



## The Patients



*This section begins with a list of complaints made to the Mayor's Court in 1550 by the hospital chaplain, a devout Protestant, who found the drunken, quarrelsome and irreverent behaviour of the new inmates unacceptable in 'Gode's Howse'. No less scandalised by the manners of this 'very rough assembly', the Victorian scholars, William Hudson (himself a clergyman) and J.C. Tingey, were also critical of the chaplain's 'bad writing' and apparent lack of education. Today's historians tend to focus upon the evidence such records provide of Tudor policy towards the 'unruly' poor and of the use of institutions like the new hospital to impose discipline upon them.*

*For more information about the care (and control) of the poor in Tudor England, and especially in Norwich, see Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sicknes, medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England (1998)*, especially chapter four.*

15 March 1550, The house of the poore: This day Sir John Fysher [the hospital chaplain] hathe exhibite unto this courte a Bill conteyning Articles to be ordeynid, made and grauntid by Master Mayour & this courte for goode order and Rewle to be had, used and contynewed amonges the poore peopill in goddes house in holmestrete, which bill is put to Master Catlyn to peruse and amende, &c. (NRO, NCR, 16A, Mayor's Court Book 1549-1555, f. 48v; the ensuing list of complaints appears on a loose sheet at the end of the volume)

With the lycens of Master Mayyr here present, & my mastrys the aldyrmen to hym assent, I make my menys at thys tyme for reformatyon of dyverse cawssys amonges the pore people in the hospytall for dyvers abusys me thynke myht be bettyr with yowur coownselles; under Master Mayyrs favur I submet my selffe at all tymes, I trost as my dewty hys:

Nota, fyrst, to a poynt them from our ladys day [25 March] tyll myelmas [29 September] from vj of the cloke in mornyng tyl viij of ye cloke in the forenon, and at aftyn none from iij of the cloke tyl v in somer tyme; and from myelmas tyl our lady day from vij of the cloke tyl ix in the forenon, & in the aftyr none from ij tyl iiij, to kepe ther chyrche, excepte a cawsse resunnable, æ or elles to be refomyd by ther keper.

Nota, the secunde ys that thay shuld resevye the holy communyon every quartyr onnys, or schowe the cawsse wy, beyng in the casse that thay are in.

Nota, the therd ys that wan I have aberyall the men wylle nat help to bere them to ther gravys, but make excusys, & lat the women do ytt.

Nota, the forht ys that men & women wyl nat cum to the sermunys at chryst chyrche [the cathedral], do the best I cane, wan they ar able to goo al the cyte over, & sume of them the cuntry also.

Nota, the fyffte ys they wyl nat kepe godes pece, & the kynges, but w[i]ll brayle & stryve onresunnably; summe that want [lack] heryng myht with ponyssment be ponysschyd, that the syht of the eye myht ~~rest~~ reforme them to a dew ordyr.

Nota, the sexthe ys non schall goo in to the cyte a lone, to the dysplesyr of thyr keper, & so cum dronkyn hoome at even with talys inowe [enough]; this wyll they do with owht ony leve, many of them. Werfore I schall dyssyur that, wan they goo, they schall goo ij to gythyr ~~or elles~~ ~~æ~~ with leve of ther keper, [so that] he may know wer they are; & they wyll to the ale howss ij or iij attonys [at once].

Nota, the sevynthe ys that wane ij men fale afyyttyng, or ij women, or j man & a women, to lay them bothe in the stokkes tyll they be bothe plesyd.

Nota, the aythe ys that yff ony of them chyd & brayle at ther mete, than to take them up & set them alone for that tyme or take away ther mett.

Nota, the nythe ys yff ony of them peke or stele to have syche ponyssment as yow schall thynke good for ther dysservyng.

Nota, the tenthe ys yff ij of them goo braylyng to ther beddes to gyff them s[o]che ponyssment as schalbe thowht mete for them.

Nota, the eleveht ys that syche persons as cum in to the howss with syche goodes as they have, & afturward gyff ther goodes owht of the howss agayne, to send them aftyr.

Nota, the twelve ys that thos persons that depart the world nat to gyff ther goodes awaye at ther plesyr & leve the howss in was cass [a worse state] than they ~~ford~~ fond yt.

All thes I know by experyens; and yt ys godes howss & I wold have them godly peple in yt.

All thes thyngges, with yowur favyrs, wold I have reheryd wan ony person shalbe resevyd in to the howss for ther abytatyon; & also to reherss them every quartyr onnys, for the more erudycyon to them selvys & quyett in the howss.

That for all thys, my pore & sympple informatyon, I put all to my Master Mayyr, with all my mastrys the aldyrmen, & suspet my owyne wyht in this behalve, ~~but undyr the corectyon~~ but undyr yowur corectytyon I submyt my self.

