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THE CORPORATION OF BERKHAMSTED—II

**The Borough 'Jayle'**

Extracts from the Berkhamsted Corporation minute book, printed in last month's *Review*, showed that the bailiff and burgesses, in 1639, were in disgrace for selling the house of correction, or prison.

In the following year, the Corporation decided to build a new "Jayle"—at a cost of £6 10s. On October 9, 1640, an agreement was made with Thomas Piddleton, a carpenter, to "build in the market house . . . a Jayle in breadth seven foote and a halfe and in length the same and one roome over the same." Piddleton was to finish it within a month, and "finde all materials for the doeing of it except lockes."

**LARGER AND DEARER**

But there was a hitch. The bailiff-elect refused to take office, and no action was taken until September 13, 1641, when the Corporation favoured a larger and more expensive prison. Again they "conferred and bargained" with Piddleton to build a gaol 12-ft. long and 8-ft. broad, at a total cost of £12. The agreement was signed, Piddleton making his mark (X). He was to receive £6 immediately, and "the other halfe on that day when he shall have finished it and deliver the key to the ballyv and this to be done at the furthest by the firste of November and everye Burgess to pay proportionably."

But it is unlikely that the gaol was ready by November 1, for at a meeting on October 16, 1641, it was decided that the building should "stand on the southe side of the market house endways into the market house joyning to the cage"—in other words, at the top of Water-lane.

It is sad to think that, ten years later, a "capital burgess" ran the risk of being detained in the Corporation's own prison. He was William

Theed, one of a number of men who at various times were threatened with penalties for not taking the oath on being elected to high office. For this refusal and for "divers other contempis and misdemeanours by him committed against the Corporation," Theed was fined £20, and the serjeants were ordered to levy the fine "by distress of his goods, cattell and chattells," or commit him to "the goale" and keep him there until the fine was paid.

What happened? We do not know; the next and last reference to Theed, dated October 14, 1651, states that he was "removed" and that Robert Newman was elected principal burgess "in steed of William Theed refusing."

Another reluctant burgess was Francis Pitkin; "aced with a fine of £8 if he did not "come in and submit to the order on Monday next at the farthest," he duly took the oath. Then there was John Toy, bailiff in 1644, who, eleven years later, was stated to have neglected his duties and not attended a meeting for several years. His colleagues decided to "remoove" Mr. Toy from the office of capital burgess.

**ON FAIR DAY**

From 1540 onwards the minute book is not a very profitable source of information. The only reference to the Commonwealth occurs in an entry dated July 19, 1657, concerning "a proclamation of his highness the Lord Protector." The company was required to meet on "Saturday next . . . (being the flayre day) to proclayme the same."

In the year of the Restoration of the Monarchy, an entry dated September 24, 1660, refers to repairs to the "Cort Loge (? Court House), the Guyldhall, the stayres leading thereto and the Goale underneath the same." The serjeants were to collect "such some or sommes of us the said Bayliffe and Burgesses for the doeing thereof as shalbe thought fitt by the same, not exceeding 5s. a man."

At the same meeting it was agreed that any bailiff or burgess who called "any publike meeting for Councell or Consultacion" and failed to attend himself was to forfeit 2s., while "any one of the rest of us haveing notice of such meeting and doe not meet accordingly shal forfeit 1s."

**THE CITY FATHERS**

The minute book is especially valuable to local historians in giving full details of the annual elections. Reference books give the names of local rectors and churchwardens, but to the best of my knowledge no one has ever before printed the names of the bailiffs, recorders, town or common clerks, serjeants at mace, and capital burgesses, or aldermen. In the following list appear a number of family names which may still be found in the district. Names in brackets are those of officers

who were elected to fill vacancies caused by death or removal.

**BAILIFFS**.—1637 Stephen Besouth, 1638 Samuel Dagnall, 1639 William Halsey (Robert Blunt), 1640 William Hill, 1641 Robert Reynolds, 1642 Ralph Benning, 1643 John Benning, 1644 John Toy, 1645 Robert Benning, 1646 John Barker, 1647 William Barker, 1648 George Dover, 1649 William Hill, 1650 Francis Pitkin, 1651 Robert Reynolds, 1652 Robert Newman, 1653 Ralph Benning, 1654 John Hoare, 1655 Thomas Aldridge, 1656 Robert Benning (William Hill), 1657 Maurice Kellett, 1658 Francis Nixon, 1659 Thomas Newman, 1660 Christopher Woodhouse, 1661 William Hill (Robert Reynolds, Christopher Woodhouse), 1662 Christopher Woodhouse.

