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'HEAVENLY' HENRY

The Life and Times
of Philip Henry
1631-1696

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David Hayns

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'HEAVENLY' HENRY

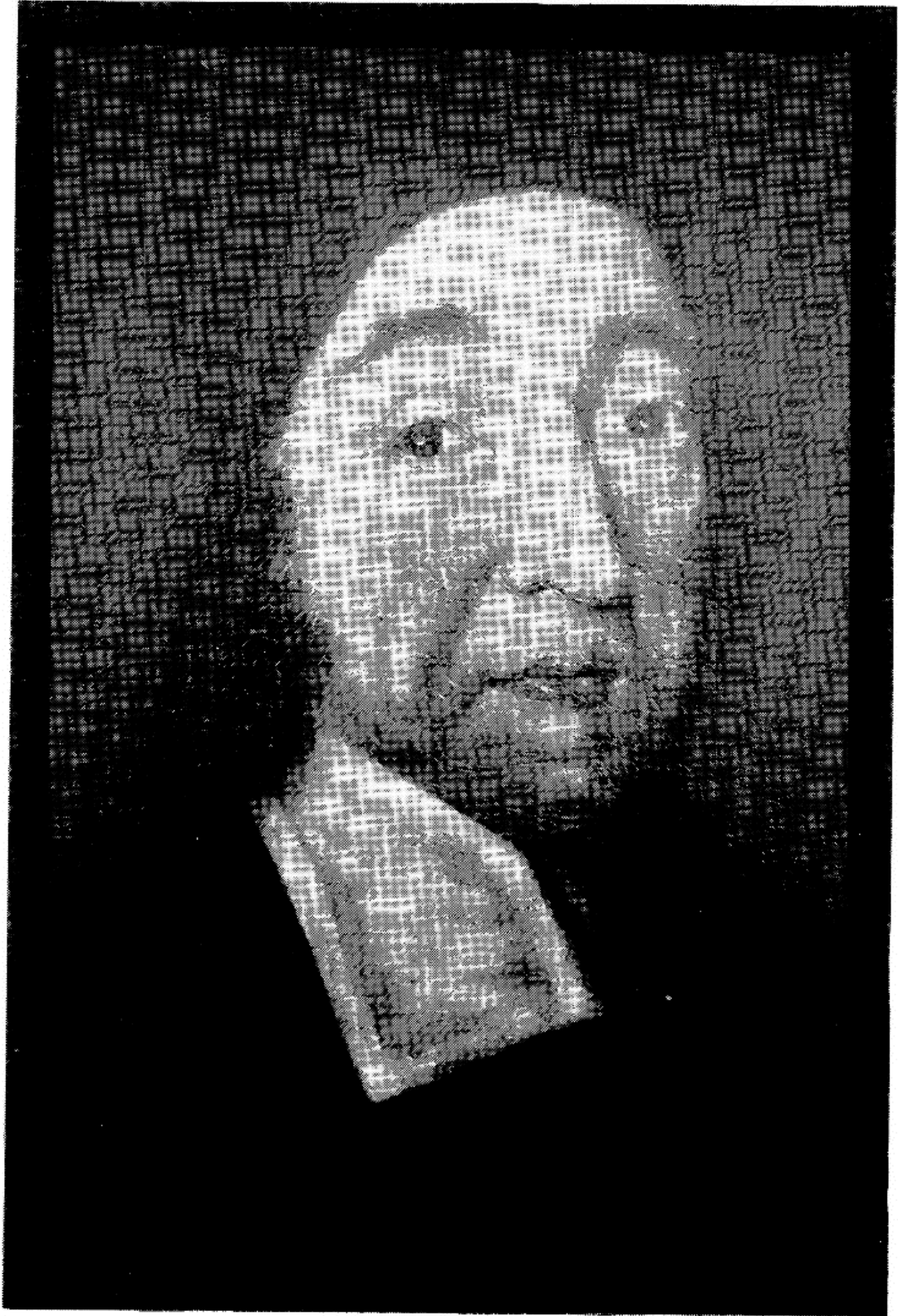
The Life and Times
of Philip Henry
1631-1696

David Hayns

Published by the author to mark the
Tercentenary of Philip Henry's death
June 24th 1996

Stoke Cottage Malpas Cheshire

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PHILIP HENRY
From a portrait painted around 1690

THE CENTURY OF PEPYS AND 'PILGRIM'S PROGRESS'

It is difficult to understand just why Philip Henry became so well known in his time, and has been so well remembered since his death in 1696. On the surface he appears to be just one of around 2,000 ministers holding Presbyterian views who suffered during the turbulent times which followed the Civil Wars, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England in 1660. He was the close contemporary of two far more famous seventeenth century men, John Bunyan (1628-1688) and John Milton (1608-1674), the authors respectively of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost*. Both of them, like Philip Henry, suffered terms of imprisonment as a result of standing up for their religious beliefs.

There is no evidence that the three men ever knew each other. Their religious convictions reflected three of the different strands of Puritanism that emerged during the course of the seventeenth century. These were forerunners of some of the Christian denominations that still exist today. John Bunyan was a Baptist; John Milton allied himself to the Independents, later to become known as Congregationalists; and Philip Henry became a Presbyterian. It is only during our present century that the wounds of seventeenth century religious divisions have begun to heal. Perhaps the most visible sign has been the merging of the Congregationalists with the Presbyterian Church of England, to create the United Reformed Church.

John Bunyan and John Milton are remembered through their many published works. Philip Henry, although he wrote an enormous amount for his own private purposes, published nothing. It was his son Matthew who brought Philip to more than local notice, with the publication in 1698 of his *Account of the Life and Death of Mr Philip Henry, Minister of the Gospel at Broad-Oak, near Whitchurch in Shropshire*. Matthew himself was to obtain lasting national and international recognition for his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, first published between 1708 and 1710. The *Commentary* has been through many editions. It is still in print and still in use as a standard theological textbook.

It seems that Matthew 'caught' the habit of writing from his father. Even at the tender age of twelve, during his London childhood, Philip

would accompany his mother to early morning 'lectures' at Westminster Abbey, where he would take notes on each lecture then write it up in detail afterwards. This was a habit that stayed with him for the rest of his life. Huge quantities of his notes, both of sermons which he listened to and of sermons which he preached himself, survive to this day. They can be found in national collections such as those of the British Library and Oxford's Bodleian Library, in local record offices, and in the private collections of many of his descendants. William Turner, who was Matthew's private tutor at Broad Oak for a few years, told how every morning and evening Philip would read a chapter of the Bible to his family. He would then 'expound' (explain) it to them very clearly, after which the children would each write a summary of his exposition. By this means each of his five children eventually had written down their own version of an exposition of the whole Bible. This must have stood Matthew in good stead during his own later career as a minister. It has been suggested that he may have re-used his childhood notes to help in his writing of the great **Commentary on the Whole Bible**. It is hard to imagine a modern family submitting to the discipline which Philip expected of his children, however enthusiastic they might be in their religious beliefs.

