The Parish of Wanstead

Graham Dixon & Patricia Wilkinson

Foreword by the Rector

This is the first local history to be published since Winifred Eastment's *Wanstead through the Ages* and J. Eldsen Tuffs' *The Story of Wanstead and Woodford.* It is issued to mark two bicentenaries: that of the building of the first Church School and the rebuilding of the Parish Church.

The authors are most ably equipped for their task. Graham Dixon, now a Senior Producer for BBC Radio 3, received his doctorate for work on Italian ecclesiastical archives; he has published extensively in this field, and his expertise is frequently called upon throughout Europe. Patricia Wilkinson is currently Principal Assistant Curator of Archaeology and Local History at the Passmore Edwards Museum; her academic background and post-graduate work at Durham University is in Classics and Archaeology.

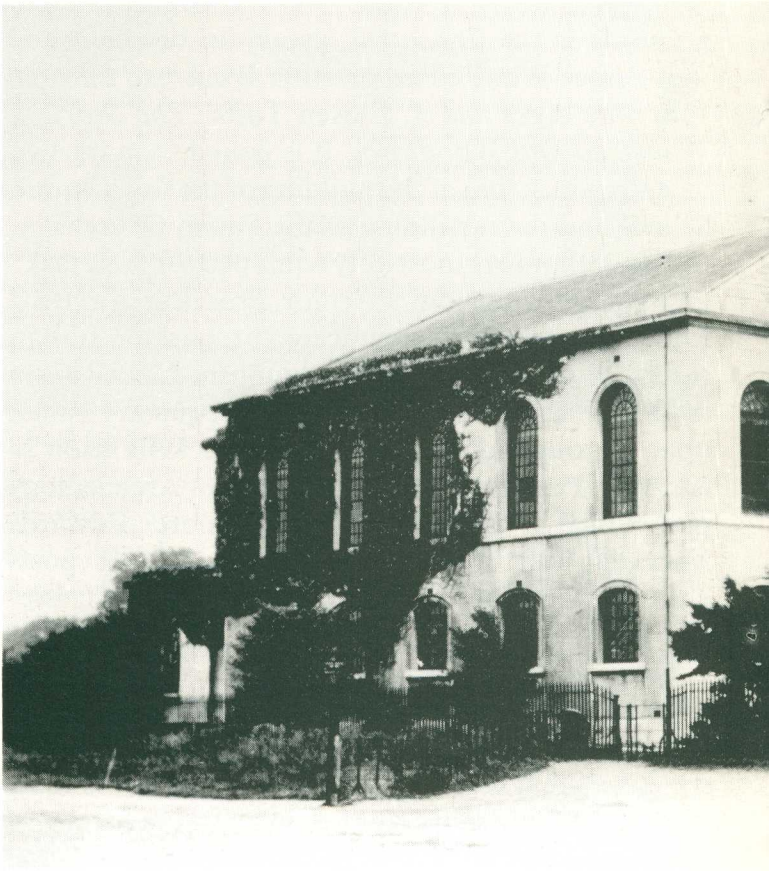
Between them they have written a delightfully scholarly, and yet eminently readable account of the Church and School in Wanstead - a work which will be of great interest to resident and visitor alike. I am very honoured in being asked to write a foreword to it.

V. Paul Bowen
Rector of Wanstead

Cover: The Parish Church taken from Ogborne's *History of Essex* (1814) (LBN)

Inside Jacket: Left: a 1735 plan of Wanstead House with gardens by J. Rocque, showing the church and Wanstead village (LBN)

Introduction



We were delighted and even surprised to discover the extent to which the parish of Wanstead has reflected the life of our country over the past 800 years. Though until the last century it was a relatively small village, evidence of the major upheavals of national life can still be found in the many documents which recall our history.

In preparing this book, Patricia Wilkinson devoted her attention to the school in general and to the present century, and Graham Dixon dealt with parish history until 1900. We are grateful to the staff of the Essex Record Office, the British Library, the Local Studies Libraries for Redbridge and

St Mary's Church shortly after 1900, showing the flagstaff placed there at the turn of the century (PEM)

Newham, the Guildhall Library and the National Society, also to Dr John Physick for information about Edward Blore. We also wish to thank Henry Fuller and Don Frazer for their design work, and Janet Banks and George Collins for their assistance with proof reading. In a work of this scope we clearly are unable to give precise references to all the documents consulted. With this limitation in mind, and in order that the work may be of more use to future historians, we shall deposit annotated versions in the Essex Record Office and Redbridge Local Studies Library.

Patricia Wilkinson *Graham Dixon* *March 1990*

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Domesday and the Foundation of a Church

The earliest mention of the church in Wanstead springs from an acrimonious exchange between the parish and a neighbouring monastic establishment. An account tells of a dispute between the first known rector, John of St Laurence, and the priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, as to who should receive the tithes of the manor of Cann Hall. Wanstead lost the argument, and the priory received the appropriate amount of grain from 1208 onwards.

The rector, John of St Laurence, was a canon of St Paul's Cathedral: before December 1192 he became Prebend of St Pancras, a position which he held until his death in 1224 or 1225. The connection with the mother-church of London is interesting in view of the Domesday entry on Wanstead, compiled in the 1080s. Despite the fact that no church is mentioned in Wanstead at this stage, Domesday still notes that St Paul's - presumably the bishop, rather than the canons - had an interest in the land. The manor, consisting of one hide, was held from the bishop by Ralph, son of Brian. The statistics of the manor record a total of three villagers and eight smallholders. The area, valued at forty shillings, is made up of woodland - sufficient to support 300 swine - on which are situated a mill and a salt-house.

Documents from the earliest years of the 13th century make reference to a vicar, who presumably assumed the 'cure of souls' in the parish, leaving John of St Laurence free for more weighty ecclesiastical duties in London. But a census taken in about 1250 notes that there was no vicar; this points towards the fact that the rector himself had taken up residence. Were it not for the long-running dispute over tithes, even less would be known about the early rectors: a certain Bernard, as vicar, witnessed another settlement to the same dispute, while during the incumbency of Roelanus, rector from at least 1259 until at least 1276, the same case was heard by the papal legate, the Archdeacon of Leicester. Such appeals against the decision seem to have continued until the early 16th century, and the authorities invariably seem to have ruled against Wanstead's entitlement to receive the tithes.

The right to choose the incumbent of the parish was among the privileges of the manor: in 1208, when we are first aware of the existence of a church, the advowson, or right of patronage, was held by Ralph of Hesdin or Hosdeng, whose father, Hugh, seems to have acquired the tenancy of the entire manor of Wanstead. From this date one can trace the descent of the advowson through the Hesdin family to the Huntercombe family in the late 13th century. One of the Huntercombes, Sir John, who died in 1368, was commemorated in the former parish church by a tomb in the chancel: this ancient memorial now lies in the open air, and has been rendered illegible by the weather, but an 18th-century historian noted its existence and the prayer for mercy which it bore.

The earliest years of Wanstead's ecclesiastical history contain no hint of its eventual importance in its royal period: at the end of the 13th century it was one of the poorest livings in Essex, and it would not have attracted clergy who were to achieve any lasting place in church history. All we can imagine is that these priests continued to administer the sacraments and teach the people with varying degrees of competence over the course of the centuries. But historical documents leave us no trace of this continuing activity, only a list of names.

Wanstead begins to take a more substantial place in history when the manor and the right to appoint to the parish passed into royal hands in the late 15th century. After some complex transfers of the manor between the families of Tatersal and Rous during the 15th century, the last member of the Tatersal family, the widow Amy - or Anne - sold the manor to Henry VII in 1499 for £360. In the same year the rector, William Lownd, died and the king appointed David Glynne to the living on October 2. As the 16th century began, Wanstead was poised to take a more substantial role in national events, and its documented history becomes considerably richer. For the next 150 years monarchs and their courtiers were frequent visitors to Wanstead, and the vicissitudes of the ownership of both manor and rectory enable us to follow closely the religious turmoil of the times.

Under Henry VII the manor of Wanstead became a favoured venue for the royal hunt, and the park was enclosed. A succession of keepers was appointed from the king's associates, including from 1512 Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, whose role at the Reformation was to put down the popular Yorkshire and Lincolnshire risings, which were fundamentally religious in nature. But not all keepers of the manor were equally prepared to acquiesce in the face of the religious changes. The family name of Sir John Heron was until recently remembered through the presence of that bird on the borough's coat-of-arms. Though Sir John had probably died in 1525, it is through the surviving Herons that we can see a vignette of the effects of the Reformation on a devout English family. Sir John had been Treasurer of the Chamber to Henry VIII, and the will of his widow, Margaret, dating from 1532, gives an insight into the piety of the time, and the benefactions which issued from her devout attitude. Margaret, using a version of the standard formula, bequeaths her soul to 'allmyghty god, the ffather of hevyne, my creatore and maker, saviour of all the worlde, and to our blessed lady, sainte Mary, the most glorious virgin his mother, and to all the glorious companny of hevyne'. Not only does she make a donation to the church of Hackney, where she died, for the saying of Mass for her soul during the year after her death, but she also leaves fine material for the making of vestments for several churches. To the image of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk she leaves 'a flowre of golde sett with iij (3) diamondes, a rubye, and iij (3) peerles'; this gift from Wanstead's leading family must have been among the last benefactions which Our Lady of Walsingham received before the Reformation, for in 1538 the priory was dissolved, various of the religious who protested were martyred, and the image itself was burned in Chelsea.

In Wanstead, too, the first effects of the Reformation were felt: an archival document implies that one John Churchman had, until the year from Michaelmas 1535, maintained a light burning in the church; from then on it was no longer necessary. And in 1552, under Edward VI, an inventory was made of the

liturgical artifacts belonging to the church prior to their sale: some of the document is illegible, but it is clear that the church possessed a gilded chalice; a cope of white satin; two chasubles (one of red damask with a green cross, and the other of Turkish silk with a white cross); three bells; a bible and a table cloth. Other church plate had been sold earlier in the same reign, as well as a large amount of candle wax, brass, banners, vestments and altar hangings.

But there were yet more dramatic upheavals: Giles Heron, the heir to Sir John, had succeeded to the manor of Wanstead, but within a short space of time the estate was confiscated by the king, since Heron was, like his father-in-law, Sir Thomas More, not prepared to accept the spiritual supremacy of the English crown. Giles Heron and his wife Cecilia forfeited their lands; Sir Thomas was executed in 1535 and Heron himself met the same end at Tyburn some five years later. For the next hundred years, the history of Wanstead is an account of the owners of the manor and their relationship to the crown.

Ironically enough, the manor of Wanstead eventually passed into the hands of one of Thomas More's chief accusers, Sir - later Lord - Richard Rich, who had professed himself a friend in order to be taken into his confidence, and acquire incriminating evidence for use at his trial. The lordship of the manor, the park and the advowson of Wanstead were passed to Rich by Edward VI in 1549. As Lord Chancellor, Rich seems to have made Wanstead his country residence, and to have rebuilt the house. Given his unprincipled role in the martyrdom of Thomas More, it is curious to relate that the first appointment made to the living of Wanstead by Richard Rich was occasioned by Queen Mary's restoration of the old faith (1553-58): William Smith was deemed unsuitable to hold the living because he was married. And one will presumably never know whether Lord Rich had any scruples about depriving Smith in favour of the unmarried Robert Wethye. It would be interesting to know whether Wethye would have been deprived himself at the end of the Marian period, but since he died in 1558 the appointment which followed seems to have been an

entirely routine replacement. It was at Wanstead that Elizabeth met Mary, the latter returning to London after having been proclaimed Queen at Norwich in August 1553. They left Wanstead together with a magnificent entourage, and entered the city amid scenes of rejoicing.

Richard Rich died in 1567, and Wanstead was left to his son Robert. But in 1578 the manor was purchased and improved by one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. At this stage in its history Wanstead became a fashionable place of recreation outside London, and away from the immediate cares of court life. In the year he acquired Wanstead, Leicester contracted a bigamous marriage with Letitia Devereux, the widow of the Earl of Essex. Also in 1578 he entertained the Queen there with the performance of a masque, *The May Lady*, specially written for the occasion by his nephew, the poet Sir Philip Sidney. It seems that Sidney may have been further involved in the cultural circle centred on Wanstead, since a song by the leading Elizabethan composer and lutenist, John Dowland (1563-1625), talks of the solace to be found in the woods at Wanstead. *O sweet woods the delight of solitarinesse* is a perfect example of the melancholy which was so fashionable in the last years of the century. In its poetic structure and vocabulary it resembles verse by Sidney, and it could well have been written by him while in residence on his uncle's estate. Nonetheless, the poem appears anonymously in Dowland's second book of songs, published in 1600. Clearly Dowland might also have spent time in Wanstead, and it would be of interest to know who provided music for the masque, and whether this was an isolated dramatic performance at the house. Though Elizabeth was reluctant for the young Sidney -'the flower of English chivalry' - to risk his life, he travelled to the Netherlands to fight for the protestant cause against the occupying Spanish forces; the commander of the campaign was his uncle, Leicester, and it was there in the Low Countries, at the battle of Zutphen, that Sidney met his death.

State documents indicate that Leicester was the potential target of a number of acts of violence, at least one of which was

religious in motivation. Probably in early 1587, there was a plot to burn Leicester's house in Wanstead and to raise a catholic rebellion. Whether this is true, or simply scaremongering, is not known, but Wanstead House was not on that occasion destroyed. Leicester himself lived on until September 1588, and subsequently his widow married Sir Christopher Blount. Over the next decades Wanstead changed hands regularly: five years later the couple had done little to pay off Leicester's debts to the crown, and Elizabeth confiscated the property and passed it to the Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, who was married to the widow of Sir Philip Sidney, with whom he had fought at Zutphen. Following his famous quarrel with Elizabeth, Essex retired in disgrace to Wanstead, but in 1598 he sold the manor to Charles Blount (elder brother of Sir Christopher), Lord Mountjoy, who was created Earl of Devonshire in 1603. He died three years later, leaving the property to his illegitimate son, Mountjoy Blount - later Lord Mountjoy.

From the beginning of the second decade of the 17th century there was a steady increase in court correspondence addressed from Wanstead, indicating that it had achieved a good measure of favour from James I as a royal residence. On one occasion, probably in 1612, the king was warned against going there, since the village seemed to be in the throes of an epidemic; the state papers note that 'many have died there'. But that was not to deter James in the long run: he certainly visited Wanstead in his progress of 1616, but in the following year Mountjoy parted with Wanstead in order to secure a peerage. The new owner, George Villiers, Earl (later Duke) of Buckingham, held it for only two years, after which he sold it to Sir Henry Mildmay, whose varied career took him from being master of the king's jewel house to a leading supporter of the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War.

From 1619 onwards Mildmay's relationship with the royal household was close and assured: James visited Wanstead at least three times in the first year that Mildmay occupied the house, 1619. In August of that year there was a report of a spa in Wanstead, which threatened to put Tunbridge Wells out of

A BRIEFE DECLARATION OF THE VNIVERSALITIE OF THE CHVRCH of CHRIST, and the Vnitie of the Catholike Faith professed therein:

DELIVERED IN A SERMON before *His Majestie* the 20th of Iune, 1624. at *Wansted*,

By IAMES VSSHER, Bishop of *Meath*.

LONDON,
Printed by *Robert Young* for *Thomas Downes* and *Ephraim Dawson*, and are to be sold at the Rain-bow neere the Inner Temple Gate in Fleet-street.

business, and in the following month the king entertained the French ambassador there. With the king regularly in residence during this period, Wanstead was visited not only by the members of the court, but also by the leading ecclesiastical dignitaries. The texts survive of a number of significant sermons which were preached at Wanstead Church in the presence of the king. The first was the work of one of the royal chaplains, William Laud, at that time Dean of Gloucester. On 19 June 1621 he preached in the royal presence a sermon - much quoted on later occasions - concerning the correct relationship between church and state: the church was to implore blessings and peace from the state, bearing in mind that Christ was the true peace of both church and state. The sermon was published in the same year by the printer, Matthew Lowndes, in London, and there is a certain irony in the fact that the king was being entertained by Mildmay, who would later be responsible for the death of Charles I. But of far greater theological significance was the sermon at Wanstead given by James Ussher, Bishop of Meath in 1624, in which year the king celebrated his birthday by hunting at Wanstead.

From his earliest days in Dublin Ussher had preoccupied himself with refuting the claims of the catholic church: he graduated remarkably early from Trinity College, and as one of the preachers at Christ Church Cathedral he had the responsibility of expounding the Roman controversy on Sunday afternoons. In the early 1620s he spent some time in London, researching for his work on the antiquities of the British church. During that period he preached at Wanstead before the king: the sermon, *A Briefe Declaration of the Universalitie of the Church of Christ, and the Unitie of the Catholike Faith professed therein...*, was delivered at Wanstead on 20 June 1624, and was later printed by royal command, since James was so pleased by the refutation of the Roman claims which it contained. The text was Ephesians 4.13, and the arguments are worth describing in some detail, since they were answered by a catholic apologist writing from St Omer.

The title-page of Bishop Ussher's sermon against the errors of Rome, preached in Wanstead in 1624 (BL)

Ussher begins by describing Christ as the ark of the covenant, and develops the symbolism of the ark as having no resting place, and of the church as a spiritual building. His definition of the 'Catholick' church is all those who call upon Christ the Lord. He accuses the Roman church of causing the schism, and identifies it with the scarlet woman of Revelation 17, the mother of harlots. Rome, not being content with its position as a 'branch' of the church, had been striving to be acknowledged as the 'root'. Christ, not Rome, is to be regarded as the head of the church. He accuses Rome of excluding the churches of the East from their scheme of things, and in this regard he cites biblical sources on the variety of ministries. Ussher is of the opinion that there is a basic deposit of faith which the churches share in common, including the Anglican, and that this is sufficient for salvation.

Of course, Ussher has the problem that all his ancestors were catholics who owed allegiance to Rome: in answer to this he, rather patronizingly, suggests that previous generations are 'under the mercie of God': though they were Roman catholics in name, God intervened in order to preserve them from popery, and through the observance of the church festivals they learned the outline of the faith. In answer to the catholic taunt, 'Where was your church before Luther?', Ussher replies that his is the ancient faith of the early fathers.

Clearly so tendentious a sermon could not be allowed to pass without comment, and in 1627 a riposte was published in St Omer in France, a town which proved a favourite refuge for the English catholics. The counter-arguments were presented by Paulus Veridicus, or Paul Harris, in his *A Briefe Confutation of Certaine Absurd, Heretical, and Damnable Doctrines, delivered by Mr. James Usher, in a sermon Preached before King James our late Soveraigne, at Wanstead, Iune 20. Anno Domini. 1624.* He answers Ussher's claim of 'brotherhood' with the churches of the East, who also lack communion with Rome, by concentrating on doctrinal differences between the Anglican and Eastern churches. Indeed, Harris argues that the only fundamental difference between the East and Rome is one of

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IAMES VSHER,

IN A SERMON,

Preached before King IAMES our late Soueraigne, at Wanſted, Iune 20. Anno Domini. 1624.

By PAVLVS VERIDICVS.

Narrauerunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, ſed non vt lex tua. Pſal. 118.

At S. OMERS, For IOHN HEIGHAM, ANNO M. DC. XXVII.

The title-page of Bishop Ussher's sermon against the errors of Rome, preached in Wanstead in 1624 (BL)

primacy, rather than doctrine. He paints the Anglican church - rejected by the East - as a pathetic organization, reviled by those whom it considers its brothers: 'You kissing them as friends, they kick you out like foes'. He also notes that Anglican doubts about characteristically catholic beliefs (the sacraments, the Virgin, the Trinity, the indissolubility of marriage) are shared by Jews and Moslems, and therefore suggests that these non-Christians might also make good Anglicans, as fellow doubters of catholic truth.