**TOWN CLERKS**.—1637 Robert Blunt, 1639 William Axtell, 1640 John Dover, 1642 Forster Ransford, 1643 Robert Blunt, 1645 Richard Dover, 1653 George Dover, 1656 Francis Clerke.

**RECORDERS**.—1638 Henry Guy, 1640 John Duncomb, 1643 John Howland, 1644 Henry Ewer, 1650 John Norbury, 1658 William Cotton.

**SERJEANTS AT MACE**.—1638 John Varney and Thomas Hudnal (William Cock in place of Thomas Hudnal), 1638 William Cock and John Varney, 1640 John Cock and William Roger, 1641 John Cock and Thomas Hudnal, 1644 George Gear, 1645 James Eames, 1646 William Bulley and John Wray, 1656 John Wray and James Eames, 1658 James Eames and William Bulley, 1659 William Bulley and John Addams, senr., 1660 William Bulley and William Hawes.

**CHIEF BURGESSES OR ALDERMEN**.—1628 William Lake, William Hill, George Dover, Francis Barker, William Pitkin, Thomas Newman, Francis Wethered, Edward Kellett, Thomas Hunt, Oliver Hains, Stephen Besouth, Samuel Dagnall, William Axtell.

The following were elected to fill vacancies as deaths occurred:

1638 Ralph Benning, Robert Darval, John Benning, Robert Reynolds, Robert Benning, 1640 John Tey, 1641 Robert Benning, 1643 William Lake, 1645 John Barker, William Parker, Maurice Kellett, Francis Pitkin, William Pitkin, Stephen Besouth, Robert Blunt, 1648 John Bailey, William Theed, 1649 Robert Newman, John Hoare, Francis Nixon, 1651 Thomas Aldridge, 1652 Thomas Newman, 1656 Christopher Woodhouse, Mordecaey Herne, 1657 Francis Wethered, 1659 John Nash, 1662 Francis Clerke, William Hill, John Child, Thomas Topping, William Babb.

**THE LAST BAILIFF**

None of the "city fathers" achieved more than local fame. The first of the two Thomas Newmans was rector of St. Peter's from 1598 until 1639, and several of his fellow burgesses were churchwardens. Christopher Woodhouse, the last bailiff, was a surgeon who was noted for his skill in curing bewitched persons. He was a close friend of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania. William Axtell was father of Daniel Axtell, a Cromwellian officer who was hanged at Tyburn for partiality at the trial of Charles I. Francis Wethered was an important landowner; he lived at Ashlyns. Two recorders (Henry Ewer and John Howland) were also recorders of St. Albans, and Henry Guy was mayor of St. Albans in 1685. Advice was occasionally sought by the Corporation from the more experienced borough of St. Albans.

This and the previous article have been based on the minute book; several other documents relating to the Corporation are in the church chest, and extracts will be given in later articles from inventories and from an extremely interesting document of 1659 headed "Orders and Constitutions made and agreed upon for the better government of the Corporation." I also hope to propound a new theory which helps to explain why the Corporation died an untimely death. '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:—

May 30—June 5: Dickman.  
June 6—12: Taylors.  
June 7—19: Boots.  
June 20—26: Fagg.  
June 27—July 3: Dickman.

**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.

**Berkhamsted St. Peter**

**ALTAR SERVERS**

FOR JUNE

6th, 7 a.m. J. D. Hildreth, 8 a.m. R. Farn, 10 a.m. J. D. Hildreth, E. C. Alsop and J. H. Todd (Cross); L. E. Crook, Banners; A. J. Binge and C. H. Mayo, 6.30 p.m. (Banners); A. J. Binge and C. H. Mayo; 10th, 8 a.m. C. Kent, 10 a.m. E. C. Alsop, L. E. Crook and E. J. Mitchell (Cross); J. D. Hildreth, Banners; A. J. Binge and C. H. Mayo; 6.30 p.m. (Banners); A. J. Binge and C. H. Mayo; 20th, 8 a.m. M. Smith, 10 a.m. S. R. Meager, R. Farn and C. H. Mayo (Cross); E. C. Alsop; 27th, 8 a.m. C. H. Mayo, 10 a.m. L. E. Crook, E. C. Alsop and A. Pangbourne (Cross); J. D. Hildreth).

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