Matthew's Life and Death of Mr Philip Henry provides the bare bones of the story of Philip's life, from his birth in Westminster on August 24th 1631 to his death at Broad Oak on June 24th 1696. There was a great fashion in the seventeenth century for writing the 'lives' of pious religious men and Matthew's biography of his father fits into the general pattern. However, unlike the famous painting of Oliver Cromwell - another of Philip Henry's contemporaries - these biographies tended to emphasise only the good points of their subjects, rather than portraying them "with warts and all". For the intimate details of Philip's everyday life, and for an insight into his human fears and failings, we have to turn to his diaries. These were never intended for publication and after his death they were distributed among his many descendants. Fortunately one of these descendants, Matthew Henry Lee, who became Vicar of Hanmer in the nineteenth century, went to great trouble to collect together twenty-two of the surviving diaries. He edited them and published them in 1882, along with some correspondence, as the

Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, M.A., of Broad Oak, Flintshire.

Here it is interesting to introduce another of Philip's contemporaries. Eighteen months after his own birth another future diarist was born in Westminster, not so very far from Philip's own birthplace in Whitehall. This was Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), perhaps the most famous diarist of all time. Pepys's diaries, covering the years 1660 to 1669, are far more detailed and significant than those of Philip Henry. Even so, Philip's diaries from 1657 to 1696 provide an interesting local view of many important national events, such as the Plague, the Great Fire of London and the Dutch Wars, also described by Samuel Pepys. We have no evidence that Philip and Samuel ever met. However we do know that they both spent their early life in London; that they were educated in London schools (Philip at Westminster School and Samuel at St Paul's School); that they both attended St Margaret's church in Westminster at various times; and that they were both present on January 30th 1649 at the execution of King Charles I. Could we assume that it is quite possible that they may have met at some time? Their religious lives followed completely opposite paths. From being the son of a servant of the Royal household of Charles I, Philip eventually became a Puritan dissenter against the Church of England, ending his life as a country cleric. In sharp contrast Samuel, the son of a tailor and a washmaid, grew up in a strict Puritan family but came to be a favoured servant of the Roman Catholic King Charles II. Perhaps the difference in the degrees of sophistication of their two lives is symbolised by the fact that Philip wrote his diaries in longhand, using a crow quill pen, while Samuel used a form of shorthand and wrote with the newly invented fountain pen!



SAMUEL PEPYS

TURBULENT TIMES

The course of Philip Henry's life was affected significantly by exceptional national events and religious upheavals. They mark out the seventeenth century as being an unusually turbulent period in British history. Monarchs came and monarchs went, each with his or her own religious bias, ranging from the outright Roman Catholicism of Charles II to the staunch Protestantism of William III and Mary II. Philip lived through four monarchies, as well as the periods of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate.

Charles I (1625-1649)

The story of the reign of Charles I, second of the Stuart kings, is largely the story of his tussles with Parliament. After it had defied his authority, Charles dissolved Parliament in 1629 and for the next eleven years ruled without it. He made himself unpopular with the nation by introducing a number of more or less illegal taxes, to provide him with sufficient money to run the country. When Parliament finally was recalled in 1640, it lasted for twenty years and became known as the 'Long Parliament'.

This was the Parliament which, through its opposition to the king's policies, forced him to raise the Royal Standard at Nottingham in August 1642. It was this action which signalled the start of the English Civil Wars. For the next six years the Parliamentarians (Roundheads) were ranged against the Royalists (Cavaliers), leading finally to the execution of King Charles in January 1649. After his death his son attempted to succeed to the throne as Charles II. However, he was defeated by Cromwell's army at the Battle of Worcester in September 1651, after which he fled to France. He was to remain an exile there until 1660.

The Commonwealth (1649-1653)

Following the execution of Charles I, Parliament abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords. A 'Commonwealth' was set up, run by the 'Rump'. The Rump was the 'tail end' of the Long Parliament. Most of its members held Puritan beliefs. They were either Presbyterians, who favoured government of the Church of England by 'Presbyters' or Elders rather than by Bishops, or Independents, who believed that every Christian congregation should be self-governing and not bound in obedience to any higher earthly power.

The Protectorate (1653-1660)

In 1653 Oliver Cromwell, whose New Model Army had been such an important force in deciding the outcome of the Civil Wars, became head of state with the title of Lord Protector. During the time of the Commonwealth and Protectorate many of the parish clergy were biased towards Presbyterianism, which allowed for their ordination by 'classes' of Elders instead of by the Bishops. When Oliver Cromwell died in 1658 he was succeeded by his son Richard, who proved ineffective and unpopular. He soon resigned from public office and retired into a private life. The country was placed under military rule but there was a growing demand for the restoration of the monarchy.

Charles II (1660-1685)

In 1660 the Convention, as Parliament was known, invited Charles II to return from France and to take the throne again for the Royal House of Stuart. Charles had very strong sympathies with the Roman Catholic church and supported his Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Clarendon, in the passing of four Acts of Parliament. Known as the 'Clarendon Code', these Acts were designed to suppress those who refused to conform to the Church of England and the Book of Common Prayer. The Code was aimed particularly at the Presbyterians and the Independents.

These four Acts were: **The Corporation Act** (1661) - this ruled that any person who was not a communicating member of the Church of England could not hold public office, for example as a member of a town corporation (council); **The third Act of Uniformity** (1662) - this ruled that all ministers of the Church of England had to be ordained by Bishops, not by Presbyters (Elders), and that they must use the Book of Common Prayer in their services. Ministers who refused to conform would be turned out of their livings. This led to a mass exodus of around 2,000 of them - around one in five of all the parish clergy and including Philip Henry - on Saint Bartholomew's Day, August 24th 1662. The day has been described ever since as 'Black Bartholomew'; **The Conventicle Act** (1664) - this Act was designed to stop Nonconformist clergymen from setting up their own congregations away from the parish churches. It became an offence for five or more persons, not of the same household, to be present at such a religious meeting. Offenders could be fined or imprisoned for the first and second offences, and transported abroad for seven years for a third offence. It was this Act that led to the

imprisonment of thousands of nonconformists, including Presbyterians like Philip Henry; **The Five Mile Act** (1665) - during the time of the Plague in London many of the 'approved' clergy of the Church of England deserted their churches and nonconformist ministers quickly stepped in to take over their duties. The Five Mile Act forbade any nonconformist ministers to come within five miles of any town or parish where they had ever preached, except when travelling. The Act also forbade them to work as schoolmasters.

Clarendon fell out of favour with Charles II, for various reasons, and was dismissed in 1667. He went into exile, where he wrote his monumental 'History of the Rebellion', the first history of the English Civil Wars. By 1670 the king had declared himself publicly as a Roman Catholic. In 1672 he issued the first **Declaration of Indulgence**, which repealed all penal laws against nonconformists and Roman Catholics, but in the following year Parliament forced him to withdraw the Declaration. Until the death of Charles in 1685 there was a constant fear that the country might return to Roman Catholicism. It was this fear that led to various conspiracies against the life of the king, including the 'Popish Plot' of 1678, uncovered by Titus Oates, and the 'Rye House Plot' of 1683.

The two most well remembered events of Charles's reign, recorded in detail by Samuel Pepys, were the Great Plague of 1665 and the great Fire of London in 1666. The Plague killed more than 10,000 people and the Fire, although it cleared the capital of Plague, reduced two thirds of the city to ashes.