Harris attacks Ussher's notion of the Church of England as the body which possesses the distillation of the truth held in common by the other churches, Reformed, Roman and Eastern. If the differences between these bodies are analysed, he argues, then the common ground on which Anglicanism claims to be based is very tenuous. As far as ancestors are concerned, Harris claims that the characteristically catholic dogmas were such a central part of the liturgy, that the excuse of an innocent faithful preserved from 'popery' is not convincing. He asks the stock question of where the Anglican church was before Luther, and attempts to demonstrate that before the Reformation there may have been doubts, but no Christian would have been so bold as to dissent from catholic doctrines as a whole.

It is somehow appropriate that such a controversy should have been centred around a sermon preached in Wanstead, for within the space of a few years, and under the encouragement of Mildmay, the church in that area was to adopt an even more extreme protestant position.

During the reign of Charles I a great deal of energy was expended on the position of the communion table in the church: under Elizabeth it was ordered that it should be positioned in the place where the altar formerly stood, and then placed in the chancel when there was a communion service. In practice, little care was taken to ensure dignity in this respect, and Archbishop Laud - seeking to emphasize the catholic heritage of the English church - ordered in 1635 that a holy table should be placed at the east end of the church, and then railed to separate a sanctuary area from the chancel. The order was communicated to Essex parishes at the time of the visitation of 1636-37, but a puritan backlash came about in the 1640s, when Essex was at the forefront of a Presbyterian style of church government. The year following Laud's imprisonment in 1640, all communion tables were removed from the east of churches and the separating rails removed; two years later all altars and tables of stone were

demolished and chancels made level with the nave, so as not to emphasize a hierarchical priesthood.

The parishioners, rector and manor of Wanstead were united as staunch opponents of tendencies to restore to the Church of England an awareness of its being part of the wider heritage of Christendom. In 1641 Sir Henry Mildmay, the rector, Humphrey Maddison, and some forty-eight parishioners signed a document which has become known as the Wanstead Protestation:

I A B doe in the ffeare of Almighty God promise vowe & professe to mayntayne & defend as farre as lawfully I may, w(i)th my life, power and estate the true reformed protestant Religion expressed in the doctrine of the church of England, ag(ains)t all popery, and popishe inovacione w(i)thin this Realme, contrary to the same doctrine, and accordinge to the duty of my allegiance, his Ma(jest)ys Royale persone, honor and estate, As also the power and privileges of Parliament, The lawful rights and libertyes of the subjects, and any p(er)sone that maketh this protestacon in whatsoever he shall doe in the lawfull pursuance of the same. And to my power as farre as lawfully I may I will oppose and by all good wayes and meanes indevoure to bringe to condigen (i.e. appropriate) punishm(ent), all such as shall ether by force, practice, councell, plotte, conspiracyes, or otherwise, doe anything to the contrary of anything in this present protestacon contayned. And further that I shall in all just, and honorable wayes indeavour to preserve the union and peace betweene the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. And nether for gane, feare, nor other respecte shall relinquishe this p(ro)mise, vow and protestation. Wee whose names hereafter followe do freely and unanimously make this protestacon afore written and in testimony thereof give publicke o(u)r names this 27 Janr 1641.

As we shall see, it is ironic that Mildmay, the chief signatory, should be vowing his allegiance to a monarch for whose death he would be at least partially responsible some seven years later.

At the Civil War and Commonwealth, Wanstead church was closely involved in the presbyterian organization of Essex parishes: in November 1645 the rector, Humphrey Maddison, was chosen to be a member of the 'classis' or ecclesiastical assembly, and five years later a church census described him as

'an able godly preaching minister'. There must have existed some connection at this time between Wanstead and John Saltmarsh, the outspoken champion of church reform, who, though living in Ilford, was buried at Wanstead in December 1647. Theologically, Saltmarsh was Calvinist in his thought, and his prodigious production of religious pamphlets contains arguments against episcopacy, and urges apologists to take a tougher stance against Rome.

But Sir Henry Mildmay was active politically as well as in the ecclesiastical sphere: his support for the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War eventually led to his being nominated as one of the judges of Charles I in 1648, though he personally abstained from signing the death warrant.

In 1653 Maddison, the rector, died and was succeeded by Paul Amiraut (or Amarott). And in 1656 Mildmay - with the support of Cromwell, the Lord Protector - presented Leonard Hoar to the living of Wanstead, but neither of these men is recorded in the official list of clergy, because of the circumstances of the Commonwealth under which the appointments were made. Hoar was taken as a child to America by his parents who emigrated there: he became an early graduate of Harvard College, and in 1653 returned to England as a 'preacher of the gospel'. With a title deriving from the patronage of a regicide and Cromwell himself, Hoar was quickly ejected from the living at Wanstead when, in 1662, the Act of Uniformity was passed in the wake of the Restoration of Charles II. Moreover, Hoar was married to the daughter of another regicide and Cromwellian, John Lisle. Hoar returned to Massachusetts, where in 1672 he became president of Harvard, a post he held without a great measure of success for a period of three years. The official list of rectors, given in Newcourt's *Repertorium* of London clergy, simply notes that Thomas Harrison was appointed on the death of Humphrey Maddison, whereas the latter had, in fact, died in 1653. Thus, a veil is neatly drawn over this troubled period of parish and national history.

With the Restoration Mildmay himself was disgraced: he was

stripped of his titles and forced to relinquish his interest in Wanstead, but these were perhaps not his greatest worries. After an attempt to leave the country, he was committed to the Tower of London, and each year on the anniversary of the sentencing of Charles I he was condemned to be drawn through the streets on a sledge as far as Tyburn, with a rope around his neck, and then returned to his prison. In 1661 Wanstead was given to the Duke of York, who sold the estate to Sir Robert Brooke; strangely enough, Brooke was Mildmay's son-in-law, and Pepys in his diary even suggests that Mildmay was conceded the dignity of being allowed to die at Wanstead, though other sources contradict this suggestion.

Perhaps because of its anti-royalist associations, and the various changes in the ownership of the manor, Wanstead after the Restoration was no longer a fashionable place for the court to seek recreation, away from the pressures of the city. Its most important years were already over, since from this period onwards national events seem to impinge little upon the regular functioning of parish life: the round of services, the maintenance of the church structure, and matters concerned with the care of the poor, establishing parish boundaries and the upkeep of the roads. The period in which a leading Jesuit apologist thought it necessary to reply to a Wanstead sermon was now at an end.

Though the parish registers survive from the Civil War period onwards, accounts and minutes are only available from the period of the Restoration: these documents, with all their minutiae, give us a far more penetrating and consistent insight into the way the parish was administered than do any papers from the previous centuries.

The report of a 1683 visitation in the archdeaconry of Essex summarizes the situation in the post-Restoration period. The rector, Daniel Mills, seems to have the assistance of a certain Mr Bruce, referred to as 'curatus'. The list of the communion plate mentions 'a small silver Cupp and patten of silver' and 'A fflagon of pewter'. The church lacks 'a book of homilys, cannons, articles, Acts of parliament and proclamacons

appointed to be read in Churches', and the implication is that when such a book is acquired it should be locked in the church chest, which is to be secured with two locks 'one for ye minister, tother for the Churchwarden'. Following the Laudian controversies concerning the communion table, Wanstead had been left with communion rails at the Restoration, but benches had been placed inside the rails in order that the sanctuary area should not be treated as a place set apart for a special, sacred purpose. The 1683 visitation required the parish to remove the benches, as well as achieving the more practical - and unexceptionable - aim of repairing the roof and replacing the tiles. Perhaps the militant protestantism aroused by Mildmay had frightened catholics away, for, in a county known for its recusancy, only a few quakers resident in the parish failed to receive the sacrament at the visitation. In the early 18th century only one Roman catholic, a certain William Colegrave of Cann Hall manor, is reported as being resident.

The earliest vestry minutes date from 1688, and the concerns are almost entirely secular and charitable: much space is taken up with the collection of poor rates - 12d in the pound - and the resulting payments to the deserving poor, such as widows, lunatics, and the financing of apprenticeships. Each Easter Monday a vestry meeting was held in the parish church, and elections were made to the following posts:

Surveyor of the Highways
Overseer of the Poor
Constable
Churchwarden and his deputy
Six auditors of the Parish accounts

Each year when the new churchwarden was sworn into office, he was presented with the key of a 'wainscoat box' in which many of the valuable items belonging to the church were stored. The complete list from 1692 makes interesting reading, and gives some idea of the liturgical and practical requisites of the day:

A Com(m)union Damask table cloth of linnen & two damask napkins w(i)thout a mark A silver cupp & cover w(i)thout

anyones mark, but marked w(i)th ye Goldsmiths mark
A pewter plate marked VV Two bookes of ye parish acco(un)ts
A Black cloth paule to cover a coffin edged w(i)th black Galoon
A pewter flaggon marked 
In ye font of ye church is a pewter Bason, ingraven 1692. The ffont Bason of wansteed Church in Essex
A basket to put ye plate & linen & bread at ye Communion Table to be kept at ye Church: a long brush A great Ironbound Chest (two ladd(e)rs a howe, & shovell) to keep the surplace, Communion table cloth, pulpit cushion & Cloth in, a spade...

It is interesting to note that a surplice was, as it would be for many decades, the only vestment used by the clergy: before preaching the rector would have made his way to the vestry, put on his surplice, and returned to deliver his sermon. Parishioners were not required to pay to use the black pall for funerals, but there is a curious sliding scale of charges for those outside the parish: 'a person of fashion' was to pay five shillings, while the price was halved for 'an indifferent body'.

A list of some of the payments made by Charles Russell, the deputy churchwarden during 1691, gives some idea of the scope of the parish administration, leaving aside for the moment local government and charitable functions:

For bread and wine for the Comunion att Whitsontide att Michelmas, att Christmas & att Easter	18.2
For scowering the Church Plate, mendeing the Sirplace, Washing itt & the rest of the Church linen	8.6
For a box to gether monie 1:s A locke for a per dore 1:6	2.6
For charges in removeing Poole paid	9.4
For Ringing the Bells, & charges in rejoiceing on 5:th November & on the Kings Birthday	6.-
For Ringing the Bells, & Charges in rejoiceing for the taking of Limmerick	2.6
To James Boseley, Carpenters bill for Repaireing the Steeple & other worke	£14.10.-
To Bricklayers bill for worke in the Church	6.-
To Smiths bill as above	13.6
To Glasiers bill as above	5.6
For mendeing the Vaine on the Steeple 2:s 8:d, Culoring itt & dateing itt 3:s	5.8
For Culloring the woodworke of the Steeple	13.4

The list shows a good deal about the fabric, but little about the

beliefs and attitudes of the parish: it is clear that communion was celebrated only four times during the year: Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and Michaelmas. On a normal Sunday Mattins and Evensong would have been read in the church, to the accompaniment of metrical psalms. Several items of expenditure are directed towards national events, such as the Guy Fawkes Day celebrations and the King's birthday, as well as celebrating the progress of English troops in Ireland. But the parish was not entirely inward-looking: a collection in 1678 raised £2.5.0 towards the rebuilding of the cathedral of the diocese, St Paul's, after the Great Fire, and in 1680 money was raised towards the redemption of English captives in Algiers.

The owners of Wanstead ceased to be closely connected with court circles after Sir Henry Mildmay forfeited the manor at the Restoration. But such a magnificent property was clearly going to stay in wealthy hands. The international trading possibilities of the latter half of the 17th century gave rise to a new merchant class. Though socially Josiah Child (later knighted), would have been considered a parvenu, he was certainly astonishingly rich and influential, in his various positions as one of the directors and eventually governor of the East India Company. John Evelyn, the diarist, remarks that Child spared no expense in beautifying his country seat, planting walnut trees and creating fish-ponds. And Defoe, in his *Tour through Great Britain*, remarked that Child had added 'innumerable rows of trees...avenues and vistos, to the house, leading up to the place where the old house stood, as to a centre'.

Sir Josiah is commemorated in the magnificent monument which dominates the south side of the chancel in the parish church, standing in exactly the same place as it occupied in the former medieval building. Clearly the population of the parish was increasing in this period, and the chief concern during the 18th century was to provide adequate accommodation for the parishioners: this led first to a substantial restructuring, and the eventual demolition of the ancient structure. Before we become absorbed in the building-work of the 18th century, an interesting excursus is to consider the remarkable collection of church plate.

Memorial to Sir Josiah Child by Nost (1699) (CL)

Church Plate

In 1694 there was an addition to the church plate, mentioned in the list of 1692 and the visitation document above, when a silver salver was donated for use at the communion. The anonymous gift bore the following inscription:

Glory. I.H.S. Jesus Hominum Salvator

While this was clearly a generous benefaction, an even more curious incident happened a few years later during the incumbency of Henry Hankey; the rector recounted the strange circumstances of the donation in a document of 25 August 1705:

On Saturday the 25th day of August 1705 A strange Porter brought & delivered to me Henry Hankey Rector... One large Silver Paten, & two large Silver Chalices, finely Guilded, weighing altogether about Forty Seaven ounces...; & with them a Letter from an unknown hand...

The letter read as follows, and is remarkable for its clearly expressed concern for the dignified celebration of the eucharist, a service which would only have been held quarterly at this period:

Reverend Sr
The bearer of this letter, will deliver to you a handsome Present, for the use of the Church at Wansted, in the county of Essex, for the more decent Administration of the most holy Sacrament of the Body & Blood of our Blessed Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ: viz: One Paten & Two Chalices of Silver, finely Guilded; As they are humbly & religiously offered to God, for the service of his Holy Altar; So it is expected S.r that you'l take a Religious care, that they are set apart for that use only. Your Blessing Sir...is humbly beg'd, & also your Prayers in *(sic)* behalf of this Person who offers this mite cheerfully & (I hope) with an upright heart, that both the Oblation & unworthy Offerer may be accepted of God thro' the merits of Jesus Christ.
I conjure you to make no Enquiry directly nor indirectly from whence they came.

Presumably inspired by the anonymous generosity, Hankey himself resolved to complete the set by donating a silver spoon some two months later, and in 1707 his successor James Pound gave a large silver flagon. But this remarkable collection of Queen Anne silver is unfortunately no longer in existence due to

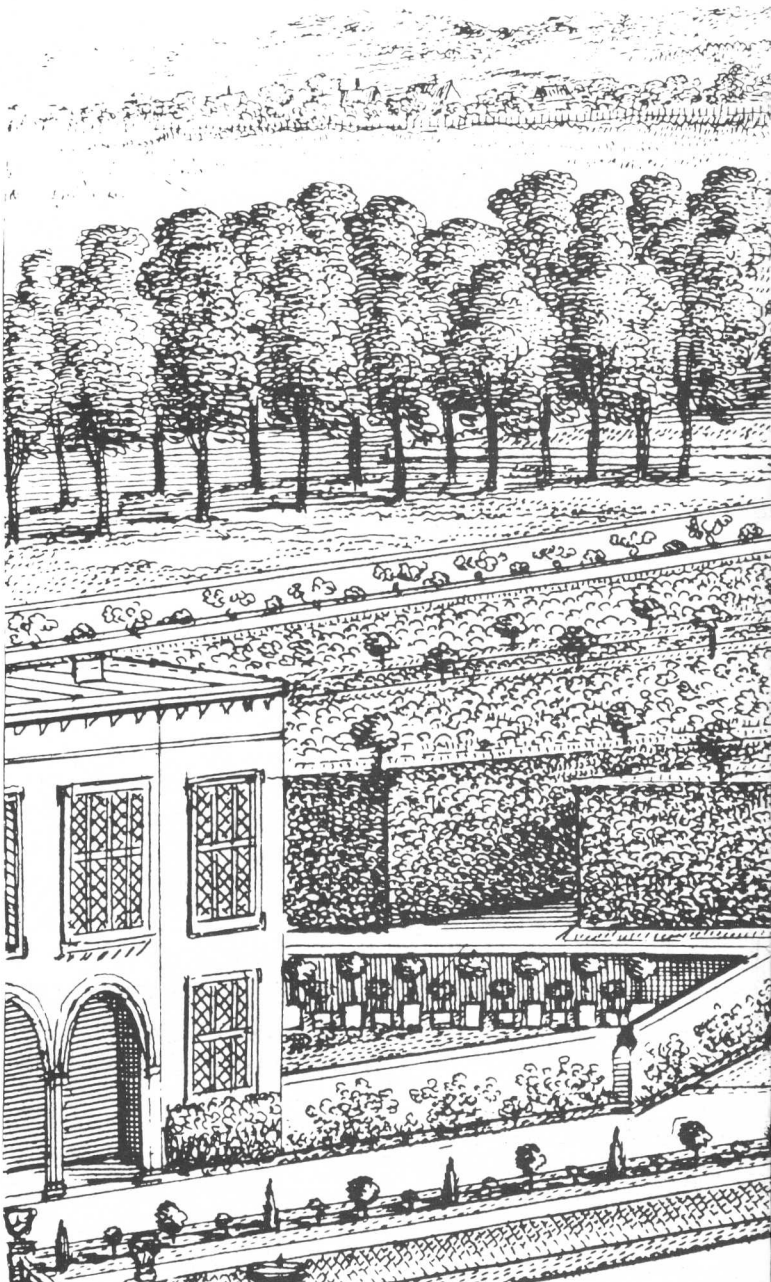
what one would now consider the misplaced zeal for modernity of Samuel Glasse, rector at the close of the century. It is probably best to allow him to explain his motives and authority in his own words:

Having diligently perused what is written in this book (the documents transcribed above) concerning ye solemn Donation of Plate for the Use of the Church of Wanstead, some part of which was very much worn, & the rest stood in need of Renewal at a Time when our Church & all things therein became new; I did, with ye consent of the Church Wardens & other chief Parishioners deliver ye above Plate into ye Hands of Mess.rs Phipps & Robinson Working Silversmiths in Gutter Lane Cheapside London; solemnly requiring them to melt down the Old Plate into one Mass; & out of ye same to make the New Plate, with the Addition of so much more Silver as would be necessary to make

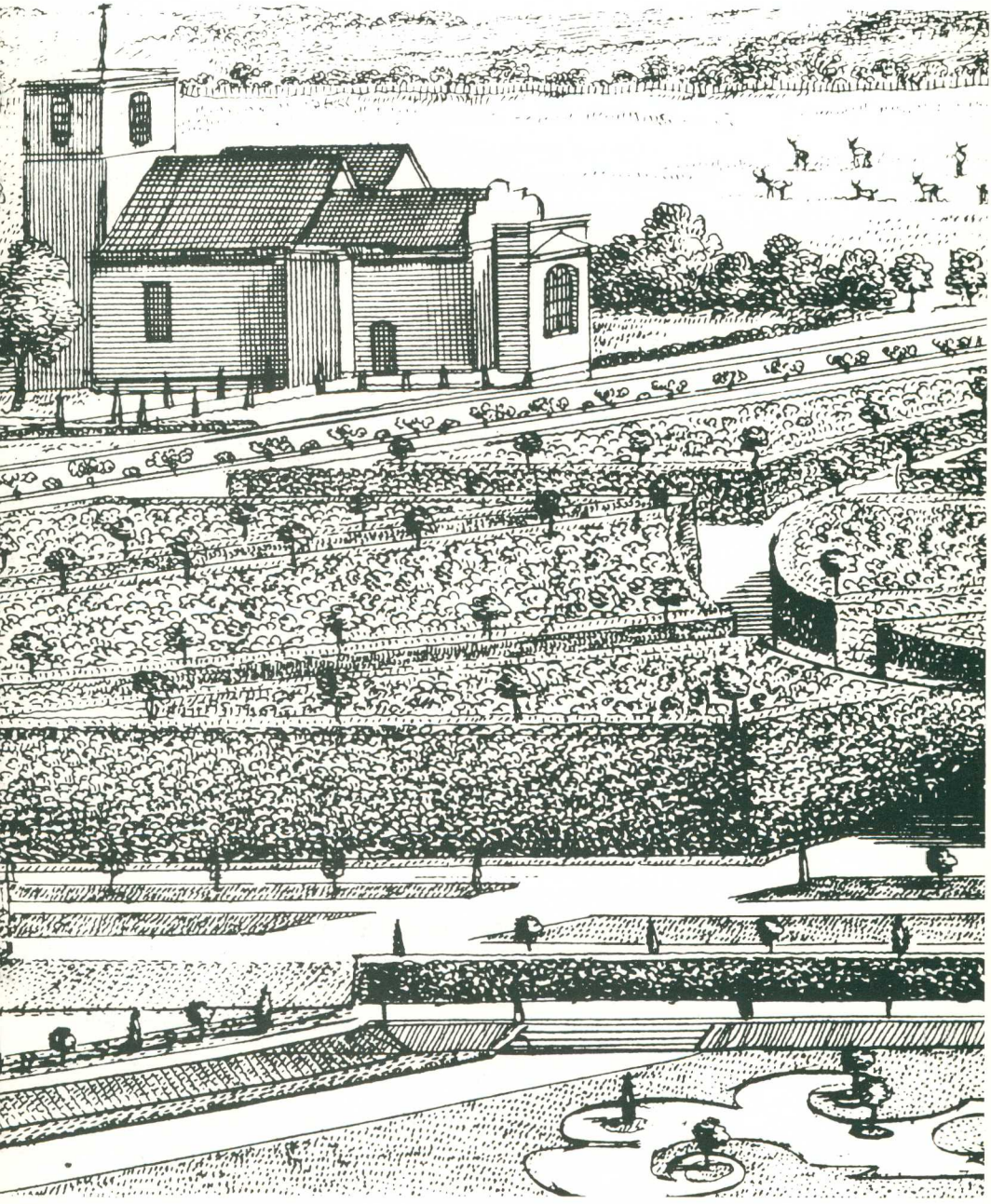
One Quart Flagon
2 Pint Chalices
2 Salvers
2 Patens
1 Strainer Spoon
1 Dish to receive ye same...

