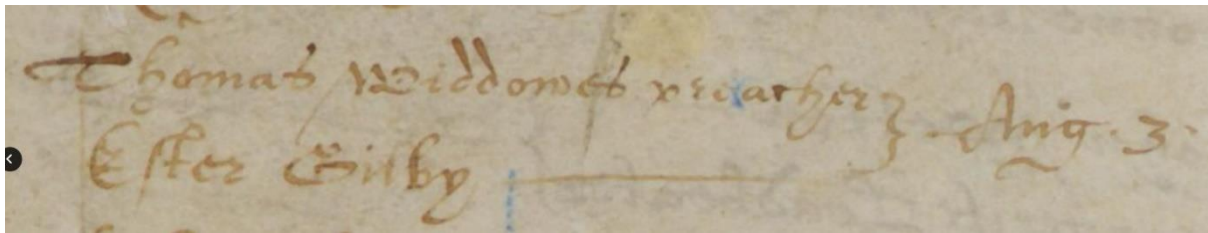


## Thomas Wyddowes

### Vicar 1583-1593

Thomas Wyddowes entered Christ's College, Cambridge in May 1545, which suggests he was born in the late 1520s, before written church baptism records were kept. He was ordained priest in Coventry on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1562 and was in Ashby by 1567, when his name is recorded on the foundation deed, as one of the feoffees for Ashby Grammar School.

Wyddowes (whose name is variously spelled in records as 'Wyddowes,' 'Wydows,' and 'Widdowes') married Ester Gilby at St Helen's Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1570. He would have been around 40 years old. The marriage register describes him as '*Thomas Widdowes preacher.*' Ester was previous vicar Anthony Gilby's daughter.

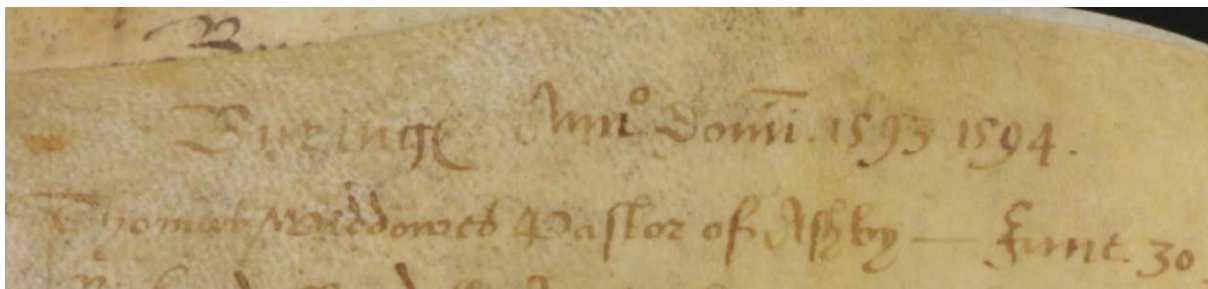


*Record of Marriage of Thomas Wyddowes and Ester Gilby – 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1570*

Twin daughters, Martha and Mary, were baptised on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1571. A son, Thomas, was baptised on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1572 and Mary was buried at the end of May – just ten months old. John was baptised in June 1575 and Daniell in November 1577. Nathaniel followed in 1579 and another daughter, also Mary, was born late in 1582. Susanna was baptised in December 1584.

Wyddowes was appointed vicar in 1583. It's possible that he worked as a schoolmaster or a lecturer in the church up until that time.

Wyddowes died in June 1593 and was buried at St Helen's on the last day of the month, "Thomas Widdowes Pastor of Ashby." (*excerpt from burial register below*)



Wyddowes appears to have been a dependable man. The vicar of Packington, Henry Presbury, turned to him for advice over a disputed marriage. This dependability is also borne out in a letter to Arthur Hildersham, Wyddowes' successor as vicar, from Henry Hastings (the 3<sup>rd</sup> earl), who wrote:

*Since that it hath pleased the Lord to call Thomas Wyddowes to his mercy, who was (in my opinion) both faithful, careful and diligent in his function according to his talent, I do wish with all my heart, the supply of that place to be such as that which good father Gilby and he by the good providence and mercy of God have planted in and about Ashby may be continued and increased. Therefore I choose to present you unto that pastoral charge of*

*Ashby, which I trust by that time I have finished my long intended purpose, shall be a sufficient place for any learned preacher. And with this letter I send you my presentation to the vicarage with a letter to the bishop of Lincoln, who, I hope, will easily accept of you, with all honour. Yet let this be your care, to advance the glory of god by exercise of your ministry, which you shall do best when you are in the pastoral charge. I am forced to end. God ever direct you, and ever assist you will all necessary graces.*

*At York, hastily, 5 July 93.*

*Henry Huntingdon.*

*To the comfort of the poor widow I will take some care.*

Ester Wyddowes was buried at St Helen's on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1601.

**Julie Starkey**  
**June 2022**

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