James II (1685-1689)

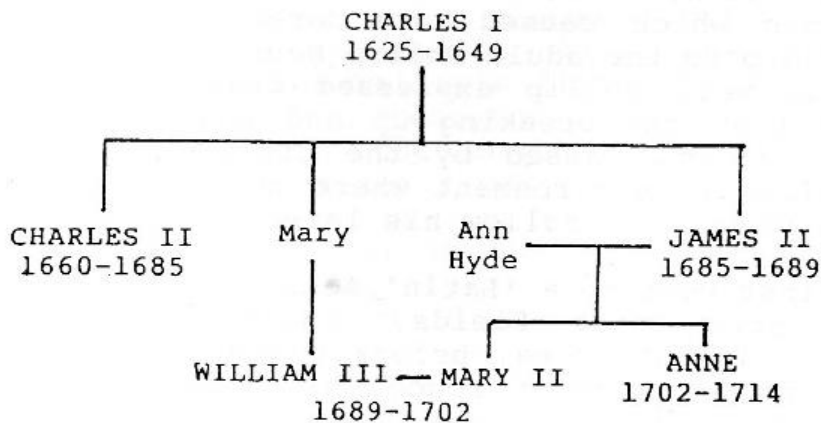
James II was the younger brother of Charles II. He was a declared Roman Catholic and made no secret of his wish to return the country to his religious beliefs. Feeling against him ran high, leading to the plotting of a two-fold rebellion by two Protestant aristocrats, the Earl of Argyll and the Duke of Monmouth. Monmouth was a bastard son of Charles II but was no favourite of his uncle, King James. The two plotters had been living in exile in Holland. In June 1685 Argyll landed with his followers in Scotland but was taken prisoner and executed. Shortly afterwards Monmouth landed at Lyme, in Dorset, and was proclaimed King at Taunton. At the Battle of Sedgemoor he was defeated by the Royal forces, captured and

executed on London's Tower Hill. A terrible revenge was taken on his supporters by the infamous Judge Jeffreys (a native of Wrexham) during the 'Bloody Assizes', when over 320 persons were hanged and 840 sold into slavery in the West Indies.

On his own authority, James issued a second **Declaration of Indulgence** in 1688, which once again suppressed all penal laws against nonconformists and Roman Catholics. However, his attempts to overthrow the Church of England and to re-introduce Roman Catholicism, plus his claim to have authority to control the laws of the land without consent of Parliament - the 'Divine Right of Kings' - were among the factors which led to the Great Revolution of 1688. This followed an invitation, issued by leading members of both sides of Parliament (the Whigs and the Tories) to the Dutch Prince William of Orange, nephew and son-in-law of James II, to come over with an army and seize the throne from his uncle. William landed at Torbay in Devon on November 5th 1688. Not a good date for Roman Catholics! King James, deserted by his friends, fled to France leaving William free to march on London. In 1689 Parliament agreed to offer the throne jointly to William and his wife Mary, the daughter of James.

William and Mary (1689-1702)

The return to Protestantism under William and Mary led to the **Toleration Act** of 1689. This allowed freedom of worship to all Protestant dissenters, including Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Quakers. Philip Henry was able to enjoy the benefits of this new freedom until his death in 1696.



PLAYMATE OF PRINCES

Philip was the son of John Henry (born 1590), a native of South Wales. He had taken his surname, after an old Welsh custom, from the Christian name of his own father, Henry Williams. As a young man John Henry left home with very little money in his pocket, to follow the time-honoured quest of seeking his fortune in London. In this he was successful since he managed to obtain a post with Philip Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke. Continuing his path 'from rags to riches' he soon became the Earl's 'gentleman' - nowadays we might call him a personal assistant - and was then promoted to be a servant of Charles I, when the Earl became Lord Chamberlain. John's first royal post was as Keeper of the Orchard at Whitehall, a job which provided him with a house, clothing and a comfortable income. He lived by the Garden Stairs onto the River Thames at Whitehall and supplemented his income with tips from the royal visitors he attended, as they came to and fro by water.

John Henry married a widow, Mrs Magdalen Rochdale of Westminster, by whom he had one son and five daughters. The son was Philip, born August 24th 1631 and named after Philip, the Earl of Pembroke, who agreed to be one of his godparents.

Later, John was promoted to be 'Page of the Back Stairs' to the king's second son, James the Duke of York, the future King James II. As the young Philip Henry grew up close to the Royal household he would often join in play with James and his elder brother Charles, later to become King Charles II. It is ironical that both of these childhood companions, when they became kings in their turn, should have been responsible for actions which caused considerable suffering and hardship to the adult Philip Henry. Philosophical as he was, Philip expressed gratitude in later life that the breaking up and scattering of the royal court, caused by the Civil Wars, released him from an environment where he might have found it difficult to follow his later beliefs.

He first went to a 'Latin' school at the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, followed by another school in Battersea, before being admitted to the ancient Westminster School at the age of twelve. When he moved into the upper school in 1645 his master was Richard Busby, later Doctor Busby, who was to have a great influence on the shaping of

his beliefs. Many years later, after he had been 'ejected' from the parish of Worthenbury because of his Presbyterian views, he met Doctor Busby again. His former schoolmaster asked him, "Prythee, child, what made thee a nonconformist?" to which Philip replied, "Truly, sir, you made me one, for you taught me those things that hindered me from conforming."

As a schoolboy he seems to have been incredibly studious. He received special permission from Doctor Busby to attend a lecture at Westminster Abbey from six o'clock until eight o'clock every morning. These lectures, or sermons, were delivered by various leading clergymen. In addition, his mother took him with her every Thursday to another lecture at St Martin-in-the-Fields. On Sundays they attended New Chapel in the morning and, in the afternoon, their parish church of St Margaret, Westminster, close by Westminster Abbey. It was then that Philip developed the habit which he later passed on to his children, of keeping notes of all the sermons he heard and writing them up in detail afterwards.

It was the custom among the more industrious boys who boarded at Westminster School to study throughout the night in 'shifts'. Philip favoured studying from midnight until about three in the morning. He would light his candle and stand it on the head of the bed, to give light for reading. On one occasion, when he fell asleep over his books, the candle fell from the bedhead and burned his pillow. Fortunately some of the other boys were awake and saved him from disaster.

IN THE CITY OF DREAMING SPIRES

Philip reaped the reward of his hard work when he went up to Christ Church College, Oxford, in December 1647. He was sixteen years old, a normal age for university entrance in those days. The Easter before he went to Oxford he received his first communion, at St Margaret's, an occasion which affected him deeply: "There had been treaties before," he wrote, "between my soul and Jesus Christ ... but then, I think it was that the match was made, the knot tied ..."

The choice of Christ Church was possibly influenced by the fact that the Chancellor of the University at that time was his godfather, the Earl of Pembroke. The Earl did not neglect his

godfatherly duties. He gave the new student ten pounds, which was to buy his academic gown, pay his college fees and to provide some spending money.