Samuel Glasse Rector July 4: 1790 The Day on w(hi)ch the Commun(io)n Plate was first used.

The communion plate of Wanstead resembles that of the parish of Hanwell in Middlesex, where Glasse had been rector until 1785. It was stolen in 1798, along with the communion wine, by a gang of sixteen; six of them were arrested, and the communion plate apparently returned intact. In Wanstead as in Hanwell, Glasse effected the wholesale destruction of the ancient to make way for the up-to-date. But before Glasse devised the scheme of destroying Wanstead church, there were various attempts at preserving the original structure while increasing its capacity. Dr Samuel Glasse was a distinguished preacher with a score of published sermons to his credit; a chaplain in ordinary to his majesty, Glasse was appointed to the living at Wanstead in 1786, and remained there until his death (at his house in Sackville Street, Piccadilly) on 27 April 1812. The period of his incumbency is one of the most active in the history of the parish of Wanstead.



A detail from a print of Wanstead House in *Supplément du Nouveau Théâtre de la Grande Bretagne* (1728)



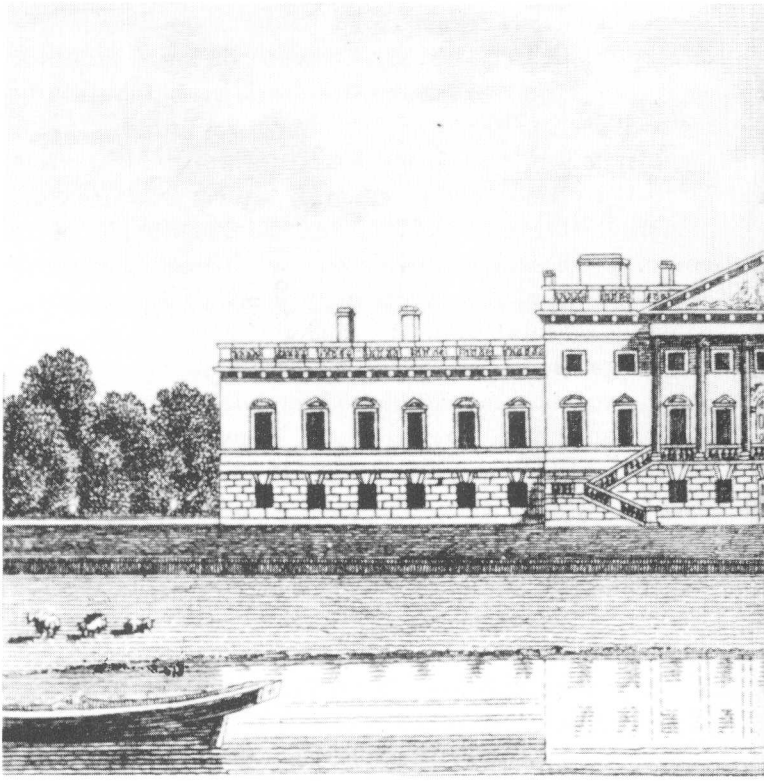
Repairing and Rebuilding the Church

A commission to inspect what were actually referred to as the 'ruins' and the 'decayed state' reported on 1 July 1709. The very way in which the church was described suggests that there was some need for urgent action, and that the building was in a generally poor condition rather than simply too small. The report does note however that extra accommodation should be made 'for all the inhabitants of the said parish who at late yeares are much increased'. It was thought appropriate to remove large pillars between the north aisle and the main body of the church, and to raise the roof of the aisle. In addition the seating arrangements were to be improved and a gallery added at the west end of the nave. For the sum of £170 a local builder, James Allison, was prepared to raise all the walls to make them the same height and thickness as the chancel walls, and to build appropriate buttresses; provide a new roof and flat ceiling; construct twenty-odd new pews; re-pave the aisles; build a west gallery with a 'handsome Stair-Case'; remove the former porch and replace it with a new large door at the west end, as well as building a small tower of brick to replace the original Essex-style wooden spire. There were also to be some adjustments to the windows, and the whole was to be plastered and whitewashed. The price was amended before completion because a rather more imposing tower - 54 feet instead of 30 - was eventually preferred, and the expense of the work was covered by donations amounting to £257.11.0. In September 1710, a surveyor's inspection was ordered by the vestry, indicating that the work was complete.

During the year which followed various other minor tasks were also undertaken: a new entrance to the churchyard was made, in order to match the alteration to the church porch, and the pews were painted to make the church 'all of a colour'. But in this period the major building projects were being carried out not in the churchyard itself, but in the park which adjoined it. Sir Josiah's half-brother, Richard Child, had taken possession of the estate in the year of Josiah's death, 1699. And whereas Josiah had concentrated his attentions on the garden, Richard had a grandiose scheme for the house. Between 1715 and 1722

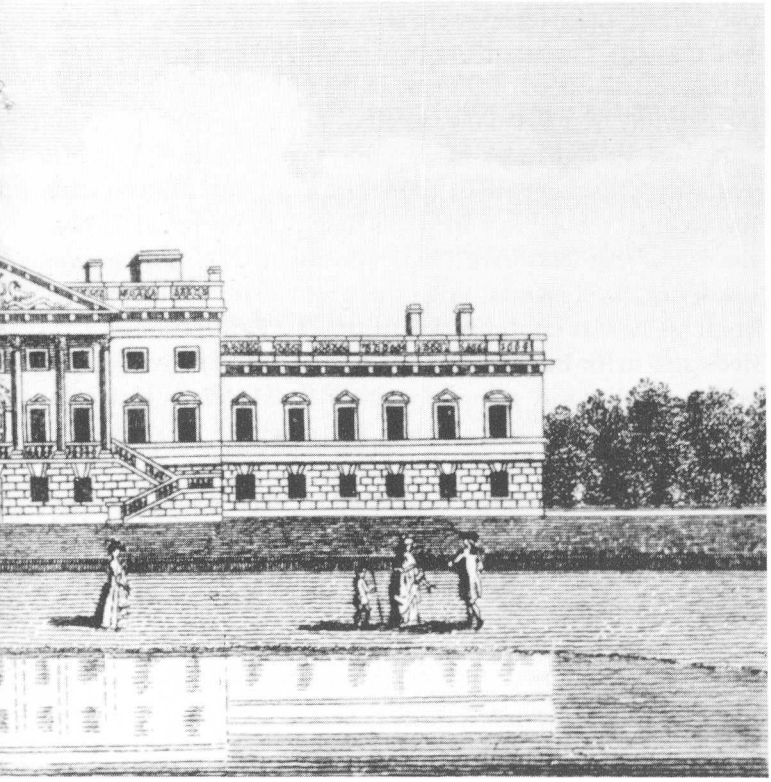
it was completely rebuilt along Palladian lines, under the direction of the architect Colen Campbell: the facade measured some 260 feet, and in its sheer spaciousness it could rival a great mansion such as Blenheim. The house was furnished in the grand style with ancient statues, tapestries - probably from Leicester's period - and paintings by leading artists. Before long the dignity of Child's titles matched the splendour of the house, since he was successively created Viscount Castlemaine and Earl Tylney. This sudden rise to wealth and position was naturally ridiculed, since the family with their commercial background never ceased to be regarded as upstarts. But the house was admired: *The Beauties of England*, published in 1774, notes that 'There are at Wanstead, and in its neighbourhood, several fine seats of the nobility, gentry, and wealthy citizens; but their lustre is greatly eclipsed by WANSTEAD-HOUSE, the magnificent seat of Earl Tylney.'

As well as the passion for building, the early 18th century in Wanstead is characterized, somewhat unusually, for being at the forefront of developments in the astronomical field. James Pound, a former chaplain to the East India Company, was appointed rector of Wanstead in July 1707; not a surprising appointment, since the position was in the gift of the Child family. He remained as rector until his death in 1724, and he was buried in the chancel of the former church. A fellow of the Royal Society, Pound began his work by studying various details of eclipses soon after his appointment as rector, and information derived from his observations of Jupiter and Saturn was used by Sir Isaac Newton in various writings. For the villagers the most memorable aspect of all this activity was the erection of a 123-foot object-glass, lent to Pound by the Royal Society, and positioned on a maypole, which had formerly stood in the Strand. As well as his own achievements, Pound succeeded in training his nephew, James Bradley, in the same science, and after holding a professorship in astronomy at Oxford, Bradley was appointed astronomer-royal in succession to Halley in 1742. It would be out of place here to consider in detail Bradley's considerable achievements; even after Pound's



death Bradley continued to reside in Wanstead with his uncle's widow for some years, and many of his important observations were made from the village.

As far as the church itself was concerned, little of note has been recorded: contributions to the needy continued, including one in 1724 to cure 'a poor Girl from the Bite of an Adder', and Wanstead obtained its first fire-engine in 1729, custody of which was the responsibility of the churchwarden. For as long as records exist Wanstead had been unusual in sending only one churchwarden to be sworn in each year at Romford: in 1719 the archdeacon at his visitation remarked upon this fact, and it was decided to appoint Richard Allison, the builder who had been responsible for the work ten years previously, as 'under Church-warden'.



Wanstead House c1776 (PEM)

The incumbency of Dr David Horne, appointed in 1769, was characterized by two main discussions: who was to pay for the burial of the poor, and how the church was to be once more enlarged. In 1771 it was resolved that the rector should be exempted from the poor rate if he agreed to bury the poor for nothing. Three years later this was revoked, and Horne agreed to pay the poor rate if he received five shillings for every poor person that he buried. The first poorhouse in Wanstead was set up in the 1720s, and it seems to have been able to accommodate seventeen people, who paid rents for their tenements. In 1749 it was decided to supply the poor with necessities, rather than give them a weekly allowance, since the vestry considered that the needy were spending their money unwisely. In 1785, after discussions about its enlargement, the parish closed its

poorhouse, and paupers were sent to the workhouse in Mile End instead. The treatment they received there was less than adequate, so from the beginning of the 19th century houses for the destitute were again organized within the parish.

In 1764 the church was whitewashed and plastered, but this was merely a small prelude to the work of refurbishment and the eventual rebuilding which was to occupy the remainder of the century, at least until 1790. Already in 1771, Muilman's history of Essex mentions that there were plans to enlarge the building; he also confirms that the former Parish Church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. In 1774 notice was given that a vestry meeting was going to be held on May 2, in order to discuss the means of enlarging the church. In August a committee, including the Lord Mayor of London, Frederick Bull, a Wanstead resident, was set up to 'inspect into the Plan and Estimate'; an outside assessor was appointed, and in December the plan was agreed; subsequently a parish rate was levied to provide funds. The basic structure was preserved, but the roof and the inside of the church were repaired and cleaned. To complete the new interior it was decided to purchase a purple cushion and cloth for the pulpit, perhaps to replace those stolen (along with two surplices and the velvet covering of the communion table) two years previously.

It seems that no actual enlargement was made at this time, despite the fact that the original purpose of the discussions had been to achieve this aim. But within a few years, and under a different rector, this would be accomplished.

In 1786, on the death of Horne, Dr Samuel Glasse was appointed rector of Wanstead, the power of appointment having by this stage passed to Sir James Tylney Long, the nephew of the second Earl Tylney. Glasse was to change the face of the parish of Wanstead: though history might judge him harshly for acts of vandalism regarding Queen Anne plate and a medieval church, he was successful in providing an adequate church building, and in founding a parish school. He had come straight from the experience of rebuilding the church in

Hanwell, Middlesex, and lost little time in Wanstead: he was inducted in August 1786, and by the following March the vestry was considering 'what Means will be most expedient for the enlargeing and improving the Church, which at present is much too small for the increased Number of Inhabitants to assemble and meet together at divine Worship'. In the 1790s, the population of Wanstead had reached 825. As well as organizing the building, Glasse wished to organize the people: symptomatic of this was a resolution of August 1787, in which it was decreed that the Lord's Day should, in the parish, be observed without drinking, blasphemy, loose literature, and the commercial activity of tradesmen.

On 12 March 1787 a motion was passed that rebuilding the church was essential, and that a petition should be placed before parliament, and a plan and estimate prepared. Within a few days, the architect Thomas Hardwick had been appointed, and he had drawn up a plan which involved joining a new nave to the chancel of the original church. The new building was to be capable of holding 500 persons, at the cost of £3100; if required, a new chancel would add an extra £320. On April 30 the resolution was passed to build the church near the original structure so that services could continue during the building work; this clearly meant that the ancient chancel no longer formed part of the scheme. The money, some £4000, was to be raised by tontine, a system whereby annuities were paid instead of interest, with each annuity increasing as the subscribers eventually died, until the last survivor received as much as all had done at the outset.

In 1787 Parliament was petitioned in *An Act for Rebuilding the Church of the Parish of Saint Mary Wanstede, alias Wanstead, in the County of Essex.* It points out that the church is 'become much decayed, and is not sufficiently large', and appoints Glasse and Sir James Tylney Long as the trustees for the building, and authorizes them to demolish the original church and sell the materials when the new structure is 'fit for the Celebration of Divine Worship'. The bill also discusses the allocation of seats or pews by the trustees, and imposes a £10

Dr Samuel Glasse (PEM)

First page of the act for the rebuilding of the Parish Church (1787) (ERO)

The Parish Church c1825 (PEM)

fine for affixing any lining to a personal pew or painting it; this last penalty is to be enforced 'for the better Preservation of Uniformity'. The act gave permission for £3000 to be raised by tontine, but rising expenses meant that parliament was asked to pass another bill two years later raising the amount to £5000. The final account reads as follows:

The expense of Building and Furnishing it amounted to	£9,150
Raised by Voluntary Contribution	3,500
By Annuities on Tontine	5,000
Sale of Vaults &c.	( )

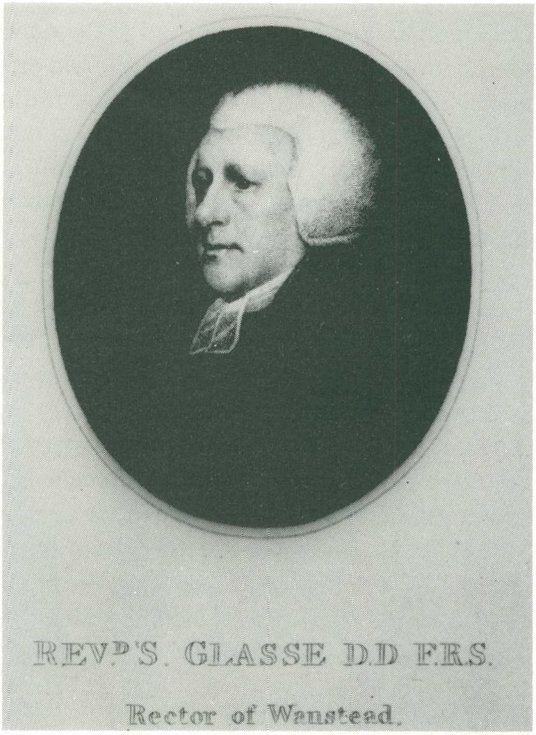
During the latter months of 1787 the committee meeting at the George Inn obtained estimates and appointed contractors, and there was an agreement to provide burial vaults underneath the church (at a cost of £105 to parishioners and £125 to others), and to cast two bells instead of the original three. The foundation stone was laid on Friday 13 July 1787, and as work progressed various practical arrangements were made for the running of the new building, such as the appointment of a sexton for ringing and tolling the bells and digging the graves; and after the consecration it was decided to provide the sexton with a great-coat and hat.

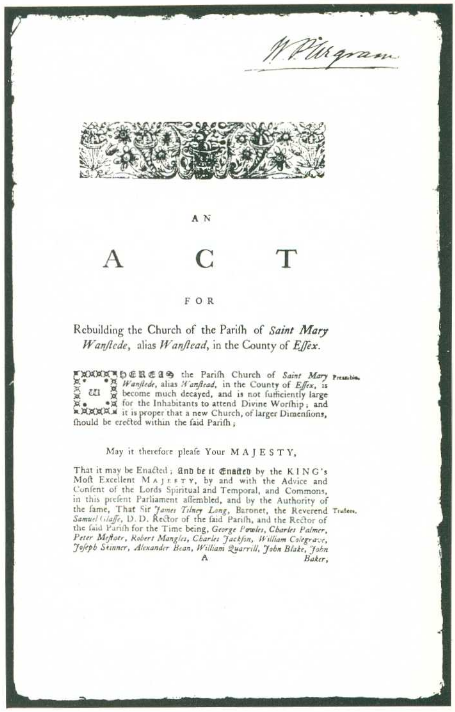
At some stage in the procedure a dinner was given at the George for fifty men, presumably the workmen, at a cost of £6.7.3:

Beef	0.18.10
Mutton	0.10.6
Puddings	0. 7.6
Bread &c	0.10.6
Punch Beer & tobacco	3.19.11

Accounts survive for every detail of the construction works: bricks, bricklayers, masons, smiths, ironmongers, carpenters, plumbers and plasterers. In addition a watchman was paid, presumably to guard the materials at the site.

