

Commemorating the life of Nottinghamshire's



WILLIAM BREWSTER

1566 -1644



400 years since Brewster and the Pilgrims sailed to the New World



Nottinghamshire
County Council



We are proud of Nottinghamshire's links to Mayflower Pilgrim William Brewster, the boy born in Scrooby who went on to help to lay the foundations of the United States of America.

As an elder and the religious leader of the pilgrims, it is Brewster who is believed to have held the first Thanksgiving in New England – a celebration ingrained deeply within American culture to this day.

In 2020, it will be 400 years since the Mayflower ship set sail with Brewster and the other Pilgrims on board to find land in America and worship God how they wished.

The Mayflower 400 Compact has been created to develop opportunities to mark the anniversary, aligning 11 core destinations in England with wider local, national and international partners.

Nottinghamshire is a key member of that Compact and throughout 2020 and beyond, it will deliver a series of capital projects, events, public art and wider content that will commemorate this exceptional period in history and provide a major ongoing impact, knitting together communities, inspiring creativity and culture, driving economic growth and tourism, and promoting understanding and education.

Visitors from the UK and we, hope from, across the globe will be stopping off in Nottinghamshire and we are proud to share our story with them.

This booklet has been created to give you an insight into the history behind our connections with the Mayflower and, in particular, William Brewster.

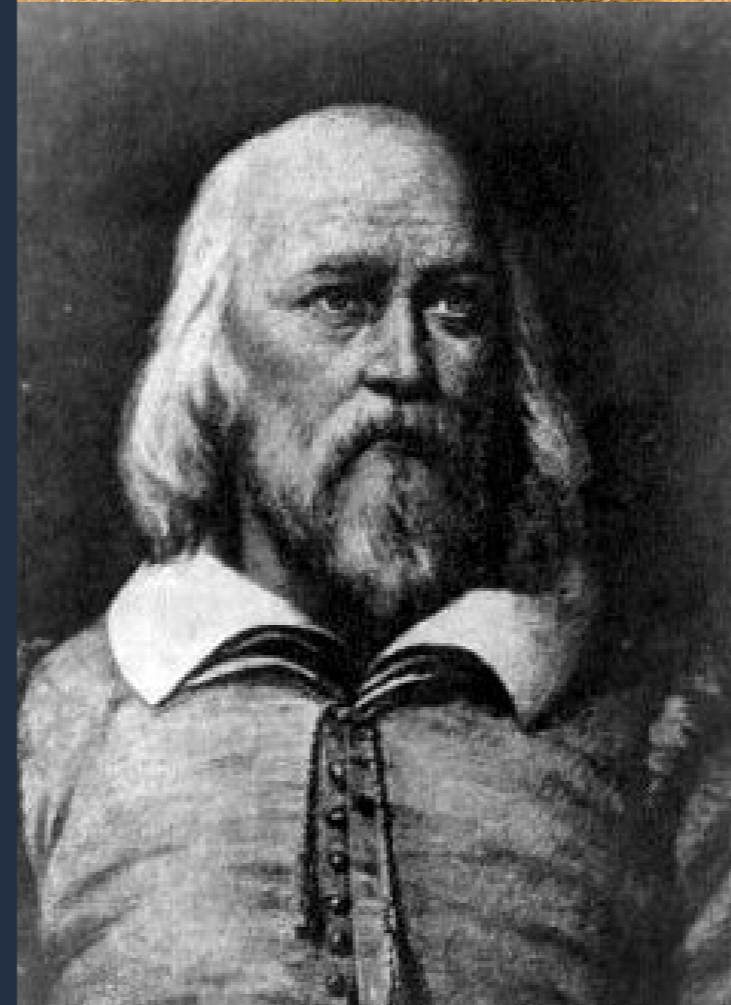
“Nottinghamshire's link to the Mayflower voyage is one of the county's most fascinating stories and we are proud to be able to tell this tale both near and far.

With a wide range of events and projects planned for this commemorative year and beyond, we hope to encourage people to realise the importance of the role that William Brewster and Nottinghamshire played in worldwide events. I'm sure you will enjoy reading this informative booklet and that it will inspire you to visit our wonderful county.”



Councillor Kay Cutts,
Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council.

To find out more visit
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/mayflowerpilgrims
www.pilgrimroots.co.uk
www.mayflower400uk.org



CONTENTS:

- 4 Timeline of Brewster's Life
- 6 Brewster's Early Career
- 8 Life at Scrooby church
- 10 Brewster and the Separatist Congregations
- 12 A Walk around Brewster's Scrooby
- 14 Brewster's Friends and Associates
- 16 Brewster's Beliefs and Influences
- 18 Brewster in Leiden
- 20 Brewster and the Mayflower Voyage
- 22 Brewster in America
- 24 Why does Brewster matter?





WILLIAM BREWSTER TIMELINE

1566-7

William Brewster is born the son of William Brewster, probably at Scrooby

1580

William Brewster starts his studies at Peterhouse in Cambridge, but leaves without completing a degree – not unusual for someone not planning to be a clergyman

1580

Scrooby estate leased to Samuel Sandys from about this time

1583

Brewster is appointed secretary to William Davison, a man with intimate knowledge of the 'Low Countries'

1584

Davison journeys to the Netherlands and France on a diplomatic mission; Brewster travels with him, living for a time at Den Haag

1587

Davison, Brewster's patron, is disgraced after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and Brewster needs a new direction

1590

William Brewster's father dies; Brewster takes his father's place as bailiff of the Scrooby estate and Davison attempts to secure the postmaster position for him

1606

The 'Scrooby congregation' begins forming around Richard Clifton, the former minister of Babworth

1607-8

Brewster moves to Boston, Lincolnshire where, after a failed attempt to leave for Holland, he is arrested as one of a large group accused of holding conventicles (a secret, religious meeting) in the town. Many 'separatists' later leave via Gainsborough and Stallingborough, but we do not know exactly when Brewster travelled. By the end of 1608 he is living in Amsterdam.

1608

Brewster is issued with a fine at Southwell in April for not appearing to answer charges of being 'disobedient' in matters of religion

1609

1609 - Brewster moves to Leiden with John Robinson and is chosen as ruling elder of the congregation.

1616

With the help of Thomas Brewer and later Edward Winslow, Brewster starts a printing press in Choorsteeg, Leiden

1618

Brewster's associate in the printing business, Thomas Brewer, is arrested at Leiden; Brewster goes into hiding

1617-9

Brewster is actively involved in discussing settling in Virginia with Sir Edwin Sandys and others

1620

Already in England, Brewster joins the Mayflower voyage to America – in the absence of a clergyman, he is their spiritual leader

1627

Brewster's wife, Mary, dies; unlike many other separatists, Brewster never remarries.

1644

William Brewster dies at Duxbury in Massachusetts





BREWSTER'S EARLY CAREER

William Brewster was probably born at the Scrooby home of his father, also called William, in 1566-7. His father was the bailiff or estate manager at Scrooby, which belonged to the Archbishop of York, and the family lived in part of what was effectively a large fortified manor site surrounded by a moat.

Brewster went to Peterhouse in Cambridge University in December 1580, joining it on the same day as John Penry – a Welshman who was to be hanged as a separatist more than a decade before Brewster himself became one.

