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THOMAS BALDWIN'S GIFT TO BERKHAMSTED

The Hyde Park Waterworks Charity

Among the hundreds of documents in St. Peter's Church chest is a bundle described as "Waterworks Papers." The papers date from the 17th and 18th centuries, a period long before Berkhamsted enjoyed the blessings of piped water. But, thanks to the generosity of Thomas Baldwin, our town had a financial interest in certain waterworks in London, for part of the profits of "springs and waters in Hyde Park" were distributed among the poor of this parish.

The water was conveyed through wooden pipes from Hyde Park to the City of Westminster, and it is interesting to find that, at a Berkhamsted vestry meeting, payment was authorised of £16 to a pipe-borer, a craftsman who gouged out tree trunks for use as water-pipes.

MAKING A PROFIT

Baldwin's waterworks flourished until George II came to the throne. The King wished to improve Hyde Park (the famous Serpentine dates from his reign) and the waterworks were in the way. So the undertaking was sold for £2,500, and Berkhamsted's share (£432 1s. 11½d.) was paid to trustees, who were required to purchase land with the money and apply the rents in the same manner as the profits from the waterworks.

Instead, India Bonds were purchased and afterwards sold: a very profitable transaction, for with interest the sum produced was £542 7s. 8½d. Land was then purchased at Ashley Green, and a charity commissioners' report of about 120 years ago tells us that "the property of this charity consists of a farmhouse and outbuildings, and about

42 acres of land, which were let to Thomas Dorrien, Esq." He paid £24 per annum to the trustees, and at Christmas this was distributed in sums of 10s. each to poor persons of St. Peter's parish not receiving alms from other sources.

LOCAL LINKS

Later, the Ashley Green property was sold, and a report dated 1906 states: "The income of this [Baldwin's] charity is derived from £2,990 11s. 1d. India 3 per cent Stock, and amounts to £89 14s. 4d. per annum, the whole of which, with the exception of 10s. for clerk's commission, had been paid over to the almoners for the distribution of weekly annuities of 3s. weekly to poor persons." In a revised form, Baldwin's charity continues to benefit the poor.

It is a pity more is not known of Thomas Baldwin's life. He was born at Watford, educated at Berkhamsted School, and spent much of his life in London. His brother, Richard, owned Baldwin's Gardens, Holborn, the "thieves' kitchen" of "Oliver Twist." Thomas must have been a frequent visitor to Berkhamsted, for he was related to the Wethereds of Ashlyns, to whom he made many bequests.

BLACK GOWNS AND DINNER

Berkhamsted was not the only town to receive Baldwin's favours. His will, dated September 30, 1639, is a lengthy document, and bequests were made to the poor of several parishes, to his relatives, to his servants, and to prisoners of the infamous Gatehouse at Westminster. (Incidentally, his share of the benefits and profits of the waterworks was to be given to his wife for her life, and after her decease "to the poor of Watford, where I was born, to the poor of Berkhamsted, where I was a scholar, to the poor of St. Martin in the Fields, where I now live; 20s. whereof to be yearly given to the poor prisoners of the Gatehouse in Westminster.")

"As many poor men as I shall be years of age at my decease (20 in Watford, 10 in Rickmansworth and the rest in Berkhamsted)" were to have gowns of black cloth and 2s. 6d. apiece "for a dinner on the day of my funeral." As Baldwin died at the age of 74, it will be seen that 44 poor Berkhamsted men were entitled to a gown and dinner. A further £10 was to be distributed to other poor people of Berkhamsted on his funeral day.

RINGS FOR REMEMBRANCE

Two brothers-in-law and two "loving friends" were to have half an ounce of gold each to make a ring to wear in remembrance; brothers-in-law and their servants; and two nephews, were to have black cloaks; and cloaks "of

black silk or stuffe" were stipulated for two sisters and two nieces.

Handsome bequests of property were made to Thomas Baldwin's wife. A niece, Bridget Wethered, was to have £100 on the day of her marriage, and a maidservant, Alice Harris, £100 to educate and bring up her children. To his sister, Elizabeth, he left £20 and an annuity of £10 "to be taken out of rents, etc., of tenements, etc., at St. James in the Fields." Among other bequests were: "To my very good friend Sir Simon Baskerville my best standing cup of silver and gilt [sic]" and "To Henry Wicks, paymaster, and the rest of officers and clerks of His Majesty's Works, 20 marks to make them a dynner."

THE BALDWIN MONUMENT

Thomas Baldwin directed that the "South Chappell or Isle of the Parish Church wherein my mother now lyeth interred to be a buryal place for myself and my friends; £100 for monument to be set up in or nigh the wall of the great window of the said chappell." Provision was made for "repair of chappell in tymbre, stone, ironwork and glass so none but my relations are buried there."

Baldwin's monument can no longer be seen in all its stupendous glory. Cobb, in his "History of Berkhamsted," says that it was remarkable only for its size. It was transferred from the south transept to the south wall, near the gallery, and is now in a mutilated state: much of the unwanted marble was consigned to the Court House yard. Though now perhaps the least attractive monument in St. Peter's Church, R. A. Norris states in his "History" that it was the work of Nicholas Stone, a sculptor of some renown.

TAILPIECE

Accompanying the Baldwin documents in the church chest is a single sheet of paper which has no bearing whatever on the charity, but is nevertheless highly interesting. It is "A Bill of Expences at a Commission held at King's Arms in Berkhamsted on 3 and 4 January, 1755":

	£	s.	d.
A couple of fowls ..		4	0
Bacon, Greens & Butter ..		1	8
Pudding and Butter ..		1	8
Cheese ..			2
2 Suppers ..		1	0
Tea ..		1	6
Wine ..		6	6
Brandy and Milk ..		1	0
Bread and Beer ..		2	0
Fire ..		2	6
Paper ..			4
Corn and Hay ..		2	0
Wine, Beer and Eating for the Witnesses ..	10	6	
Sealing Wax and Tape ..			4
Servants ..			2
	£117	2	

Evidently the commissioners did not fare quite so well as the Bourne School trustees, whose bill for dining and wining at the King's Arms in 1764, was quoted in the December number.

'BEORCHAM'

Medicine and Food

Local Arrangements

Arrangements for the emergency supply of medicine now operating in Berkhamsted is as follows:—

CHEMISTS' ROTA

The week-day evening (6-7 p.m.) and Sunday morning (11.30 a.m.—12.30 p.m.) service rota adopted by Berkhamsted chemists for the dispensing of medical prescriptions, is as follows for the current month:—

March 28—April 3 : Figg.
April 4—10 : Dickman.
April 11—17 : Taylor.
April 18—24 : Boots.
April 25—May 7 : Figg.

FOOD OFFICE

The Food Office, in the Town Hall, is open on four week-days as follows:—

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 to 5 p.m.
Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

All Welfare Foods are also obtainable from Gossoms End Stores.

LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

The Berkhamsted Branch of the County Library is open in Prince Edward Street on the following days and times:—

Monday and Friday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Wednesday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Thursday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Saturday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

"Bob-a-Job" week for the local Scouts has been fixed for Easter week, 19th—24th April inclusive, and anyone who wants an odd job done—at the same time helping the funds of the Scout movement—should make contact with their nearest Scout group.

Or, send your name and address, on a postcard to the Publicity Secretary, 20 George Street, Berkhamsted, and leave the rest to him.

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