The day for the consecration by the diocesan bishop, namely Dr Porteus, Bishop of London, was set for 24 June 1790, and three days earlier the committee met for the last time to make final arrangements. These included the





AN

ACT

FOR

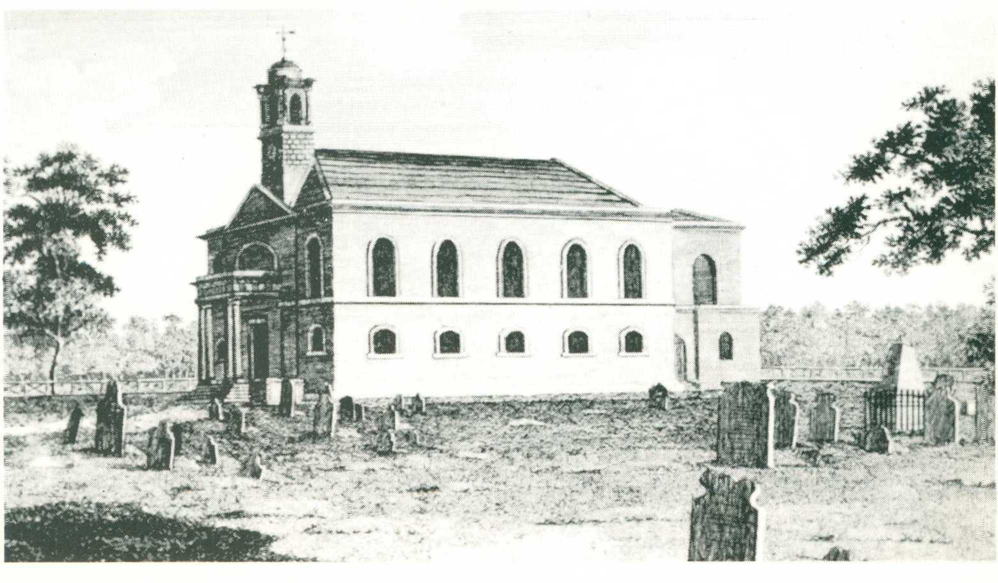
Rebuilding the Church of the Pariſh of *Saint Mary Wanſtede*, alias *Wanſtead*, in the County of *Eſſex*.

WHEREAS the Pariſh Church of *Saint Mary Wanſtede*, alias *Wanſtead*, in the County of *Eſſex*, is become much decayed, and is not ſufficiently large for the Inhabitants to attend Divine Worſhip; and it is proper that a new Church, of larger Dimenſions, ſhould be erected within the ſaid Pariſh; Preamble.

May it therefore pleaſe Your MAJESTY,

That it may be Enacted; And be it Enacted by the KING's Moſt Excellent MAJESTY, by and with the Advice and Conſent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this preſent Parliament aſſembled, and by the Authority of the ſame, That Sir *James Tilney Long*, Baronet, the Reverend Truſtees.
Samuel Glaſſe, D.D. Rector of the ſaid Pariſh, and the Rector of the ſaid Pariſh for the Time being, *George Powles*, *Charles Palmer*, *Peter Meſtaer*, *Robert Mangles*, *Charles Jackſon*, *William Colegrave*, *Joſeph Skinner*, *Alexander Bean*, *William Quarrill*, *John Blake*, *John*

A *Baker*,



resolution that men and boys should be directed to the north side of the church, and women and girls to the south. Old men and women should sit in the window seats. To avoid traffic congestion, it was ordered that 'Coachmen...set down & take up with the Horses' Heads towards Wanstead House.' Maidservants and female housekeepers were to sit in the gallery on the south side, while men in livery and other men and boys were to take up the equivalent position on the north.

A complete account of the service of consecration survives, and gives remarkable detail about the ceremony. The Bishop, attended by the Chancellor, was received at the door by the Minister, churchwardens and some of the parishioners. The Minister presented the Bishop with a petition, which was then read by the Registrar: then his Lordship stated that he was prepared to consecrate the church. After robing, the procession made its way from the west to the east end of the church, during the recitation of Psalm 24. The Bishop then sat at the north side of the communion table, and Glasse presented him with a copy of the Act. Morning Prayer was then recited:

Psalm 84, 122, 132
First Lesson: 1 Kings 8.22-62
Second Lesson: Hebrews 10.19-26

When Morning Prayer was finished, a number of psalms were sung before the communion service: during the liturgy, an extra prayer concerning the consecration was recited after the Collect for the King.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6.14-17
Gospel: John 2.13-18

And Psalm 100 was recited after the Creed. When the sermon was concluded, those who were not to receive the sacrament left, and the door was shut. An extra prayer was inserted after the blessing, and then the Bishop proceeded to bless the churchyard.

At this period St Mary's would have looked very similar to its present appearance: there was no organ for another decade, and the present window at the east end had not yet been installed. As part of the deliberations which preceded the

building, it was resolved that a window of 'painted glass' was to adorn the east end. It was to be based on a picture of Christ carrying the cross, found in the chapel of Magdalen College, Oxford, and was the work of a certain Mr Eginton. It seems that Glasse may have paid for this item himself. It was removed in 1890, and replaced by a memorial window to William Pitt Wigram, rector from 1837 to 1864.

The *Universal British Directory*, published in 1792, contains a lengthy description of the newly finished church which is worth repeating in full:

On the 13th of July 1787, the foundation of a beautiful church was laid here by Sir James Tylney Long, Bart. It was finished in 1790, and consecrated the same year, on the 24th of June. Simplicity and neatness were aimed at in this rural temple, by the architect, Mr Thomas Hardwick. The portico is of the Doric order; the cupola supported by eight Ionic columns. The whole of the external part of the edifice is faced with Portland stone.* The internal order is Corinthian. The pavement of the church, remarkable for its beauty and neatness, was brought from Painswick in Gloucestershire: that of the chancel is of the same kind of stone, intermixed with black marble dots. The window of the chancel is of stained glass; the subject, our Saviour bearing the cross: the circular windows, at the east end of the galleries, are also of stained glass; that on the right of the altar being the royal arms; and the correspondent one the arms of the patron, Sir Ja. Tilney Long. These stained windows were executed by Mr. Eginton, of Birmingham. The pews in the body of the church are of right wainscot; and, in the christening-pew, is a font of artificial workmanship. In the chancel is a superb monument of white marble (removed from the old church) to the memory of Sir Josiah Child. The ground, on which the church was erected, was given to the parish by Sir J.T. Long, out of his own park; from this pious motive, that the remains of the persons interred in the old church and church-yard might not be disturbed, and that divine service might continue, without interruption, while the new structure was erecting.

* The same stone as Wanstead House itself.

There clearly was great pride in maintaining the new Parish in Church all its splendour: five years after it was completed the exterior was totally repainted, including the cupola and doors,

and services were cancelled for two weeks in March 1818 in order to clean the interior of the church. But in the 1790s Wanstead, like the country as a whole, had more pressing concerns: from 1795 to 1798 the British were living under the threat of a Napoleonic invasion, and the Wanstead vestry discussed how they could best assist in raising a defensive force. In 1795 they were concerned with raising men for the navy; in the following year the 'raising of a militia' was discussed. And subsequent years saw 'raising Volunteers upon the Cavalry Act', and a consideration of what measures would be necessary in case the country was invaded. The possibility of an invasion soon receded however, and more pleasant matters occupied the vestry: the erection of a parish oven and bakehouse in 1801, and discussions about completing St Mary's by installing an organ.

But Wanstead did eventually enjoy one effect of the turbulence of France - not an invasion, but the presence of one distinguished refugee, one of the most belligerent counter-revolutionaries of the French Revolution: Louis Joseph, the Prince de Condé, was living in the house in 1809, and on occasion the future Louis XVIII stayed there for prolonged periods, and even entertained at the house. A member of the house of Bourbon, the Prince de Condé was married at Wanstead to the Princess Marie-Catherine de Brignolé-Salé on St Stephen's Day in 1808. The ceremony was performed by the son of the rector, who had succeeded his father at Hanwell; he is charmingly referred to as 'Georges Henri Glasse' in the documents. On his death in 1818, the Prince recognized his debt to Wanstead by leaving a bequest of £50 for distribution to the poor of the parish; it was decided to use the money to distribute bread during the winter.

There had always been an intention to install an organ at the Parish Church, and it would seem that only lack of money prevented this from being realized in the original plans. When pews were allocated in the building, as well as giving numbers 1 and 2 to Sir James Tylney Long, it was decided that the holders of Pew 76 should be prepared to

relinquish it, if at any time an organ was installed. Before long the project came to fruition, and on 27 May 1800 Sarah Green of Isleworth signed a contract agreeing to provide an organ 'in a good Plain Case maid of Norway Oak without ornaments with the front pipes gilt with the best gold'. It was to be provided by the important firm of Samuel Green (run by his widow after his death in 1796); the cost was 200 guineas, excluding transport, and the money was raised by subscription. Ogborne's history of Essex of 1814 describes the instrument as 'handsome'.

An organist was appointed on 5 April 1802, having been auditioned by the subscribers to the organ at the house of George Bowles, presumably using his piano. A certain Mr Samuel Kemm accepted the post at an annual salary of £31.10.0, with the promise of a supplement for instructing the children of the school in singing each Sunday before church. His duties were clearly defined:

> He is to attend every Sunday at 9 o'clock at the School to instruct them in singing the Psalms intended to be sung. To attend in Person Morning and Evening Service every Sunday
> On Christmas Day
> On Ascension Day
> On all days of Publick Fasts and Thanksgiving Days
> To perform the Duty himself unless prevented by Ilness or by any unavoidable accident.

It is interesting to note that there seems to have been no choir, except the school children, and no music except psalms, presumably sung to metrical versions. An organ blower was also appointed at an annual salary of five guineas.

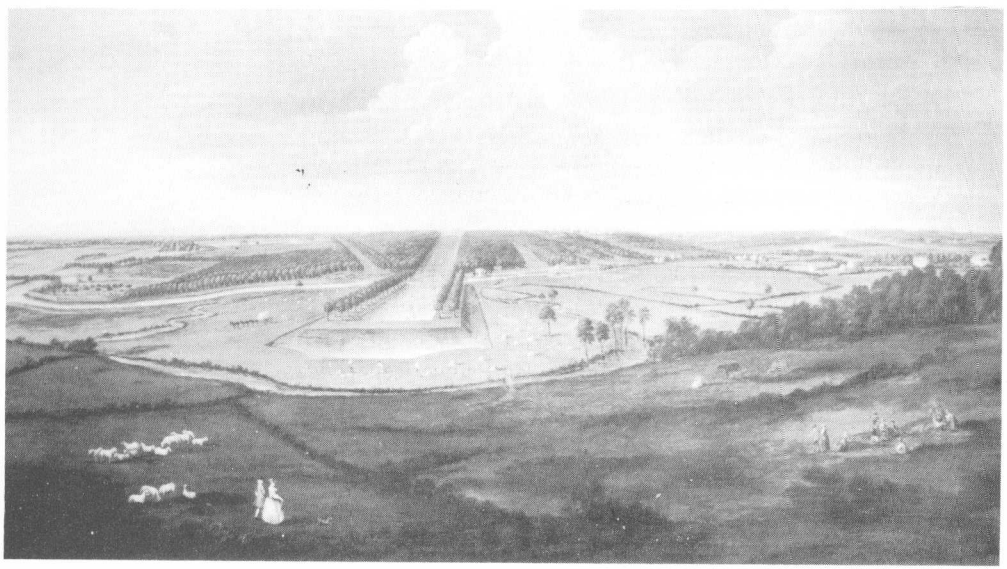
It seems that Kemm soon neglected his duties as organist: as early as 1813 he was requested to pay 'particular attention' to the singing of the children. There were, however, problems on both sides: four years later he requested a gratuity of £5 to compensate him for the travelling, while professing his willingness to rehearse the children 'when they can be found to attend'. But Kemm went from bad to worse, and in 1820 the vestry wrote to him pointing out that in future he would be expected 'to appear at Church more cleanly in his Person, and punctual to the Hour'. In the following year the vestry had to

discuss the complaints of the parishioners:

It having been remarked by several of the Parishioners that the Parish Children sing very much out of Tune. Resolved that unless Mr Kemm pays more attention to their Improvement; that the Sum of Ten Guineas p(er) Ann(u)m voted for that express purpose be transferred to some other Person who will undertake that charge.

The post of organist was re-appointed annually, and in 1826 it seems to have happened only grudgingly: Kemm was appointed 'during his good behaviour'. In the following year Mr James Bates took charge of the children, and in 1828 on Kemm's death, Bates was the preferred candidate for the position. However, he insisted on holding the post in plurality with Woodford, a condition to which the vestry would not agree. Therefore, on October 27, Mr Frederick Morphett accepted the position; he was still teaching 'Psalmody' to the children in 1863. And two years later a new organ was installed by Hill & Co at a cost of £400; an allowance of only £50 was made for the instrument which had been installed at the beginning of the century. It has since been twice reconstructed, by Spurdon-Rutt in 1923, and by Robert Slater & Son in 1974.

'A Prospect of the Park and House at Wanstead, Essex, from the North' by Charles Catton Snr. (c1760). The house is at the top of the avenue. (PEM)



The Destruction of the House

The early 19th century emerges as a rather sad period for Wanstead: in 1822 the content of the great house was auctioned, and the house itself demolished in the following year. William Pole-Tylney-Long-Wellesley, nephew of the Duke of Wellington, needed to realize the capital to pay for his extravagances, and to pay off his gambling debts. The only apparent mention of this dramatic event in the parish archives concerns the allocation of pews: since the house no longer existed, the first two pews had become vacant and unoccupied, and therefore it was thought best to make three pews out of the two so that the parishioners might be better accommodated. The pews at the Parish Church have been little altered since: the high backs were removed from the gallery seating in the centenary year, and choir-stalls were provided. The year before the destruction of the house the population of Wanstead was given as 609 males and 745 females, living in 229 houses. Seventy-three of the 234 families were employed in agriculture, and forty-six persons were resident at Wanstead House itself.

Wright's Essex, published in 1835, mentions that the Snaresbrook end of the parish was becoming particularly fashionable in the period after the demolition of the house: 'Snaresbrook...is a delightful village on the confines of the Forest, not far distant from the river Rodon...: it contains some capital houses, the residences of gentlemen's families; the neighbourhood, naturally pleasant and healthful, has been improved by art, and selected as a suitable situation for numerous elegant seats and country villas.'

But the number of the poor increased too: in the early years of the century there seems to have been a charitable attitude towards them, but as the years progress this gradually hardened. In 1809 George IV's becoming Prince Regent was marked by making some donation to the 'Loyal Poor of or in this Parish'. But within a few years there was real concern at the scale of the problem: a vestry meeting in October 1814 noted that the poor had greatly increased in number in the parish, mainly because landlords had been exacting unreasonable rents

The Parish Church from the south with the Wilton memorial 'Watchman's Box' and various symbol stones in the foreground (PEM)

on new cottages. Shortly afterwards, in December 1819, a special 'Select Vestry' was founded, simply to deal with the problem of the poor. The demolition of Wanstead House cannot have helped matters, since so many must have been employed there, directly or indirectly. From the 1830s the vestry paid the poor to work, rather than giving them charity: exact regulations were drawn up to control labour in the parish gravel-pits, where the able-bodied unfortunates were occupied in digging, heaping and sifting the gravel, while the aged and infirm were given 'light work'. Single men and boys were not employed; rather they were given the option of receiving £5, which would have covered their expenses in emigrating to Canada or New Brunswick. No parish work was given if other jobs were available, and by keeping the wages at starvation level, the vestry claimed to have stamped out the 'spirit of pauperism' in the parish.

Perhaps this tougher policy led to other social problems: in 1830 the parish offered a reward of £50 for information leading to the discovery of the vandals who broke and defaced the stained-glass window in the chancel. The landlord of the George Inn was warned about 'disgraceful scenes' of drunkenness on his premises, which could lead to the withdrawal of his licence if repeated. In 1832 an epidemic of

cholera was anticipated, and the rector took steps to minimize its effects. In about 1830 an armed guard was organized to deal with body snatchers active in the churchyard; the stone sentry-box, a memorial to the Wilton family, was erected in 1831, and still stands.

Despite these problems, life in many respects continued as normal in the period around 1820: the pew opener and organ blower were in regular employment; the beadle was paid for decorating the church with holly at Christmas time, and the usual payments were made for maintaining the church and its grounds. Paths were swept; nettles and weeds cut back in the churchyard; the surplice was washed; the gutters cleaned, and snow swept away. The parish clerk seems to have been allowed a bottle of sherry on the church account, presumably to warm him while he spent long hours in the chilly building; stoves had been installed as early as 1809 but these were only lit for services. Every three years a party of about twenty children was taken to Hackney for the confirmation, and payments were made for the hire of a horse and cart, and for providing the children with dinner at a certain Mermaid Inn. Small changes took place: from 1814 the vestry no longer rewarded the parishioners who brought them hedgehogs - the harmless beasts had been considered by law as vermin since Elizabethan times, and handing them over to the parish authorities had been a statutory form of pest-control for over two centuries. And the cast-iron frames of the church windows were installed in 1820, since the original lead ones were beginning to let in rain.

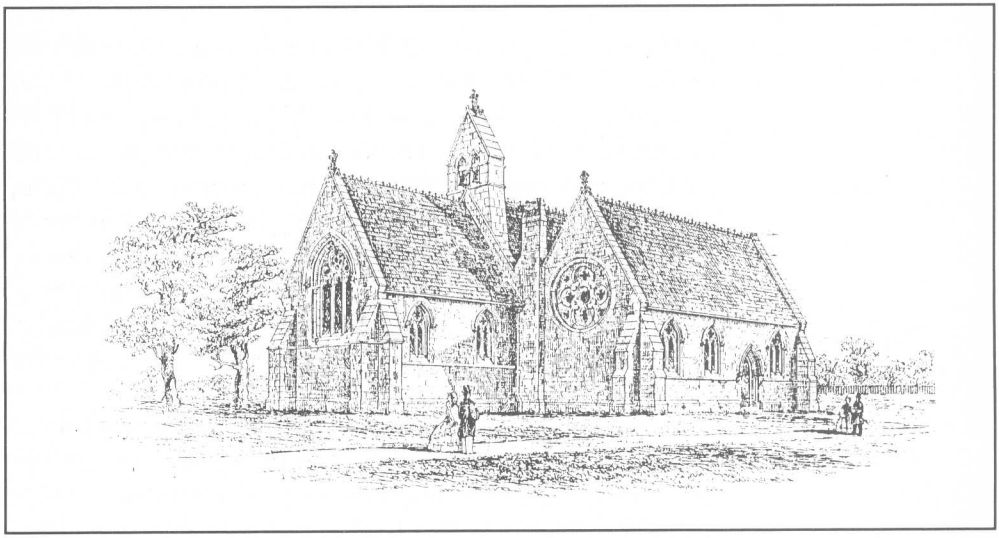
However peaceful the semi-rural life of the Parish Church seems to have been, major changes were afoot in the mid-century which would affect Wanstead considerably. Though the railway did not arrive at Snaresbrook until 1856, the parish was assessing the rates for land belonging to the Northern & Eastern Railway Company from 1843 onwards. In 1853 a certain Mr Downes from the South Essex Gas Light and Coke Company petitioned the vestry for permission to dig up the roads to lay gas mains. The request was refused, since no written submission had been

presented. This problem seems to have continued for a decade, because in 1864 the question of gas was again raised. It was proposed that the introduction of gas lighting would be beneficial since it afforded greater security both to persons and to property during the darkness of the winter months. Again, the debate was adjourned, on this occasion because the Board of Health had received a petition against gas. Land enclosure was also proceeding at a rapid rate, causing the rector anxiety in 1860, since the well which provided the rectory (then situated to the south of the A12, just by the Redbridge roundabout) was to be enclosed in land which was not his own.