Brewster left Cambridge without completing his degree – though at that time this signified little more than he was someone who did not plan on an academic or Church career. Instead Brewster put his abilities to use as a secretary to William Davison during his time as ambassador to the Netherlands in 1584 and 1585-6. Bradford recorded that Brewster made a good impression on Davison, who 'found him so discreet and faithful as he trusted him above all other that were about him, and only employed him in all matters of greatest trust and secrecy; he esteemed him rather as a son than a servant, and for his wisdom and godliness, in private he would converse with him more like a friend and familiar than a master.'

Davison did well enough to become the assistant to Sir Francis Walsingham but his role in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots won him only the displeasure of the Queen and so both Davison and Brewster were forced out of politics.

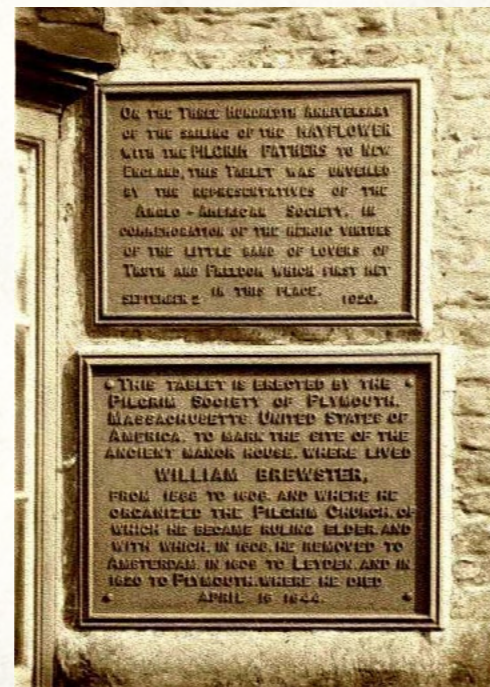
William Brewster returned to Scrooby on the 'retirement' of Davison and in 1590 his father died. As well as drawing an income from managing the estate, Brewster plainly made too much of an assumption about his father's postmaster job simply transferring to himself, and offended Sir John Stanhope – the Postmaster-General. Stanhope's cousin, Samuel Bevercotes, was also a local man and had hoped to nominate the elder Brewster's replacement. In the end it was Davison's influence on Stanhope that secured the post for Brewster.

We know relatively little about the rather mundane life of a postmaster. Brewster's father covered the section between Doncaster and Tuxford, only holding the job for two years during which his pay was the equivalent of about £5,000 a year in today's money. Brewster himself would have been able to add to his income by supporting important travellers such as Sir Timothy Hutton (a son of the Archbishop of York), who in 1605 paid 7s 6d for 'candle, supper and breakfast' at Scrooby Manor and 10s for 'guide and conveyance to Tuxford.'

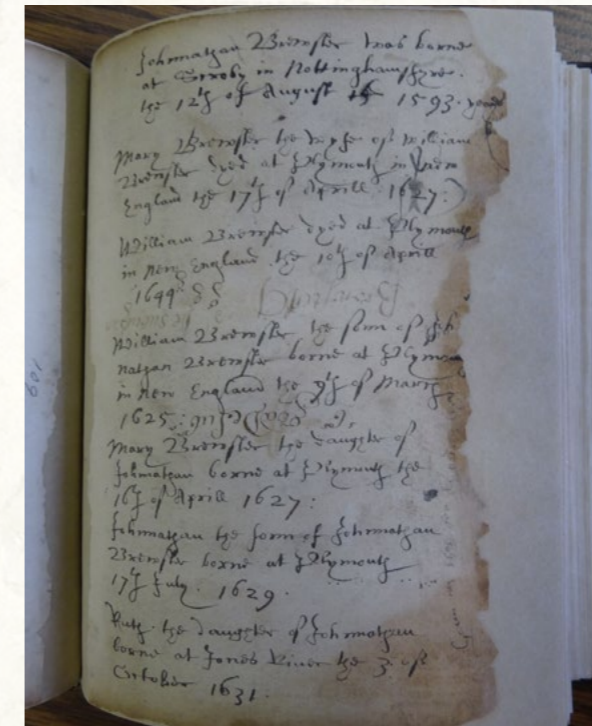
Meanwhile Brewster settled into Scrooby life and in 1593 got married, eventually having six children. They gained increasingly puritan names – being Jonathan, Patience, Fear (born at the height of the troubles in England), Love, Wrestling and one who died young in Leiden in 1609.



Scrooby Manor, where William Brewster lived and served as postmaster



Commemorative plaques at Scrooby Manor



A page from the "Brewster Book," containing some of the family birth and death records for William and Mary Brewster and their children



Scrooby church





LIFE AT SCROOBY CHURCH

Scrooby has had a church for a thousand years or so but it has rarely attained the status of an actual parish church – instead it has been a 'chapel of ease' so that the isolated inhabitants of Scrooby did not have to trek to the parish church at Sutton cum Lound on a Sunday. As a result, it has rarely had its own vicar and has generally been served by a curate – often a curate who also looked after other churches like Bawtry.

The vicar at Sutton was James Brewster - brother to William, who had taken over the living from his Uncle Henry in debateable circumstances in 1594.

It was not unusual in the district for puritan clergy to flout the law for years – Brian Barton survived for 37 years at South Collingham yet often refused to wear a surplice. We have only occasional glimpses of what was happening at Scrooby – where clearly not everyone enjoyed the puritan influence for in 1591 churchwarden William Throope complained that 'one of his horses could preach as well as the curate.' The curate, Thomas Hancock, sued him. Hancock seems to have arrived in 1590.

Then in 1592 curate Hancock was accused of not wearing a surplice and conducting a marriage without the legal banns being read. The marriage was of Rev Robert Southworth to Jane Wasteneys, both of Headon and both puritans. Hancock was replaced by John Hutchinson and then by Richard Charter, who was accused of being the 'pretended' curate – not licensed by the Bishop.

John Deacon also served as a curate at Bawtry from 1594 and also Scrooby up to about 1598. He was another puritan who had been cited in 1594 for preaching without the proper licence at Bawtry. It seems likely that he was the same man who in 1601 published an attack on another Nottinghamshire puritan, John Darrell, over exorcisms in Lancashire and Nottingham, and in 1616 published another book which blamed tobacco for many social ills and also the Gunpowder Plot!

Curate Henry Jones was cited in 1598 for sometimes failing to wear the surplice.

However, the charmed life of the Scrooby puritan community was interrupted when Brewster, Richard Jackson and several others were accused in the church courts of being absent from their own church whilst attending others (a practice called 'gadding about'). Brewster was also accused of unlawfully 'repeating sermons'. Brewster's defence is interesting:

June 15, 1598

Scroobie and Bawtrie being not far distant one from the other have joined together to mayntaine one preacher betweene them, who preacheth at one Towne one Sundaye and at the other Towne on the next sundaie by a continuall course, so that if their preacher preach at Bawtrie he with other of the parishe of Scroobie go thither to hears him, and otherwyse he doth not absent himselfe from his parish Church on the Sabothe daye.

In 1603 James Brewster took a wedding service at Scrooby 'in church privately after morning prayer.' This clearly caused some rumours, for James Brewster was forced to rebut claims that he had not used the proper Prayer Book service. James was again in trouble in 1605, when Edmund Thurland sued James Brewster for having called him 'an atheiste, a knave and a whoremaster.' Brewster admitted to part of the charge but Thurland had also been presented for refusing to take communion so we may not know the full story!

Henry Gray, the curate at Bawtry, was also courting trouble by 1604 and was amongst the small group of clergy 'culled' along with Clifton.