Shortly after the first battle of the Civil Wars, at Edgehill, Oxfordshire, in October 1642, Oxford had become the headquarters for King Charles. London was under Parliamentary control. The king was not to return to London until he was taken there as a prisoner for his trial at the end of 1648. Following the final defeat of the Royalists, the Parliamentarians had taken Oxford. Shortly after Philip arrived there was a 'visitation' by representatives of Parliament when every person in the university was asked the question "Will you submit to the power of the Parliament?", to which Philip replied, "I submit to the power of Parliament ... so far as I may with a safe conscience..." There were many changes following the visitation, particularly among the academic staff. Those who appeared to have Royalist sympathies were replaced by Parliamentary supporters.

Philip was to spend the rest of his life wrestling with his conscience. He seems to have been extremely hard on himself and regretted that, in his own eyes, he did not take full advantage of the opportunities for hard study that the university offered. Later in life he wrote: "I was too much in love with recreation." He recalled spending time on the bowling green and going for morning drinks to a metheglin house (metheglin is spiced mead), although he claims he was never drunk. However, his own experience at Oxford seems to have affected his judgement later in life, when he refused to let his son Matthew go to university where, he considered, "so many temptations were presented"!

'SUCH A DISMAL UNIVERSAL GROAN'

Towards the end of 1648, while still a student, Philip went home to stay for a time with his father in Whitehall. This coincided with the trial of King Charles, who Philip and his father would see as he took the boat each day at the Garden Stairs, to face his accusers in the Palace of Westminster. Philip was still in London on that fateful day, January 30th 1649, when Charles mounted the scaffold in Whitehall. He was among the thousands present "when the king was beheaded,

and with a very sad heart saw that tragical blow given ... there was such a dismal universal groan among the thousands of people that were within sight of it ... as he never heard before; and desired he might never hear the like again, nor see such a cause for it". Whatever his religious feelings at that time, Philip was opposed to the king's execution and claimed that there was "not one man of them in the kingdom did consent to it".

In 1651 he took his Bachelor of Arts degree, becoming a Master of Arts the following year. Shortly afterwards he preached his first sermon, at the village church of South Hincksey in Oxfordshire, after which he wrote in his diary of his hopes for the future: "The Lord make use of me as an instrument of his glory, and his church's good, in this high and holy calling".

RED BROOK OR RUBICON?

Meanwhile, one hundred and twenty miles away from Oxford in the Flintshire village of Worthenbury the wife of the local squire was looking for a private tutor for her sons. She was Lady Frances Puleston, wife of Judge Roger Puleston. The Pulestons, of the now demolished Emral Hall, were strong supporters of Oliver Cromwell. They had experienced more than their fair share of suffering during the Civil Wars.

Lady Frances wrote to her cousin Francis Palmer, a student at Christ Church, to ask him to recommend a suitable tutor. The terms of the post would be to teach her boys and to preach when required at Worthenbury church, which at that time was a chapel-of-ease to the parish church at Bangor-on-Dee. Francis Palmer asked Philip Henry whether he would be interested, with the result that in September 1653 Philip travelled from Oxford to Worthenbury. He wrote later of "...passing over the brook that parts between Flintshire and Shropshire (the Red Brook) ... would sometimes affectionately use that word of Jacob's - With my staff I passed over this Jordan".

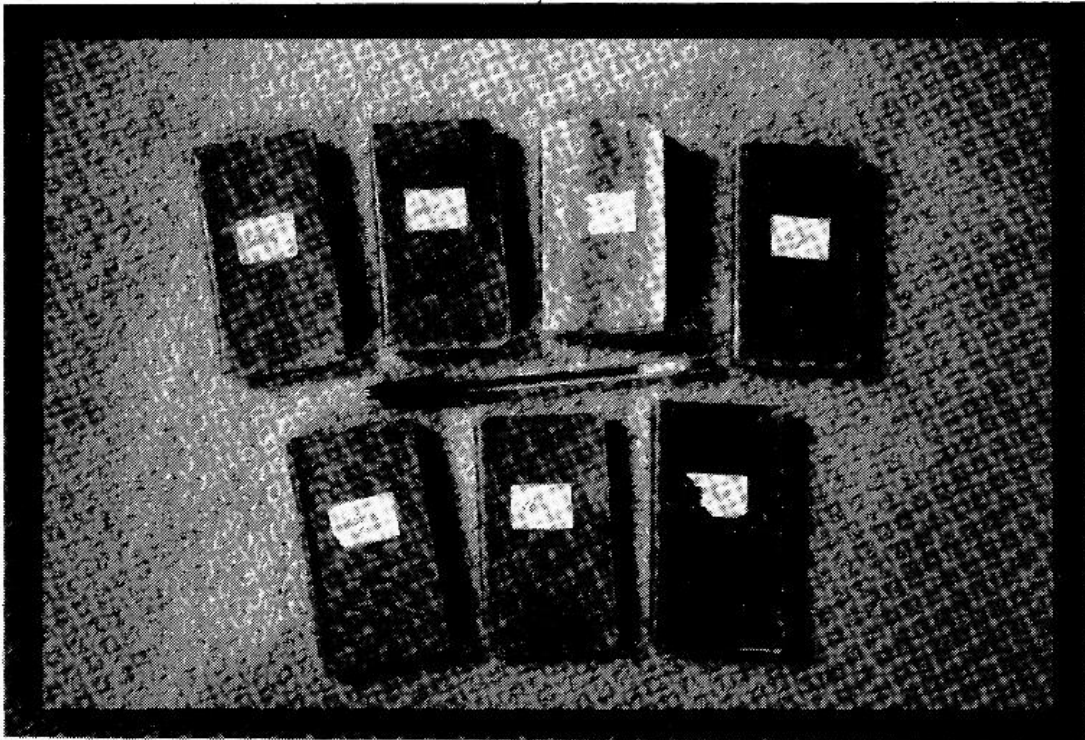
The rest of his life was to be centred in the English Maelor, that detached part of the former Welsh county of Flintshire which borders onto the English counties of Shropshire and Cheshire. At the time of writing, following the most recent twentieth century upheaval in local government reorganisation, it forms part of the County Borough of Wrexham Maelor.

It was mutually agreed that initially Philip should stay at Emral for just six months. However, his preaching at Worthenbury church - described by himself as "a plain and practical way of preaching" - attracted increasing numbers of listeners. from both the parish and elsewhere. Lady Puleston even had the impression that some former frequenters of the local alehouses and bowling greens were preferring to spend their Sundays in church instead! Nevertheless, in line with the agreement, Philip returned to Oxford in the spring of 1654. Determined not to be deprived of her protégé, Lady Frances followed him, complete with her five sons so that he could continue to teach the two oldest.