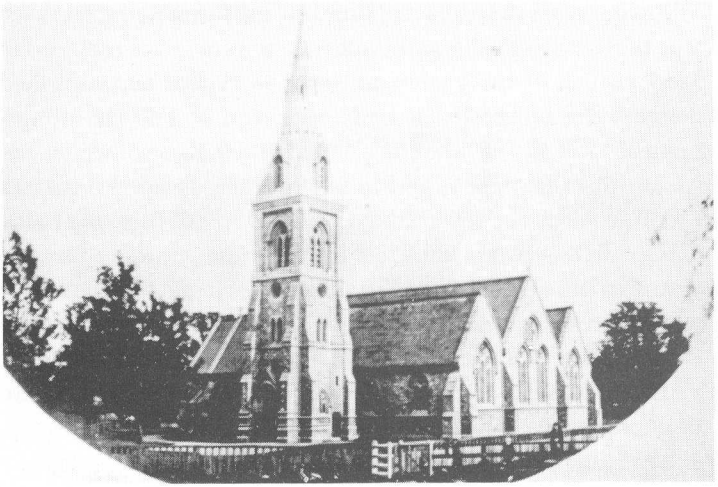
Though Wanstead had for many years been the residence of many city merchants, the easier access to London afforded by the railway led to a remarkable increase in building activity. The 1354 residents in 1821 had risen to 2207 persons by 1856. Clearly the problems of the previous century about insufficient church accommodation were about to emerge once again. The result was the building of Christ Church in the Early English style, to the design of Sir George Gilbert Scott; the site lay near to the railway, an area where the population was growing rapidly. The Parish Church, which had been extremely convenient for the now-demolished Wanstead House, was isolated - at the end of a lane - from the new developments of housing in the parish. The petition of consecration explains the situation:

> ...the population of the said Parish has greatly increased and the seats in the Parish Church have been found inadequate to the wants of the parishioners...it was determined to build a Chapel of Ease in connection with the Parish Church.

The building of Christ Church seems to have been almost entirely the personal concern of the Revd William Pitt Wigram, brother of the Bishop of Rochester, who had been rector of Wanstead since 1837. The Wigram family appear to have paid a third of the building costs of £3000, and the Bishop of Rochester laid the foundation stone on 18 May 1860. Other donations were solicited: in July 1860 a collection at the Parish Church for the cause amounted to £43.0.2 after an appeal by the Bishop of



Christ Church in 1861



Christ Church in c1875 (PEM)

Rochester, and another £29.17.10 was donated in the following year. It is a slight digression, but worth mentioning, that other collections were held for less parochial matters. A fascinating example occurred in 1862, when money was collected for 'distressed operatives' in Lancashire, on account of the failure of the cotton supply, occasioned by the American Civil War.

Whereas many documents survive relating to the 1790 building of the Parish Church, few indications of the

circumstances of work on Christ Church can be found. My own supposition is that the Wigram family must have been so closely involved with the whole scheme, that it was handled as a private project, rather than being submitted to the scrutiny of the vestry. The Bishop of Rochester's involvement was personal as well as official: in 1846 the parish was transferred - along with all the others in the area - from London to the apparently distant diocese of Rochester, and subsequently to that of St Albans in 1877.

Though Christ Church was consecrated by the Bishop of London, on 19 July 1861, the structure was gradually extended during the course of the next decades. The structure as consecrated was a chancel, with the north aisle, and a nave of four bays. In 1867 the south aisle was added, and the church was lengthened by one bay in a westward direction. In the following years the project of building the tower and spire, with a peal of six steel bells, was undertaken; these were replaced in 1934. Much of this early additional work was accomplished through the generosity of Lady Morrison of The Hermitage, Snaresbrook: in 1867 she contributed £1000, some of which was spent on stained glass, and in 1868-69 she donated a further £1350 towards the tower and spire, and in addition the clock and the bells - two in 1868, six by 1869. New, more spacious, vestries were added in 1889 to house the clergy and the choir, which had been in existence since 1876, and had worn surplices from Sunday 31 December 1876. In the years which followed, attention was devoted to the improvement of the chancel: an oak reredos was given in 1892 in memory of Mary Charlton, and Elizabeth Bangs gave the oak choir-stalls, pulpit and organ front in 1895.

From as early as the 1840s there seems to have been a curate in permanent residence, and there is even mention in a vestry minute of 1865 of a fund, the Wanstead Curate Trust, for maintaining a second curate. With the consecration of Christ Church, a new system of lay parish appointments was devised in order to deal with the two churches. In 1863, the following personnel was employed by the parish, with the duties indicated:

Parish Church

Sexton:	care of churchyard
	bell-ringing
	lighting fires
	assisting pew opener
	dusting heavy mats
Pew Opener:	cleaning church
	washing surplices and bands
	attending the sick room
Organ Blower:	to assist with bell-ringing

Parish Clerk
Organist
Collector of Church and Tontine rates
Person to 'assist to keep order' in the Galleries of the Parish Church during morning service on Sundays, and in Christ Church during the afternoon and evening services on Sundays.

Christ Church

Beadle and Bell Ringer:	care of churchyard
	lighting fires and candles
	dusting heavy mats
Pew Opener:	cleaning, scouring and dusting
	washing surplices and bands

In order to cope with the changing social order of the mid-Victorian period a number of administrative measures were taken. Under the new incumbency of the Revd Gerald FitzGerald the vestry agreed that the church rate should be abolished in favour of a voluntary rate of five pence in the pound.

The visitation of Essex churches made by the Revd Andrew Clark, Rector of Great Leighs, is revealing for the second half of the century. When he first inspected St Mary's in 1842 it was in good order, and there were services on Sundays at 11 am and 3 pm (7 pm in summer months). By the late 1860s it was falling into disrepair: parishioners, particularly those who owned pews, were urged to recognize their duty of maintaining the fabric, and to contribute a church rate of five pence in the pound. By 1870 the church was in a better state of repair, though the discovery of dry-rot in 1876 cannot have helped matters. Indeed, the church must have been rather isolated from the centre of population, especially since the roads from

both Leytonstone and Wanstead village were in a poor condition by 1881. In 1890 work was still continuing at St Mary's: the chancel was decorated; the roof repaired; and four bells - as opposed to the original two - were hung in 1899, three of which were new. Curious though it may seem to us, the Parish Church was little admired as a building in the late 19th century: dealing with Wanstead in general in the January 1872 magazine, the writer notes that the Parish Church, 'though scarcely one of the most beautiful features of the place, must yet rank amongst its chief objects of interest'. And in 1887 the magazine again remarks that the Parish Church 'presents us neither with the beauties of architecture, nor the picturesque dignity of age'.

The initial attempt to publish a parish magazine was short-lived, but the issues that appeared between 1872 and 1874 give a fascinating insight into parish life of the time. The Parish Church had continued its regime of morning and afternoon services on Sundays, and the Communion was celebrated once a month, after the morning service on the first Sunday. At Christ Church there were the same morning and evening services; communion was held on the second Sunday after morning service, and as an extra service at 8.30 am on the third; in addition, there were prayers in Christ Church at 11 am to mark the red-letter saints' days of the Book of Common Prayer. In addition, there were regular lectures and entertainments for working men, meetings for mothers, a lending library and provident club, and a Coal Club by which the winter fuel could be provided by subscription. The parish was hardly inward-looking, and just before Christmas in 1872, a week of well-attended mission services was held at Christ Church with the object of 'gathering, however few, from the kingdom of Satan to that of Christ'. Moreover, lamenting 'the deplorable state of the poor, at least as far as religious knowledge is concerned', a new mission room was opened by the parish in Cann Hall Lane on 1 October 1873 to replace, it seems, a former building at Holloway Down.

The original magazine foundered due to high running costs, and it was not until 1887 that a replacement was published,

under the rector, the Revd Morton Drummond, who had been in Wanstead since 1879. By Advent 1886 the communion was held as a separate service at Christ Church on the Sundays when this was a sung celebration, and on Christmas Day the church was clearly flourishing: there were three Eucharists, and a Festal Mattins. Two hundred and forty persons communicated at Christ Church, compared with thirty-seven at St Mary's. By this stage daily services of Mattins and Evensong were being held at Christ Church with the addition of communion on saints' days. Much energy was also devoted to the choir at Christ Church: anthems were sung every Sunday, at one and generally at both services, and a complete music list was published in the magazine; the members must have been committed, since three evening choir practices were held each week. In 1894 the disposition of the choir was twenty-four trebles, one alto, three tenors and five basses. The organist until that year, E.P. Lavington, seems to have done excellent work in building up the choir in the ten years before his death in office, yet Christ Church must have already had a certain musical reputation since 108 candidates presented themselves for the post of organist in 1884. There is during this period no evidence of a regular choir at the Parish Church, and a simple list of hymns is published which contrasts poorly with the lavishness of the Christ Church music list. On major festivals such as Easter and Whitsun an anthem was sung - perhaps an *ad hoc* choir was formed specially for these feasts.

At Christ Church there was clearly an interest in increasing the dignity of the liturgy in a mildly Tractarian manner: new frontals, stoles and chalice veils were purchased in 1888. Three Hours Devotion was introduced in the same year with addresses on the Seven Words from the Cross, and there were daily communion services during Holy Week itself. In the following year the Three Hours Devotion was well attended by 200 people, though the parish magazine contains an admonishment to 'the working class, with few exceptions, appearing to consider Good Friday as more of a holiday than a Holy-day'. Communions at Christ Church in 1888 totalled

4369, while those at the Parish Church reached only 909. And indeed the daily services at Christ Church seem to have been well attended, as is recorded in the magazine for August 1891 when they were stopped due to the repairs to the heating, but resumed by strong support. While all this activity was burgeoning at Christ Church, St Mary's still seems to have maintained the regime of two Sunday services, and in the latter years of the century a hint of frustration on the part of the clergy is expressed in the magazine, because the congregation in the Parish Church is not prepared to observe even the major church festivals, such as Ascension Day.

During the 19th century Wanstead changed from being a village, and acquired more the atmosphere of a busy town in close proximity to London. Christ Church was well positioned to minister to the needs of the increasing population in the parish, and responded to that demand. It was also to an extent influenced by the major Anglican spiritual awakening of the century, the Oxford Movement, which sought to emphasize the belief that the national church was heir to the rich traditions of the rest of Christendom. The outward indication of this can be seen in the daily experience of worship, and the dignified approach to the liturgy, as evidenced in the robed choir. Christ Church even achieved the distinction of a mention in a volume entitled *Ritualism Rampant*, published in 1892 by the extreme protestant Church Association, on the now unexceptionable grounds that a surplice was worn and the Eucharist celebrated in an eastward-facing position. The Parish Church in the late Victorian period was poorly positioned to embrace the new influx of population in the area around the High Street. Perhaps this glorious isolation reinforced the church's proud sense of its own traditions, whereby it failed to follow the dominant spiritual trends which were invigorating the rest of the parish.

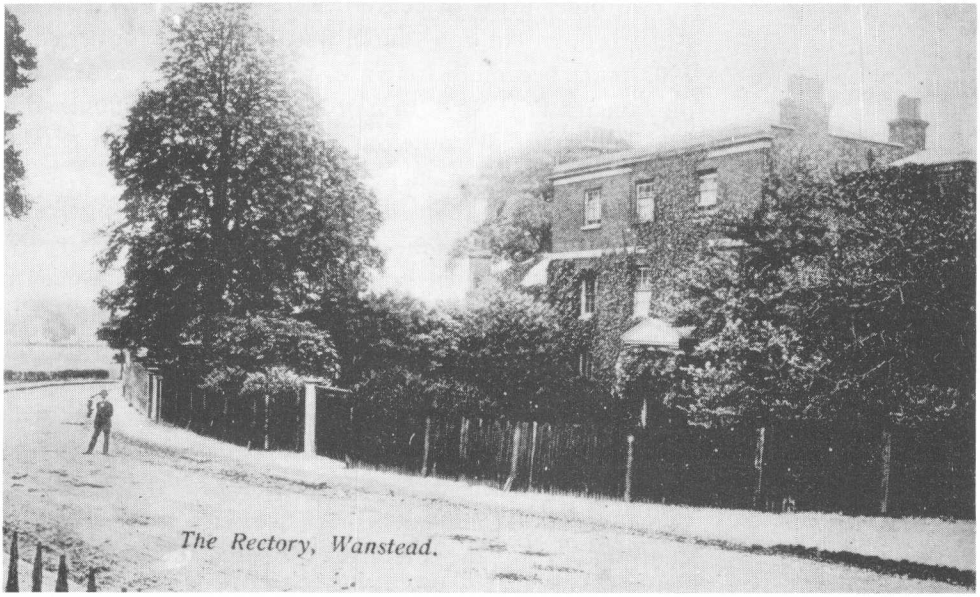
But the parish was united in celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in June 1897. Special services were held at Christ Church: two communion services at which the national anthem was sung; Mattins and Litany; a Special Children's Service; and Evensong. In addition, there was a dinner for 120

parishioners, a concert, and the evening ended with fireworks. The water-fountain diagonally opposite the George Inn still stands to commemorate what were for Wanstead, as for the whole country, the eventful years of Victoria's reign.

The rapid expansion of Wanstead at the turn of the century was of great concern to the incumbents. There was a need both for extra curates and additional places of worship. In 1900 the Revd John Scott appealed to the parishioners to recognize their responsibility by helping with the stipends of assistant clergy. The 'Wanstead Curate Trust' was still bringing in £88 a year, and £200 from the Christ Church pew rents had also been passed on annually to the Trust by the rectors. This sum, however, was insufficient for two stipends, and three curates were now required. Scott lists the work undertaken by the clergy:

'You must not think that when the 20 or more services in each week are performed in this Parish, that the work of the Clergy is done. There is the teaching in the Day School of one or other every morning in the week; there is the superintending of the

The early 19th-century rectory in Redbridge Lane, on the site where Wanstead County High School was opened in 1924 (A. Mudie)



Sunday Schools, there are Bible and Pupil Teachers' Classes, Lectures, Youths' Club, Committee Meetings, Confirmation Classes, Visiting the Sick, calling on new comers, and parishioners generally, keeping in touch with all the various works of a Parish; besides the Reading of Theology, and the preparing of Sermons.

The 'Wanstead Clergy Fund' was duly opened. It might have been thought by some that the clergy spent too long preparing their sermons, as in 1916 one of the staff regaled the congregation with a sermon composed entirely of words of one syllable.

With regard to premises, Wanstead followed the common practice of rapidly expanding urban areas by building iron churches or mission rooms. The first of these in Wanstead itself was Holy Trinity, Hermon Hill, built in 1882. In 1888 a separate parish was created from parts of the parishes of Wanstead and Woodford, and the permanent church was completed in 1890. Much of the cost was borne by the Misses Nutter, notable benefactors of parochial life in Wanstead, who in 1898 became patrons of the living.

Two other areas of concern were Nightingale Green and Aldersbrook. An iron church was built at the former site in 1903, and it became St John's Mission Room. It was dedicated on January 17 using a form of Mission Service published by SPCK; an assistant curate was put in charge, the services being 'on Sunday Evenings and at other times'.

It was decided that Aldersbrook required a permanent church, but as soon as the site was acquired a temporary iron church was built, which opened on 16 October 1903. Money for the land and for the stipend of a new senior curate was sought from the Bishop of St Albans' Fund. It was also suggested that the Lord of the Manor should be approached to contribute a portion of the profits made by the sale of part of his estate for the Aldersbrook development. His response is not recorded, but for both projects the Misses Nutter head a list of subscribers to the Wanstead Church Extension fund. They were also major contributors to the permanent church of St Gabriel's, Aldersbrook, which was completed in 1914, when a separate

parish was formed.

The improvement of both St Mary's and Christ Church is a continuing theme throughout this century. In the early years there were regular complaints about heating and lighting in both churches, and in 1901 the products of the Welsbach Incandescent Lighting Company greatly improved matters at Christ Church. In 1900 St Mary's was given the present choir stalls, separated from the pews by a low screen. In 1905 a side chapel was proposed for Christ Church to be used for the daily offices, with a saving both on the gas bill and on the clerical voice. This was achieved the following year for the cost of between £40 and £50, and the loss of a few pews in the south aisle. It was dedicated on February 2, but it is unclear whether the proposal to dedicate it to St Anne was eventually approved. By 1907 it was in frequent use, though there were some complaints that it was 'homely and ugly'.

The churchyard of the Parish Church had been closed for burials in 1889, but some additional land had been given in trust. By 1906 this land was also filled, and it was necessary to purchase and enclose a further plot of half an acre at a cost of £400. The site was eventually consecrated in 1908. The Revd John Scott was eager to have a flagstaff and flags for both churches. There were particular difficulties in the positioning at St Mary's; these were eventually solved by setting the staff horizontally over the porch from the base of the bell turret. Thus the church was well equipped to join in the celebrations for the end of the Boer War. In 1907 a peal board was unveiled at Christ Church to commemorate the first peal rung by local ringers. In 1922 Christ Church needed £500 for the organ and the fence; it is interesting to note that the fence was a more popular item with donors.

Christ Church continued to be influenced by the Oxford Movement, though some of the congregation may have been a little cautious. In 1906 John Scott appealed for a donation of two lights for the altar, describing them as 'a legal ornament of the church'. The gift was duly made, followed by a cross - set with crystal - by the same designer, Bodley.

During the incumbency of the Revd Godwin Birchenough practices at Christ Church gradually became more Anglo-Catholic in style. In 1922 simple linen eucharistic vestments were introduced to add dignity and solemnity to the early morning celebrations. Offers to provide the same for St Mary's were turned down, so that the parish could continue to provide for more than one shade of churchmanship. However, in 1927 a white linen set used by a previous curate was accepted there as a gift from his widow. In that year a processional cross was acquired for Christ Church and in 1929 a white cope for use in processions, initially at Harvest. On this occasion, those in the front pew under the pulpit were asked to move out during the procession. A number of the front pews have been removed in recent years to provide an open, slightly raised, space.

The qualms exposed by the Church Association in 1892 continued to be felt, most visibly by the followers of John Kensit, who opposed all ritual and aimed to disrupt services. They were regular visitors to Wanstead, haranguing the populace from a soap box, but they were with equal regularity answered in debate by the rector. In church they would sit with arms folded throughout the liturgy, but on no occasion did they succeed in causing a disturbance. Birchenough encouraged his parishioners to learn more about Anglo-Catholicism, and in 1928 and 1929 ran a series of conferences to inform a general audience in the parish. After the first series he reports that the message was received in a spirit of love and tolerance. In 1932 he held a Novena for the Union of Christendom. The parish magazines also contain reports on the Anglo-Catholic Congress of 1927 and subsequent events. The major celebrations in 1933 for the centenary of the Oxford Movement were well supported in Wanstead; a commemorative card was given to all attending Mass on July 9. Many of the congregation were present at the High Mass at White City the following Sunday, Wanstead providing four stewards and three choristers.

During this time various wider matters were affecting the parish: in 1914 the new diocese of Chelmsford came into being.

The choice of cathedral city was viewed with mixed feelings. It was announced in the March 1908 issue of the parish magazine with the comment 'we must loyally try to fall in with the decision'. From 1922 there was regular discussion of the prayer book revision, and whether it leant too far in the direction of Rome. By 1927 there are comments on 'what appears to be an ignorant and rather malicious campaign against it', and not surprisingly the church council gave the new book general approval. There was also grave concern regarding the possibility of disestablishment; in 1909 parishioners were urged to attend a protest meeting in Stratford against the disestablishment and disendowment of the church in Wales.

