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978-0-521-02804-2 - Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson

Edited by Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts

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In this volume seventeen distinguished historians of early modern Britain pay tribute to an outstanding scholar and teacher. Several present reviews of major areas of debate: of the significance of the regulations which determined the social and legal status of professional actors in Elizabethan England, of Protestant ideas about marriage, of the political significance of the Anglo-Scottish Union, or relations between the Churches of England, Scotland and Ireland under the early Stuarts, and of the riddle of the inner dynamic of the experience of emigration to New England. Case-studies in the social and religious history of the period include the relationship between ideas of cleanliness and godliness, the flowering of the notion of unitive Protestantism in two declarations on behalf of the National Church and provincial preaching at a moment of political crisis in the north of England. Three essays draw on literary evidence to explore attitudes to men of war, and the use of the murder pamphlet as a Puritan conversion narrative and the service provided by scholarly readers for politically influential public figures. Two essays make impressive use of fieldwork to reveal how the churches of James I and VI's two kingdoms were furnished and how the gardens of Sir Nicholas and Sir Francis Bacon illuminate their minds and attitudes. The European dimension is represented by an essay on Nicolas Pithou's history of the Reformation in the city of Troyes.

This very wide-ranging and fascinating collection of essays will appeal both to specialists in the period and to those interested in the social and culture history of early modern Britain.

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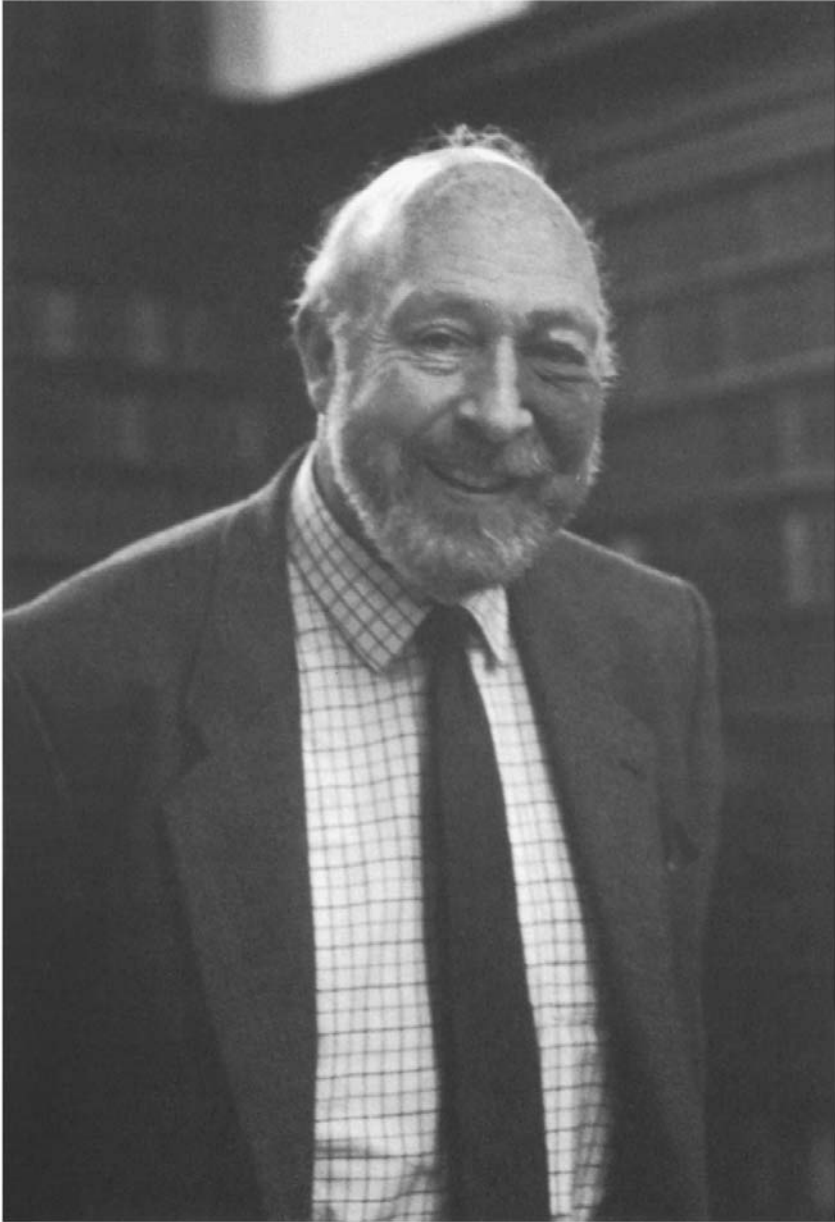
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# Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain

*Essays in honour of Patrick Collinson*

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*Edited by*

**Anthony Fletcher**

*University of Durham*

*and*

**Peter Roberts**

*University of Kent at Canterbury*



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CHRISTOPHER BROOKE was Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Cambridge from 1977 to 1993. His many publications include *Oxford and Cambridge* (1988, with Roger Highfield and Wim Swaan), and *A History of Cambridge University: Volume IV 1870–1990* (1993).

ANTHONY FLETCHER has been Professor of Modern History at the University of Durham since 1987. He is the author of *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600–1660* (1975), *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (1981) and *Reform in the Provinces: The Government of Stuart England* (1986). He is currently working on a book on gender in early modern England.

MARK GREENGRASS is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Sheffield. He has published extensively on sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century France and, in particular, on the French Reformation. He is a Director of the Hartlib Papers Project, a major interdisciplinary research project in the humanities, based at the University of Sheffield. He is currently editing Samuel Hartlib's diary, *The Ephemerides* for publication.

SUSAN HARDMAN MOORE is Lecturer in Reformation Studies at King's College London. She is a graduate of Cambridge and Yale, and completed her doctoral work with Patrick Collinson, at Kent and in part at Harvard. Before moving to the University of London, she taught for some years at the Universities of Durham and Edinburgh. She has been a visiting professor at Yale, and a visiting scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary.

MICHAEL HATTAWAY has been Professor of English Literature at the University of Sheffield since 1984. He is author of *Elizabethan Popular Theatre* (1982), *Hamlet: The Critics Debate* (1987), and has edited plays by Beaumont and Jonson as well as 1–3 *Henry VI* for the New

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Cambridge Shakespeare. He is currently working on an edition of *As You Like It* and a book on drama and society in the early modern period.

LISA JARDINE is Professor of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London. Her most recent book is *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton, 1993). She is currently completing a book entitled, *Reading Shakespeare Historically*, and is working with Anthony Grafton and William Sherman on a book on Renaissance readers.

PETER LAKE is Dodge Professor of History at Princeton University. He is the author of *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (1982) and *Anglicans and Puritans?: Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (1988).

WILLIAM LAMONT has been Professor of History at Sussex University since 1980, and Dean of the School of Cultural and Community Studies between 1981 and 1986. His Puritan trilogy was reprinted in 1991 under a three-volume title, *Puritanism and the English Revolution*, and his critical edition of Richard Baxter's *A Holy Commonwealth* will be published by Cambridge University Press in 1994.

JOHN MORRILL is Reader in Early Modern History at Cambridge where he has been a Fellow of Selwyn College since 1975. He is the author and editor of fifteen books and his most recent – *The Nature of the English Revolution* – contains twenty of his most influential essays.

PETER ROBERTS is Lecturer in History at the University of Kent at Canterbury and writes on early modern Wales and on the Elizabethan court and stage. He is an honorary fellow of the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth and editor of the *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*.

CONRAD RUSSELL is Professor of History at King's College London. He is the author of *The Crisis of Parliaments: English History 1509–1660* (1971), *Parliaments and English Politics* (1979), *The Causes of the English Civil War* (1990) and *The Fall of the British Monarchies 1637–1642* (1991).

