

14. THOMAS SWIFT, THE CHURCH PLATE AND THE SWIFT CHEST AND TABLE

There are a number of memorial stones on the chancel floor hidden when the church was re-paved in 1793. Fortunately before they were covered over they were noted. There is a transcription in the information area.

The oldest stone is that of Thomas Swift, the vicar of Goodrich who was vicar of Goodrich from 1624 until 1658. He was an ardent Royalist, and during the Civil War he is reputed to have supplied money to the King's cause. He and his family were harassed a number of times by the Parliamentarians at their curious three-winged house in Goodrich called New House. Thomas's possessions were seized and in consequence some of his sons left Goodrich for Dublin in the 1660s, and it was there that Jonathan Swift, the satirist and essayist and Thomas's grandson, was born in 1667. He became dean of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, and died in 1745.

The parish has little church plate, but the two cups or chalices are interesting. This photograph was taken by the RCHME surveyors in 1927, with the cups standing on the steps of the churchyard cross.



The communion cup on the right is inscribed

*Goodrich.
Warren Tyler
William Boughan
Churchwardens 1665*

It has a maker's mark 'WC' with 3 stars above, 4 pellets below.



The date of 1665 may be significant, because it seems that Thomas Swift's chalice (left) seems to have remained in his family's hands and was gifted to the church in 1726 by his grandson Jonathan. A Latin inscription around the base says:

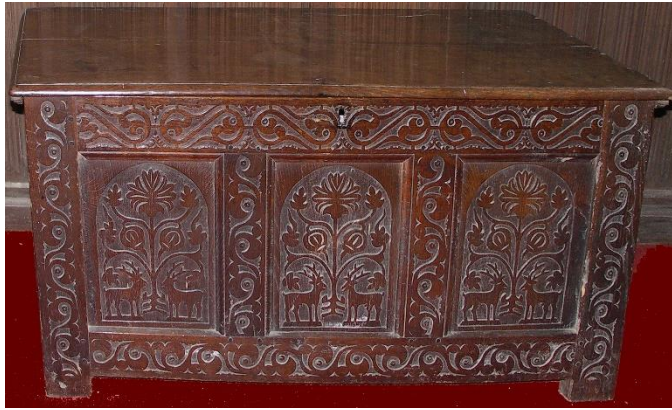
'Jonathan Swift Doctor of Sacred Theology, dean of the church of St. Patrick, Dublin, willed (or wished) this sacred chalice to the church of Goodrich.

Thomas Swift, vicar of this church, known in histories because he did [acted] and suffered for Charles I, gave the sick to drink from this chalice. Jonathan Swift, STD, dean of the church of St Patrick Dublin, grandson of Thomas by his son, dedicated the same chalice to this church in perpetuity.'

The cup has a date mark for 1617, maker A.M.

In the north-east corner of the church is a large oak chest. Its front is decorated with three similar panels showing two deer facing each other around the trunk of a tree. This chest was bought by Harold Moffatt of Goodrich Court in 1874 from Dean Swift, a descendant of Thomas Swift, along with some land and New House itself, the residence of Thomas Swift which he built in 1636.

Harold Moffatt was a very keen amateur furniture maker, and he travelled around the area buying early furniture. In 1928 he published privately a book called *Illustrated description of some of the Furniture at Goodrich Court, Herefordshire and Hamptworth Lodge, Wiltshire.*



On page 26 of that book there is a photograph of the chest, a record of Moffatt's purchase and also his opinion that the chest had been made for Thomas Swift, because of the deer motif. This could well be true.

When Samuel Meyrick built Goodrich Court he included the arms of local people including Swift on the ceiling bosses of one of the rooms (above left). Moffatt therefore had an example in Goodrich Court of the Swift arms. These bosses were sold when the Court was demolished in 1950, and sold again more recently. The arms are confirmed as Thomas Swift's because they are also shown on the grant of the Freedom of the City of Dublin granted to his grandson Jonathan.

Next to the chest under the north-east window is an old, maybe 17th-century, oak refectory table. It's possible but unlikely that it came from Moffatt's collection as it is very plain. It could not have been in that position in the 1870s as the area was pewed. Possibly that it was an earlier communion table as the current one is plain and fairly modern.

At the eastern end of the table are a pair of wooden chairs, very plain with vaguely ecclesiastical decoration. They may have been earlier readers' chairs.