There were complaints about poor attendances at certain services. In 1905 the parish was exhorted to give due weight to the festivals of Michaelmas and All Saints, and two years later there was concern because there were only 115 communicants at Ascension. The rector was displeased at the low attendance for his Bible class, despite its being open to a wide social group, including originally communicant girls, but latterly also older women, ladies, maids, servants and Sunday School teachers. He was also unhappy about the numbers at the Wednesday Evensong. However, by 1922, major services at St Mary's were attracting a large congregation for which additional chairs were required.

The Return of Parochial Work for 1904-05 provides some interesting figures. In the year there were 277 celebrations of Holy Communion and 960 other services with Easter communicants numbering 800. There were 410 children in the Sunday Schools and eighty-six choristers etc. (presumably servers). It is recorded that in 1913 forty boys and thirty-eight girls were confirmed.

In 1904-05 750 parish magazines were produced, a drop of a hundred from 1902. In 1908 it cost 2/6d annually which included delivery, and the cost was subsidized by advertising from local shops. However, a rather surprising advertisement appeared in 1906 for T. Bird and Sons showing a lady of slightly saucy demeanour clad in a corset. This garment was apparently

suitable for spring wear and cost only a farthing less than three shillings.

Parochial charities of the previous century continued to function, but the contributions were dropping. The charities operating in 1905 were the Provident Dispensary, Provident Club, Coal Club, Clothing Club, Sunday Schools, Church Institute, Temperance Association, Band of Hope, Church Lads' Brigade, Young Mens' Club, Parish Library and General Purposes Fund. Sunday collections were usually given to a variety of deserving bodies: in one month in 1900 they went to The Poor, The Church Fund, The Chinese Waif, Transvaal War Fund and the Oxford Mission to Calcutta. In January 1927 pew rents were abolished at St Mary's, and the congregation reminded that generous giving was now required to help maintain the building.

The Second World War caused much disruption in the running of the parish. Half the population were absent, resulting in a lack of funds and, consequently, a loss in clergy. Evening services were much curtailed because of the lighting regulations. For the first time the sacrament was reserved, though the aumbry had been installed in Christ Church ten years earlier, a decision which was to be reviewed at the end of the war. Both buildings suffered war damage with most of the stained glass being lost from Christ Church. The repairs were completed in 1949.

In 1953 there was a proposal to have a new High Altar in Christ Church in memory of Godwin Birchenough and Charles Kempson Waller. This was designed by Faith-Craft and completed in 1956. At that time Victorian architecture was not much admired, and Christ Church was spoken of as disparagingly as St Mary's had been eighty years earlier. The Revd Alan Gates commented that 'the new altar lifts the church out of its Victorian dinginess'. In 1974 the Nuremberg angels from Ely Theological College were added to it. More substantial building work included the new rectory in 1963, the previous one having been condemned. Though Corbett had identified the need for a parish room as early as 1909, action

The interior of the Parish Church in 1966, showing the screen dividing the choir-stalls and pews

was only taken during the incumbency of the Revd James Adams, and it was not until 1973 that the parish hall adjoining Christ Church was dedicated. Attempts by the present rector, the Revd V. Paul Bowen, to provide a hall at St Mary's were refused by the Greater London Council's Historic Buildings Division, who felt it essential to maintain the integrity of the

Wanstead Church School
A Work of Charity

Previous page: The interior of Christ Church, Easter 1990 (D. Wood)

ancient churchyard. In 1972 major works were undertaken on both the bell turrets. At Christ Church the bells were rehung and two additional ones cast by Mears and Stainbank of Whitechapel - the Whitechapel Bell Foundry - were added, making a total of eight.

Major work on re-roofing and cleaning the stonework at St Mary's was undertaken in 1989. At this moment work is starting at Christ Church on the erection of a rood dating from the 1920s, formerly positioned in the chapel of Salisbury Teacher Training College; this work has provided the opportunity to undertake a complete redecoration of the chancel.

* * *

Set into the wall of the present school, rebuilt in 1980, is a stone which reads 'Parochial Schools 1790'. This is believed to be the foundation stone of the first school building, laid by Dr Samuel Glasse. The date, however, poses a problem as it appears in only one document (a grant application to the National Society in 1870).

Lysons in his book *The Environs of London* (1796), refers to two charity schools 'established in the year 1786, soon after the institution of the present rector'. In a footnote, he thanks Glasse 'for his assistance, in various particulars, during my inquiries at this place', and therefore 1786 seems to be an authoritative date. Given Glasse's strong views on the importance of a Christian education, expressed in a sermon given before the annual service of the Charity Schools in 1791, the setting up of a school for about fifty children within weeks of his arrival is not surprising. As an educationalist, Glasse was closely associated with Robert Raikes, who in 1784 founded the Sunday School movement, which for decades was the only educational provision for many children.

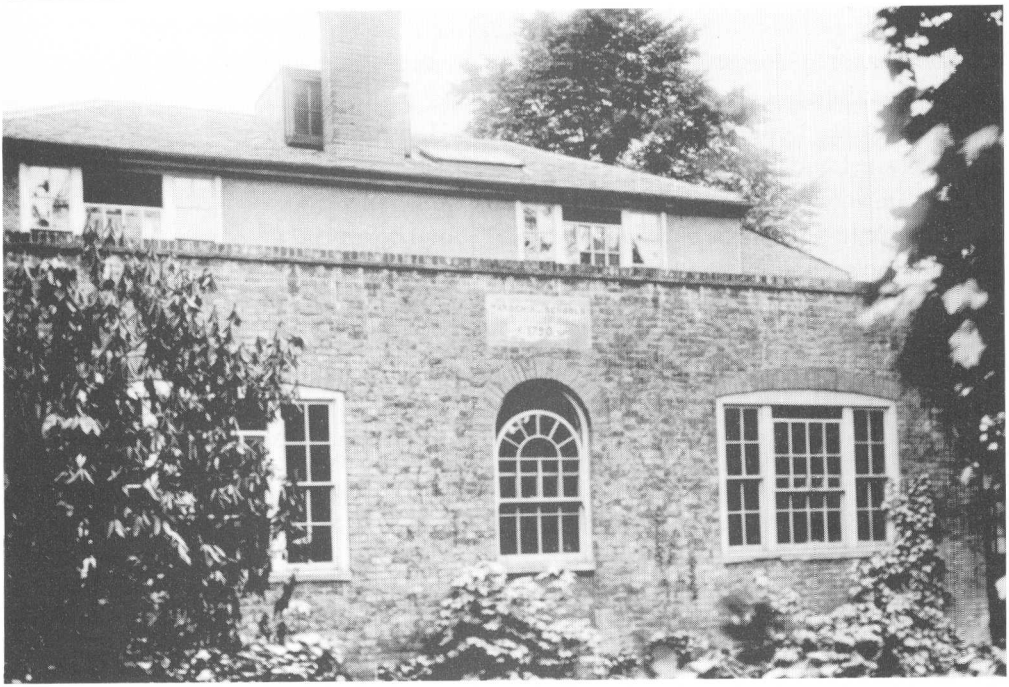
Initially, there was no purpose-built school: the 1790 pew list, in which four pews were allocated to the school, does refer to the possibility of the two school houses becoming private homes. It seems likely, therefore, that originally two houses in the parish were acquired for separate boys' and girls' schools.

Clearly this was not a satisfactory arrangement, and in 1795 'the Rector Churchwardens Overseers of the Poor and Principal Inhabitants of the Parish of Wanstead' petitioned Sir James Tylney Long 'for leave to erect a School House on part of the Waste Land' of the manor. Permission was given to enclose half an acre. By this stage some capital must have been available to finance the building, and a £200 bond borrowed to build the school house was discharged by October 1803. The work began in 1796 and Glasse's words on laying the foundation stone survive:

In an humble but full Trust in the Mercy of God for his Blessing on this Work of Charity,
And with a grateful Sense of their liberality who have enabled & encouraged us to engage in it,
I, Samuel Glasse Rector of this Parish, do now lay the Foundation of Wanstead School this eighth day of August 1796,
And I hope that it will never want the Favour, Assistance and Protection of the good and opulent Inhabitants of this Parish, so long as good Morals Religion and Loyalty shall be considered as the brightest Ornament & the finest support of the British Nation.

The land was granted to the petitioners of 1795 on 13 November 1797. By this time the building was complete; the grant records that a 'tenement hath been lately erected intended to be used as a school house'. The plot included one acre around the building with an annual rent of one shilling payable at Michaelmas.

Of the old school buildings only the early Victorian 'Master's House' remains. The foundation stone, recut in 1980, is set in the wall of the new building facing the High Street. Photographs of it in 1928 set in the then earliest surviving wall suggest that it may have been recut around that time as well. Robert Sheaf, headmaster for many years, who must have seen the stone daily, wrote in 1890 that it reads 1794. This suggests that it was badly worn by the later 19th century. The grant application of 1870 is the only document dating the school to 1790. It seems possible that, due to wear, the foundation stone laid by Samuel Glasse in 1796 appeared to read 1790, the cause



A 1928 photograph of the surviving wall of the 1796 school, showing the stone reading 1790, after the original upper storey had been removed (PEM)

of much later confusion.

Initially, the main funding for the school came from the subscribers, who held an annual meeting. There were also a number of benefactors: in 1805 George Bowles gave £200 in 3% stocks (part of a total bequest of £470); David Russell gave £31.10.0 'to the charity-school, preserved from fire' (a dramatic event not recorded elsewhere); and in 1812 Miss Tylney Long gave £500. Investments of this size would have produced a reasonable annual income. The expenditure in 1798 is recorded as £73.15.3½. At what stage the schools began to take fee-paying pupils is not recorded, but in April 1801 there were twenty-one charity boys and twenty-two fee-paying. An additional source of money was the sale of the girls' needlework. This is first mentioned in 1802 when they were doing 'plain work' to raise money but were allowed one day a week to repair their own clothes. By the October meeting of subscribers in 1803 they had raised £6.6.1. This work continued to bring in similar amounts for many years: in 1847 the girls

raised £5.5.2 for an outlay on materials of £1.10.1. A further source of income were Charity Sermons; two preached on 26 April 1840 raised £56.10.0 in collections.

Education was not the sole charitable activity of the school trustees: they also provided clothing for a number of children 'from among the most destitute and deserving Objects'. The regulations, dating from 1799, specify that twelve girls between the ages of five and twelve years may receive clothing; they must attend the Sunday School and church regularly on Sunday, but need not belong to the day school. The clothing consisted of a gown, bonnet, cloak, cap and tippet. By 1804 some of the poorest boys were receiving shoes and some clothes, and in 1807 Glasse records that fifteen girls and twelve boys were clothed. This clothing was clearly a distinctive uniform. The boys wore blue cloth coats with white knee-breeches, caps and hose, whilst the girls' dresses were 'of modest tint'. In 1811 children of a William Porter were allowed by the trustees to attend the Dissenting Meeting House in Walthamstow, only in the evenings and not wearing their charity clothes. In 1836 they ruled that boys were to return their coat and waistcoat on leaving the school as certain ex-pupils were bringing the school into disrepute. In the same year one deserving case, having received a bible and prayer book on leaving, was also 'allowed to retain his trowsers'.

In 1804 a broad syllabus is outlined by the trustees. Boys were taught reading, writing and arithmetic and were 'well instructed in the principles of Christian religion'. The Girls School was described as a 'School of Industry', and the teaching was of a practical nature and consisted of knitting, spinning, plainwork, needlework and instruction in Christian duty. The children were examined in Lewis's *Exposition of Church Catechism* and leavers were usually given a bible and prayer book. A letter from Glasse, dated 23 December 1807, details school provision in Wanstead for a pamphlet on Essex schools:

One School of Industry supported by subscription	37 girls
One School supported by subscription	28 boys
One School of children paid for by their parents who are poor	24 boys & girls

One paid for as last mentioned	14
One of very small children, a sort of preparatory school	14
Total	117

NB 15 girls & 12 boys clothed in first 2

The first two are the parochial schools, but it appears from the other entries that the school was already full with sixty-five pupils, if some of the poor were having to pay for their children to be taught in other establishments.

By the early 1830s there seems to have been a need to extend the curriculum and to raise the standard of teaching. Mrs Prior, the mistress, wished to retire in January 1832 after forty-five years' service. The trustees, seeing this as an opportunity to appoint a headmaster and mistress 'competent to teach the children upon the National System', asked Peter Pegler, the master for thirty-five years, to resign. They also decided to enlarge the school to accommodate all parish children from six years of age. A circular to all parishioners reports that 'a respectable married couple' will be engaged 'to educate the children upon the National System'. It also requests them to provide 'liberal aid, to extend and secure the Advantages and Blessings of Religious and Moral Instruction to the Children of their necessitous neighbours'. A letter to the National Society regarding the appointment of the new master and mistress states that the trustees were aiming to provide for forty to fifty boys and the same number of girls, that the salary was £40 augmented by an additional £30 (as the master was also vestry clerk), and that the house provided was commodious. Accordingly, the National Society recommended Alfred and Jane Condell, who took up the appointment in late March 1832.

As yet no final decision had been made to unite with the National Society. In June 1832 a printed address outlined the consequences of union such as school hours, which would be 9-12 am and 2-5 pm from Ladyday to Michaelmas, 9-12 am and 2-4 pm from Michaelmas to Ladyday, and 10 am and 2.30 pm on Sundays, plus two services. There would also be an annual meeting on the last Monday in July. Parents were also

'earnestly exhorted to give Children good instruction and advice; to accustom them to Family prayer, to make them say Grace before meals; to call upon them frequently to repeat the church catechism and to hear them read the holy scriptures'. In November a lending library for which the children paid 6d a year was attached to the school and supervised by the headmaster.

Finally, in December 1833 the trustees resolved to apply for union with the National Society and to request a grant of £5 to assist with the library expenses. The form for Application for Union, signed by the rector, the Revd William Gilly, states the conditions for union:

> In those schools the National System of teaching will be adopted as far as is practicable. The children will be instructed in the Liturgy and Catechism of the Established Church, & constantly attend Divine Service at their Parish Church, or other Place of Worship under the Establishment, as far as the same is possible, on the Lord's-day; unless such reasons be assigned for their non-attendance, as shall be satisfactory to the Persons having the direction of the Schools. No religious tracts will be used in the Schools but such as are contained in the Catalogue of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Annual or other communications on the state & progress will be made as may be required by the regulations of the SOCIETY.

The school seems to have readily adapted to the new circumstances. In 1834 comes the first reference to Pupil Teachers. Promising scholars were used to assist with basic teaching for which they received rewards: in 1834 one boy received 2/7d for books and 3/- for clothes. One book specified as a reward was *Trimmer's Instructive Tales* costing 1/4d. In 1836 five pupils apparently were involved in teaching. The lending library was obviously a success, as its use was extended to the whole parish in 1837. In the same year, a minor alteration to times was made; the pupils now studied on Saturday mornings and had leave on Wednesday afternoons. In 1838 the Midsummer holiday was transferred to harvest time, presumably to avoid absences by boys working in the fields.

The trustees meeting on June 1838 decided to end the provision of clothes. Instead, reward tickets were instituted for regular attendance over a quarter: lower school pupils received 13d, the second class 2/-, and the first class 4/-, the equivalent of the school fees for that period. William Pitt Wigram, early in his incumbency, realized the need for increased accommodation, and in 1839 commissioned the architect Edward Blore to undertake the work. Blore's account book records the transaction:

1839, Sept 4 To Wanstead to examine site of
proposed new school — 1 day.
Making out a set of working plans for the school.
1840, Apl 25 To Wanstead to set out site. . .

He visited Wanstead six times at a guinea a time and charged a commission of £35. In 1841 Blore's plans were still being put into practice: the account book for the Infants' School records £823.11.8 for bricklayers, carpenters and plumbers. This was presumably for the building of the mistress's house (now known as the 'Master's House'), the girls' schoolroom - a single-storey building attached to the rear of the house - and the conversion of the girls' room into an Infants School. The first mistress of the new Girls School was Miss Townsend who remained there until 1865. But the position of headmaster looked less than stable at this period, as four are recorded between 1845 and 1853 when Mr and Mrs Marchant were appointed heads respectively of the Boys and Infants Schools. Salaries are also recorded for two assistant teachers in 1855.

The major change at this period was the decision in 1843 that the schools were no longer charitable institutions. The new rules specify that children should be aged between seven and fourteen years, that 1d per week is payable on Monday mornings, and that arrival times are 8.45 am and 1.45 pm. Teaching continues to follow the National System with the best pupils acting as monitors of small classes. Everyone will be taught reading, writing, arithmetic and religious knowledge, with the girls also learning needlework. The subjects for the senior girls' class are scripture, geography for New Testament

Watercolour of the school painted by E. Absolom c1850. In the foreground is the headmistress's house, built by Edward Blore in 1840 with the girls' school room at the rear to the right. On the left is the original school (PEM)

history, needlework, setting work, cutting out. The boys study the history and geography of England with large maps, and the tables and weights used in trades. By 1855 the incumbent, feeling the need to establish a legally binding form of management, applied to the Court of Chancery for a 'Scheme for the Management of Wanstead Schools' which was ordered by the Court on December 11. As a result a School Committee of Management was formed consisting of the rector, an assistant curate and five parishioners.

In 1861 the committee decided that the school should become subject to government inspection:

The Rector having reported that Mr Marchant having passed the examination for schoolmasters under the Committee of Council on Education:- It was resolved that the visit of the Government Inspector to the Boys' School be sanctioned by the Committee, in order that the master may derive the benefit of his newly acquired certificate so long as the Committee deems it desirable. This resolution is passed from the conviction that the additional stimulus to the master will be a benefit to the school.

This resolution meant that government grants would become available to the committee. Annual inspections began, and it was soon made clear that, whatever the quality of the teaching, the premises were regarded as completely inadequate. The

report on the inspection for 1864 is highly critical:

It is impossible to work this school properly with such a deficiency of desk accommodation. The knowledge seems to be fair, but H.M. Inspector has seldom of late visited a school where the furniture was so ill-kept and the boys so untidy and ill-washed. The discipline requires great attention. The grant will be seriously reduced next year, if H.M Inspector finds the school in the same discreditable condition of dirt and disorder as at present.

The following year the Committee decided that both the Boys and Infants Schools must be enlarged. To accommodate the children during the rebuilding, a large tent was provided at the beginning of the autumn term. Robert Sheaf, the headmaster, describes this period as 'halcyon days' though his log book records 'work much retarded on account of the wet booth', because of heavy rain during the first week of term. Later, events became dramatic when a high wind flattened the tent with many of the pupils inside. Wisely a week's holiday was declared and on 23 October 1865, with the building work completed, the schools re-opened. At this stage the Girls School also came under government inspection, receiving its first grant of £20.6.3 in 1866.

During this period we gain a new insight into the day to day workings of the school. This is a result of the introduction of official log books completed daily by the headteachers. The log books for the Boys School begin in April 1864, for the Infants School in 1872 and for the Girls School, sadly, only from 1894. In 1865 the appointment of Robert Sheaf as headmaster begins a period of almost sixty years during which his vision of education greatly influenced the development of the school, for he was succeeded in the headship by his son Horatio until 1924, and his wife and other family members also taught at the school.