WILLIAM SHEILS is Provost of Goodricke College in the University of York, where he teaches Economic and Social History. He has written books on Puritanism and on the Reformation, and several articles on the church in the early modern period. From 1981 to 1990 he was editor of *Studies in Church History*.

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WILLIAM SHERMAN is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park. His doctoral dissertation on John Dee was directed by Lisa Jardine and Patrick Collinson; and a book based on this research – *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* – will be published in 1994.

HASSELL SMITH is Professor Emeritus in the University of East Anglia where he taught in the School of English and American Studies and directed the Centre of East Anglian Studies. His publications include *County and Court: Politics and Government in Norfolk 1558–1603* (1974) and three volumes of *The Papers of Nathaniel Bacon*.

SIR KEITH THOMAS is President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and President of the British Academy. He is the author of *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971) and *Man and the Natural World* (1983).

SUSAN WABUDA completed her doctoral thesis under the supervision of Patrick Collinson in 1992. Her monograph *Preaching during the English Reformation* will be published by Cambridge University Press.

GEORGE YULE was Professor of Church History at Ormond College from 1958 to 1978 and Professor of Church History at the University of Aberdeen from 1979 to 1986. His publications include *Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament 1640–1647* (1981).

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## Preface

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We have sought to gather together friends, colleagues and former students from a wide range of institutions in putting together this tribute to Patrick Collinson on his sixty-fifth birthday. For his academic career has been peripatetic: London, Kent, Sydney, Sheffield and Cambridge are all represented here. We have adopted a broad theme. This reflects the breadth of Patrick's interests and scholarship in the early modern period and it has enabled contributors from different areas of the field to write illuminatingly about topics within their specialist expertise. The flavour of the volume, we believe, represents an appropriate tribute to an historian whose works have enriched our understanding of the period over thirty years. Patrick's own mind has ever been on the move. His supervisor, Sir John Neale, commented at the time of the presentation of Patrick's prodigious PhD thesis on Elizabethan Puritanism in 1957: 'Collinson, I like to think of you spending the rest of your life on this subject.' In one sense he has done this but in another this is very much less than what he has done. For Patrick's later writings show his receptivity to findings from the related disciplines of anthropology, sociology and literature and his unremitting search into the social and cultural implications of religion and religious change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It has been a great pleasure to edit this book. It is presented to Patrick Collinson in respect and affection. We honour his distinguished achievement as an historian, his dedication to the subject and his warm generosity towards all those, from undergraduate students to senior colleagues, with whom he constantly shares his learning, experience and enthusiasm.

ANTHONY FLETCHER  
PETER ROBERTS

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## Abbreviations

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<i>APC</i>	<i>Acts of the Privy Council</i>
BIHR	Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York
<i>Birthpangs</i>	P. Collinson, <i>The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> (London, 1988)
BL	British Library, London
<i>Cj</i>	<i>Commons Journals</i>
<i>CSPD</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
<i>CSPI</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers Ireland</i>
<i>CSPV</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers Venetian</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
DWL	Dr Williams Library, London
FL	Folger Library, Washington DC
<i>Hj</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
HRO	Hertfordshire Record Office
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PRO	Public Record Office
SP	State Papers
SRO	Scottish Record Office
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria County History</i>

Place of publication for books cited in the footnotes is London unless otherwise stated.

