

This is the Forty Fourth of an occasional series of articles by David Stone about incidents in the history of Swanton Morley and its church

The Rebuilding of Swanton Morley Rectory by Henry Tacy

I had been aware for some time that both Henry Tacy (rector from September 1825 to April 1863) and Andrew Hunter (rector from 1896 to June 1914) commissioned work to be done on the old rectory building. However, it is only recently that I unearthed a file which contained details of this work. A comprehensive set of drawings is held by the Archive Centre and I have taken photographs of some of them. I have also obtained permission to reproduce them here.

The main drawings were made by the Norwich Architect Edward Boardman in March 1896 and I shall present these in my next article, but his starting point was to carry out a survey of the rectory as it was at that time, before proposing new work. So far as I can tell, this survey shows the situation at the time of the death of Henry Tacy. I don't think that his successor as rector, Edward Henry Evans-Lombe, had any significant work done. But he did live there for a long time, for in the 1871 census Edward Lombe aged 47, rector of Swanton Morley, was living in the rectory, and in the 1881 census, Edward Lombe aged 57 ("Clergy A man in Holy Orders") was living in "The parsonage" with Ellen his unmarried daughter. Furthermore, in the 1891 census Edward Lombe, rector of Swanton Morley, was living in "the vicarage" with his second wife, Mary Isabella, and daughter, Ellen.

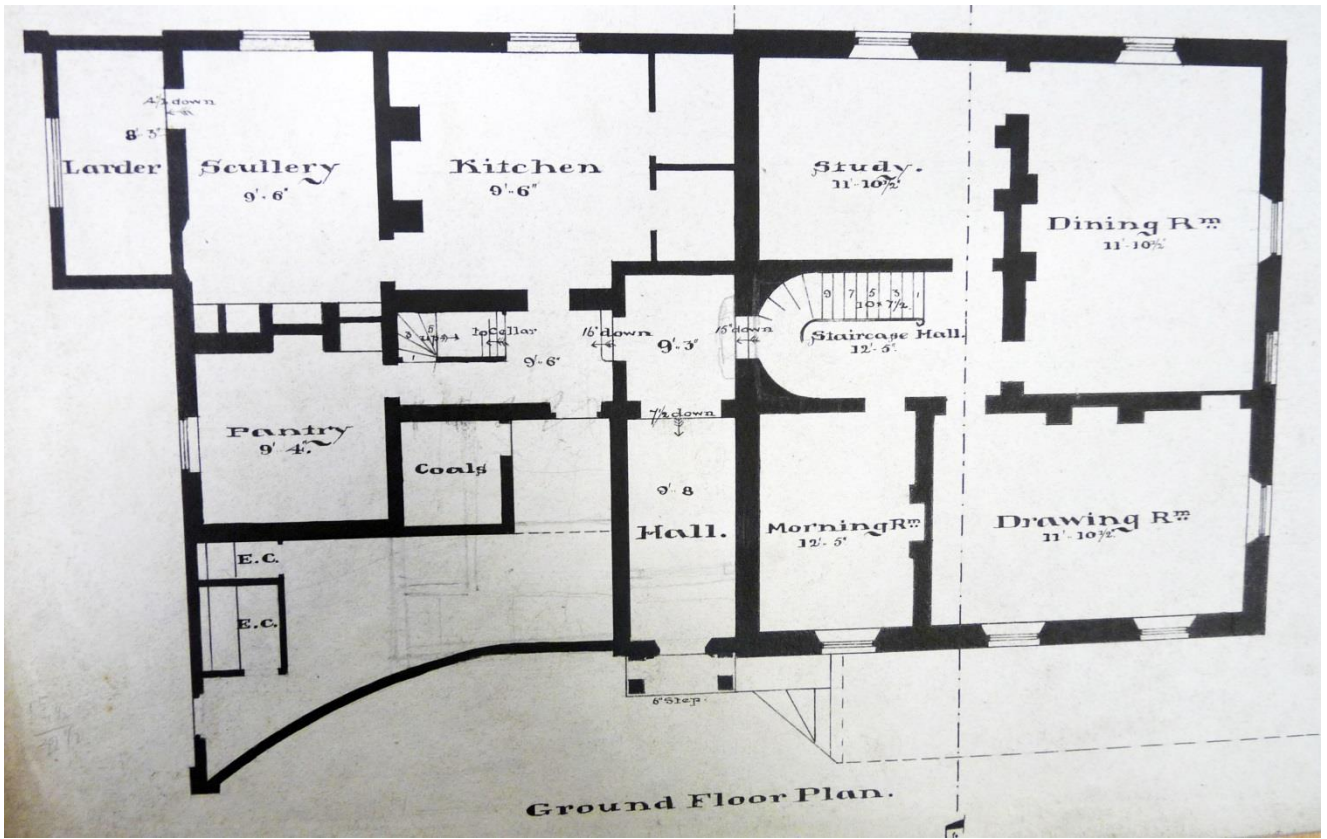
Thus, were it not for the fact that, writing in about 1901, a historian called Bryant said that Henry Tacy rebuilt the rectory I would be uncertain whether to attribute the following improvements to Henry Tacy or to Edward Lombe.