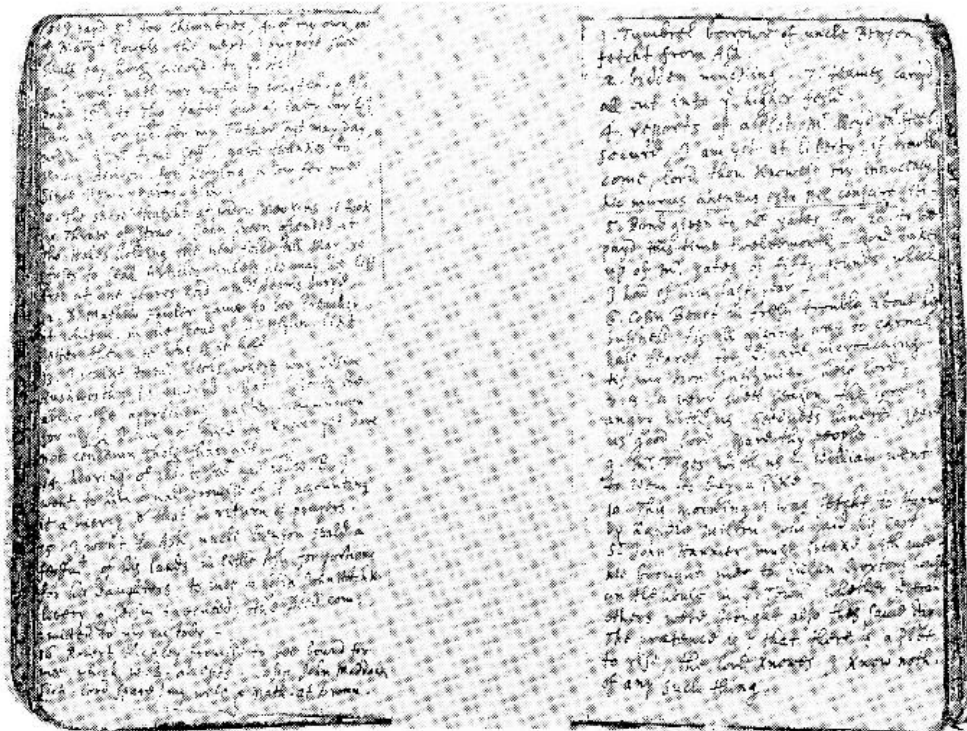
Judge Puleston, under pressure from parishioners and his wife, wrote to Philip the following October. He begged him to come back to Worthenbury, offering a guaranteed annual income of £100. In addition he promised to build Philip a house in Worthenbury, with a sixty year lease. Philip yielded and returned to live at Emral, until he moved into his new house in 1657.

His next concern was to seek ordination as a minister of religion. This was in the time when Oliver Cromwell ruled the country as Lord Protector and the Presbyterians had a strong hold on the Church of England. Therefore it was to the Presbyterian 'class' of Bradford North in Shropshire, set up by authority of Parliament in 1647, that Philip turned for ordination. After satisfying the Elders of his fitness for the task ahead he was ordained as a 'Presbyter' at Prees church on September 16th 1657. His ordination was through the laying on of hands by the Presbyters who acted as Elders for Bradford North, including the ministers from the churches of Wem, Prees, Newport and Hanmer.

Philip was 'presented' to the church of Worthenbury as its minister. Mr Fogg, rector at Bangor-on-Dee, was not very happy about this at first since he considered Worthenbury should be under his control but differences were overcome. Eventually Philip and Mr Fogg became close friends.



PHILIP HENRY'S DIARIES FOR THE YEARS 1661/63/67/71/72/74/79
 Each diary measures 10 cms (4 inches) by 5 cms (2 inches)



PAGES FROM PHILIP HENRY'S DIARY FOR 1663

The left hand page (April) includes references for payment of Hearth Tax and to thatching a tenant's cottage. The right hand page tells of his arrest and imprisonment at Hanmer on October 10th

'HEAVENLY HENRY'

Philip was by nature a peaceable man and sought to live in harmony with the local community. He once wrote: "A man cannot wrestle with God and wrangle with his neighbours at the same time". However, there were times when his human feelings got the better of him. Roger Puleston junior, his former pupil and the heir to the Emral estate, he found particularly difficult and they were frequently at odds with each other. Once Roger struck Philip in anger, whereupon Philip retaliated by hitting Roger's face, for which he repented afterwards - "...the occasion was zeal for God, though in circumstances ill managed Lord, lay no sin to either of our charge".

Another time he confronted some of the villagers on a Saturday evening when they followed a fiddler to the church, which they proceeded to decorate with flowers and garlands. He accused them of making it more like a play-house than a church. This was in those Puritanical times when such secular pleasures as theatre-going had been suppressed by Parliament.

Generally, though, Philip was well loved and respected in the area, to the extent that he became known by the nickname 'Heavenly Henry'. He was renowned for his ability as a preacher and this led to offers of livings in churches elsewhere. Among others, he was offered the post of vicar at the parish church of St Giles in Wrexham, as well as a comfortable parish near London. He was content to stay in Worthenbury, supported by his fellow ministers in the area. A particular friend was Richard Steel, the minister at Hanmer, to whom he refers frequently in his diaries.

Perhaps his greatest support came from Lady Frances Puleston "the best friend I had on earth", who had first persuaded him to come to Worthenbury. Philip was devastated when she died of breast cancer. She died in the same month (September 1658) as Oliver Cromwell, at which time Philip wrote that there was throughout the country "a great change in the temper of God's people, and a mighty tendency towards peace and unity, as if they were, by consent, weary of their long clashings".

BRING BACK THE KING!

Richard Cromwell, who succeeded his father, turned out to be totally unsuitable to fill his place. He soon resigned from the position of Lord Protector and retired into private life. The mood of the country was beginning to favour a return to the Monarchy. There were two notable attempts to restore the exiled Charles II to the throne, both organised by the alliance of aristocratic Royalists known as the Sealed Knot, in association with agents of the exiled royal court in Cologne. The first unsuccessful attempt, known as 'Penruddock's Rising', took place in the West Country in 1655. The second attempt, from which Worthenbury experienced some side effects, was the Cheshire Rising of 1659, which followed the resignation of Richard Cromwell.

In the summer of 1659 secret plans were prepared for no less than seven simultaneous risings in separate parts of the country. They were designed to lure the New Model Army away from London. Eight important ports, including Chester, were to be seized to provide King Charles and his followers with a choice of landing sites. However, shortly before August 1st, the day planned for the risings, the leaders decided not to press ahead with their plans. Hurried letters were despatched to those responsible for organising each rising. They were all cancelled except for the one in Cheshire, which was to be led by Sir George Booth. It seems that the letter to Sir George reached him too late. On August 2nd the rebels had reached Chester, where they appear to have received the support of the Mayor and Corporation. From London, Major General John Lambert was despatched to Cheshire, with 3,500 horse and foot soldiers of the New Model Army. The whole affair ended in an ignominious defeat for the rebels, when Lambert's forces routed them at Winnington Bridge near Northwich on August 19th.

As Lambert's men made their way back to the south, some of them came through Worthenbury and appeared at service when Philip Henry was preaching. Like many of the New Model Army they were Quakers, as members of the Religious Society of Friends had become known. Following Quaker custom, one of them refused to remove his hat during the singing of the psalms, for which Philip publicly admonished him. In fact, Philip had been suffering for some time at the hands of the

Quakers, who seemed to take delight in baiting him. There was an established Quaker meeting in Malpas, led by John Baddeley, a blacksmith. Once when Baddeley reproved a Malpas gentleman for drinking and swearing, the gentleman is said to have replied, "Why, I'll ask thee one question, whether it is better for me to follow drinking and swearing, or to go and hear Henry?", to which Baddeley answered, "Of the two, rather follow thy drinking and swearing."

It was to be another nine months after the Cheshire Rising before King Charles finally returned to London, in May 1660. Shortly before the king's return, Philip was to experience a major event in his own life.