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## Patrick Collinson

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*Christopher Brooke*

‘A big man in every way: big in physical frame, and bursting with energy; large in mind and intellectual interests; large in heart and sympathies, wonderfully lacking in any sense of his own importance or any pomposity; finding life, and thought, and gossip (of a superior kind) too much fun, too enjoyable, for there to be room, or time, for narrow-mindedness’ or meanness; endowed ‘with a kind of natural generosity.’ Geoffrey Nuttall’s sketch cannot be improved.<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Collinson returned to Cambridge in 1988 as Regius Professor of Modern History after academic experience of quite exceptional variety. His predecessor Sir Geoffrey Elton, for all the continental, cosmopolitan background which has deeply influenced his scholarship, had been nearly forty years in Cambridge by 1988. Patrick Collinson studied in Cambridge and London and taught in Khartoum, London, Sydney NSW, Canterbury UK and Sheffield before accepting an invitation from Downing Street to the Cambridge chair. He is no restless wanderer, but wonderfully adaptable, ready to seek new experience and immerse himself in it body and soul. His return to Cambridge has brought refreshment and the breath of a wider world to the Cambridge History Faculty.

Elton and Collinson were both pupils of Sir John Neale – a unique example of the influence of the London history school by the Cam. Both have made one region of history the centre of almost all their work, Elton the Tudor constitution, from Thomas Cromwell to the Elizabethan parliament, Collinson the religion of Puritans and Protestants in Tudor and Stuart England – and given it great breadth as well as depth by seeing the wider ripples of its continental background and the relation of their theme to every aspect of English life.

<sup>1</sup> The reader will quickly see that in preparing this brief prologue I have had invaluable help from Anthony Fletcher, Mark Greengrass, Sybil Jack, John Morrill, Geoffrey Nuttall, Peter Roberts – and Liz Collinson – for which I am deeply grateful.

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Patrick Collinson was born in 1929, sprung from a Quaker family – his father had been a missionary in North Africa. His early training lay among Puritans; but his interest in Puritan history only came to hold sway after a remarkable education in the London zoo – which nearly made him a zoologist – and King’s Ely, where he was told that he could not be a scientist. At Pembroke College, Cambridge, he read history, scoring a First in Part II and winning his College’s Hadley Prize, and was a fervent supporter of CICCU: it was not till he was teaching in Khartoum that he was confirmed as a member of the Anglican communion by Oliver Allison, bishop of the Sudan.

He was over thirty when he married, in his late thirties when his first book was published. It is hard now to imagine Pat or his world without Liz Selwyn and without *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. For he is a living example of the truth that an historian and his convictions – and his personality and his home – cannot be severed; though few have attained to his exceptional combination of learning and integrity. He is a man of many friends, warm, kind, thoughtful, encouraging, inspiring; and by the same token he has an infinitely large acquaintance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and will never allow his acquaintances and their texts to be misrepresented – however courteously he reveals to others the error of their readings.

Behind his first book lay a thesis of legendary proportions and authority, and a scatter of fundamental articles. He laid foundations of exceptional depth and strength which have helped to build many notable structures of learning apart from *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. In many respects, the message of his life work is already there; in many more his later work has grown and developed and opened new paths. That first book, in John Morrill’s words, ‘transformed our understanding of English *Protestantism*. It was very certainly a seminal work in rediscovering the nature of puritanism as a movement rooted in a creative tension with the establishment. Most of Patrick Collinson’s own subsequent work is an exploration of the minds of men who were yearning to take over the national church but in various degrees frustrated and having to consider the option of schism . . . When we now explore that mainstream of Elizabethan/Jacobean protestants that conformed but chafed, we call them Collinsonian Protestants, and we all know what we mean’. Our understanding has been transformed most obviously in three ways. First, he wrote in the heyday of Christopher Hill and restored religion and politics to the centre of the picture, where recent fashion had set economics. Next, he rescued Puritanism, in Geoffrey Nuttall’s words, ‘from being seen, and understood, by hindsight, only through Nonconformist eyes, and [restored] it as a

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respectable, central, entity in its origins and first century, *within* the Church of England'. Whereas Geoffrey Nuttall's 'major concern was with faith and devotion, and Christopher Hill's with sociology and economics, as expressed in historical circumstances and developments, Patrick has been the true historian, content to portray and elucidate the history, but always aware of the importance of the religious factor in what was undeniably a religious movement'. A third element is his deep knowledge of the European dimension. He has not written on continental movements similar to the Puritans; but he remains 'the least insular of early modern English historians', as Mark Greengrass has put it. 'He writes about the English church in the age of the Reformation with a profound understanding of the issues which were raised on the continent. He knows the debates that European historians have about the Reformation and, equally important, knows which issues are not likely to be worth pursuing very far.'

