12/3/5 (10 April 1809).
59 SROB, FB 64/E4/1. Sir Charles Rowley was patron; his family held the patronage
until c.1920.
60 At Stoke, the glebe fell to Prittlewell Priory (see above, n. 15); a 'fair and stately
vicarage house' was sold and replaced by 'a little house in the street' (Tanner's Index,
p. 1385); but the vicar retained his small tithes which grew in value from £60 in 1709 to
£220 in 1834 (glebe terriers, SROB, 806/1/145). In 1835 his total living was worth £294
a year — over twice the value of Nayland's curacy (Rept on Eccl. Revenues, pp. 754–55).
61 In this study, militaristic words like 'struggle', 'hard-fought' and 'won' have proved
unavoidable.
62 From c.1917 the living was listed, again, as a perpetual curacy; the patronage was
allotted c.1920 to the Lord Chancellor and Diocesan Board of Patronage (St Edmundsbury
& Ipswich Diocesan Calendar, 1918, 1925).
Nayland and Stoke are not unique. Many towns containing chapels-of-ease challenged their mother parishes and strove for greater ecclesiastical and political autonomy. In Suffolk alone, at least five other cases of this adolescent-parent tension can be quoted: Botesdale contested its future with Redgrave, Needham Market with Barking, Newmarket with Exning, Orford with Sudbourne and Southwold with Reydon. All save one built fine medieval chapels – witness Needham's superb timber roof and the Perpendicular grace of Southwold – and three of them, at different times, gained full parochial status. All over England, wherever towns crystallised within older rural parishes, a sense of separate identity arose, stimulating the ambition to win new privileges and, if possible, total independence.

Appendix

Grant of John, Lord Scrope, 6 July 1429 (SROB, GB 12/1/33)
[translated from Latin; facsimile in Plate 1]

To all to whom the present letters come, John Lord Scrope [gives] everlasting greetings in the Lord. Since the lord King Henry the Sixth after the Conquest by his letters patent, dated at Westminster on the fifth day of July in the seventh year of his reign, granted and gave licence for himself and his heirs, as much as he could, to the aforesaid lord de Scrope, that he the aforesaid lord de Scrope may give half an acre of land lying around the chapel of St James in a certain hamlet called Nayland situated within the vill of Stoke-by-Nayland (medietatem minis acre terre iacentem circa capellam Sancti Jacobi in quadam bameletto vocata Nayland infra villam de Stokenyland situatem) to the wardens and guardians of the aforesaid chapel, elected by the men living in the same hamlet (custodibus et gubernatoribus capelli predicti per homines in eodem bameletto commorantes eligend), to the purpose that they may make of the aforesaid half [of an acre] a cemetery for burying there the dead bodies of the aforesaid hamlet (ad sepelland ibidem mortua corpora bameletto predicte). To have and to occupy the aforesaid half-acre to the aforesaid wardens and guardians, to them and their successors in perpetuity, to the effect abovesaid, notwithstanding any statute forbidding lands and tenements being put in mortmain, or any other ordinance against the practice, as is more fully contained in the said letters patent.

Be it known that I the aforesaid lord de Scrope have given in pure and perpetual alms to John Joseph and John Ewell, wardens and guardians of the aforesaid chapel, elected in the aforesaid form by the men of the hamlet aforesaid, half an acre of land lying around the aforesaid chapel. To have and to occupy the aforesaid half-acre to the aforesaid wardens and guardians, to them and their successors in perpetuity, to

63 While Botesdale and (surprisingly) the parliamentary borough of Orford remained chapelyries, the other three places became independent parishes at widely different dates: Newmarket St Mary c.1500, Southwold in 1751, and Needham in 1901. See Heads of Agreement concerning Newmarket and Exning, Huntington Library, BA 987; D. Dymond, 'Chapels-of-ease and the case of Botesdale' in R. Joby and A. Longcroft, eds, East Anglian Studies, Norwich 1995.

64 In writing this article, I have received valuable help from Dr Joe Bettey, Rosemary Knox and Peter Northeast. Phillip Judge drew the maps.
the purpose that the aforesaid wardens and guardians make of the aforesaid half-acre a cemetery in the form aforesaid. In testimony of which we have caused to be made these our letters patent, with this most genuine seal of our arms. Given on the sixth day of July in the seventh year of the reign of the aforesaid king [1429].

[one tag: seal with heraldic shield, crest and floral background]

65 Azure a band or, with label (Scrope).