By yowur chaplen to the pore.

*The next manuscript reveals that the civic authorities were more sympathetic towards the poor inmates of God's House than the exasperated Master Fyssher might have wished. From the 1550s onwards, a series of contracts has survived, binding successive 'keepers' to provide a decent level of care for their charges. This, the earliest, is notable for its insistence that the patients should be given good quality wheat bread, and that they should be protected from any physical abuse or unnecessary 'correction'. Care was also taken to safeguard the hospital's slender revenues and to ensure that proper records were kept.*

An Indenture betwixt the Surveyours of th'ospitall and the keper of the same.

**Thys Wryghtyng Indentyd**, made the last daye of Maye in the yere of our Lord God m<sup>d</sup>lxvj [1566] and in the Eight yere of the Raigne of our Sovereyn Ladie Elizabeth, by the grace of god Quene of Inglond, Fraunce and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c, **Betwyn** Thomas Sotherton, Mayour of the cittie of Norwiche, Thomas Whall and Thomas Parker, Alderman and Surveyours of the hows of the poore, otherwise called Goddes hows in holmestrete, within the cittie of Norwiche, on the one parte, **And** William Olyver of the same Cittie, Bere brewer, on the other parte, **Witnesseth** that the seid Mayour and Surveyours, for their part, And lykewise the seid William Olyver, for his part, have Covenanted for the keepyng of the xl<sup>tie</sup> [40] pore people which are to be kept in the seid hows of the pore, otherwise called Goddes hows, upon souche Agreamentes and Artycles as hereafter be declaryd:

**In primis**, the seid Mayour and Surveyours covenant and agree that the beforenamyd William Olyver shall enter and take the chardge of keepyng and provydyng of meat and drynk for the xl pore people and their keepers at the Feast of St John Baptist [24 June] next insuyng the date herof; And he to have then payed hym xxxj*li* xiijs iiij*d* [£31 13s 4*d*]

at his entrey for one quarters dyettes of the same xl pore people and their kepars before hand payed, Whiche (if he shall fortune to dye or otherwise to depart before th'end of eny yere duryng all the tyme that he shalbe keper thear) he shalbe bound to leave and Repay ageyn to the use of the hows at his goyng of.

**Item** the seid Mayour and Surveyours covenant and agree that the seid William Olyver shall have and receyve at that his entryng into the hows for provysyon of wood and cole for the xl pore people and their kepars for the whole yere then next following *xxli*. And [he] shall enter bond, with suretye, That, if he shall fortune to departe this lyfe at any tyme within one yere after his entrey, And so for every yere that he shall contynue keper thear, That he shall leave, or cause to be left, suffycient wood or coale to serve the xl pore people from the tyme that he shall enter untill that tyme twelvemoneth; And so allweys shall have *xxli* payed hym before hand at Midsoomer for provisyon of wood and coale for the whole yere following.

**Item** it is further covenanted and agreed that the seid William Olyver shall have and receyve for the keepyng of the of the xl pore people for their dyettes, and the dyettes and wages of their kepers and officers, *xxvjli xiijs iiijd* every quarter by covenant so made with hym in great, So that he shall allweys have one quarters dyettes payed before hand, Whiche he shall leave and Repay ageyn to the use of the seid hows at his goyng owt.

**Item** it is also covenanted and agreed that the seid William Olyver shall have the Scyte of the hows, with all the gardeyns, Medowes, Ortyardes and groundes (only two howses except), which shalbe reserved for storehowses to lay in thynges necessary for Reparacions, without eny Rent or Ferme payeng.

**Item** it is also covenanted and agreed that the seid William Olyver shall have the land without St Augustyns gates which Vyncent Tesmond now hath, And to paye therfor *lxs* by yere: Videlicet, every quarter of A yere *xvs*. **And** the seid William Olyver for his part Covenanteth to and with the seid Mayour and Surveyours That he, the seid William, shall kepe the seid xl pore people in Sycknes and in helth, and *iiij* women keepers, accordyng ...

