

# INVESTIGATION OF TRISTRAM TILDSLEY

14 July 1581

That the said Tristram Tildesley is a priest or minister of God's word, and notwithstanding the aforesaid, he, not having the fear of God before his eyes, very un-modestly and to the great slander of the ministry, upon Sundays or holidays has danced among light youthful company, both men and women, at weddings, drinkings, and rish-bearings in the parishes of Rutherforth, Marston, and other thereabouts; and especially upon one Sunday or holiday in his dancing or after, wantonly and dissolutely, he kissed a maid or young woman then a dancer in his company, whereat divers persons were offended and so sore grieved that there was weapons drawn, and great dissention arose, as was like to arise thereupon, to the great disquietness of God's peace and the Queen's Majesty's, and to the great peril and danger of his soul, etc.

In answer to this he says that he has "divers and sundry times in the times of Christenmas and harvest danced among other honest young company, both at Mr. Gale's house in Rutherforth parish and at Mr. Lougher's house in Marston parish, but not immodestly."

That the said Tristram upon a Sunday or holiday did not only permit and suffer a rish-bearing within the church and church-yard of Rutherforth whereat was used much lewd, light, and unseemly dancings and gestures, very unfit for these places, but also he himself at the said rish-bearing very unseemly did dance, skip, leap, and hoighe gallantly, as he thought, in his own foolish and lewd concept, in the said church-yard among a great multitude of people, where he was derided, flouted, and laughed at.

In answer he says, "there was a rish-bearing at Rutherforth church for the decency of the church, and at that time he gave in charge that neither piping nor dancing should be used in the church or church yard, as in deed there was not to his sight or knowledge."

That the said Tristram has not had and used decent apparel and square cap like a minister of his vocation and according to the laws ecclesiastical of this realm, but has worn and had most commonly a long sword and round cloak, like to a ruffian or serving man. And by all the said time has been and yet is a common haunter and user of alehouses, and a common player at unlawful games in unlawful times and places.

In answer he says "he does not usually wear a square cape, yet he has one and wears it on principal feasts, as Christenmas-day and Easter day; and he wears when he rides or goes abroad a round cloak without sleeves... decent, as he believes."

That the said Tristram upon Sunday last, being the second day of July, had two cures to discharge within the diocese of York, in both which places he was bound to say divine service the same day, which he left un-done and un-said in both places, and did exercise himself all the fore noon and the afternoon, or the most part thereof, the same day in bowling at Marston, even in the time of Divine service, most contrary to his vocation and calling.

In answer he says "that on Sunday last he had two cures to serve; viz., Kirkby Wharf and Rutherforth, whereat he was to say divine service; he did it at Rutherforth himself, both morning and evening prayer, and at Kirkby by one Sir Thomas Gregson, his curate there for that time." "On Sunday last, a little before supper and after supper, he bowled at Marston with Mr. Gayle and other honest company."

That, by reason of the premises, the said Tristram has been and yet is greatly and vehemently suspected to be a Papist or mis-liker of religion now established within this realm.

William Jackson, of Acomb, husbandman, says he saw Tristram Tildsley, clerk, dance among young men and young women after a piper upon a Sunday in the afternoon about a year ago in Rutherforth town gate. It was on a rish-bearing day. Upon a Sunday within night about eleven o'clock and after in summer last, he saw him dance at a wedding at William Hunter's house in Rutherforth among many young folks, both men and women, when the bridegroom and bride were in bed, and they were come from the wedding house to the said Hunter's house, being an ale house, when the said Tristram was so lusty in his dancing that either he kissed or offered to

kiss the said Hunter's daughter, a young woman; and a young fellow who kissed her was beaten on the face by Sir Tristram or by some other standing by—but, as he remembers, it was Sir Tristram—so that divers swords were drawn and a great tumult had like to have been; which all was begone and set on by the said Tristram of his own sight and hearing.

He denies this.

He has been a lusty dancing priest, and offensive to many both by his dancing and swashing in apparel, not minister-like.

Thomas Smith, of Acomb, laborer, says that upon a Sunday in the afternoon, being a rish-bearing day at Rutherford, in summer last past, he saw Tristram Tildsley dance very lustily among young folks, both women and men, in his coat or doublet and hose, very unseemly; and they danced divers dances; and one dance among other was a man fetched in a woman and put his hat on her head and kissed her; and she fetched in a man in like manner, and so till there was a great company both of men and women which danced hand in hand; among whom the said Tristram Tildsley was one, and had in either hand a woman, and danced round with the other company, and hoighed as they did, which was much noted and marked, and was very offensive to those that saw him.

“Office Promoted Against Tristram Tildsley, Clerk, Vicar or Curate of Rutherford” *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 15 (1900):241–243.