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## The Private Accounts of Dr. Jeffries

IN this—the 159th of his monthly articles in the *Review*—"Beorcham" starts a new series of outstanding local interest, based on hitherto unpublished material.

He is indebted to the Rev. R. S. Brown for allowing him to inspect a number of manuscript books written by 18th and 19th century rectors. The books, kept at the Rectory, are full of fascinating facts and figures.

One of the most interesting personal documents ever to come the way of a local historian is a memorandum written by the Rev. Charles de Guiffardiere, rector of St. Peter's from 1798 to 1809. It will be printed in next month's issue.

*A man he was to all the country dear  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.*

Oliver Goldsmith's couplet came to mind as I turned the pages of a manuscript book entitled "Berkhamsted Rectory" and discovered that, in the 18th century, the curate's stipend was £40 a year. Not for the first time in history were there complaints that the curate was not receiving a living wage, and the rector gave him the Easter offerings (usually about £11) and the "surplice fees" to raise his annual income to £60.

And the rector? The benefice provided him with a house and a net annual income which, between 1757 and 1797, varied from just under £100 to £158. A fair average was £115. In five years only did the rector's net income from St. Peter's parish exceed £150, and that was when Berkhamsted was without a curate.

### THE WINDOW TAX

It was not a rich living, but £100 in those days was the equivalent of perhaps £500 at the present time. And the Rev. John Jeffries, D.D., had other sources of income. He was also rector of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, E.C., until his resignation in 1792, rector of Barnes until his death, and

Canon of St. Paul's. He could well afford to keep a gardener and a staff of house-servants!

The Rectory was not, of course, the present building. It was an old, rambling house, with a conglomeration of thatched barns and stables, and on an average repairs cost the rector £20 a year. There were nearly 40 windows—an expensive matter in days when the window tax caused many a householder to have unnecessary (and, sometimes, necessary) windows bricked up. A note dated 1767 states that there were 34 windows in the rectory itself—thirteen on the north side, nine on the south, six on the west, and six on the east. With two windows in the laundry and three in the brewhouse, the rector had to pay £3 18s. in window tax (39 windows at 2s. each). In addition, he paid a house tax of 3s.

As will be seen by the reference to a brewhouse, the rector brewed his own beer. He also has a well-stocked cellar which, at the time of his death, contained wines to the value of £27.

### RATES AND TAXES IN 1781

Under the heading "Land Tax" (4s. in the £) the rector gave the following details for 1781:

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Berkhamsted Tythes and Parsonage charg'd at ..	88	10	0	17	14	0
Glebe in Northchurch ..	5	0	0	1	0	0
Lectureship ..	6	10	0	1	6	0
	£100	0	0	£20	0	0

In a footnote, Dr. Jeffries added that in 1781 the parish of Berkhamsted was rated for land tax at £1,777 12s. 11d. and, at 4s. in the £, paid £355 10s. 7d. Poor and church rates were set out as follows:—

Rents		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
3042	10	A Poor's rate ..	2	0	299	6	0
2977	10	" " " " ..	2	3	334	11	6
			4	3	633	16	7
		A Church rate ..	2	..	22	13	6
			4	5	£656	11	0

The parish paid £133 in window tax, and £17 18s. in house tax. There were 242 houses in Berkhamsted in 1781.

The lectureship mentioned above refers to Coombe's Charity (1641). Every year, £6 13s. 4d. less tax (not £6 10s., as stated by Dr. Jeffries) was paid to the preacher of "a catechetical lecture every Monday in St. Peter's

Church." A charity commissioners' report of 120 years ago tells us that it was the practice, "during six weeks' gleaning time . . . to omit the lecture."

### PAYMENT TO WILLIAM COWPER

Dr. Jeffries succeeded Dr. John Cowper as rector of Berkhamsted, and it is interesting to find, in accounts for 1757, that two payments were made to his predecessor's son, William Cowper, the poet, then a little-known man of 26:

	£	s.	d.
Paid Mr. William Cowper upon account of Priory Tythe from Michaelmas 1755 to Midsummer 1756 ..	6	7	0
To Do. for Tythe of Hay Sever'd before the death of Dr. Cowper ..	13	9	3

In his first year at Berkhamsted, Dr. Jeffries received from the parish £136 16s. 6d., viz.:

	£	s.	d.
Received of William Johnson a year's Tythe due at Michaelmas 1756 ..	115	0	0
Easter offerings ..	10	13	0
Surplice Fees to Midsummer 1757 ..	5	18	6
Received for Burying Mr. Matthews in the Chancel ..	5	5	0

Payments totalled £89 10s. 1d., so, in Dr. Jeffries' own words, he "received clear £47 5s. 11d." in his first year at Berkhamsted. The Church rate in that year amounted to £44 12s. 5½d.

### ONE YEAR'S ACCOUNTS

1759 was perhaps a typical year in the ministry of Dr. Jeffries, and here, in full, are his accounts for the twelve months:

	£	s.	d.
Paid a Poor's rate for 36 months ..	12	0	
Baker the Bricklayer's Bill ..	1	2	0
Land tax to Michaelmas ..	8	10	0
Window tax to do. ..	1	10	0
Tythe Dinner ..	3	16	0
Paid Mr. Bland (curate) upon account 5 Load and Half of Straw for thatching ..	3	6	0
Paid Sear for thatching ..	2	16	0
Gave Wilkinson for collecting Tythe Assurance of my House and goods ..	1	0	0
Tenth to Xmas 1760 ..	2	0	6
A Bill for Paint ..	4	0	0
Paid Mr. Bland upon account ..	10	0	0
40 months Poor's rate ..	13	4	0
Land tax to Lady Day ..	8	10	0
Window tax do. ..	1	10	0
Clerk, Sexton, etc. ..	10	0	0
Land tax for my Glebe to Michaelmas 1759 ..	14	5	
Subscription to the Clergymen's widows ..	10	6	
20 months Poor's rate ..	6	8	
Paid Mr. Bland to Midsummer 1760 Procurations, etc., at the Bishop's and Archdeacon's visitations ..	19	10	
Thatching and 2 Load of Straw ..	2	8	6
Repairing the Barn ..	17	0	
	£86	8	3

Received upon account of Tythe due at Michaelmas 1759 ..	145	6	8
Received of H. Petter a year's Rent for my Glebe due at Michaelmas 1759 ..	8	0	0
Easter offerings ..	12	0	0
Surplice Fees to Midsummer 1760 ..	8	6	6
To Mr. Johnson's Burial ..	2	2	0
Received from the Accountant General's Office upon account of 2/9 of the Interest of £387 12s. 4d. due to the lectureship from 10 October 1758 to 5 April 1760 ..	3	17	6
Received of John Reeve upon account of the lectureship to Lady Day 1760 ..	5	6	8
	184	19	4
Deduct Curate, taxes, etc. ..	86	8	3
Received net ..	£98	11	1

(To be continued)

## EMERGENCY MEDICINE

### 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:—

Sept. 26—Oct. 2: Taylors.  
October 3—9: Boots.  
October 10—16: Figg.  
October 17—23: Dickman.  
October 24—30: Taylors.  
Oct. 31—Nov. 6: Boots.

### 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.

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