"I SHOULD LIKE TO GO WITH HIM"

Now established in his own house in Worthenbury, Philip had been seeking a wife to share his life and ministry. He had come to know Katherine, the only daughter and heiress to Daniel Matthews of Broad Oak, Iscoyd. Although geographically in Flintshire, Iscoyd township formed part of the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Malpas in Cheshire. The little church in Iscoyd, Whitewell Chapel, was a chapel of ease for the parish church of St Oswald in Malpas town.

Although Katherine and Philip felt a strong attraction for each other, Katherine's father was not so sure. He objected that although Philip was obviously a gentleman, a scholar and an excellent preacher, he was also a stranger and they did not even know where he came from. "True," Katherine is said to have replied, "but I know where he is going, and I should like to go with him." In spite of the opposition - Daniel Matthews never fully accepted the match - Philip and Katherine were married at Whitewell Chapel on April 26th 1660.

Although Philip had welcomed the return of the king, his former childhood playmate, Charles II had strong Roman Catholic sympathies and soon introduced measures to reform the Church of England. Presbyterian ministers like Philip Henry had evolved forms of worship which did not use the Book of Common Prayer and had done away with some of the traditional rituals of the church, such as the custom of kneeling to receive Holy Communion. Following the Restoration, all clergy had to swear an oath of allegiance to the new regime, which

Philip did in November 1660, before Sir Thomas Hanmer at Overton-on-Dee. Meanwhile, the church authorities tried hard to persuade Philip and those who shared his views to conform to the new ways. The following February Philip went to Chester, where the Dean and the Chancellor at the Cathedral tried to reason with him, warning him that if he did not conform he would be turned out of his job as minister at Worthenbury.

Philip went home and sought solace in his garden, of which he wrote frequently in his diaries: March 15th 1661 - "Garden prepared, I sow, God knows who may reap"; March 20th - "Garden finished, in time of an eclipse, Lord lift up upon me the light of thy countenance, and let nothing cloud it towards my soul".

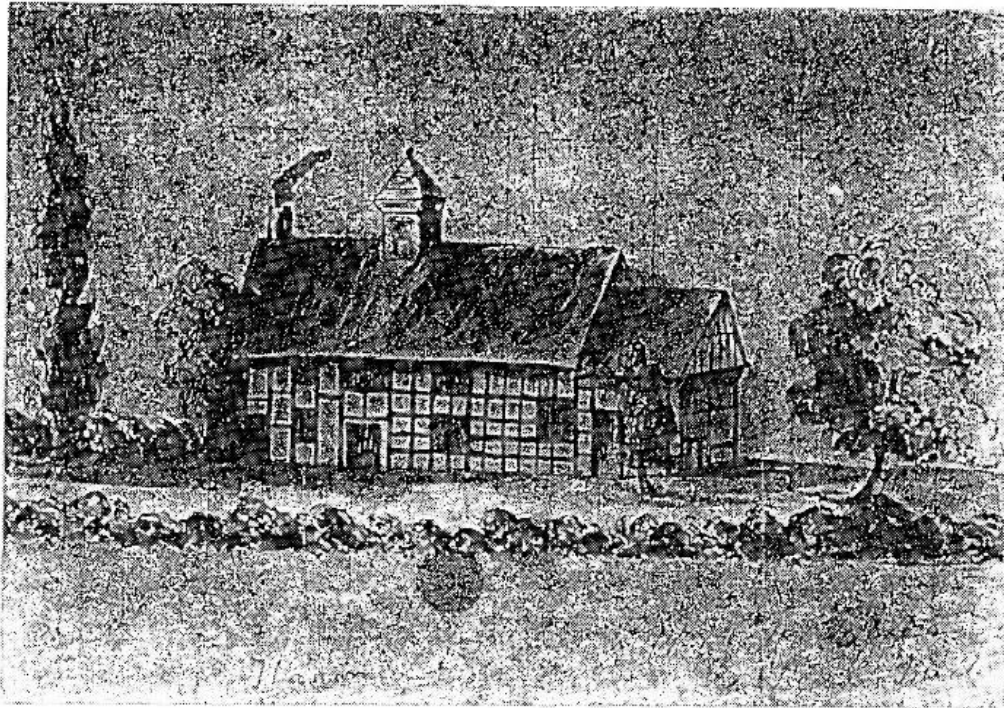
A week later both he and Mr Steel, the minister at Hanmer, were reported to the Assizes at Hawarden for not using the Book of Common Prayer. The persecution of Philip and his fellow Presbyterians had begun in earnest.

'BLACK BARTHOLOMEW' AND AFTER

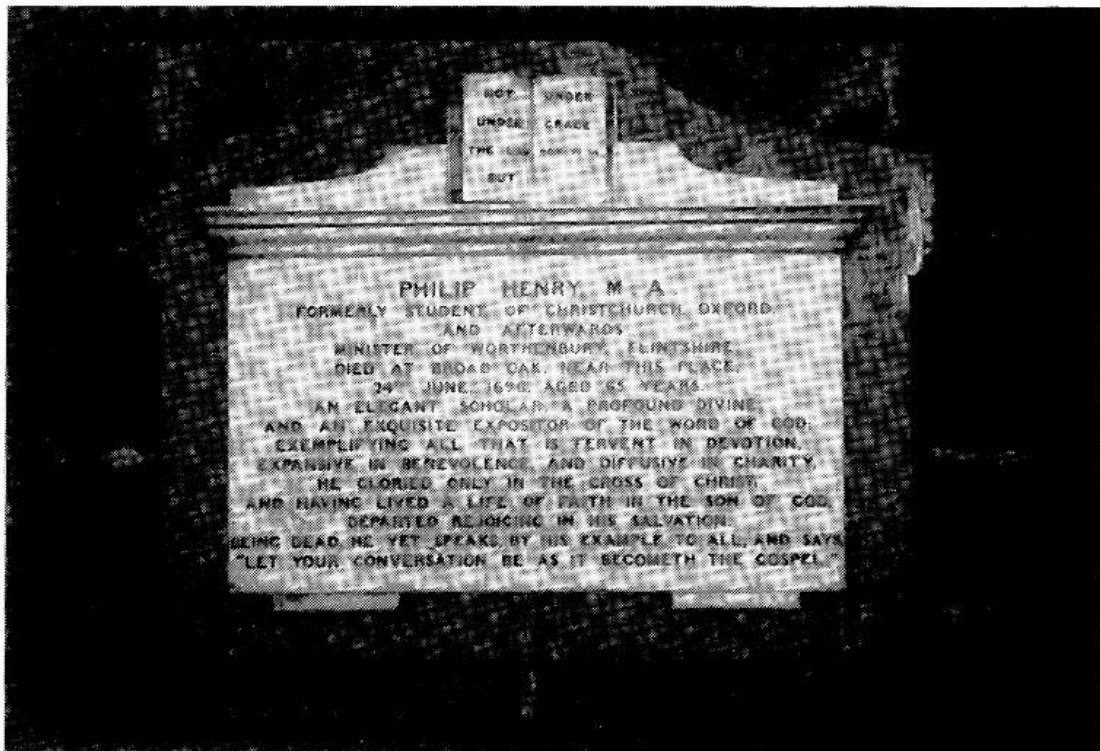
Philip refused to change his ways. Since the death of Lady Frances Puleston he had lost his greatest supporter so that when, in October 1661, Dr Bridgman, Rector of Bangor-on-Dee, came to read his public 'discharge' in Worthenbury church, Philip knew that further resistance was useless. He realised that Dr Bridgman was only carrying out his duty to the new regime and wrote afterwards: "I justify not myself! Lord, lay not my sin to my charge, nor his sin to his!"

