

Stories behind the Monuments—1

THOMAS BALDWIN'S HYDE PARK CHARITY

By 'BEORCHAM'

I HAVE HEARD IT SAID that the only people who notice monuments and memorials in churches are non-worshippers. The point could be made in a more tactful way. At home a guest may show interest in a picture or piece of furniture which is too familiar to go on arousing one's own interest. In the same way a stranger who buys a guide book and spends half-an-hour looking round a church is often capable of telling regular members of the congregation about things they have either forgotten or never known.

In the churches of Berkhamsted and neighbouring villages we have many monuments, ancient and modern, large and small, attractive and commonplace, well sited and badly sited. Some of the monuments are very interesting indeed, and their interest is not wholly visual. Portraits and inscriptions on brass and stone may be the means of introducing us to some fascinating family histories.

LOOKING FOR HISTORY

The late Mr. R. A. Norris, whose 'History of Berkhamsted St. Peter' (1923) has been out of print for several years, was a historian who was not content merely to make a list of the memorials. No clue was too slender to be followed up, and his detective work added greatly to our knowledge of the people who lived in the parish in years gone by. But sometimes a monument is sufficiently informative to satisfy most of the people who see it; for example, there is a famous brass in St. Mary's, Northchurch, with a portrait and potted biography of Peter the Wild Boy, a very odd character who probably never went to church until he was in his coffin.

This month I would like to introduce you to Thomas Baldwin, the subject of a monument in St. Peter's Church. Most of our facts about this local benefactor come from the church chest,

which contains a bundle described as 'Waterworks Papers,' dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. One of Baldwin's many bequests gave Berkhamsted a financial interest in certain waterworks in London. As we shall see later in this article, when the Serpentine was made in Hyde Park the waterworks ceased to function and our parish, adequately compensated, invested the proceeds elsewhere.

ASHLYNS LINKS

Thomas Baldwin was born at Watford in 1567, educated at Berkhamsted School, and spent much of his life in London. His brother Richard owned property in a part of Holborn which figured in 'Oliver Twist' as the site of a thieves' kitchen. We do not know whether Thomas lived in Berkhamsted after his schooldays, but he was related to the Wethereds of Ashlyns and was almost certainly a frequent visitor to the town.

His will, dated 30 September, 1639, is a lengthy document. Berkhamsted came out very well in the list of bequests he made to the poor of several parishes, to his relatives and to his servants.

His share of the benefits and profits of the waterworks, consisting of springs and waters in Hyde Park, fed by wooden pipes to the City of Westminster, was given to his wife for her life, and after her decease 'to the Parish of Watford, where I was born, to the Parish of Berkhamsted, where I was a Schollar, 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.'

Gowns of black cloth and 2s. 6d. apiece 'for a dinner on the day of my funeral' were to be given to 'as many poor men as I shall be yeares of age at my decease (20 in Watford, 10 in Rickmansworth, and the rest in

Berkhamsted.)' 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.

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.

£100 FOR A MONUMENT

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 guilt [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.'

Baldwin finally directed that 'the South Chappell or Isle of the [Berkhamsted] Parish Church wherein my mother now lyeth interred to be a buryal place for myself and my friends; £100 for monument to be sett up in or nigh the wall of the great window of the said chappell.' Provision was also made for 'repair of chappell in tymber, 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 one of the least attractive monuments in St. Peter's Church, R. A. Norris states that it was the work of the distinguished sculptor Nicholas Stone.

BOUGHT BY GEORGE II

Now for some facts about the waterworks. By supplying water to Westminster it earned steady profits for the shareholders until George II came to the throne. He wished to improve Hyde

Continued on page 19



BROWN & MERRY

ESTATE AGENTS, AUCTIONEERS, VALUERS, SURVEYORS
AND PLANNING CONSULTANTS

128 HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED

Tel. 5421/2

Partner in Charge J. O. BOLTON KING, F.R.I.C.S.