The first entry in the Boys School log tells us that there were eighty boys present, divided into four classes. After a week the arrangement appears to be successful as each boy is receiving more individual teaching. The log books were checked regularly by the rector as chairman of the Committee of

The headmistress's house in 1928 (now called the 'Master's House') (PEM)

Management and could therefore be used by the head to record matters of concern; the entry of 29 May 1865 is clearly directed to the new incumbent, the Revd G.S. FitzGerald: 'The Rector has visited the school *once* for about ½ an hour during his residence in the parish'. This had the desired effect as, within a month, the clergy were visiting the school regularly, often to take scripture lessons.

In 1866 homework or 'Home Lessons' were first provided for all classes: geography, grammar, catechism and collects for the senior class; spelling, catechism and collects for the three lower classes. A system of marking for lessons was introduced in 1869 which was said to 'stimulate the children greatly'. Alterations to the buildings, and perhaps the arrival of the Sheafs, obviously pleased the Inspector, whose reports became much more favourable. In 1867 he says that 'This School has improved greatly. The Order and General Tone of the school are satisfactory', and in 1868 he reports that 'This school does credit to the master for the instruction and discipline of the boys'. The schools were also visited annually by a Diocesan Inspector to examine the religious teaching being given and to set the following year's syllabus.

The school year began in June and was organized in quarters.

The girls' schoolroom built by Blore with an additional classroom added on the right, probably in 1870 (PEM)

Holidays consisted of a week at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun and about three weeks in August. There were additional half-day holidays usually after attendance at church, for example, on Ash Wednesday or Ascension Day. On 4 December 1867 they were given a full day's holiday to celebrate the re-opening of Christ Church after the new additions were completed. Special events in the locality sometimes warranted a holiday, such as a visit by the Prince of Wales. They were occasionally released from school early to attend educational displays, including an Exhibition of Dissolving Views. There was also a half-day Annual Treat in the summer which consisted of a visit to the rectory. It is unclear what form the treat took, but presumably it included food as the word 'partake' is used in the log book.

Absence from school was frequent and there was no attendance officer. Reasons given include harvest, haymaking and acorn-picking, though numbers did improve when children had to make up lost time after school hours. Poor attendances are mentioned when cricket matches are played nearby, on Guy Fawkes Day, and because of the Harlow Fair. Two major factors affecting attendance were sickness and bad weather:

common infectious diseases such as measles, mumps and scarlet fever were then life-threatening and caused great parental concern. The log for 20 June 1870 records 'The closing (for the present) of the Infant Sunday School seems to have deterred some of the parents from sending the children to the Daily School for fear of infection'. Measles and scarlet fever were prevalent in the area, and said to be affecting attendance from late May to mid-July. Absences as a result of bad weather reflect both the distances children travelled to school and the poor state of the roads. Absences caused by 'bad feet' were presumably the result of wearing wet boots all day. Children of school age were often sent to work. In April 1867 the head notes that 'Ten per cent of the No of children have left for work in the Brickfields etc', and in March 1868: 'Several children removed to go to work, the parents expressing great willingness to keep them at school, but unable to afford it'.

The Education Act of 1870 laid out a standard of provisions, and if these were not met a local School Board was to be formed. The Wanstead Board was formed in 1880, and by 1900 it had provided almost 5000 places in four schools at Cann Hall (then part of Wanstead Slip, now Leyton). The history of the school for many years was dominated by the determination of the parish to retain a school where education was based on Christian principles. The Inspectors' reports make it clear that problems lay in the quality of the accommodation rather than in the teaching, which is frequently warmly praised.

In November 1870 the Committee of Management applied to the National Society for a building grant. From the application form we learn that the premises consisted of three rooms each of 36 x 29ft to accommodate eighty boys, sixty-five girls and ninety-six infants. The cost was to be £1200 for an additional classroom of 51 x 20ft for the Boys School and a classroom extension of 21ft 6in x 16ft. They hoped to raise a sum of £845 from the local board and the Committee of Council on Education and were requesting the final £355 from the National

Society. A balance sheet indicates that they had been over-optimistic in their requests, the final cost being £1438.17.2 paid for as follows:

Subscriptions & local collections	768.10.4
Committee of Council	208.11.3
Bishop of Rochester's Fund	170.00.0
Grant from Local Board	120.00.0
National Society	60.00.0
SPCK	13.00.0

The deficit was paid by the rector. To comply with the grant requirement it was necessary legally to secure the school premises, and so the copyhold grant of 1797 was made freehold by the Privy Council in 1871. The document reads in part:

To hold the same Unto and to the use of the Rector & Churchwardens and their Successors for the purposes of the said Act and Upon Trust to permit the same premises and all buildings thereon erected or to be thereon erected to be forever hereafter appropriated and used as a school for educating the labouring and poorer classes of the said parish of Wanstead and as a residence for the said teacher or teachers of the said school and for no other purpose.

The work was completed on 17 October 1871, and tea with an entertainment was held that evening.

The inspections of 1872 reflect the benefits of the rebuilding. Regarding the Boys School, the Inspector wrote:

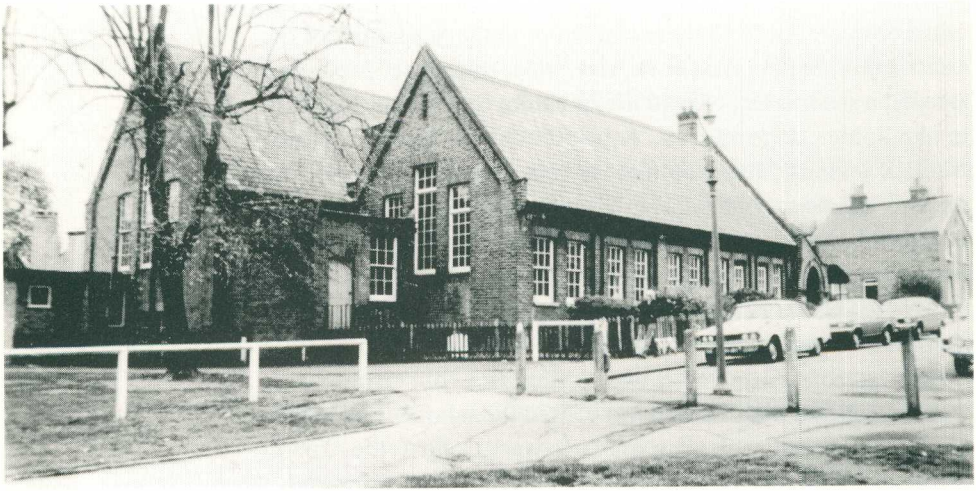
This school is most creditably conducted. The writing deserves particular commendation and the order is all that can be desired. The Room has been rendered very efficient by the addition of a good classroom and an extension of the principal room.

Of the Infants School he says 'This school has not long commenced work. The present order and instruction promise well for the future'. During this period there were various additions to the basic syllabus. The main subjects in the Infants School, which had an age span from 'babies' to seven years, were reading, writing, spelling, numbers, scripture and catechism. To this were added knitting, needlework and singing. There is a reference to learning an action song, 'I'm a merry little soldier'. In 1873 a 'Gallery' was added to the

classroom and in 1883 there is a list of Gallery lessons for the year: sugar, coffee, flax, cork, rice, gold, salt, slate, paper and needle; a second list, of wild life, includes tiger, wolf, fox, cod, snake, spider, dog and crab. A programme for 1886-87, termed 'Object lessons', has two similar lists but adds Trades and Moral Lessons. The latter contains honesty, cleanliness, danger of playing with fire, stones - throwing, helping mother, loitering on the way to school and how to avoid quarrelling.

Lessons in drawing - including maps - and musical notation were introduced in the Boys School. A school drum and fife band was formed in 1872: twelve fifes and four drums were purchased, and a drill instructor visited the school. The band's first performance took place only two weeks later at the Annual Treat. In 1874 tonic sol-fa was introduced, and used to teach a two-part song, 'Glorious Apollo'. The following year the twelve best tonic sol-fa pupils sang in a concert at the Crystal Palace. The singing is regularly praised in the inspector's reports. The poetry for the year was to be approved by the inspector: in 1875 Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was chosen, but later found to be unavailable, so *Marmion* was substituted. This seems to have been a success as the boys were soon asking to be allowed to learn more than the fifty lines set. In 1876 drawing models arrived from South Kensington. By 1886 senior boys were using oil paints, and doing pen and ink and pencil drawings for which prizes were given. The band continued to flourish and in January 1889 marched out to perform at Harrow Green. In 1890 a School Museum was set up and minerals and shells brought in; shortly the collection included specimens of preserved fish and kangaroo.

In 1891 the first new timetable in sixteen years was prepared and electricity and magnetism added to the curriculum. In 1900 botanical excursions were introduced together with lantern lectures. Such innovations were not always welcomed: the Board of Education, noting that twenty boys had been through the forest to Chingford to study tree life, said that, if it happened again in school hours, the manager would be fined. Also around this time violin lessons were offered; in 1902 eighty-five children were paying tuition fees. In 1899 the



The FitzGerald and Drummond Rooms, photographed from Church Path before the rebuilding of the school in 1980

headmistress of the Girls School began an additional form of testing to the termly examinations; these tests led to places on the 'Emulation Ladder', and gave a better knowledge of each girl's abilities. A number of school clubs including cricket and football were formed in these years. Throughout this period the schools were highly regarded for their progressive syllabus and teaching methods.

There were further building works at this time: in 1879 the FitzGerald Room was built, and in 1890 the Drummond Room. The FitzGerald Room was intended principally for Sunday School use, but it was also used as an extra boys' classroom, and for concerts and public meetings. Most of the money was raised by the rector. The Drummond Room - on the side of the FitzGerald Room - was a larger hall which could seat 400. Attached to the grant application to the National Society is a letter from Miss M.E. Absolom, the School Manager, saying that the parish is not a poor one and would be happy with a loan, not a gift. At that date the daily attendances were 190 boys, 170 girls and 120 infants. The appeal document produced by the parish states that the main aim was educational, but that a large room was needed for evening meetings and parochial entertainments. The document stresses that:

if the Voluntary Schools cease to provide the necessary accommodation for the children of the poorer classes, the Education Department will at once step in, and insist upon the ratepayers doing so, thus, of course, curtailing to a great extent the previous system of Religious Education in the Schools, and also heavily increasing the rates.

Within a week of moving into the new accommodation the head was complaining that the echo from the roof made it impossible for teaching. In 1891 a letter to the National Society seeks advice on the use of the room for political meetings of the Conservative Party; it points out that it is the only available room in Wanstead except the skittle alley attached to the pub. Sometimes it is let for lectures and paid for by public subscriptions, and the Party are willing to pay three to five guineas a time. The rector's main concern was that discussion on disestablishment or the abolition of the school might take place there. The Society advised against the letting.

Absence from school was still a problem, though allowance was made for those boys arriving late who were 'regularly engaged in carrying out the morning papers'. The headmistress also bemoans the frequent permitted absences: 'Average (attendance) lowered by the Wanstead Excursion on Monday and another wretched treat on Wednesday'. To deal with the problem, an attendance committee was set up in June 1877, and numbers instantly increased though compulsory attendance was not legally enforced until 1880. There were, however, difficulties in the payment of fees by some of the children sent back to school by the attendance officer. Children were still expected to pay for books and stationery. A half-price offer encouraged children to buy new copybooks as soon as their old ones were finished . This offer was later extended to new lesson and poetry books. In 1879 the managers ruled that they should pay 1d per month for stationery.

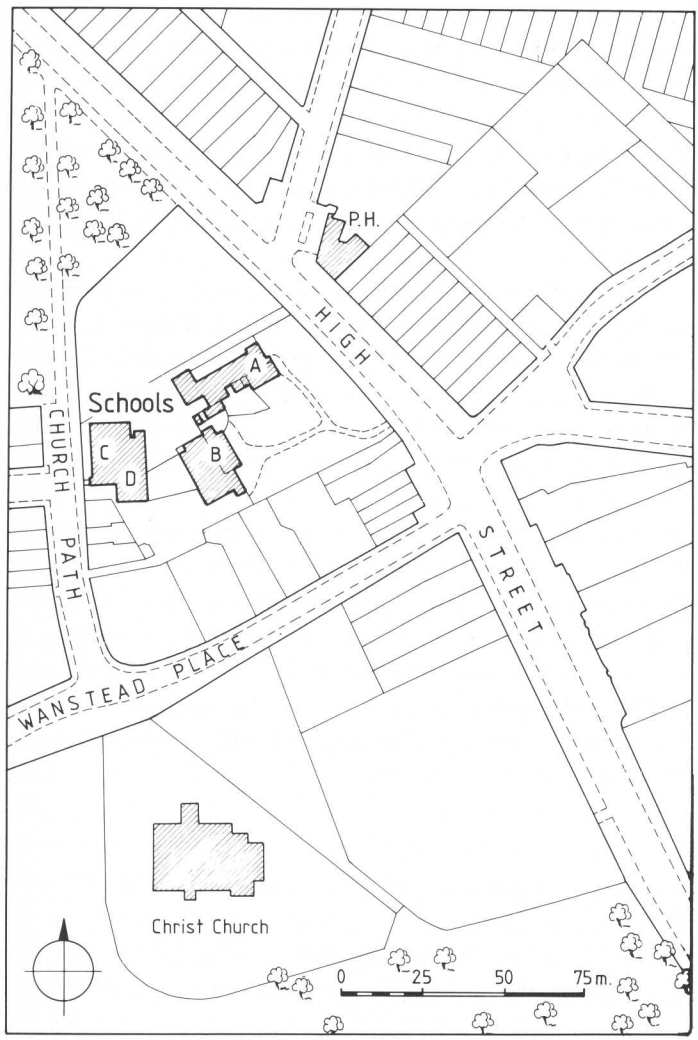
In 1882 the school fees were revised so that irregular attenders in the upper forms paid 6d per week, and those in the lower forms 4d instead of 3d. The fees for the upper school were raised to 4d, but 1d per week was refunded at the year's end to

those with 400 attendances. There were further alterations in 1884, and in 1887 when 'book money' was discontinued; instead the refunds for regular attendance were given in the form of books. In 1891 Lord Salisbury's Assisted Education Act introduced free education in elementary schools, resulting in a 7½% increase in attendance at the Boys School in the first four months. Under the Act some fees continued to be charged until 1899.

At the beginning of 1893 the Boys School had five staff, qualified jointly to teach 240 pupils, though there were 259 on the books. Miss Absolom believed that the youngest boys' class should be taught by a woman, and advertised for 'a certificated mistress qualified in tonic sol-fa and drawing and a disciplinarian' at a salary of £60. There had been regular problems in retaining staff and in 1898 Horatio Sheaf, now headmaster, commented that for twenty years they had not had the same staff for two years running. He notes that the small salary will only encourage the poorest of teachers to apply, and complains at the managers' failure to place advertisements for new staff. In the same year the school received a government grant of £144.7.6 for furniture for the Infants School, raising salaries and increasing efficiency. In the Girls School £55 was used to increase five staff salaries.

Financial problems became more extreme in the early years of the century. In 1901 the managers dispensed with two staff in the Boys School though the Inspector's report was excellent, probably as a result of the full staff being retained for a whole year for the first time in eleven years. In June 1902 it is noted that each teacher was taking at least 80% more than the minimum number of prescribed pupils: 310 boys were registered whereas the staff available should have been teaching only 225 pupils.

The 1902 Education Act abolished local school boards, and in 1903 the school came under the control of Essex County Council. Under these arrangements the managers of voluntary



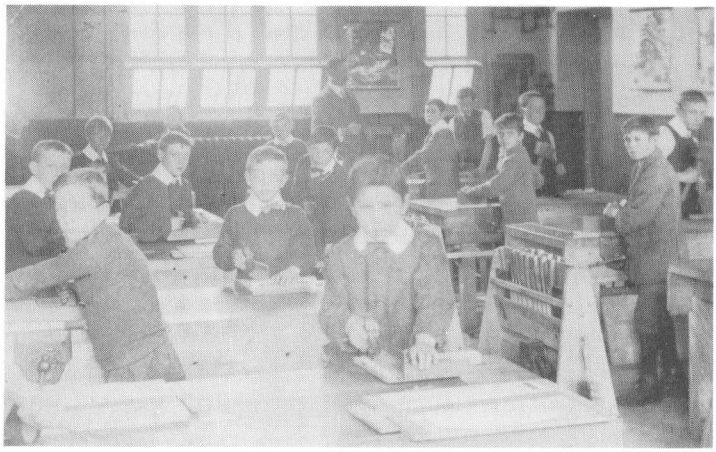
Layout of the school buildings in 1896. (drawn by Graham Reed)
A: Headmistress's house with girls' schoolroom at rear
B: The original building, considerably altered
C: FitzGerald Room
D: Drummond Room

schools provided adequate school buildings and appointed the staff but the running costs were paid from the rates. Many non-conformists had opposed government support for voluntary schools. The nature of the problem can be seen from the 1875 log book: the Congregational School in Wanstead had closed and some pupils were admitted to the parochial school.

This happened despite their objections to an Anglican education, noted in the log, 'in 2 cases the Catechism objected to but not scripture instruction from the Bible'. The school was also suffering by comparison with the facilities provided by the board school. Early in 1902 the caretaker had problems regarding cleaning and heating as a result of Christmas and other entertainments. Parents were transferring their children to the Board School because of the state of the buildings.

The serious financial position is explained in the parish magazine of 1902; a deficit of £200 was expected due to loss of subscribers and abolition of fees. Money was needed for more teachers and the maintenance and extension of the building. The managers were concerned about the prospect of a Board School in the village, and calculated that it would add 6d in the pound to the rates. In 1903 the rector sought advice from the National Society about the appointment of Foundation Managers for the school, and he was strongly advised against renting or leasing the school to the local authority. A request to the Society for special aid to save the schools shows the debt increased to £615. The pupils now numbered 290 boys, 230 girls and 163 infants. The school argued that it had been let down by continual demands from the Board of Education, with which the managers were unable to comply. The rector believed that £1400 to £1500 was needed, and the Society advised him to persist, and try to raise £1000. A later suggestion was to halve the number of pupils rather than abandon the school. There were various approaches from the local and county councils, one wanting to provide extra accommodation itself on part of the site, the other wishing to provide a new boys' school elsewhere. By 1905 the debt had been cleared by a bazaar and donations, and the Education Authority agreed to the school's continuance as a church institution. The National Society still recommended caution in dealing with the Authority, advising against asking them to provide a clerk for the school, but recommending that the rector 'get a teachable curate and make him learn the work'.

Despite everything the schools continued to function normally; the success of the teaching is demonstrated by the



A woodwork class soon after the turn of the century (A. Mudie)

fact that in 1900, forty boys had gone to 'good situations'. To match the other schools in the area from 1903 the school year was to begin in April. The Inspector that year 'highly praised the staff and the pioneering work with Orchestra classes, excursions etc., especially because of the great difficulties'. There were complaints that the County Council provided meagre salaries which failed to attract applications. They were also allowing only 2/- per child for books, which was completely inadequate. But there was some recruitment, and various entries in the log book imply that the managers appointed new teachers without advising the head. The staff were obviously working under stress, as there were regular absences due to nervous complaints. In 1908 the headmistress left because of a breakdown. Two teachers also left because of the strain of teaching in the Drummond Room. The Inspector commented that both Boys and Girls Schools were important, requiring assistant staff with greater teaching ability.

The curriculum remained much the same, but woodworking was introduced at a cookery and handicraft centre attached to Aldersbrook School in 1908. Some parents refused to send children because of the distance. The school continued its biology teaching, and introduced an aquarium and gardening classes in 1909. These classes were popular, and produce was successfully grown on plots in the school grounds.