The 1980s have brought forth three very notable books. 'His major contribution down to 1980', writes John Morrill, 'was to reclaim religious history from denominational history – to jettison a search for the roots of the denominational present in the past . . . for a search particularly of the religious experiences of the past', for the mental world of the preacher in his study and his pulpit and 'the person-in-the-pew'. In his Ford Lectures, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559–1625* (1982), the whole of the Church of England is deployed on a marvellously rich canvas, in a highly readable book which is yet of the most compelling subtlety and insight. As always, he presupposes some knowledge in his reader; only in his biography of *Grindal* (1979) has he attempted to tell the whole story of one of his leading characters. In the Ford Lectures Matthew Parker, Lancelot Andrewes, George Herbert, John Williams and many others appear alongside his old Puritan friends, deftly introduced to light up many of the threads in his discourse. He does not pause to tell the reader more than a passing word on who these people were: space is thus reserved for 'those precious truths which reside in particulars' in his own words (p. 39). Yet he also makes clear that the evidence he can reveal is a small part of what remains: for example of the 'learned and laborious writing' of the English bishops – 'but who is there prepared to engage seriously with this mountain of extinct divinity?' (p. 44). The profusion of riches in the book is so great that even such a gem as Archbishop Sandys' pleading with Burghley to remove his dean to the middle distance – 'the bushoprik of Litchfield wold wel serve the turne' – has been confined to a footnote (p. 10). For all its subtlety, the book does not disguise its author's sympathies. As he contemplates the Jacobean bishops, he concludes 'the most challenging



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element in these episcopal careers is the emphasis on the reconciliation of puritans and other opponents, as a preferred alternative to forceful suppression: a pointedly anti-Laudian message . . . If these accounts of the Jacobean bishops were only half-true, then Archbishop Laud was indeed the greatest calamity ever visited upon the English Church' (pp. 89–90).

In *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (1988) the Reformation was sought in the family, in the town, in society at large; and seen too as a cultural revolution. Cultural history has been a major theme of his recent work. 'He has been a keen exponent of historians drawing on the methods and insights of many contiguous disciplines' (John Morrill), developing in Canterbury, Sheffield and Cambridge, for example, 'a deep dialogue' with colleagues in English literature.

One of his greatest gifts is to honour special occasions 'celebrating innumerable quatercentenaries . . . with memorable addresses'. John Morrill 'especially recalls the Nicholas Bacon memorial (1979) . . . A very dull lamp was polished, burnished and shone exceeding bright.' Nicholas Bacon and many others light up *Godly People* (1983), a wonderful treasure house of Patrick's best essays on many themes. My own favourite among his occasional pieces is his *Andrew Perne*, in which he collaborated with David McKitterick and Elisabeth Leedham-Green to commemorate the master of Peterhouse who was not a Puritan, but was everything else, surviving every vicissitude of the Reformation in Cambridge (1991). It is based on a vast store of learning, in which the continental and English movements of the day, and the history of Cambridge, are brought to bear on the puzzling, ambiguous career of the old fox. Patrick does not try to solve the insoluble, but he sets the problem in a new frame; he shows us a man genuinely puzzled on the frontiers of old and new doctrine, yet also a survivor by nature; and he shows how deeply the preservation of Peterhouse and Cambridge entered Perne's motives. It is a striking example of the way in which a small part of English history can be linked to many of the great issues of the day, in unforgettable fashion, a characteristic sketch from the ample store of a great master of historical landscape.