We only really know about Brewster's life at Scrooby from when he got into trouble. However, William Bradford later wrote that 'he lived... .in good esteem among his friends, and the good gentlemen of these parts, especially the godly and the religious. He did much good in the county where he lived in prompting and furthering religion.'

But when church law began to clamp down on Brewster, services at Scrooby must have fallen into abeyance. By 1607-8 the people of Scrooby were petitioning to have a minister and had selected their own 'honest, decent and quiet man' – a hint that they did not wish to continue the Brewster pattern!

To bring an end to this period of nonconformity, Archbishop Matthew preached a sermon against the separatists in Bawtry church in May 1608. By this date most of the separatists had surely left – or were about to – but the Archbishop did not fully quell the constant pushing against the boundaries that the remaining Nottinghamshire puritans continued with.





BREWSTER AND THE SEPARATIST CONGREGATIONS

Whilst Brewster was able to influence the services at Scrooby chapel in a puritan direction, many other churches in the district offered good evangelical preaching whilst avoiding the hated ceremonials such as surplices and kneeling. The puritans had hoped for a new direction under King James, but after the failure of the Hampton Court Conference Richard Clifton at Babworth and Richard Bernard at Worksop were both deprived of their livings in 1605; this was a calculated move to deprive the radical puritan communities of their leading ministers. Brewster's curate at Bawtry, Henry Gray, was also sanctioned. However, this was not the end of the world – deprived ministers usually got a small pension and often found a different job.

Yet Scrooby and Bawtry continued to enjoy a degree of independence. Bishop Joseph Hall later described them as enjoying 'a secession, rather than a separation.' Clifton moved there and was accused of being the 'pretended' curate. After the appointment at Babworth of the more compliant Turvin, Brewster's relative freedom at Scrooby became more significant. Nonconformist puritans travelled to Scrooby for worship and Bradford wrote that 'they ordinarily met at his house on the Lord's Day (which was a manor of the bishop's) and with great love he entertained them when they came, making provision for them to his great charge, and continued so to do whilst they could stay in England'.

Clifton and Bernard knew other radical puritans such as John Smyth, and it was probably Smyth who, in about 1606, encouraged them all into the momentous step of formal separation from the Church of England – in effect making themselves into a new Church. They were joined by John Robinson, returned from Norwich, and Thomas Helwys who was closely associated with Smyth. They formed into two groups – one at Scrooby effectively led spiritually by Clifton, the other at Gainsborough under Smyth.

Writing years later, William Bradford described how separatists were then 'hunted and persecuted on every side . . . some were taken and clapt up in prison, others had their houses beset and watched night and day and hardly escaped.'



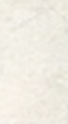
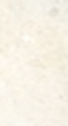
James I of England and VI of Scotland
Royal Collection Trust

In this situation, it was not surprising that Brewster and his associates decided to try for a life of greater freedom in the Netherlands – which was already a well-established place for English puritans to settle and which Brewster already knew from his time with William Davison.

We do not know when Brewster left Scrooby because the evidence that he moved to Boston lacks a confirmed date, but it was probably in later 1607 or very early 1608. In this Lincolnshire port, the birthplace of the famous author of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the separatists clearly mingled with the local puritan community – perhaps over a period of many weeks. However, when Brewster and the rest of the congregation attempted to sail away down the estuary of the River Witham, they were betrayed by the ship's captain and arrested. The charges they faced emphasised holding illegal religious 'conventicles' (meetings) and not attending the parish church, but after a brief court appearance at Boston Guildhall they all seem to have been released pending further appearances for some – but by December 1607 Brewster had gone into hiding or already left. It is often assumed that Brewster invested much of his own money in the Boston escape attempt, so its failure left him in straitened circumstances.



Boston Guildhall





A WALK AROUND BREWSTER'S SCROOBY

Park outside the church – this is correctly spelt as St Wilfrid's church but is often given as Wilfred's and was most likely called St James's in Brewster's time. Wilfrid was a Northumbrian church leader, seen by some as instrumental in placing England under the control of Rome – you can see a 'picture' of him in the windows at Austerfield church which marks his involvement in the Council of Austerfield in 702/3. First records of the church date from around 1171 and it was rebuilt in 1380, but in Brewster's day it was a 'chapel of ease' and not a parish church. By 1911 it was part of the parish of Sutton with Scrooby and Lound and only in 1920 did it have its own vicar. There is a separate guide to the church itself and the interior is much-changed from Brewster's day – including the font, which is only a replica of the one that Brewster himself was christened at with the original sold to an American in 1880 and now being in Chicago. However, you can sit on a pew that Brewster might have sat on.

A more tangible connection to Brewster can be found with the wall memorial to Penelope Sandys, a descendant of Archbishop Sandys who leased Scrooby Manor at advantageous terms to his own family – and for whom Brewster then managed it. There are also the three 'Brewster pews' kept in the south aisle, which are old enough that Brewster might indeed have sat on them.

Leave the church and walk round the tower to leave the churchyard at the north gate. On your left you will see the old village pinfold – a place where stray animals could be impounded. Just beyond this is a house known as the Old Vicarage, dating from the very late 1500s although much altered. Scrooby rarely had an actual resident vicar so probably it was used more often by a curate, maybe even Richard Clifton.

The Pilgrim Fathers pub stands on the road which bypasses the village, and has a large car park. This pub used to be known as the Saracen's Head until in 1969 an enterprising owner changed the name in the hope of luring in wandering American tourists. Nowadays it is the only pub in Scrooby, but in the past Scrooby was better supplied – in 1852 it also had the Galway Arms and the George and Dragon, which you can still see in the fork of the Great North Road as it arrives at Scrooby from the south.



Scrooby pinfold

Pilgrim Fathers pub



William Brewster would not recognise the Great North Road as it is today, nor the Pilgrim Fathers of course. In his day the main road from London to York snaked through the middle of the village past the church but it provided him with an income from his job as postmaster, supplying the mails with fresh horses for twenty pence a day. In 1776 a Turnpike Act allowed it to be improved and so it now skirts the village. The road provided a lively income for many and there were later coaching inns at Scrooby Top and Barnby Moor, but even the famous old Blue Bell there was killed off by the railways and became a house until the arrival of cars inspired a reopening in 1906. Brewster would probably also have been interested in the old inn that still stands by the roadside at Scrooby Top, which was a popular posting house from 1780 to 1821.

On the north side of Scrooby is a road called Gibbet Hill Lane. William Geadon was the turnpike keeper at Scrooby and was called out at night on 3 July 1779 by a Lincolnshire shepherd, John Spencer, on the pretence of letting some animals through the turnpike gate. Spencer knew there would be money in the house, so he murdered Geadon with a hedge stake and then went upstairs and murdered his mother as well. However, he was spotted dragging one of the bodies across the road to the river and taken to Nottingham for trial, where he was executed by hanging. The body was then brought back to Scrooby and hung in chains as a warning to others. The gibbet post was still visible until at least 1833.

Return from the main road down Church Lane, turning left into Chapel Lane. Turn right into Dog Lane and this brings you into Mill Lane – you can carry along to the lovely old mill which stands on channelled water from the River Ryton. Then you can return into the centre of the village and explore around the remains of Scrooby Manor. The Archbishops of York had had an estate here for centuries before Archbishop Thomas Savage decided to develop it into a palatial hunting estate from 1501. When Cardinal Wolsey was staying here in 1529 it had 'a large dining chamber ceiled and dressed with wainscot . . .thirty-nine chambers and apartments' and excellent kitchens, of course! It had a moat and two courtyards, making it very popular for the large family of Archbishop Sandys in the 1570s. The Archbishop then leased the estate to his own children at something like a quarter of the market rate. King James saw Scrooby in 1603, noting its great potential for hunting but that the buildings were 'exceedingly decayed.' Meanwhile the Sandys family used their wealth to invest in the Virginia Company.