to the foundacion, with meat, drynk, fyryng and wassing meete and convenyent for allmes people; And that they shalbe fedd with no courser bread then whole wheat bread, without either Rye or barlye to be putt and myxed thereith. **And** the seid William Olyver also covenanteth for his part That he, his wyfe and kepers shall well and gently use and intreate the seid xl pore people & every of them at all tymes, without eny correccion or beatyng of them or eny of them. But, in case the or eny of them will not be ordryd and rulyd, Then he to complayne to the Surveyours of their misdemeanours; and allwes to kepe the full number of xl pore folke. And if eny shall fortune to dye, or else depart the hows, Then he to signifie their names, so dead or departed from the hows, to the Surveyours or one of them at the least within twoo dayes after they shalbe departed from the hows. **And** the seid William Olyver further covenanteth that, if he shall fortune to departe this lyfe at any tyme before eny of the *iiij* quarters of the yere shalbe fully accomplisshed and ended, fforsomocheas he shall allweys have the *xl<sup>li</sup>* markes [*£26. 13s 4d*] for A quarters paiement before hand, That he shalbe bound with good Suretye to kepe the seid xl pore people and their *iiij* kepers duryng the tyme of the whole quarter which he shall have receyved the money for, Or else to allow accordyng to the rate for so many weekes as shalbe wantyng of the Quarter. **And** the seid William Olyver convenanteth to kepe A booke of all the names of the xl pore people which he shall receyve into the hows, with the day of their entryng into the hows and the daye of their death, or otherwise departing, owt of the same hows. And also shall save all souche Apparell or sheetis as eny of them shall fortune to leave at the day of their death to help the rest with. **And** the seid William shall also kepe a booke of all souch legacyes and gyftes, either of bedding, shettis, shirtes and smockes, lynnyn and woollen, or monye as shall fortune to cum into his handes of the gyft of eny body towards the Relieff of the pore people. **Allso** the seid William Olyver shall save and preserve to the use of the seid hows all souche Beddyng, stuff and utensilles of hows as shalbe commytted and delyvered to the seid William Olyver by Inventorye or otherwyse.

**In witnes whereof** to the one parte of these present wrightynges indented remayneng with the seid William Olyver th'aforseid Thomas Sotherton, Mayour, Thomas Whall and Thomas Parker have sett their handes and Seales; and to the other part of the same wrightynges Indented remayneng with the seid Thomas Sotherton, Mayour, Thomas Whall and Thomas Parker the seid William Olyver hath sett his hand and Sealle. Gyven at the seid cittie of Norwiche the daye and yere first above wrytton.

*Dorse:* Redd, Sealed and delyvered in the presens of Master Thomas Peck, Alderman, and Thomas Corye the younger (NCR, 24B/36).

*The practice of keeping inventories, or detailed lists, of all the possessions owned by a hospital was already centuries old when the next document was drawn up at the start of the seventeenth century. It probably marks the arrival of a new master or keeper, who could be held to account when he left, and prevented from selling off valuable assets. Inventories are particularly helpful to historians, as they provide a rare glimpse into the daily living conditions of patients. The residents of God's House clearly benefited from a well-appointed laundry and (by the standards of the age) had more than adequate bedding. As in many contemporary institutions for the elderly, they were expected to bring a sheet with them, in which they would eventually be buried.*

An Inventory Indentid taken of the Beddyng, Blankettes, Coverynges & pillowes, Coffers, stooles & other Implementes belonging to the poore in the hospitall

*First in the 19 Bed chamber*

Eleaven fetherbedes good & bad

Nyne fether bouldsters

Eighten fether pillowes

Tenne fflockbeddes

Seaventen flockbolsters

ffive flock pillowes

Twelue yellowe Rugges

Seaven blankettes good & bad

Twenty six dornix coueringes good & bad

Nyneten Bedsteades

Twenty three old Coffers and Chistes

ffourten stooles and Chayers good & bad

*In the fyer howse next adioynynge to the said 19 bed chamber*

One ffyer pann

One payer of tonges

One payer of dogyrons

Twoe barres of yron

One yron hake

One payer of bellowes

*In the longe Hall*

Seaventen Bedsteades  
Nyne ffetherbeddes  
Three fether bolsters  
Eight ffether pillowes  
Eight flock beddes  
Sixten flock boulsters good & bad  
Eight flock pillowes  
Sixten yellowe rugges  
ffower Blankyttes  
Six dornix coverynges good & bad  
Seaventen old coffers & chayers  
Twenty fower stooles & ould Chayers good & bad  
One great Chist bottomed with yron  
Two longe Tables with trusselles fast in the ground  
ffower longe fourmes made fast in the ground  
One payer of dogyrons  
Two barres of yron for the fyer  
One fyer pan; One payer of tonges  
One payer of bellows and one close stoole

*In the chamber called the 14 Bed chamber*

Twelue Bedsteades  
Three ffetherbeddes  
One ffether bolster  
Three fether pillowes  
ffive fflock beddes  
Eleaven flockboulsters  
Three flock pillowes  
Seaven yellow Rugges  
Two dornix Coverynges  
Eight Coffers  
Twelue stooles & Chayers  
One payer of tonges

One ffyer pann  
One payer of bellows  
One payer of dogyrons  
Two yron barres

*In the washehowse Lodginge*

Six Bedsteades  
Six fflockbeddes  
Seaven flockboulsters  
Two flock pillowes  
Eight fetherpillowes good & bad  
ffourten dornix coveringes good and bad  
Eight Coffers  
Eight old stooles & chayers  
Twoe dogyrons  
One ffyer pann  
One payer of tonges  
One payer of bellows