Philip was not to preach again at Worthenbury until after the Toleration Act of 1689 but he sometimes preached at other places nearby, until the fateful date of August 24th 1662 - St Bartholomew's Day and Philip's 31st birthday. On that day around 2,000 Presbyterian clergy, about one in five of all the English clergy, were finally turned out of their parishes. Philip and his family - his first son, John, had been born in May 1661 - stayed on in Worthenbury for another month but then moved to Katherine's family home at Broad Oak. Within three weeks their second son, the famous Matthew, was born, on October 18th 1662.

Despite 'Black Bartholomew', as the day became known, there were still some ministers with



WHITWELL CHAPEL IN PHILIP HENRY'S DAY
 THE CHAPEL WAS PULLED DOWN ABOUT 1830 AND THE PRESENT
 BUILDING ERECTED SOON AFTERWARDS



THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE PHILIP HENRY MEMORIAL IN
 ST. ALKMUND'S CHURCH, WHITCHURCH. THIS WAS ERECTED IN 1844
 TO REPLACE THE ORIGINAL LATIN MEMORIAL WHICH IS NOW
 PRESERVED IN WHITWELL CHURCH

Presbyterian views who managed to stay on in their parishes. The Henrys frequently visited Tilstock where "Mr Thomas is still preserved in his liberty and the place is a little sanctuary to us".

The family attempted to settle down to a normal life at Broad Oak. Philip's diary for the first half of 1663 is full of the details of domestic life. He wrote of his beloved gardening - "I first attempted to graft and tried two ways" - "great store of plums about the house this year, beyond that which hath been ordinary"; of farming the Broad Oak estate - "at home making hay, the weather seasonable"; of supervising repairs to the tenants' houses - "dwelling house clayed for John Green, cost four shillings (20 new pence) besides windings" (this refers to 'clay windings' or wattle and daub construction); of paying the recently introduced Hearth Tax - "I paid five shillings (25 pence) for chimneys"; of trading in livestock - "I went to Cousin John Jennings, agreed with him for a cow and a calf" - "went to Whitchurch Fair, where I bought a black mare"; and of shopping for clothes - "new suit, Lord clothe me with thy Righteousness, which is a comely, costly everlasting garment".

However, despite the apparent normality of every day life, the climate of anti-Presbyterian feeling was beginning to have an increasing effect upon Philip Henry and his fellow "silenced ministers". In October 1663 he was arrested along with Mr Steel and twelve others and taken prisoner to Hanmer for a few days, under pretence that they might be involved in a plot which had been discovered against the government. How prophetically he wrote: "Tis the first time I was ever a prisoner but perhaps may never be the last".

Two years later, in September 1665, he and his colleagues were taken prisoner to Hanmer again. This time they were accused of attending private meetings for worship, contrary to the Conventicle Act of 1664, and of unlawfully administering the Lord's Supper. After a few days in prison, Philip was released on bail of twenty pounds.

It was at this time that the Great Plague was raging in and around London. A number of nonconformist ministers, including Presbyterians, had taken advantage of the situation and stepped into the pulpits vacated by conforming ministers who had fled from London. This was one of the reasons for the passing of the Five Mile Act,

which made it illegal for any non-conformist to come within five miles of any place where he had previously been a minister. This concerned Philip Henry since it was said that Broad Oak was only four miles from Worthenbury. Therefore he had the distance measured, by pacing, and calculated that it was in fact just five miles and sixty yards from his new home to the Worthenbury parish boundary!

There were those who disagreed with his measurements and continued to harass him. Throughout 1666 Philip spent occasional periods staying away from his family, sometimes with his wife's relations the Benyons of Ash, to escape being prosecuted under the Five Mile Act. Eventually he decided it would be better to move the whole family to Whitchurch for a time. This was partly to avoid the restrictions of the Act but, equally, to provide schooling for his two sons, John and Matthew. John had started his education in a school run by a Mr Catheral at Whitewell Chapel but that school had moved to a new building in Wigland, which was too far away from Broad Oak. Sadly, John's education at the Whitchurch Free School was not to last for long since in April 1667 he died from the measles. What anguish Philip and Katherine suffered as their six year old first born child was laid to rest in St Alkmund's church!

During his time at Whitchurch, broken by a period back at Broad Oak to supervise the harvest, Philip continued to meet with his fellow nonconformist ministers. He even started privately to administer the Lord's Supper again. In February 1668 a group of these dissenters met at Betley church, on the Cheshire/Staffordshire border, where Philip was one of the preachers. The local Member of Parliament heard of the meeting and reported it afterwards in the House of Commons, with completely untrue exaggeration. He claimed that the dissenting ministers had dragged the resident minister out of his pulpit, trampled his surplice and torn the Book of Common Prayer.

RETURN TO BROAD OAK

Sensing that the Five Mile Act was no longer being enforced so strongly, Philip Henry decided to take his family permanently back to Broad Oak in May 1668. However, the law against conventicles, or unauthorised religious meetings, was being enforced ever more strongly. Parish constables could be fined five pounds for not reporting meetings and Justices of the Peace could be fined one hundred pounds, an enormous amount in those days, if they failed to prosecute the offenders reported to them. Philip was very careful to stay within the law. On Sundays he would attend Whitewell Chapel when there was a licensed preacher present and in the evenings would preach to his own family at Broad Oak, sometimes with two or three neighbours present, which was permitted.

Now that Matthew was deprived of his Whitchurch schooling, the Henrys started the practice of employing a private tutor to live with the family. Usually the tutor was a young man preparing to go to university which gave Philip an added opportunity, to keep his mind active with intellectual discussion.

By 1672 it seemed that the feeling against religious dissenters was easing. Charles II issued his Declaration of Indulgence which repealed all the laws against nonconformists and Roman Catholics. Although those who shared Philip Henry's beliefs benefitted from this, it was really the first step in the king's attempt to restore the country to Roman Catholicism. The Declaration authorised the issue of licences to dissenting ministers to allow them to hold meetings in their own houses and elsewhere. Philip duly received his licence and "threw his doors open, and welcomed his neighbours to him, to partake of his spiritual things". His ministry became widely known and people would travel to Broad Oak from as far away as Whitchurch, Wem, Prees and Ellesmere in order to listen to him. He also travelled widely to preach elsewhere, in Shropshire, Cheshire and North Wales. Although within the following two years the national feeling against dissenters began to harden once more, Philip had such a good reputation locally as a peace loving and God fearing man that the local magistrates left him alone.

Meanwhile the Henry children were growing up and Matthew needed an education which could no longer

be provided by a private tutor. In 1680 Philip took his eighteen year old son on the long journey to London, to enrol in a school at Islington run by Thomas Doolittle, a dissenting minister.