Normally you cannot access the Manor grounds, but you can see the remaining fragments by walking along Station Road. The railway at the bottom forms the edge of the marshland known locally as the Carrs.



BREWSTER'S FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

James Brewster was Master of the hospital at Bawtry from 1584 (although living mostly in Chelmsford) and also vicar of Sutton cum Lound from 1594, reflecting the Brewster family's dominance of the area. His role at Bawtry was clearly seen as corrupt dealing by Archbishop Sandys and the next archbishop, Piers, brought a case against Brewster in 1590. He stayed in this post after his brother's departure and added to it by becoming vicar also of Gringley-on-the-Hill. Although probably a puritan in practice, James Brewster has something of a chequered history – accused of neglecting his benefices and largely destroying the Bawtry hospital. He was replaced by Ezekias Burton from Sutton-in-Ashfield, who also had a long history of nonconformity.

Richard Clifton is famous as the minister at Babworth, where he was first cited for nonconformity in 1591. He was briefly in charge of the church at Marnham before moving in 1586 to Babworth which was already a strongly puritan church. Clifton led something of a charmed life at Babworth but the pressure tightened early in 1605 when Babworth churchwardens were found not to have a surplice or the correct Prayer Book. Clifton was deprived as one of a group of leading preachers in April 1605. Evidence suggests that he then moved to the Scrooby district where he took services no doubt at the instigation of Brewster, and then moved to Amsterdam; however, unlike the others, he remained in that city when the move to Leiden took place.

Thomas Hancock was Brewster's curate at Scrooby from 1590 until about 1592 - he came from West Retford with a track record of having been in trouble in 1584 for not wearing a surplice. He replaced his friend Southworth at Headon, after the latter was deprived, and then moved to another living controlled by the same Wasteneys family at Todwick. He is a classic example of how nonconformist puritans survived within the Church of England with a little bit of help!

Robert Southworth was married at Scrooby in 1592 without proper legal banns and was a leading nonconformist puritan with more citations than any other Nottinghamshire clergyman. After being deprived of the living of Headon in 1605, he was briefly in trouble for acting as curate at Scrooby in 1607 – he was excommunicated in September that year. Much research has been done on his connections with the separatists of the same surname and their links to the village of Claborough, but Southworth himself stayed in England.

Henry Gray was curate at Bawtry until he was deprived in 1605. Gray was prosecuted for 'pretending' to be curate at the puritan stronghold of Headon but in 1607 he became a diocesan preacher and moved away from the separatists. He was still curate at Headon in 1614.

Richard Jackson moved to Scrooby by about 1598 and lived in part of Scrooby Manor adjacent to Brewster; he also seems to have served as its bailiff for a time. His wife was from the Nottinghamshire



Pettinger family, who were important local puritans of some standing – one had been a predecessor of Clifton at Babworth. Jackson was cited in 1598 and 1604, and in December 1607 he was one of the small group being hunted for not appearing in court although he had not been listed amongst those involved in conventicles at Boston. Jackson's family were much involved in the Spalding Court of Sewers, which may explain why Brewster and the others chose to stay in Boston while planning their escape. Jackson is perhaps best known because his daughter Susannah travelled on the Mayflower and later married Edward Winslow. Having travelled to the Netherlands, he seems to have returned to England and lived near Scrooby at Everton.

John Smyth was from the nearby village of Sturton-le-Steeple. Having lost his job as lecturer in Lincoln, he eventually played a leading role – if not the leading role – in the decision to separate from the Church of England which occurred in about 1606. Smyth then formed a congregation at Gainsborough and worked with the Scrooby group to plan the move to the Netherlands. Once in Amsterdam tensions between the groups surfaced, and Smyth's group stayed in the city to embrace adult baptism and Arminianism instead of Calvinism. Smyth's closeted friend, Thomas Helwys, also split from him and returned to England to start the Baptist denomination.

John Robinson was, like Smyth, from Sturton-le-Steeple. After Cambridge he began a church career but his radical opinions proved a barrier to securing a permanent job in Norwich, so he came back to Nottinghamshire where his new wife also came from. Robinson's preaching at West Burton (1603), Sturton (1605) and Treswell and South Leverton (1607) gained him some significant and sometimes unwelcome recognition. Robinson's exact status in the early days of the separation is hard to trace, but after the move to Leiden he emerged as the spiritual leader and guiding influence. Robinson never went on the Mayflower, but his wife's sister did – and he chose her husband John Carver to be the initial leader. Both the Carvers died soon after their arrival. Bradford described Robinson as 'very courteous, affable and sociable in his conversation, and towards his own people especially. He was an acute and expert disputant, very quick and ready...' Robinson died in 1625.



William Bradford was from a minor landowning family at nearby Austerfield, where he was born in 1590. At some point Bradford came under the influence of Clifton – it is interesting that Bradford cannot have been more than 15 when Clifton was deprived of the Babworth living, but he made his decision to join the Scrooby separatists in their attempts to leave for the Netherlands. Bradford lived at Leiden and got married, then joined the Mayflower expedition as one of the few with any practical knowledge of farming. However, he is best known for his chronicle of the early years of the new settlement, without which our knowledge would be sorely limited. There is a delightful window depicting Bradford in Austerfield church. He died in 1657.

William Bradford statue at Pilgrim Hall Museum



BREWSTER'S BELIEFS AND INFLUENCES

An important understanding is that in 1605-6 none of the future separatists had any substantial theological difference from the leaders and bishops of the Church of England. They had all rejected the authority of Rome, followed the Calvinist teaching of pre-destination, and denied such doctrines as purgatory and transubstantiation.

The original differences were very largely over style of worship and dated back to the so-called Elizabethan Settlement of 1559. This had set out what was acceptable practice in church in the Book of Common Prayer, including what prayers and bible readings were acceptable on any specific day, and what forms of ritual or clerical dress. Many puritans regarded the Book of Common Prayer as 'quenching the Spirit' as it forbade ministers from using their own prayers. Ritual issues became repeated problems – the wearing of the surplice, kneeling at Communion and making the sign of the Cross at baptism. Moderate puritans regarded some of these as 'things indifferent' but more extreme ones thought them worth risking prison over.

Puritans liked their services to include a lengthy sermon and unscripted prayer which they called 'prophesying', but they were generally cautious about music. The use of the Psalms, sung metrically, seems to have been the most common practice. Communion was taken around a 'table' not an altar.

Meanwhile all accepted the Calvinist teaching that there was an elect - people who were pre-selected by God whilst others would be damned. The problem was how to tell who had been pre-selected and some then began looking for evidence of lifestyle....leading to confusion over 'salvation by works' which they certainly did not believe in!

The problem was that, in a State church, the elect were forced to rub shoulders with many who were ungodly; indeed, they were often led by ungodly bishops. One way round this was to form an inner or 'covenanted' congregation, as Richard Bernard tried at Worksop, but ultimately this still left the nonconformist puritans under the control of King James – who was 'Head' of the Church. And the separatists came to question whether the Church of England was in any sense a 'true Church' at all.