*In a little lodginge chamber ext the washowse*

Three Bedsteades  
One ffetherbed  
One ffetherboulster  
One ffether pillowe  
Twoe fflock beddes  
One flock bolster  
ffive dornix Couerynges  
Twoe Coffers

*In the Church Chamber*

Bedsteades  
ffive ffetherbeddes  
ffive ffether bolsters  
Two ffether pillowes  
One flock bolster

Twoe Blankettes  
Three yellowe Rugges  
Two darnix Coverynges  
Six old stoole & Chayers  
ffower Coffers  
One close stoole  
One payer of Tonges  
One fyer pann  
One payre of dogyrons fast  
One payer of Bellowes  
One square table & Trusselles to turne vp against the stayres  
One rost yron

*In the newe Lodgeynge*

Twenty three Bedsteades  
ffourten ffetherbeddes  
ffiften fether boulsters  
Thirty fether pillowes  
ffourten flockbeddes  
Sixten flock boulsters  
ffive flock pillowes  
Twenty three blankettes  
Twenty thre good darnix coueringes  
Twenty thre pewter basons  
Twenty two small towelles  
One & twenty Chamberpottes  
Twenty fower Coffers  
Seaventen Chayers & stooles  
Two payer of dogyrons  
ffower yron Barres  
Two payer of Tonges  
Two fyer pannes  
Two payer of bellowes  
One great chist for the lynyng  
One great planck table with trusselles & footbankes framed thereto  
ffower longe fourmes  
One fayre lanthorne

*In the great Chamber ouer the new lodgynge*

Sixten new bedsteades  
One ould Chist  
Twoe longe stooles of plancke

Six Buckittes belonginge to the hospitall howse

*In the Kytchinge and pastrey*

Three dressers with Trusselles fast in the ground  
One other dresser with trusselles  
One newe round Copper kettle with a byle  
One great Chopping block  
One great boyler of cast mettall  
One couer of bord to the same  
One longe barre of yron to the Chymney with two other barres for the same  
Two yron hakes  
A fayer sinke of marble stone  
One great kneadinge trowe  
Two mouldinge tables  
Two longe Shelves  
One trough to put dishes in

*In the Brewhowse*

One great guilefatt with an apron of lead  
One mashefate with the vnder becke  
One sweete wortefate  
Twoe Coolers  
One Copper with the yron furnys  
One deale & a ladder  
One skoope & a short deale  
Ould hoopes & old broken bottomes

*In the well howse*

One pully for a well  
One old Tonell  
Thirty Staffes of some ould fatt

*In the Mill howse*

One mault mill with the stones, hopper and trough  
Three ould worne milstones besides

*In the Pygges Howse*

One small peece of lead

*In the washinge howse*

One small Copper hanged without yron  
One great bookynge tubbe  
Three great rinsinge tubbes  
Three washinge tubbes  
Two old payles with yron byles  
One Colrake  
One fyerforke of yron  
One stoole that the tub stand on  
One beatynge stoole

*In the church porche*

Twoe beres and one ould payer of stockes

*In the Cloyster*

One fayer lead for rayne water & poled round about to dry Cloathes onn  
Two longe ladders whereof one broken  
One little short ladder

*In the Maulthowse & crick thereto adioynynge*

One fayre Sistorne of lead to steepe in, in a frame  
One Lyttle Ladder for the Sistorne  
Three Lattizes in the Maulthowse  
Six Lattizes on the Maultchamber, one Bynge for dryed mault or barley  
One swaype with the stopp, yron pole & Chayne

*In the Swynes yard*

One shorte peece of ould Tymber

*In the Buttery*

Three Berestooles & one old Cubberd

*In the hall*

One longe table vppon three Trusselles & ij longe fourmes  
Two longe footebankes & one old livery Table, The Bench to the Table &  
back for the same  
The hanginges to the hall  
One fayre large brasinge Chaffer

*In a littell Buttery next the parlour*

Twoe shelues, one payre of Trusselles, one Table of two long bordes

*In a lyttle Closett next the parlor*

One old liverie Cobard & two poore folkes Coffers

*In the greate Chamber*

One Livery Bedd, [blank] Cubbard

*In the porch Chamber*

One good longe open presse

*In an Inner chamber next the greate chamber*

One old Table with two old Trusselles

*Lynnen belonginge to the Beddes*

Twenty three beddes in the newe Lodginge  
fforty payre of sheetes ggod & whole & two Towelles

*In the keepers hand Bradley*

ffifty seaven Sheetes good & bad  
ffifty seaven payer on the beddes and Twenty nyne payer in all besides,  
whereof fower payer very Raggas, & but fower Towelles  
Sheetes brought in by poore people that are found in the keepers handes for  
wyndynge sheetes are in number Thirteen Sheetes