Unfortunately, enterprising local people regularly helped themselves to the best vegetables, generally cabbages. In 1913 a boys' hockey team was started, and fifty boys were attending violin classes. Concern was also shown about the numbers in employment out of school hours. In 1909 the work of nearly fifty boys was affected, since they were up between 5 and 6 am. A regular complaint was the use of the Drummond Room by other organizations: for example, on one occasion the Church Lads Brigade overturned desks and smashed windows and models. On another memorable occasion, a Saturday dinner and entertainment, Miss Taylor's specimen plants were sliced; the insects let loose from their tank; and the fish had their tails cut off. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that in January 1911 the caretaker 'showed violent signs of insanity and was removed to the infirmary'.

The First World War had a serious effect on both pupils and teachers: many of the boys were unable to return to school after the summer holidays in 1914 since, for example, eleven scouts were guarding the telephone centre. The headmaster and one teacher were night guards for the Water Board, and another a special constable. When raids began those staff on night duty had difficulty working the next morning. In 1915 the Boys School was short of three teachers who had enlisted, and various special subjects had to be dropped from the curriculum. Moreover, the staffing did not meet the requirements on which the grant was contingent. In July the log records a large number of old boys coming to say goodbye before going to the front. The girls meanwhile were knitting garments for the troops and prisoners of war.

As raids became more frequent the children were distressed and suffered many sleepless nights. In November 1916 nearly half of the boys were doing work out of school hours and were unable to concentrate. By January all boys of eligible age were replacing working men, causing attendance to be at its lowest since 1892. Many of the children were having fainting fits from lack of sleep. In October 1917 the hours were changed to

9-11.30 am and 1.15-3.30 pm; this reduction by fifteen minutes was to be taken from the secular, not the scripture teaching. It was also necessary to stop nature rambles because of the risk of daytime raids. In December the records contain the first reference to absences caused by food queues, especially for butter. Because of continuing raids, boys delivering milk and papers were regularly very late. In July 1918 the County Doctor was deeply concerned about pupils working outside school hours and threatened to summon parents under the Childrens' Care Act unless they let them recuperate. Despite legislation in 1923 regarding hours worked out of school, it appears that the children were still doing the same rounds but completing them more quickly.

The effect of the war on the pupils is shown by a comment in February 1919: 'the strain of the war being over, the children appear to be on the verge of collapse'. References are being made as late as 1923 to the effect of air raids on the childrens' concentration. However, the school was clearly maintaining its standards. In 1919 an SPCC Inspector commented on the splendid condition of the boys 'considering that these embrace

An infants' class in 1921

the poorest class in Wanstead', and 'Tho' I have been thro' so many schools this is the first educational establishment I have visited'. New activities were made available, such as bee-keeping - the school had six hives in 1920 - and a Hobby Club; in 1923 a wireless was brought into school. Gardening was started again but abandoned after three years because of persistent theft. February 1930 saw the introduction of a milk scheme whereby a third of a pint of milk could be purchased for 1d at morning break.

Financial and staffing problems continued to plague the school. In 1922 the Church Council felt unable to maintain its level of help. According to correspondence held by the National Society, some council members did not wish to retain the church schools. The letter, however, states that:

> It is a most important school in a growing district which is promising to be very populous. It would be a disaster if church people were allowed to surrender it.

Though a letter from the headmaster in 1927 refers to the school's chequered history, he believed it had 'turned the corner', but by 1934 there were again financial difficulties when £1500 was needed for repairs, probably related to the school's reorganization for junior boys, junior girls and infants. The Bishop of Chelmsford's concern is recorded in a letter:

> I believe that the weak position which the Church of England holds in the life of the working classes today is very largely attributable to the way we have let our schools go, and I earnestly trust that Wanstead will be the last place to throw up the sponge in this matter.

Once again the required money was raised. Staffing problems seem to relate mainly to low pay: one teacher was living at Chatham because of the high local housing costs, and consequently arriving late and leaving early. Because of 'incessant inspections' another teacher was ordered into a sanatorium. In 1926 the headmaster notes that he has had seventeen different teachers in two years because of the low pay. The stress caused Horatio Sheaf to have a nervous breakdown in 1920, and after a number of periods of ill-health he finally retired in January 1924. However, by 1938 the Inspector is full

of praise for the school's success following the 1934 reorganization.

Again war brought disruption to the school. The first evacuations took place on 3 September 1939 when 110 children were sent to Castle Street School, Saffron Walden, and a

A view of the new school buildings, opened in 1980 (David Wood)

number of teachers were transferred there too. One hundred children from Wanstead and Woodford were sent to Wickham Bishops. A further group went to Camborne, Cornwall in June 1940. A shelter for fifty boys was built in the playground. The buildings, though suffering no direct hits, did experience general damage from bombs falling close by. The one innovation during wartime was the introduction of school meals. The first lunch was served on 27 September 1942 to fifty-nine boys.

In the post-war years the diocese had to review its church schools because many of them had suffered war damage or were in a poor state of repair. By 1949 they had decided that Wanstead Schools were second or third on the diocesan list of those which had to be retained. Rebuilding was required at an estimated cost of £58,000, which was eventually raised. In

1950, under the terms of the 1944 Education Act, the school's aided status was confirmed, making the managers' only financial burden the external fabric of the building. After the work was complete, the three schools were amalgamated in 1953 and re-organized for mixed juniors and infants. This event is noted, perhaps regretfully, by the head of the Boys School on April 1: 'So passes Wanstead Junior Boys' School'.

The last major development took place in 1980, when the school was completely rebuilt. The parish resolved to retain control of the school as a voluntary aided primary school. This meant raising £25,000 towards the total cost of £381,622; the diocese also contributed £20,000. The debt incurred by the parish to undertake this work was finally repaid in 1990. The school can now accommodate 245 pupils. The new hall was deliberately larger than is required for a one-form-entry school, in order to preserve the dimensions of the former Drummond Room. At each end are stained-glass windows, designed to represent the two churches of the parish. The governing body consists of representatives from the parish, the diocese, the local education authority, parents and teachers, and education continues to be based on Christian principles. Even with a modern school, building work still continues: during 1990 an open courtyard area is being roofed over with a glass dome to provide an additional activities space. This work is being funded from a recent bequest and will be named the Gordon Browning Court. Once again, government legislation has brought changes, the Local Management of Schools giving much greater financial responsibilities to the head and governors, as well as the task of implementing the National Curriculum.

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY

CHANCEL: The east window is a memorial to the Revd William Pitt Wigram, replacing the original 18th-century window depicting Christ carrying the cross. At the same time as this window was installed, stained glass was placed in a number of the windows on the south side of the Church, at ground and gallery level. The altarpiece depicts the burial of Christ, and the altar-table itself is believed to have come from Wanstead House. The north side of the chancel contains several monuments to past rectors of Wanstead.

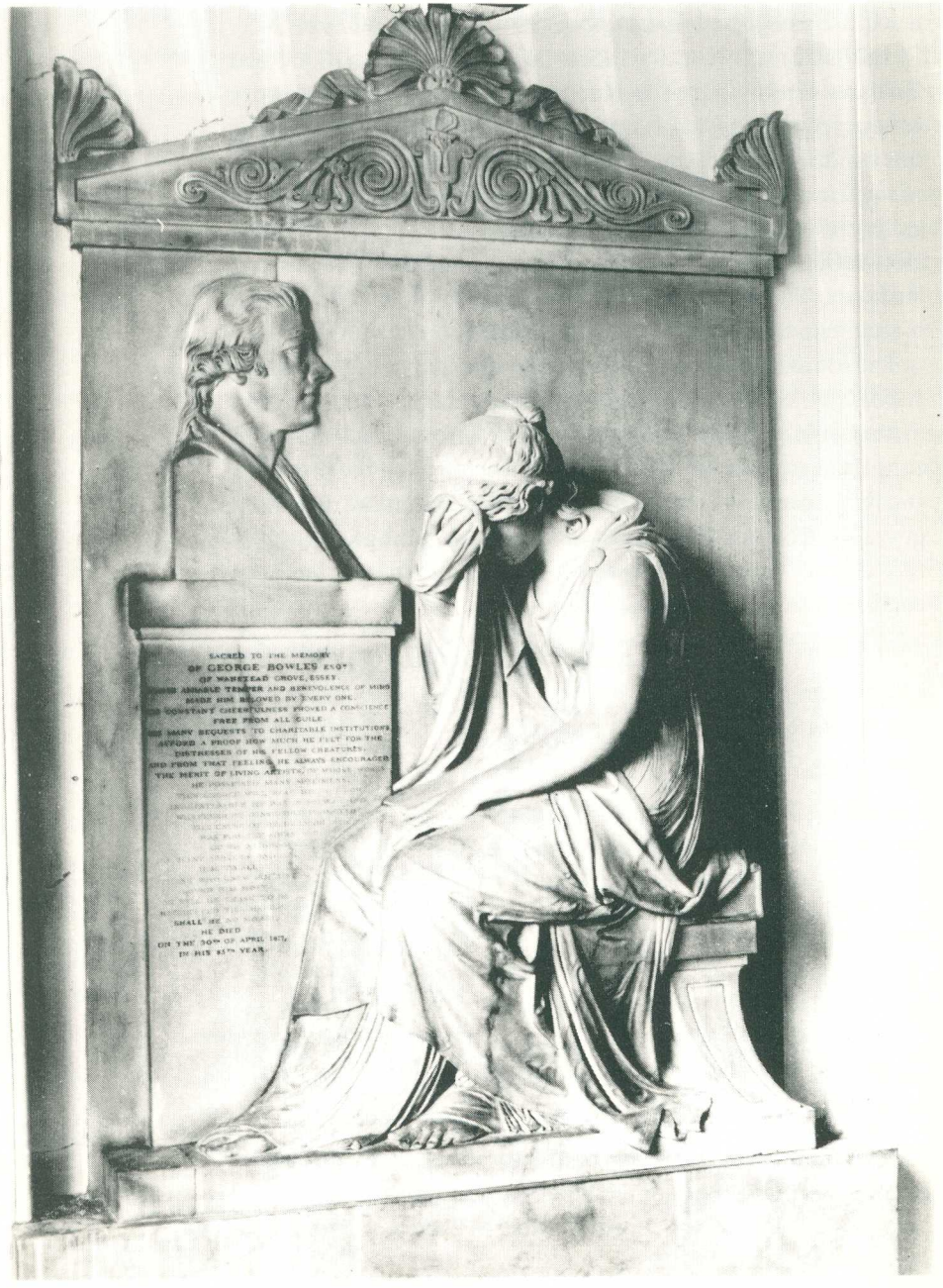
The south side of the chancel is dominated by a memorial, by John Nost, to Sir Josiah Child (d.1699), who was instrumental in transforming the Wanstead manor into a much admired country seat. The memorial was transferred from the previous, smaller church, where it must have held an even more dominant position. The skull, the hour-glass, and the bubbles, blown by the youth, are all symbols of mortality. Nost enjoyed considerable royal patronage.

PULPIT: An elegant example in oak with IHS monogram of walnut and sycamore, restored in 1890; on that occasion the sounding-board, previously used as a vestry table, was repositioned and the present finial added.

PEWS: These remain as originally in 1790, except for the present choir-pews which were given in 1900.

FONT: In memory of the Revd Gerald FitzGerald, whose memorial can be seen next to the lectern; the font dates from the late 19th century. A previous font from a much earlier period is still stored in the (now-sealed) vaults under the church. The oak fir-cone and leaf finial on the lid is the original finial for the pulpit, but it was returned to the church in 1901 too late to be replaced in its correct position.

MEMORIALS: Few memorials were transferred from the previous structure, and those which were are now positioned at the back of the church. Of note is that of David Petty (d.1745) by Peter Scheemakers, who also carved ornamental vases for


SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF GEORGE BOWLES ESQ^R
OF WANSTEAD GROVE, ESSEX
THOSE AMIABLE TEMPER AND BENEVOLENCE OF MIND
WHICH MADE HIM BELOVED BY EVERY ONE
HIS CONSTANT CHEERFULNESS PROVED A CONSCIENCE
FREE FROM ALL GUILE
HIS MANY BEQUESTS TO CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS
AFFORD A PROOF HOW MUCH HE FELT FOR THE
DISTRESSES OF HIS FELLOW CREATURES
AND FROM THAT FEELING HE ALWAYS ENCOURAGED
THE MERIT OF LIVING ARTISTS
SHALL BE
HE DIED
ON THE 30TH OF APRIL 1815
IN HIS 83RD YEAR

Wanstead House. At the west end of the north gallery is the memorial to Joshua Knowles (d.1834), by Sir Richard Westmacott.

George Bowles (d.1817), a considerable benefactor of church and school, is commemorated in the north side of the gallery with a memorial by Sir Francis Chantrey in the classical style depicting a grieving woman. Above this memorial is one of the two original stained-glass windows; this one bears the arms of George III, and the other those of Sir James Tylney Long.

Memorial to George Bowles by Sir Francis Chantrey (1817) (CL)

The vault of the Parish Church, showing an earlier font in use in the church (PEM)

CHURCHYARD: There are some 1800 tombstones in the three-acre churchyard, of which about fifty date from the 18th century or earlier. These lie in the immediate vicinity of the medieval church, which can be identified by the line of grave slabs parallel to and some twenty metres to the south of the present church. These are set in the chancel of the medieval church and include the grave of Sir John Huntercombe, which shows the indent of a brass shield and figure now removed. To the east in the sanctuary is the grave of the Revd James Pound (d.1724) with the modern tribute from the Astronomical Society.

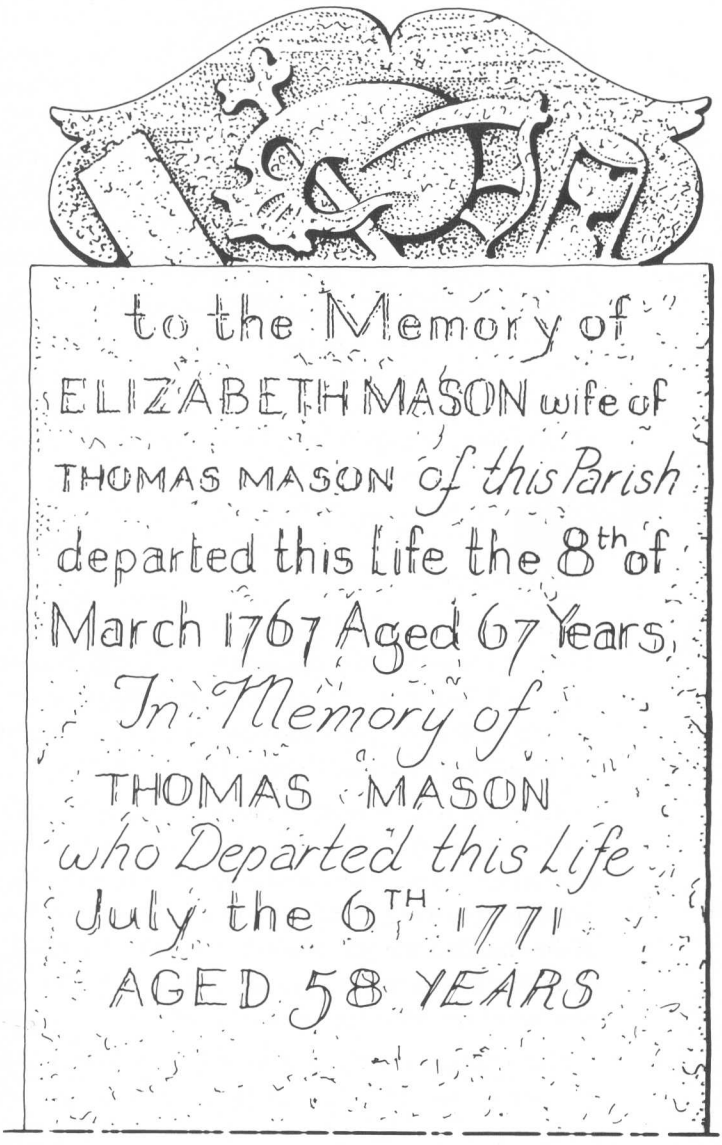
The Watchman's Box was a memorial to the Wilton family and lies to the south of the early church. In the area around it are a group of 18th-century gravestones with carvings symbolic of mortality, including skulls and cross-bones, scythes, hour-glasses, torches and trumpets. Look particularly for those of the Crump family dating from the 1770s, which are north-west of the Watchman's Box. There are over fifty 'symbol stones' in the churchyard.

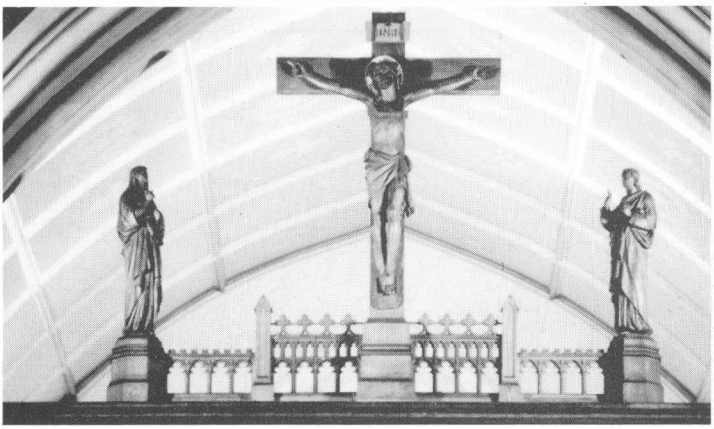
To the south of the old church lies the tombstone of one Thomas Turpin of Whitechapel (d.1719), who is supposed to be Dick Turpin's uncle. At its west end there is the grave of Savill, a victualler (d.1756). The earliest stone in the churchyard commemorates James Waly (d.1685).

Recent graves of interest include that of the three Nutter sisters, Jessie (d.1919), Mary and Gertrude (both d.1926) patrons and benefactors of the parish. In the modern part of the churchyard along the path running south from the east end of the church is the grave of Jabez Bunting Dimbleby (d.1907), described as Journalist, Author and Biblical Chronologer. A number of previous rectors are buried here.

Many of the early stones are badly worn and can only be read by careful use of light. A full survey of the churchyard including drawings of the stones and inscriptions was undertaken in 1987. The archive is housed at the Passmore Edwards Museum in the London Borough of Newham.

One of the many finely carved symbol-stones in the churchyard of the Parish Church (Graham Reed)


to the Memory of
ELIZABETH MASON wife of
THOMAS MASON of this Parish
departed this Life the 8th of
March 1767 Aged 67 Years
In Memory of
THOMAS MASON
who Departed this Life
July the 6TH 1771
AGED 58 YEARS



The figure of Our Lord from the rood at Christ Church (David Wood)

CHRIST CHURCH

This contains memorials to a number of rectors, and to Elizabeth Charlotte Bangs who was a substantial benefactor of the new church. There is also a memorial to Lady Morrison, another benefactor, through whose generosity the church acquired the original stained glass, destroyed in the Second World War. Further memorials are to be found in the chapel situated in the south aisle. The north aisle contains a small altar dedicated to the Holy Family.

The new high altar was placed in the church in 1956, as a memorial to the Revds Godwin Birchenough and Charles Kempson Waller, and the angels -previously in Ely Theological College - were added in 1974. The east window was given in memory of Jessie Nutter (d.1919) by her sisters; it depicts Christ as the Eternal Priest, censed by two angels in deacon's vestments. The 1920s rood was previously in the chapel of Salisbury Teacher Training College. In the porch are a number of boards recording peals which were rung on Christ Church bells to commemorate great national events.

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POST-SCRIPT
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