Whilst in Leiden, the congregation started off basing their practice on Francis Johnson's separatist confession of faith from 1596. Then Robinson and Brewster were forced to confront the new thinking developed by Arminius that became known as Arminianism: this utterly rejected the Calvinist belief

Worksop Priory Gatehouse



in predestination and argued that all men and women could come to good by exercising their own free will. Many of the former Gainsborough congregation (and, ironically, some of the Church of England) embraced this, but in Leiden Brewster and Robinson argued against it.

Brewster was also guided by his belief in God's Providence – that God continuously guided events in the World. Thus, on the turbulent trip across the North Sea in 1608, the separatists saw God's hand both in the storm that so disrupted them and in their rescue from it. We can see this thinking in Bradford's comments about the discovery of corn when they got to America: 'And it is to be noted as a special providence of God, and a great mercy to this poor people, that they thus got seed to plant corn the next year, or they might have starved; for they had none, nor any likelihood of getting any, till too late for the planting season.'

Worksop Priory





BREWSTER IN LEIDEN

After a brief time in Amsterdam, Brewster moved with most of the Scrooby group to a new home in Leiden in Spring 1609 although Richard Clifton stayed behind with the Ancient Church. John Robinson became their new leader.

There was plainly a difficult period where the separatists had to find homes and livings. As a relatively wealthy man and also having been elected 'ruling elder', much of this fell upon Brewster and Bradford's writings tell us that he 'spent most of his means, having a great charge and many children; and in regard of his former breeding and course of life, not so fit for many employments as the others were, especially for such as were toilsome and laborious.'

By this time Brewster was already becoming something of a leader in the separatist world. When Johnson's Ancient Church in Amsterdam experienced a period of division in 1610, Brewster went there with Robinson to try to help.

Brewster put some of his Cambridge education to use by teaching students English and Latin, but his Leiden years are best known for the formation of printing business at Koorsteg in the middle of Leiden. Brewster became involved in this with Thomas Brewer (who financed it) and perhaps Edward Winslow, who had gained experience of the trade while in London. They produced around twenty books and pamphlets, including one by John Robinson. However, in 1618 they printed a pamphlet that was so critical of the English church system that it led to pressure being put on the Dutch. Sir Dudley Carleton investigated English printing in the Netherlands and found the Koorsteg press aimed at 'his Majesty's disservice and the trouble of his Kingdoms.'

Then he discovered who was responsible: 'I believe I have discovered the printer... one William Brewster, a Brownist, who hath been for some years an inhabitant and printer at Leyden'. By August 1619 he had arrived in Leiden; Brewster went into hiding at Leiderdorp, perhaps having just got back from England, but Thomas Brewer was captured and sent back to England. The press fell silent but its type lived on to resurface in other separatist books over the next few years!

Meanwhile in 1611 John Robinson bought a house just opposite St Peter's Church in Leiden. This was adapted for community living, rather like a small college.



Old postcard of Pieterskerk, Leiden

A WALK AROUND LEIDEN

To have a look around Brewster's Leiden, we suggest that you start at the American Pilgrim Museum which is in a fourteenth century house in Hooglandskerk. This will give you an excellent idea of what home life was like in Brewster's time here, combined with high quality historical explanations.

Head towards the Pieterskerk but before you go in call at Pieterskerkchoorsteeg (Jan Pesijn Courtyard). This is where Robinson bought a house, originally known as 'Green Gate', and built accommodation for members of the congregation. The Pilgrims' houses were demolished and replaced in 1683. Just opposite this you can see a memorial on the wall of the Pieterskerk before going inside to enjoy this splendid monument where John Robinson was buried in 1625.

A highlight for many is where William Brewster lived and worked off an alley now called William Brewstersteeg. The blank end wall of Brewster's house can still be identified by the contrast of its bricks with more modern additions. His house was the last on the right. Brewster and Brewer ran their press here; Edward Winslow, who had been trained as a printer in London, helped Brewster and probably also lived here.

You can also visit the University Academy at Rapenburg where Brewster and Robinson did some teaching.

Finally, a visit should finish at the Vliet river, from where it is believed the Pilgrims left and where a statue marks their voyage.

For more information visit www.mayflower400uk.org/visit/leiden-holland



View of Vliet River, Leiden





BREWSTER AND THE MAYFLOWER VOYAGE

The Leiden congregation considered where to move and eventually agreed to settle near the mouth of the Hudson River in North America. There were then some lengthy negotiations involving John Carver, Brewster and others with London representatives of the commercial businesses involved. Finally, the Speedwell was contracted to collect a portion of the congregation from Delftshaven and take them quietly to England as the first step. Bradford later described their departure – 'So they left the goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting place, near twelve years; but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on these things; but lift up their eyes to ye heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.'

At Southampton it joined up with the Mayflower, captained by Christopher Jones of Harwich, and this is perhaps where Brewster joined it. His wife and children Wrestling and Love also travelled on the voyage. The Leiden congregation made up less than half of the Mayflower passengers, who totalled 102.

The Speedwell soon became a problem, so after a stop at Dartmouth it was abandoned at Plymouth. On the lengthy journey across the Atlantic, John Howland was washed overboard but was saved with a rope. A child named Oceanus was born on the way and Susannah White gave birth soon after they saw the coast. Meanwhile Bradford's wife Dorothy fell overboard and drowned whilst her husband was away exploring the coast.

After 65 days (on November 9) they sighted the American coast at Cape Cod and Brewster read Psalm 100 as a thanksgiving. After a few more efforts they abandoned the idea of going to the Hudson River and entered what became Provincetown Harbour. However, this was not a hospitable area and lacked water so they explored the coast and finally landed at Plymouth. The leading figures then signed the Mayflower Compact to provide a basis for governing their affairs.

Hope was kindled when fresh running water was found – Bradford wrote that 'we saw two becks of fresh water.' But by this time they were in the depths of winter – hardly a good start for a settlement. Unable to build a proper settlement in the harsh winter, most of the Pilgrims stayed on the Mayflower until 21 March 1621 during which period many died.



*Signing the Mayflower Compact
1620, a painting by Jean Leon
Gerome Ferris, 1899*



BREWSTER IN AMERICA

Brewster had travelled as the teacher of the Pilgrims so although he was a senior member he was not its leader. That was Robinson's brother-in-law, John Carver, but both Carver and his wife died within a few months of the landing. In 1621 William Bradford, the young man from Austerfield, became the new governor. In 1623 Bradford married the widow Alice Southworth. The fact that Bradford and others took on the challenging issues of politics and economics left Brewster free to focus on his library of 400 books and spiritual teaching, so that he emerges from history with something of a wise man reputation.

Bradford did not portray him as an aethereal academic however. 'He was no way unwilling to bear his burden with the rest, living many times without bread or corn many months together, having many times nothing but fish and often wanting that also... he lived by the blessing of God in health till very old age. And besides that, he would labour with his hands in the fields as long as he was able. Yet when the church had no other minister, he taught twice every Sabbath, and that both powerfully and profitably, to the great contentment of the hearers and their comfortable edification; yea, many were brought to God by his ministry.'

Once the settlement was established, Brewster was joined by some of his family. His son Jonathan arrived in November 1621 whilst Patience and Fear came in July 1623. His wife Mary died in 1627.

By 1630, when large numbers of new settlers began to arrive, Brewster had attained the status of the true pioneer. John Cotton famously described him as 'Old Mr Brewster....a man of long-approved piety, gravity, integrity.'