Since 1969 his skills have matured, and his influence has radiated, from Sydney, Canterbury, Sheffield and Cambridge. In Sydney Sybil Jack recalls his efforts 'to give the department a greater sense of corporate identity by holding regular largish parties and smaller dinner parties, with a pleasant level of informality'. He sought out new pastures, and taught 'popular courses on such things as the sociology of religion . . . He also showed himself willing to consider a more democratic departmental structure in which decisions might be made at depart-

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mental meetings chaired by someone other than a professor' and in other ways reflected the creative movements of the 1960s and 70s in which he naturally flourished. Especially memorable were the gatherings of early modernists from all over Australia and New Zealand which he and George Yule inspired and led.

In Canterbury, Peter Roberts had devised before his arrival a post-graduate programme on Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies, in which Patrick joined with enthusiasm and inspiration: another collaborator was Michael Hattaway, with whom he was later to work on common ground in Sheffield – 'bringing together literary material and historical evidence on social history topics', in Anthony Fletcher's words. While at Canterbury he suffered a fearful accident which led to the amputation of a leg – and inspired his colleagues with the 'remarkable courage and energy, mental discipline and powers of concentration' he showed in hospital and convalescence, as Peter Roberts recalls: 'his colleagues [in Kent] remember how visits to him in the Kent and Canterbury Hospital were sometimes difficult to arrange because he was likely to be holding a special subject class around his bed'.

In Sheffield he showed once more his eagerness to learn from his environment. 'His democratic, listening, approach was much appreciated. He talked a lot about the Sheffield culture which he was learning . . . The hallmark of effective chairmanship of the department was consultation and painful attempts to bring all together without rushing things. He also had lots of time for students and their problems which they found very impressive' (Anthony Fletcher).

Let us observe him in action in Sheffield and elsewhere, with the aid of Mark Greengrass. 'In meetings, he can be disarming and devastating at the same time. The vigorous nod of his head and infectious laugh can make you nod in agreement with him, even as you inwardly are trying to put the counter-arguments together. Apparently dozing in a seminar, he suddenly emerges from torpor to shape the discussion afterwards and drive it forward with energy and class. At conferences he is wonderful value. He opened the international conference attached to the Hartlib Papers Project, of which he is a director, here in Sheffield last July with an almost sixth sense of what the occasion required and a sure lightness of touch. The result was that the delegates – some 100 or so from 17 different countries – went into the first session of the conference already on their mettle, the intellectual adrenalin flowing.' In *The Religion of Protestants* (p. 244) Pat cites one of his native Suffolks from the sixteenth century saying 'Come, let's go to Dedham to get a little fire!' – kindled by Mr Rogers, a notable preacher. 'Many of us early modernists have the same response to Patrick – going to him for some intellectual

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xx Christopher Brooke

fire' – a quality one does not have to be expert in his own period to identify and enjoy.

If one set to work to portray Pat Collinson in all his stature, one would take one's reader to a view of all his books and to attend his lectures, sit at his feet in seminars and faculty boards; above all, to go with him to church and to visit his family. 'It is difficult to separate Patrick from Liz and the family', Mark Greengrass has said. I am conscious that I can only portray a part of him; let me conclude with one very characteristic encounter. Soon after he had returned to Cambridge, I rang to ask him if he would join with me in writing a history of Emmanuel College. Without a moment's hesitation – or the request for a day or a week's reflection – he said 'yes', and he and I and Sarah Bendall are now embarked on the adventure. He may well have had earlier thoughts of such a task; he loves to say 'yes'; he has a warmth of commitment which is one secret of his great power to encourage and inspire. Yet there was more in it than any of these, and there is more in him than in all we have described. It has been a special delight to spend my last years in harness in his company in Cambridge – where he has learned and taught and inspired with all the experience of the wider world at his command, and with the eagerness which is all his own – and a most singular privilege to open this volume of essays dedicated in his honour, in warm affection and friendship.