With Matthew safely settled at the school, Philip returned to Broad Oak - travelling on the new London to Chester stage coach - to pick up the reins of domestic life, as recorded in his diaries. He continued to look after the estate: June 21st 1681 - "I put 50 tench fry & 9 carp into the pond in the Orchard" - July 4th "workmen roughcasting the pigeon house"; to record the weather - June 2nd "a time of great drought for many weeks ... this day a day of prayer ... a speedy answer in a comfortable shower, praised be God"; to attend to duties as a Malpas parishioner "whereas Malpas church is now pewed and mine is at 3s 6d (17.5 pence) per year ... my wife this day paid it to Thomas Sherington of Wigland churchwarden ... the pew is in the North Aisle"; and to keep a note of local and national affairs - March "election in Chester, with great Contest".

It was on June 14th at a further meeting to pray for relief from the drought, in the house of Thomas Millington near Hodnet, that Philip and his companions were surprised in the middle of his preaching by two Shropshire Justices of the Peace. The Justices burst into the meeting, shouting and cursing, took the names of all of the 150 or so present and then retired to an alehouse on Prees Heath to brag about their action. As a result of the raid, Thomas Millington and another minister were each fined £20. Philip "being the greatest criminal" was fined £40.

He refused to pay the fine. In retaliation the Justices sent men to Broad Oak to seize his goods. The warrant did not allow them to enter the house but they carried away thirty-three cart loads of hay from the barns, coal from the sheds, corn cut from the fields and much else besides. It was shortly after this that Sir George Jeffreys - later to become known as the notorious Judge Jeffreys of the 1685 'Bloody Assize' - sat at the assizes at Mold. He expressed his strong disapproval of the action which had been taken against Philip Henry and spoke of the minister with respect. Philip was a friend of his mother, Mrs Jeffreys of Acton, near Wrexham, and had assisted the Judge with his education when he was a schoolboy. Sir George was not the only prominent public figure to declare his respect for



MATTHEW HENRY



KATHERINE HENRY
Wife to Philip and
mother of Matthew



THE MATTHEW HENRY CHAPEL
IN TRINITY STREET, CHESTER
Opened in 1700 and demolished during the 1960s

Philip. Dr William Lloyd, the Bishop of St Asaph, having been involved in a public discussion with Philip and some other ministers at Oswestry, later invited him to Chester for a private discussion of theological matters.

Yet hardship was not at an end for Philip. At the time of the Duke of Monmouth's rising in 1685, Philip was one of many 'suspected persons', including nonconformist ministers, who were rounded up and sent under guard to Chester Castle. He was kept prisoner there for about three weeks but was treated not too badly. On July 8th he wrote to Katherine: "I have not tasted butter with bread, since I came from home. This dinner we had beans and bacon, salmon, &c. ... Mrs Wenlock came to see me yesterday, and brought me a bottle of wine".

MATTHEW - MINISTER AND WRITER

Matthew's schooling in London had been disrupted due to the persecution of Mr Doolittle, his schoolmaster, as a nonconformist minister. He returned to Broad Oak for a time then went back to London, in April 1685, to study law at Gray's Inn. However, his real desire was to follow his father into the ministry and so he continued his religious studies alongside his legal studies. At the end of 1686, when it seemed that the government was relaxing its attitude towards nonconformists, he decided to seek ordination. He was ordained in London on May 9th 1687 and soon afterwards returned to Broad Oak once again. Shortly after his return, his ability as a preacher having become widely known even at that early stage of his career, he was invited to take charge of a Presbyterian congregation in Chester. He moved there in June 1687. One month later he married Catherine Hardware of Mouldsworth, whose family he had come to know while he was living in London.

Matthew remained in Chester until 1712, when he moved to London as minister of a congregation in Hackney. The Chester congregation built the 'Matthew Henry' chapel in Trinity Street, opened in 1700. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Chester congregation became Unitarian in its doctrine. It was the present day Unitarians who built a new Matthew Henry Chapel at Blacon, now occupied by a Baptist congregation, when the original chapel was demolished in the 1960s.

Matthew died at Nantwich in 1714, on a journey back to London. His most lasting memorials will probably be his many writings and especially the great Commentary on the Whole Bible.

FREEDOM IN PHILIP'S FINAL YEARS

By 1688 Parliament had had enough of the Roman Catholicism and 'Divine Right' of James II, who succeeded his brother Charles II in 1685. It was many years since Philip Henry had played with them both at Westminster! William and Mary were invited to take the throne from James so that, as Matthew Henry wrote in his biography of his father: "It was not without fear and trembling that Mr Henry received the tidings of the Prince of Orange's landing, in November 1688 ... but, when secret things were brought to light, none rejoiced in it more than he did".

A new era of freedom dawned for religious nonconformists. Philip was able to continue his ministry publicly, although his health was beginning to fail. He rejoiced in the marriages of all five of his surviving children and lived to see 24 grandchildren born.

On Sunday June 21st 1696 "he went through the work of the day with his usual vigour". The following Tuesday he led family worship in his usual manner but went to bed early, in great pain. Matthew was summoned from Chester and early the next morning, with his wife and son at his bedside, Philip Henry passed from this world.

He was buried in St Alkmund's church at Whitchurch where a memorial tablet was erected, with a Latin inscription. In 1844 this was replaced with an English version. This would have pleased Philip who, although fluent in Latin and Greek, preferred plain speaking! The original monument is preserved in Whitewell Church. Its inscription reminds us of a man who was "especially remarkable and born to be an example". To him, and to the many who suffered during the times of religious uncertainty in the seventeenth century, we owe much of our freedom to worship as we please today. Philip Henry was a living example of John Bunyan's 'Mr Valiant-for-Truth':

He'll fear not what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been written as a result of research I carried out for an illustrated talk - 'Most Pious and Excellent Men' - on the lives of Philip and Matthew Henry. The talk was presented at Whitewell Parish Room on June 24th 1996, the three hundredth anniversary of Philip's death.

I am extremely grateful for the help and encouragement I have received from a number of individuals and institutions. In particular I would like to record my thanks to: Mr Philip Warburton-Lee, Mr Peter Moore-Dutton, Rev. Paul Winchester, Mr Adrian Sumner, Mr Edward Broad, Mr Robert Stones, the late Mrs Sunter Harrison; Whitchurch and Chester Libraries; Cheshire and Chester City Record Offices; Chester Archaeological Society Library; and, as ever, Jill my wife.

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COVER ILLUSTRATIONS: The engraving of Philip Henry is from a 1765 edition of his 'Life' by Matthew Henry. The background consists of extracts from Philip's Diary for 1663.

... whom you were spent y^e day
ther in y^e prison, as y^e lord enabled
my man William Griffith being sent
when I was, came not till the day
from home, which caused suspicion;
Holliman examined but not released
I sweet being in any condition wth
or conscience - the sting of Death
of so of Imprisonment also -

... first time I was ever a Prisoner,
perhaps may not be y^e last. We
no hardship, we know not what
way -

... we were called to appear, S^r Thomas
or Mr. W^m Hammer of Fenns
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one after we are called for.

... they past his word for me
in Mr. Holliman -
more about 7. or 8. besides Ja:

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