Brewster died at Duxbury in 1644, leaving his small farm to his two surviving sons Jonathan and Love.

For more information visit www.plimoth.org



Brewster Gardens, Plymouth, Massachusetts.
The park covers the original garden plot that was granted to William Brewster in 1620.



Brewster and the Pilgrims giving thanks to God for reaching land



William Brewster is portrayed in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol giving thanks to God in the "Frieze of American History" depiction of "The Landing of the Pilgrims."





WHY DOES BREWSTER MATTER?

Brewster's reputation depends to a great extent on what others said about him and none has left us more evidence than William Bradford who had known him since childhood. Bradford was able to describe Brewster's last hours and saw the hand of God's Providence in them:

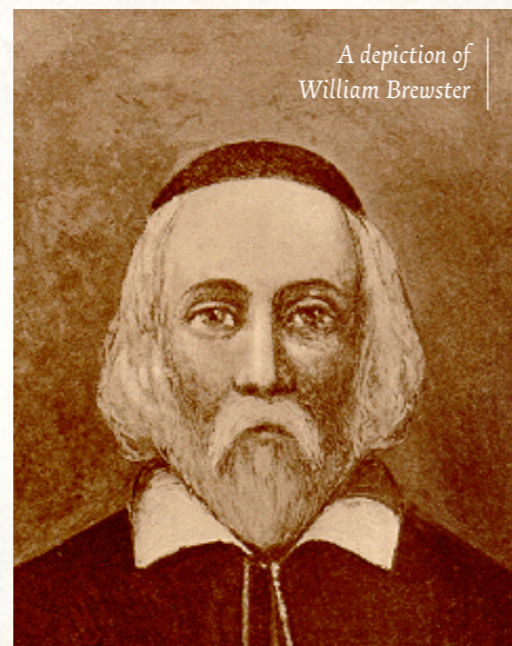
'And notwithstanding the many troubles and sorrows he passed through, the Lord upheld him to a great age. He was near fourscore years of age (if not all out) when he died. He had this blessing added by the Lord to all the rest, to die in his bed, in peace, amongst the midst of his friends, who mourned and wept over him and ministered what help and comfort they could unto him....'

Unique among the original Pilgrims, we thus have a personal testimony in detail of Brewster's character:

'He was wise and discreet and well spoken, having a grave and deliberate utterance, of a very cheerful spirit, very sociable and pleasant amongst his friends, of a humble and modest mind, of a peaceable disposition, undervaluing himself and his own abilities and sometime overvaluing others. Inoffensive and innocent in his life and conversation, which gained him the love of those without as well as those within; yet he would tell them plainly of their faults and evils, both publicly and privately, but in such a manner as usually was well taken from him.'

Bradford went on to describe Brewster's manner as a teacher and religious leader, noting that he preferred ministers to pray briefly and often rather than 'be long and tedious' whilst in his own prayers he had a talent for 'ripping up the heart and conscience before God.'

There is no doubt Nottinghamshire's William Brewster is pivotal to the Pilgrim story. Without Brewster, the Pilgrims story would have been very different and may not have happened at all. Brewster's role in forming the congregation at Scrooby, his role during their time at Leiden and his status as Elder and spiritual leader when they reached America cannot be under-estimated. It is Brewster who led the first Thanksgiving, an event now synonymous with American culture, and his descendants (and those of the other pilgrims) now number 35 million people worldwide. This is why the people of Nottinghamshire are extremely proud of Brewster and his influence in all aspects of the pilgrim's journey, settlement and self-governance in the New World.

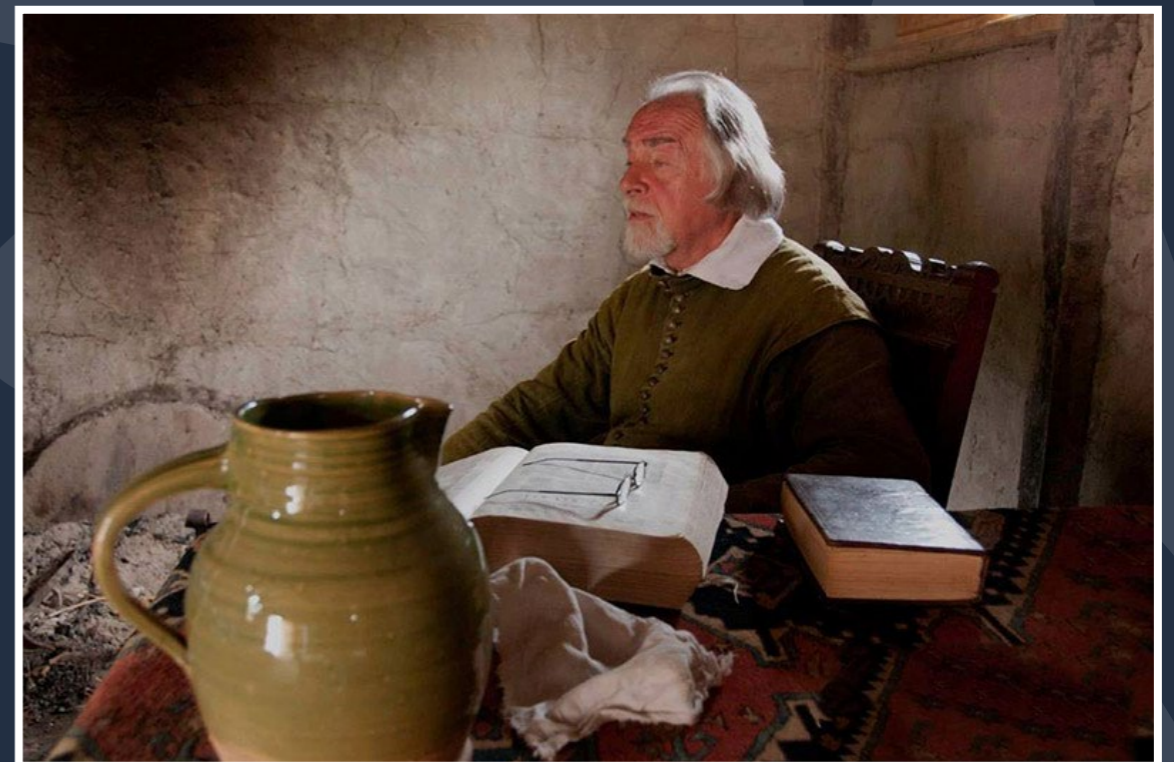
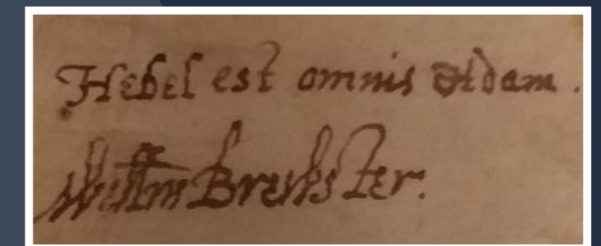


A depiction of William Brewster

Coat of Arms of William Brewster



William Brewster signature



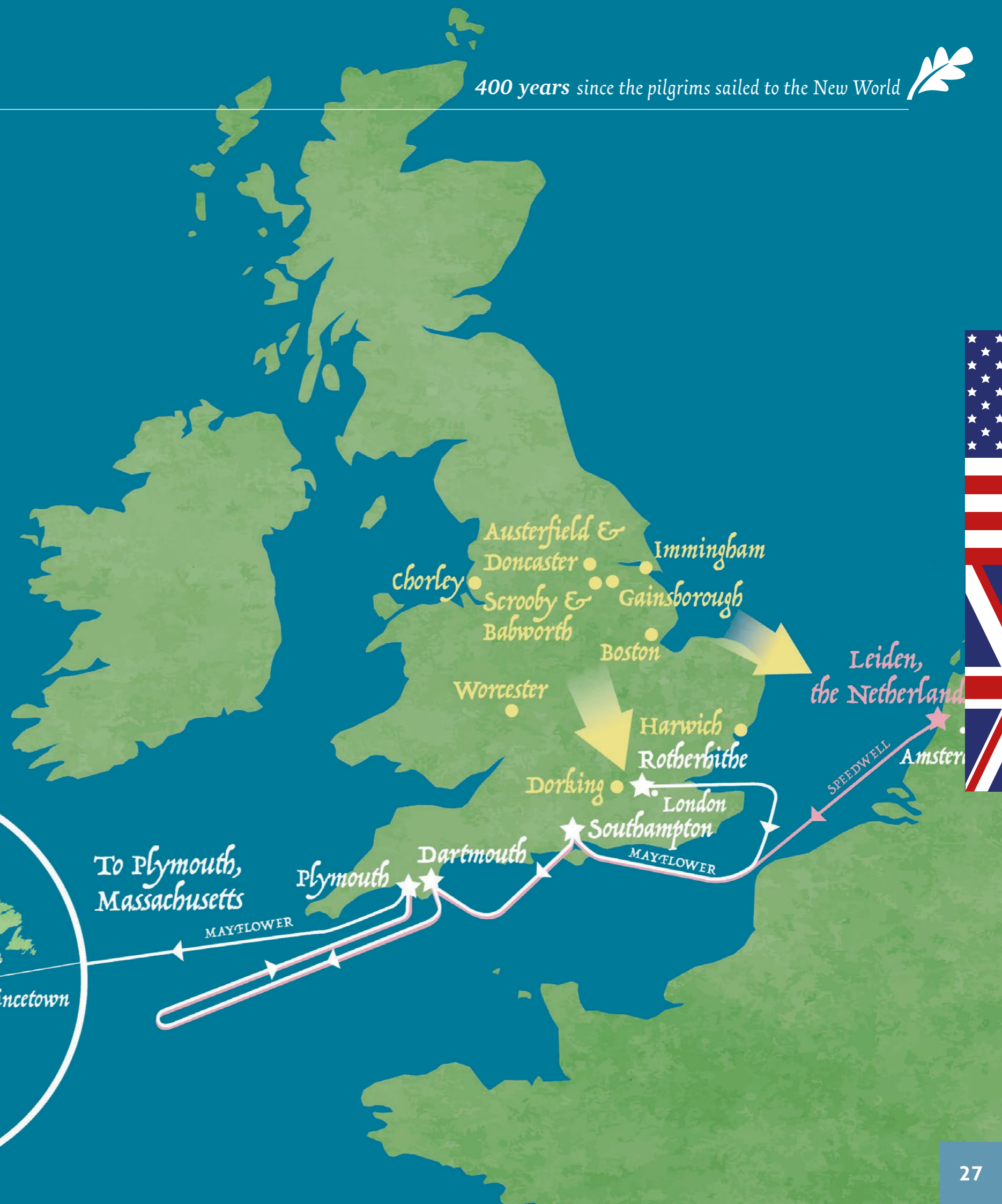
A re-enactor portraying William Brewster at Plimoth Plantation





Mayflower 400 Trail

- Pilgrims and crew hometowns
- ➔ Pilgrim migration
- ★★ Mayflower and Speedwell destinations
- ➔ Route of the Speedwell
- ➔ Route of the Mayflower
- Major Cities



Nottinghamshire

Pilgrim County

The map opposite shows you the regional connections to the Mayflower Pilgrim story. There is also a map overleaf that directs you to main sites associated with the Pilgrims across Nottinghamshire. You can find out more at:
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/mayflowerpilgrims

The Mayflower



England

1620

Austerfield (South Yorkshire)

William Bradford, one of the Mayflower Pilgrims and later governor of the colony in America was born in Austerfield in 1590. He was orphaned at an early age, and by the age of 12 he was beginning to read scripture and attend Richard Clyfton's preachings at Babworth. He later joined the congregation at Scrooby and became good friends with William Brewster.

Immingham (Lincolnshire)

In 1608, some of the Separatists secured the services of a Dutch captain to take them over the sea to Holland to escape persecution. They left from Immingham Creek which is now part of Immingham port, one of the largest ports in Great Britain.

Gainsborough (Lincolnshire)

Gainsborough Old Hall has a link to the Separatist movement and the Mayflower Pilgrims through its owners William and Rose Hickman. They were ardent Puritans and were sympathetic to the beliefs of the Separatists. They allowed the group to worship in secret at the Old Hall and supported them financially.

Lincoln

At the time of the Mayflower Pilgrims, the beautiful city of Lincoln would have been a thriving centre for the wool trade. The city's cloth became famous in legend through Robin Hood being said to have worn garments of Lincoln Green. Lincoln is well known for its links to the Magna Carta (Great Charter) which is believed to be the forerunner of the Mayflower Compact – the set of self-governing rules that the colonists drew up once in America. The Compact, in turn, is said to have inspired the creation of the American Constitution.

Boston (Lincolnshire)

Boston is a historic port and market town that sits on the banks of the River Witham which joins the North Sea. It was at Boston that some of the Mayflower Pilgrims were held captive in the cells at the Guildhall in a bid to escape religious persecution across the sea in Holland. The Guildhall cells and other memorials to the Pilgrims can still be seen today.



Scrooby

It is amazing to think that this quiet, rural village in North Nottinghamshire is part of the beginning of the Pilgrims story and foundations of America. Therefore, Scrooby holds a lot of importance to American visitors. Scrooby Manor House was once home to William Brewster and Susanna White Winslow and they, along with some of the other separatists, attended St Wilfred's Church before they decided to

break away from established traditions and Church law. William Brewster was one of the most influential Pilgrims, held secret religious meetings at his house and he accompanied the Pilgrims over to Holland and America. As the elder and religious leader to the Pilgrims, he is credited as holding the first Thanksgiving in 1621.



Sturton le Steeple

Sturton Le Steeple is the birthplace of John Robinson the "Pilgrim Pastor." Robinson was born in the village in 1576. John Robinson became the leader of the Separatists during their time in Holland. He died there in 1625, never making the voyage across the ocean, but proved an important source of advice through letters he sent to the

colonists. In 1604, he married Bridget White who was also from Sturton le Steeple. The village and church also has connections to some of the other separatists including John Smyth and Katherine Carver (Bridget White's sister) who married John Carver, the first governor of the new colony in America.

Clarborough

Separatist preacher Robert Southworth was almost certainly the son of Oliver Southworth of Clarborough. More certain is the identification of Edward Southworth and his elder brother, Thomas, sons of Richard Southworth, who were baptised in the church.

Both were almost certainly members of John Robinson's Separatist church in Leiden. A sister of Edward and Thomas married the cousin of William Bradford at Austerfield.