And at Tring, Aylesbury, Hemel Hempstead, Wendover, Leighton Buzzard, Bleckley, Stony Stratford and Bedford

'BEORCHAM' (from page 17)

Park—the Serpentine dates from his reign—and the waterworks were in the way. So the undertaking was sold to the King in 1730 for £2,500, and Berkhamsted's share (£432 1s. 11½d.) was paid to trustees. Incidentally, at one of the vestry meetings called to deal with this matter, a bill for £16 was ordered to be paid to the pipe-borer, who gouged out tree trunks for use as water pipes.

The trustees were required to purchase land with their share of the proceeds and apply the rents in the same way as the profits from the waterworks. However, India Bonds were purchased and afterwards sold—a profitable transaction, for with interest the sum of £432 1s 11½d. was increased to £542 7s. 8½d. Land was then purchased at Ashley Green, and a charity commissioner's report of 1830 tells us that the property consisted of a farmhouse and outbuildings, and about 42 acres of land, which were let to Thomas Dorrien. He paid £24 per annum to the trustees, and this was distributed in sums of 10s. each to poor persons of St. Peter's parish who were not receiving alms from other sources.

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, has 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 parish.

Parochial Paragraphs

(continued)

accepted the Boundaries Committee's informal suggestion that there should be three wards; but the other interested parties (Labour, six wards; Liberal six wards reduced to three but geographically different to the Boundaries Committee's idea, and the dissentient Urban Councillors, three wards increased to four) were unable to agree to a common scheme. So the matter was referred back to the Boundaries Committee.

It is that Committee's latest request to the Urban Council which alters the whole aspect of the situation. It is, that the Council should adopt the role of protagonists of warding by putting forward the case for three wards as outlined by the Boundaries Committee.

If the Council agree it will be a broad-minded reversal of their previous 'overour-dead-bodies' posture, for which they would receive full credit.

But what intrigues me is how the Council representatives at the Inquiry will successfully swallow 12 foolscap pages of their previous case opposing wards and regurgitate it in the form of an argument in favour of wards!

Newly appointed as Matron of West Herts and St. Pauls Hospitals is Miss Ruby Rice, who for the past two years has been Assistant Matron at the Birmingham General Hospital and previously was Administrative Sister at Gloucester Royal Hospital. She succeeds Miss Garland who is retiring.

'The father of an illegitimate child has, in a number of cases, been the one who showed most concern for the welfare of the infant', states the annual report of the Berkhamsted and District Association for Moral Welfare, which also mentions that the twelve months under review has been 'a busy year, bringing a marked increase in the number of unmarried mothers who asked for help'.

Of the £567 received by the Association in parochial contributions, Berkhamsted heads the list with £142, with Hemel Hempstead next at £84, Boxmoor £50, Apsley £45, Northchurch £42, Little Gaddesden £30, Sunnyside £26, Potten End £15, etc.

A refusal of planning permission was the decision of the Berkhamsted Urban Council in respect of an application for extensions and alterations to provide accommodation for ten additional children (making 30 in all) at Falkland House Nursery School.

The reason for the refusal was that the extension would be unreasonable in view of the possible increase in noise.

With 100 years' service (all but two months) between them, two employees of Cooper, McDougall & Robertson Ltd. recently retired. They are Mr. Arthur H. Cook of Rambling Way, Potten End, 51 years' service, and Mr. S. James Prince of Dublin, 48 years. Mr. Cook has been at the Berkhamsted headquarters of the Company throughout the whole of his career, but Mr. Prince left the firm's Printing Office (now the Clunbury Press) thirty years ago to take up the managership of the newly-formed Dublin branch.



KEEP YOUR HOME 'SPRINGTIME FRESH' WITH

COOPER'S

Fresh-aire

BOUQUET FLORAL plus New Double-Action GAIETY

COOPER, McDOUGALL & ROBERTSON LTD. · BERKHAMSTED