

Records of the Borough of Chesterfield.*



HE thanks of all archæologists, especially of this county, are due to Mr. Alderman Gee, Mayor of Chesterfield, for the spirit and enterprise that he has shown in causing the publication, at his own expense, of all that remains of the records of the ancient Borough of Chesterfield. Publication is the chief conservative source that we possess in the preservation of our old muniments. When it is known that an intelligent public have before them printed lists or transcripts of archives, the consciences of Chapter Clerks, Town Clerks, and other responsible officials, will be considerably quickened.

It is most melancholy to note the shameless carelessness that has characterised the custody of the Chesterfield archives during the past one hundred years. In 1789, that celebrated local antiquary, Dr. Pegge, drew up a schedule of the evidences, charters, etc., that were then in the Chesterfield Corporation chest. This list is bound up with Dr. Pegge's MS. Derbyshire Collections, which he bequeathed to the College of Arms. It is printed in full in this volume. Mr. John Cutts, for so many years Town Clerk of Chesterfield, soon after his appointment, did a most practical and serviceable work in printing a list of "all charters, deeds, books, books of account, and all documents and effects belonging to the Corporation of Chesterfield." This list was printed in 1857. Since that date nothing has been lost. Would that Dr. Pegge had

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printed his list in the "Gentleman's Magazine," to which he was so frequent a contributor. Had this been done, the disgraceful loss or purloining of public property would in all probability not have occurred. As it is, nearly fifty of the seventy scheduled items of Dr. Pegge's list had disappeared when Mr. Cutts drew up his list in 1857; some of the greatest interest and value. Dr. Pegge's schedule also affords evidence of the comparatively recent loss of "the Black Book," wherein were copies of all the ancient charters, evidences as to customs, etc., and which was extant in his days. Possibly it may be in my power to give some faint clue that may lead to the recovery of some of the missing archives. In the autumn of 1866, when in conversation with the late Mr. Waller, of Chesterfield, in his house in the Market Place, on the subject of modern trades' unions and their connection with medieval guilds, Mr. Waller remarked, "I have," or, ("I can show you") my memory does not serve me as to which expression was used) "some medieval rolls that I can't make out, but they refer to guilds at Chesterfield and Dronfield." This was to be done when we both had more leisure. In 1868, when at the College of Arms, I copied out Dr. Pegge's list of the Chesterfield archives, and was struck with the mention of the Guild Rolls of Dronfield and Chesterfield. I wrote to Mr. Waller on the subject; he replied that very likely they were those he had named, and renewed his promise of showing them to me. Unfortunately, through mutual misunderstanding and dilatoriness, my inspection of them never took place. Perhaps communications with the representatives of the late Mr. Waller might lead to the recovery of these and other missing archives.

Chesterfield, however, still preserves a remarkable and original series of Royal Charters, as well as other valuable and interesting documents. Mr. Gee's scholarly munificence has caused the whole of these documents to be printed *in extenso*, with various fac-similes of the more interesting ones, as well as drawings of seals, and the result is a beautifully printed and handsome volume of about 200 pages. The work of transcribing, translating, and editing these archives was entrusted to the capable pen of Mr.

Pym Yeatman, and most ably has he done his task. The Introduction is helpful and original, its only fault being its brevity.

I have only two or three criticisms to offer. The first Charter is damaged in parts, and lacks the king's name. But it is beyond doubt a charter of King John, which might as well have been stated. I do not agree with the translation, in all its particulars, of Lord Wake's Charter (temp. Edwd. I.) to the burgesses. For instance, I take it that *braciacor*, p. 34, is the baker, and *pistor* the miller. At all events *braciacor* cannot be a "brewer," but perhaps both terms are for different varieties of bakers. *Coreas*, page 35, is not "wax," but hides; it reads *coreas vel pelles*, that is, hides or skins. *Pane braiaco* should be translated barley bread, and not "malted bread." I take it that *tinctor* should be rendered "dyer," and not "painter."

Every Derbyshire man of letters, and therefore every member of our Society, ought to have this volume. The following is a copy of its Table of Contents, in addition to the Introduction.

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