So let's look at the house that was probably created by Henry Tacy. Turning to the plans on the next page, you will see that the walls are significantly thicker on the right-hand part of the building which contains the drawing room etc. I suspect that this eastern end was the original four bedroom house and that Tacy added the western end to give himself a kitchen/scullery complex with three further bedrooms and a box room above. You can see the pillars by the front door which leads into a single-storey hall. At the end of this hall there are steps up where the floor level rises slightly. You can then turn right and up some steps through an archway leading into the staircase hall of the old house. Alternatively, you can turn left and down some steps leading to the kitchen of the new part. This also gives access to the cellar steps. The area behind the curved wall is an open yard containing a coal store and a couple of earth closets.

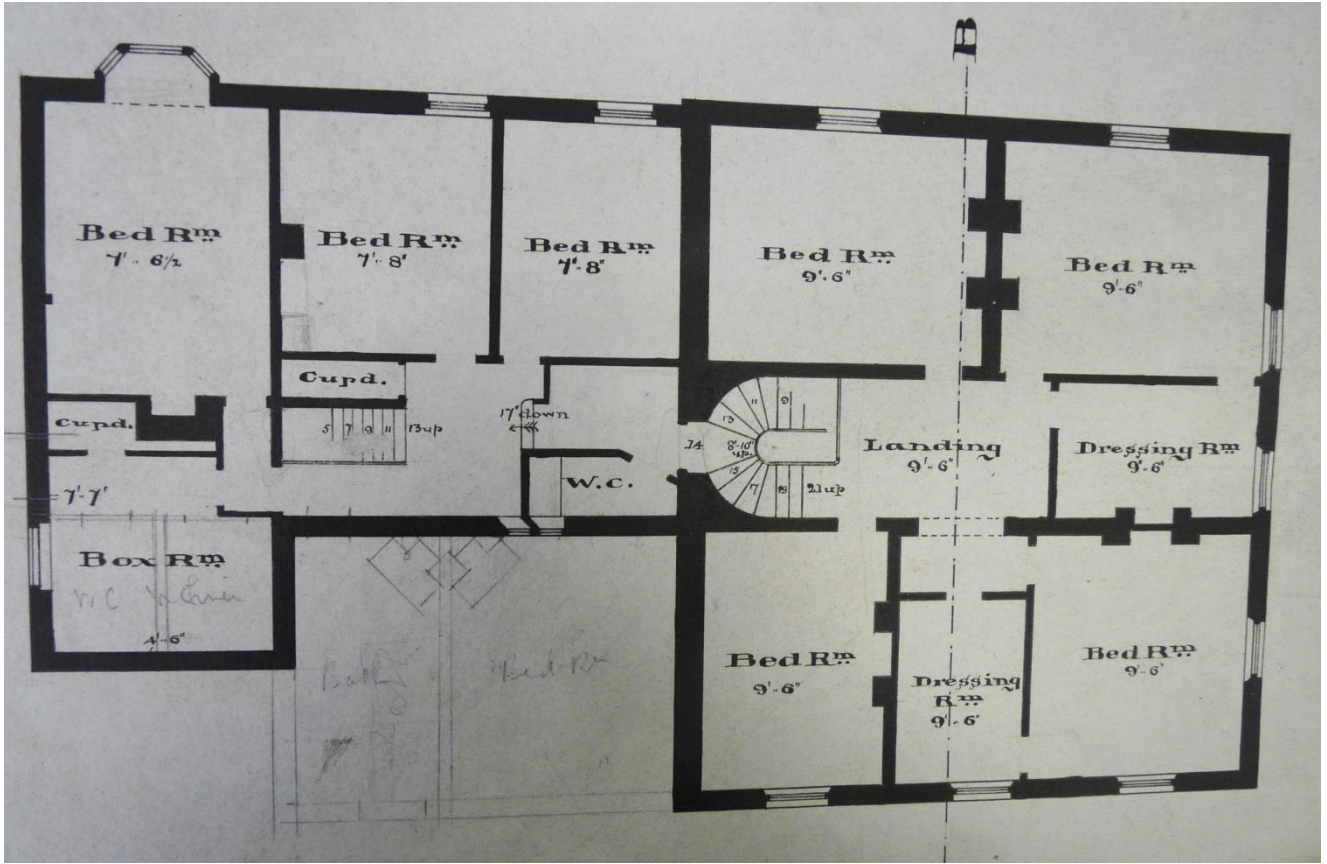
On the first-floor plan you can see that, awkwardly placed on the landing and partially blocking the window, there is a WC. This was probably put in during the last years of Tacy's life when he was quite ill. In the sale of Tacy's furniture after his death mention is made of an easy chair in chintz, fitted up as a night commode. A WC on the first floor would have made life much easier. You will see next time that Andrew Hunter had this removed when toilets and a bathroom were built on the first floor.

I have found no indication of any work commissioned by Edward Lombe, although having inherited the Bylaugh Estate he was a man of substance. It was Edward Lombe who in 1896 arranged to exchange the advowson of Great Melton, which was owned by Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, with that of Swanton Morley, which he owned. The Rev. Andrew Johnston Hunter was the first rector to be presented by the college and he lost no time in

having plans drawn up for the improvement of the rectory. I will look at these in my next article.



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan