This issue contains new information on a number of subjects: the York Girdlers' pageant house (Eileen White, Bradford, Yorkshire); entertainments in Warwick in the seventeenth century (David George, Urbana College, Ohio); entertainments of Henry, Lord Berkeley, in 1593-4 and 1600-5 (Peter H. Greenfield, Whitman College).

Through an error, the photograph of Wyngaerde's view of Greenwich on p 12 of the Newsletter of 1982:2 was printed reversed. The last page of the current issue contains the correct reproduction. It can be detached so as to replace the other. We apologize to Professor Astington and to our readers for the confusion.

Readers will notice that with this issue we begin to refer to the Newsletter by volume and number. Our publishing history has been two issues each year since 1976, thus: vol 1, nos 1 and 2 (1976); vol 2, nos 1 and 2 (1977); vol 3, nos 1 and 2 (1978); vol 4, nos 1 and 2 (1979); vol 5, nos 1 and 2 (1980); vol 6, nos 1 and 2 (1981); vol 7, nos 1 and 2 (1982). An index to the first eight volumes will appear in vol 8, no 2 (1983).

EILEEN WHITE

The Girdlers' pageant house in York

From 1424, the Bridgemasters' rolls in York record the receipts from various craft guilds for rent of pageant houses on Toft Green; these receipts remain remarkably
consistent for over 150 years. The 1424 list has the Skinners and Dyers, the 
Tanners, Mercers, Tapiters, Carpenters, Cordwainers and Bakers, each guild paying 
12d; the Goldsmiths also rented a pageant house for 8d. In 1591 the list gives the 
Skinners, Merchants, Tapiters, Tanners, Carpenters, Bakers and Cordiners who still 
pay 12d each. Other guilds appear occasionally: the Weavers are included in the 
Bridgemasters’ accounts in 1499, but are later found paying rent to the Bakers 
along with the Cooks, Bowers, and Painters. Between 1501 and 1543, there are 
also receipts of 18s for ‘a house in the Pageant Green that diverse pageants stand 
in.’ The Merchants record payments made to them by the Bowers and the 
Butchers.1 While the entries between 1499 and 1543 deserve further examination, 
this study concentrates on the pageant house of another guild.

In 1548, the Girdlers are first recorded in the Bridgemasters' rolls, appearing 
amongst the regular pageant house tenants: ‘Item of the gyrdlers for ther pagnant 
house viij d’ (York City Archives, Bridgemasters’ Roll C 89:5; York, 1, p 292). 
They occur again in similar entries in the next two extant rolls, those of 1552 and 
1554 (C 90:1 and 90:2; York, 1, pp 306 and 319), but after this they disappear 
and only the seven regular tenants remain to the end of the century.

First, it is worth considering other rents in the city in comparison to the 
payments of 12d (for most of the pageant houses), 8d (the Girdlers and the Wax-
chandlers between 1501 and 1518), and 4d (the Coopers from 1501). Here, the 
examples are taken from the Bridgemasters’ Roll of 1554 (C 90:2). In this year 
the rents of between 4d and 12d are among the lowest paid. For example, 4d leased: 
a parcel of ground (rents for ground went from 4d to 16d, but one was as high as 
3s 4d); a garth (rents went from 4d to 4s); a section of the moat (which ranged 
from 4d to 20s); an enclosing of part of a common lane (4d to 10d); and an outshot 
(2d to 6d). 8d rented a piece of ground; a garth; the cheapest tenements – one was 
at Toft Green, the other at Jubbergate (relatively few were leased for between 8d 
and 20d; most went from 2s to 40s); and for enclosing a common lane. 12d, apart 
from ground, garths, a little moat, a tenement, and a house (the only one so called 
in the roll), leased two shops on the north side of Ouse Bridge (which then ranged 
from 20d for two shops to 2s 4d) and a stable (the only one in this Roll). In other 
words, the pageant house, as would be expected, was not an elaborate or large 
structure. Indeed, the outshot of the Coopers, for which they paid 4d (called a 
pageant house in 1503, but more regularly appearing as an outshot through most of 
the century), would have been a kind of lean-to, built under the extended roof of a 
larger building.

The regular tenants on Pageant Green must have had a form of permanent lease. 
Whenever the city made a long-term lease under seal – commonly for twenty-one 
years, though longer periods are known – the tenant enjoyed security of tenure, and 
an individual could pass the lease on to his heirs. However, the tenant usually had 
the obligation of keeping his property in repair at his own cost and was expected to 
hand it back to the city in good condition. There are many examples in the city’s 
House Books to illustrate this; for example:
George Cook nowe Chambrelayne shal haue a leas for terme of xxx yeres of & in one tenement with thapportynaunces in Conystreet in the holdynge of John Carre yeldying yerely thaccustomed rent .xxij s. And he bearyng of his costes and Chardges all maner of reparacions/ at his costes and charages duryng all the sayd terme And at the terme end the same to yeld vp & leave tenant hable And the sayed leas to be made vnder the seale of the office of mayoraltie with a clause of Recentry/ (York City Archives, House Book 20, f 79: 23 October 1551)

When the Merchants stopped paying for their pageant house after 1591, the ground on which this stood - rather than the house - was entered as leased to Alderman Moseley, and for the same rent of 12d. Both the Merchants and the Bakers carried out minor and major repairs to their pageant houses at their own costs. They obviously took responsibility for the building, and their rent seems more in the nature of a ground rent, especially as the Merchants’ rent of 12d was charged for the ground alone after the house had ceased to be used for the pageant wagon. In general, however, the city had a claim on the building after a long lease, even if the tenant had spent money keeping it in repair. The comparative cheapness of the rent could reflect this obligation.

Before returning to the Girdlers' brief occupation of a pageant house on Toft Green, we must understand the lay-out of the Bridgemasters' Account Rolls, especially in the period 1548 to 1554, and the nature of the entries. Originally, the income from certain civic property was intended to finance the upkeep of the city's two bridges, Ouse Bridge and Fosse Bridge; hence the collectors' titles of Bridgemasters. Property in certain areas was assigned to one or other of the bridges—mostly of course to Ouse Bridge, making the Ouse Bridgemasters' rolls the longer. The rents of Toft Green came under the Micklegate area, which was part of the Ousebridge rental, and therefore all references to Bridgemasters' rolls here mean those of the Ouse Bridgemasters (the Ouse and Fosse accounts were combined from 1570). They are made up usually of three parchment membranes sewn together to make a long roll. The entries were made on one side, and then the roll was simply turned over and the bottom became the top of the reverse side: the entries there are written 'upside down' in relation to the first side. In 1554, the receipts fit on the first side, and expenditures (a shorter list) begin on the reverse side, but this is not always the case. In 1548 the receipts continue over to the reverse. Most of the items of expenditure are therefore written on the reverse side of membrane 3.

The 1554 Bridgemasters' Roll (C 90:2) is typical of the three rolls relevant to the Girdlers' rent of a pageant house (1548, 1552, and 1554). The lay-out of the account is consistent. After an introduction naming the Bridgemasters and the Mayor, and the regnal year as well as the calendar date, a note of arrearages (none in 1554) was made. Then the receipts were noted under the headings of clearly-defined areas of the city, following the same order each year:
Rentes & ffarmes withowte Myklyth Barr/ within Ratton Rawe Toft
Grene & Myklithe/ (35 receipts)
Bysshophill Skeldr gate Clementhorpe & hamerton layne (13 receipts)
Northestrete (12 receipts; one was sold in this year)

The Eystesyde of the Brygg (17 receipts)
Northesyde of the Brygge (18 receipts)
Cartgate ffrerelayn Castelgate & Coppergate (23 receipts)
Overowsegate payment ffleshe Shamyls whytney whatnaygate/ Stayne
bowe layn Collyergate & St Savyourgate (23 receipts; one was sold this
year)
Conystrete Ioberlayn little ffeysgale Thursday markett
davygate and Swynegale (28 receipts; and another one was sold this
year)

Petergate Bowthome Gelygate Merygate and Gotheromegate (31
receipts; two were sold this year)
Stayngate and Blaykstreyt (2 receipts)
In the great and little Shamyls (5 receipts)
In the horse ffayre (1 receipt: St Anthony’s Hospital)
Peasholme and Aldewarke (2 receipts) with an extra receipt for Petergate
Total of receipts £82 13s 2d

The reverse of the roll contains the clerk’s fee under allowances, as well as:

Expenses on Whytson Tewysday vppon owse brygge
Reparacions (total only: the particulars were in a paper book)
Allowances for certain Tenemenes dystreasyd this yere and for some
given for dyuers consyderacions (3 allowances)
Certen tenementes decayd for lakk of tenandes this yere (5 allowances)

The total of allowances is £13 7s 6¾d. Also on the reverse are a summary of
allowances and payment (in two parts), a record of payment by the accountants to
the Chamber of £68 19s 2½d, and signatures of Auditors, dated 3 March 1555.
The allowances and decayed tenements can on the whole be clearly matched
with payments recorded under the receipts even when obviously nothing was
received because there was no tenant. Under the rents received in the Myklyth Bar
area is recorded ‘Item (blank) for a tente at Myklith Barr iii s.’ However, under
‘Certen tenementes decayd’ on the reverse side of the roll, is entered ‘Item for a
Tente at Myklith Barr of iii s a yere having no tenante this yere  iii s [tente, Tente for tenemente; mark of abbreviation omitted]. In this balancing of receipts and allowances, the disappearance of the Girdlers after 1554 is explained. On the reverse side of the roll for 1552 (C 90:1) is entered under the heading 'Certen landes in decay for lakk of Tenandes':

... Item for decay of a pagyant howse on Toft grene in the holdyng of the Gyrdlers by yere viij d ...

In 1554, the decay had gone further, for amongst 'Certen tenementes decayd for lakk of tenandes this yere' is recorded 'Item for the vttter decay of a pagyant howse of the Gyrdlars viij d.'

The city council was concerned about its property in 1552 and ordered the wardens to view the common rents in their wards in April (House Book 20, f 99). On 27 May they recorded:

certayne howses of the comon rentes within this Cite be very sore ruynouse & in decaye for defalt of Reparacions that is to say/ one hows in lubargate of xvj d rent/ certayne howsez besyde Mr halles in gotheromgate one hows of the bakside syde of the Toftes and one in the Shamblez/ which will in maner cost the Chamber asmoch as they be worth the reparilling of theym/

Members of the Common Council were to examine these and certify 'whyther theye thynk it bettar to mak reparacions on theym at the Comon chardges or elles to sell theym/ And all this to be done before pentecost next commyng' (House Book 20, f 103v). Was the house 'of the bakside syde of the Toftes' the Girdlers' pageant house? Unfortunately, the buildings in the above list do not closely correspond to the buildings 'in decay for lakk of Tenandes' on the reverse of the Bridgemasters' Roll for 1552 (C 90:1):

... Item for decay of a Tenement in Myklith hair in the holdyng of William Manne by yere iii s
Item for decay of a pagyant howse on Toft grene in the holdyng of the Gyrdlers by yere viij d
Item for decay of a whyte Rent of the Churchwardens of Saynt lohns at vsebrige end whiche they deny to pay xij d ...

Why should the Girdlers' payment of 8d in 1552 and 1554 be recorded when the building was in decay? The Bridgemasters were obliged to account for a total that
in theory was due from the city's properties. A Rental—a list of these properties and the rents they should bring—obviously existed from which the Bridgemasters worked. Their receipts had to match its total; their allowances adjusted the total to the amount actually handed over. It is known that a new Rental, made to include recently acquired property, was compiled at the time that the Girdlers were renting (or not renting) their pageant house:

... the brigmaysters Clerkes of bothe the brygges within thys City shall furthwihb maybe profyte Rentals of all the common lond within this City & Suburbes of the same & to put in to the same Rentals the lond of the layte dissoluyd Guyld of seynt christofer & seynt George within the sayd City & Suburbes of the same to thentent yat the brigmaysters may haue knowleage of there [ch...chayge ...

(House Book 20, f 17: 18 May 1550)³

It has been shown that the Bridgemasters recorded in the receipts amounts they never received, but as long as an item was balanced under the allowances it could be entered to comply with the Rental from which they were working. This is an accounting practice still used today and seen elsewhere in York accounts.⁴

The Girdlers, therefore, can only be proved to have rented a pageant house on Toft Green for one year, 1548. The rolls of the preceding four years show they held nothing (as least in their own name) until this date, and no record exists until 1552, when the pageant house was in decay. It seems less likely that they paid their rent in that year and were then given a refund than that they had occupied the house no later than 1551, and it may have been officially classed as decayed in the View of 1552. The ruined building, still called the Girdlers' Pageant House in the 1552 and 1554 account rolls, would probably not have then been in occupation. The next surviving roll, that of 1558 (C 90:3), shows the lease of a pageant house to the Girdlers had been allowed to disappear, and the Girdlers did not rent another property on Toft Green, at least not in their corporate identity. The result of the city council's debate on whether to repair its decayed property in 1552 is unknown: the pageant house could have been allowed to fall down or have been sold to someone who was prepared to rebuild it, but the House Books have no record, and the Bridgemasters' Rolls have no other rent of a pageant house to a new guild. Obviously the Girdlers had not taken a long lease, for they seem not to have had an obligation to repair the property.

The entries concerning the Girdlers' pageant house raise more questions than they answer. Where did they keep their wagon before 1548? Where did they put it in 1552 and 1554 and after? They may still have been able to rent a house in the same area from a private landlord, for at the beginning of the century the Waxchandlers appeared in the rolls as renting pageant houses 'on the land of John Alen' or 'the land of John Hall,'⁵ and the Merchant Tailors had their own building there.⁶

A final thought is more intriguing. Did the Girdlers' pageant wagon receive any damage as its temporary house began to decay, or did rehousing the wagon cause
some disorganization for a year or two? In 1554, when their only known pageant house was in ‘utter decay,’ the Girdlers achieved the rare distinction of being fined because they held up the procession of the Corpus Christi Play. The precise reason for the delay is not given. The House Book entry for the meeting on 1 June 1554 reports first the decisions on other pageant matters, concerning the pageant money of the Vintners and the Corn Merchants, before mentioning the fine of 10s imposed on the Girdlers because their pageant ‘taried an whole hower & more in hyndrans & stoppyng of the rest of the pageantz folowyngh and to the disorderyng of the same’ (House Book 21, f 46v; York, 1, p 312). The Chamberlains’ Book, in recording receipt of the fine, is more explicit, stating ‘that ther players was not Ryddy at convenyent tyme to play in ther pagyant’ (Chamberlains’ Book 4, 1554, p 69; York, 1, p 314). This second entry was made by John Clerke, who in 1554 is known to have been at the first place with the Register of the Play: he must have known, therefore, the reason for the delay to the pageant. However, the Girdlers’ pageant of the Slaughter of the Innocents came not quite half-way through the cycle, and it seems strange that the actors themselves were not ready by that time of day, and that it took them a further hour to begin. Did, in fact, problems with their wagon delay them? If the wagon had been moved to a building some distance from Toft Green, they may have misjudged their arrival and confused the manoeuvring of wagons waiting their turn to set off.

When searching for references about drama, it is necessary to know how the records are balanced and to keep an eye open for familiar names in a different context. If connected entries are missed, the resulting interpretation can be misleading. Extracts cannot always be trusted in isolation; they must be studied in the context of the whole document, and if possible in relation to other events recorded at the same time. The extra details about the Girdlers’ pageant house show how such study can help to suggest an interpretation of their mishap in 1554, and how in addition it affords a possible glimpse of the organization of the pageant wagons during the setting forth of the Corpus Christi Play.

NOTES

1 This brief summary is made from the many entries recorded in York, 1, ed A.F. Johnston and M. Rogerson, Records of Early English Drama (Toronto, 1979), between the years 1424 and 1591.

2 The word ‘decay’ often meant the decay of the rent rather than of the property. However, the entries quoted here, especially in relation to the ruin and decay mentioned in May 1552, suggest that in this case the decay was to the building.

3 Examples of lists of city properties can be seen in the York City Archives, bound into Book E 76, ‘Rentals of City Properties.’ This includes views of the common rents in 1594 and 1602, a list of property formerly belonging to chantries in York (?1548), and other lists from the seventeenth century.
4 See R.B. Dobson (ed.), *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls 1396–1500*, Surtees Society, 192 (1980, for 1978 and 1979), xxvi–xxv: 'However it is important to emphasise that the income recorded in the accounts was based on the total revenue due to the chamberlains and is not at all necessarily identical with the cash which had actually been paid into the chamber.'


6 *York*, 1, p 547, reference in the year 1615.

7 For details of the handwriting of John Clerke and his keeping the Register, see Peter Meredith, 'John Clerke's Hand in the York Register,' *Leeds Studies in English*, ns 12 (1981), 245–71.

8 The entries, referred to above, concerning the end of the Merchants' pageant house and the apparent lease to Mr Moseley of the house and later the ground on which it stood are similarly cancelled out by entries on the reverse of the roll:

1591: C 94:7
Certen Rentes allowed for dyvers consideracie
...
Item for the whole yeres rent of A pagiante house late in the holding of the merchantes & now in the occupation of Mr mosley alder which he refusith xij d
...
[alder for alderman; mark of abbreviation omitted.]

1592: C 94:8
Certen Rentes allowed for dyvers consideracie & others which Refuse to pay
...
Item for the whole yeres rent of a pece of ground on the pagiant grene late in the tenur of the merchantes & nowe in the tenur of Mr mosley alderman xij d
...

There is a similar cancelling entry in 1593 (C 95:1), after which the Merchants disappear altogether from the pageant house leases. The other craft guilds continue to pay rent for several more years, though in one year only, 1604, they too are all listed on the reverse side of the roll, under the heading of rents allowed or 'suche as refuse to paye' (C 96:4).

DAVID GEORGE AND MONICA ORY

Six payments to players and entertainers in seventeenth-century Warwick

At the Warwick County Record Office in Warwick are some 300 shelves of muniments which came from Warwick Castle early in 1979. Their acquisition followed a successful appeal by the Warwickshire County Council to acquire the more than 25,000 documents in the Castle archives, after the then owner, Lord Brooke, had offered the County Council a six months' option on their purchase. Most of them