Babworth

Rev Richard Clyfton became Minister of the congregation at All Saint's Church Babworth on 11 July 1586. He was deprived of his living in 1604 for his nonconformist views. William Brewster and William Bradford, worshipped here until the Separatist Church was formed at Scrooby in 1606 when they and Clyfton moved there. Brewster and

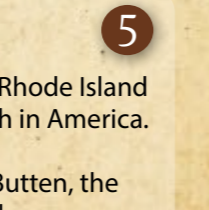
Bradford were both passengers aboard the Mayflower. Clyfton escaped to Amsterdam in 1608 and died there on 20 May 1616. The Church has artefacts associated with the Pilgrims including a Breeches Bible and a Communion cup thought to have been used by them.



Worksop

Richard Bernard (1568-1641) was a Puritan Clergyman who lost his job over his nonconformist views in 1605. During his time at Worksop, he associated with the leaders of the Mayflower Pilgrims. His daughter, Mary, married Roger Williams and together

they founded the state of Rhode Island and the first Baptist Church in America. It is possible that William Butten, the only passenger to die on the voyage itself, came from Worksop.



Nottinghamshire

Pilgrim County



Retford

Retford is one of the oldest boroughs in England and was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as 'Redeforde'. Retford was a centre for Puritans and many often visited nearby Babworth and Sturton to listen to Richard Clyfton and John Robinson preach. While in Retford, you could visit the 13th Century St Swithun's Church or the Mayflower Pilgrims Centre based at Retford Hub on Churchgate.

From mid-2019, there will be a new heritage trail and Pilgrims gallery at Bassetlaw Museum on Grove Street.



Greasley Church

St Mary's Church at Greasley is a medieval church, built in the mid-15th century and was restored in 1882.

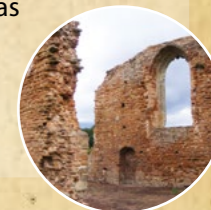
On the 15th February 1604, the church was the place of the marriage for John Robinson and Bridget White who lived

at nearby Beauvale Priory at the time. In 1607, there was concern raised that the Puritan exorcist John Darrell was allowed to preach at the Church. Separatist John Smyth also preached here.

Beauvale Priory

Beauvale Priory was a Carthusian Priory founded in 1343. The Priory has links to the Pilgrims as Bridget White, originally from Sturton le Steeple, lived here in the early part of the 17th century because her family held lands here. She married John Robinson at St Mary's Church at nearby Greasley.

Bridget's sister Katherine White would later marry John Carver, credited with writing the Mayflower Compact and was its first signatory, he was also the first Governor of Plymouth Colony.



Southwell

The pretty village of Southwell is dominated by the imposing structure of 900-year-old Southwell Minster which is the cathedral for Nottinghamshire. At the time of the Pilgrims, Southwell Minster would have been a powerful centre of religious rule, having come through the turbulence of the years of

Reformation pretty much unscathed. Senior clergy who accepted the successive religious changes were permitted to return, while Queen Elizabeth I from 1558 onwards allowed the Chapter to resume most of its former powers.



Newark Castle

It is said that the Mayflower Compact, which was set of rules for self-governance for the Pilgrims to live by in their new colony in America, was inspired by the Magna Carta. Magna Carta meaning 'Great Charter' was

signed by King John in 1215 and it was at Newark Castle a year later that King John died of dysentery – a disease caused by parasites in the gut.

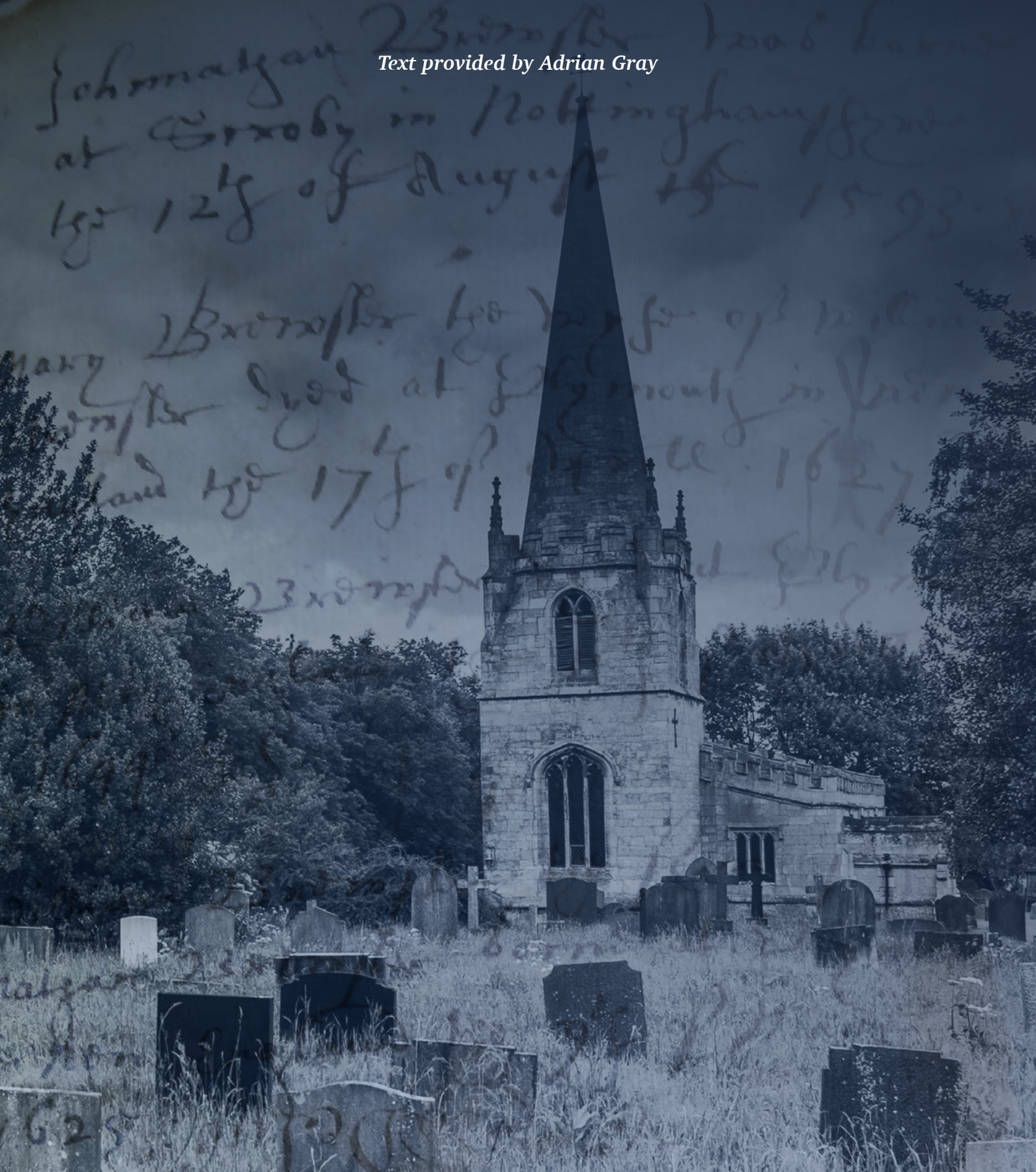
National Civil War Centre

The National Civil War Centre has links to the story in terms of the legacy. At the start of the 17th century, the Pilgrims displayed the free-thinking and questioning against established traditions and laws that would eventually pervade further into the mindset of the whole country on a larger scale finally resulting in a civil war.

Visit the National Civil War to find out more about 17th Century life and the results of free-thinking that resulted in the execution of a King www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com



Text provided by Adrian Gray



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