

Winster Market House.

BY H. C. HEATHCOTE.



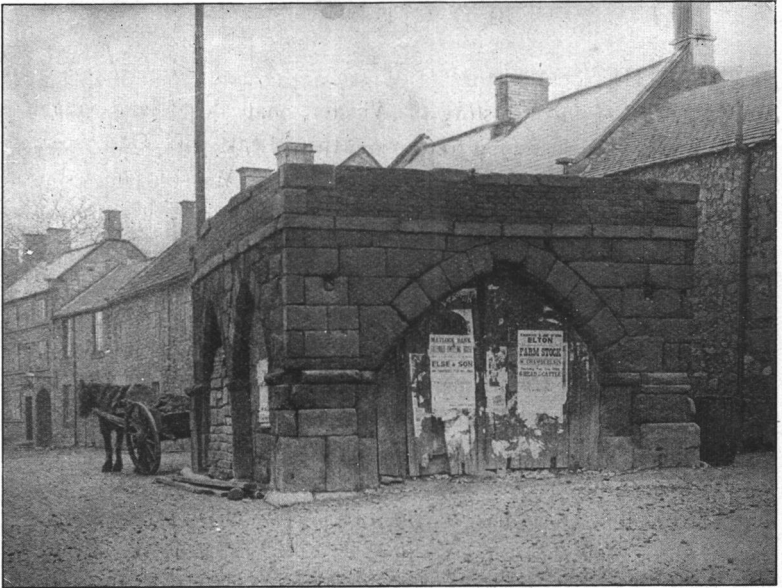
THE local history of Winster, that old upland village—once a town—in the Peak of Derbyshire, seems to have been unwritten. Winster, named in the Domesday survey *Winsterne*, has had several speculative derivations of its name: for a detailed account of these the reader is referred to an article by Mr. Frederic Davis, which appeared in the *Derbyshire Archæological Journal* some years ago. The antiquity of the village is beyond doubt, as is manifested by the discoveries from time to time of stone implements and the numbers of ancient burial-places in the neighbourhood. The old lead mines show undoubted evidence of Roman occupation, but, “Hypotheses non fingo,” Winster is one of the oldest market towns in Derbyshire. Tradition has it that a peck of potatoes, a peck of meal, and a pound of butter could be purchased for a shilling in Winster market once upon a time.

The earliest record we can find of the market is in the Will of the late Thomas Eyre,* of Rowtor, or Roo-Tor, who died November 30th, 1717. An extract from his Will reads: “And as for ye wordly (*sic.*) estate wch it hath pleased God to bestow upon me I give devise and bequeath ye same in manner and form following . . . together with my Market and Fairs of Winster with their and every other appurtenances.”

* He was son of Adam and grandson of Roger of Rowter, who was a son of Rowland Eyre, of Hassop, by Gertrude, daür and co-heir of Humphrey Stafford, of Eyam.—EDITOR.

In Capper's *Topographical Dictionary*, A.D. 1808, Winster is mentioned thus: "Here is a small market on Saturday and a fair on Easter Monday."

Brevity itself characterises the account given in *Pilkington's View of the Present State of Derbyshire*, 1738: "The Church of Winster is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The town has a market."



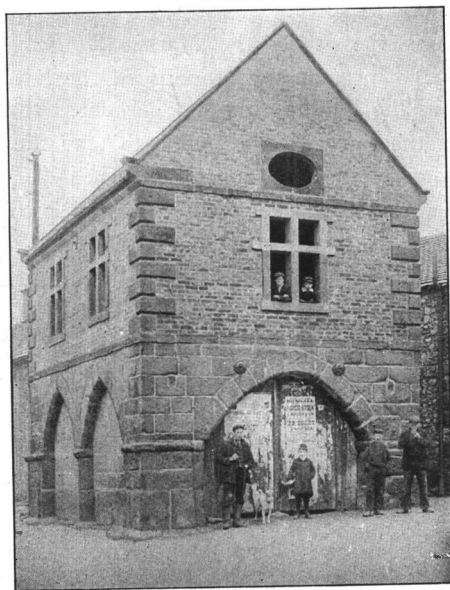
Before Restoration.

From *The Diary of George Moore of Winster Hall*, bearing date July 8th, 1778, we may conjecture that the market day at Winster was a busy one, for he writes: "I propose to go to Buxton to-day out of the way of the market."

In Lyson's *Magna Britannia*, vol. v., page 306, A.D. 1817: "Winster is a small market town about three miles from Youlgreave, about 19 miles from Derby, and about 145 miles from London. The market, which appears to have

been held by prescription (as we can find no grant for it on record), is held on Saturday, chiefly for butchers' meat. There is no fair now held."

The late Llewellynn Jewitt, that accomplished litterateur, lived at Winster many years, and spent much time and research in trying to find some early record of the old Market House, but without success. In *The Reliquary*, vol. xxi., p. 144, we find



After Restoration.

the following from his pen:—"Dating back as it does from Saxon times, Winster is one of the oldest market towns in the county of Derby. Its market once very flourishing, and even within the memory of the oldest inhabitants, 'Wi long rows o' stalls, and the people so thick and throng together you could a walk'd a top o' their heads,' is now, however, a thing of the past, having for many years fallen into desuetude. The old venerable Market House, one of the few examples spared to

us, still happily remains, and although but rarely opened except at the time of the annual wakes, gives an air of importance and antiquity to the place. The building stands nearly in the middle of the main street of the village, the principal thoroughfare being on one side and a footpath on the other. It is two stories in height, the lower one of massive stone and the upper of very ancient brickwork with stone facings. Of the Market House nothing is known, nor is it necessary to conjecture. That it has stood some centuries there is no doubt."

After various vicissitudes the Market House, a little over twenty years ago, became the property of the late Mr. Joseph Greatorex, but the building got so dilapidated that it became necessary for the safety of the public to take the upper story down, as shown in the first illustration (1904). For a nominal sum Mr. Greatorex most generously conveyed it to the present owners, who, in response to a general desire evinced by the lovers of the ancient buildings of Derbyshire, have secured the restoration of this ancient relic of old time.

The National Trust for Places of Historical Interest kindly gave the services of its architect, Mr. Weir, who has been twice down from London to plan the restoration, which has been carried out under the superintendence of Mr. Henry Rye, of Bakewell, architect for the Duke of Rutland, the work being done by local labour. The old material has been used except in places where it was absolutely necessary to put new. Mr. Rye reports:—"I have visited the above building several times at the request of the National Trust Society, and also the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, and have been able to report in all cases that the work of rebuilding the Old Market House has been and is being carried out in a sound and most conservative manner, no pains being spared to keep it to the old lines of this very interesting building. It has been a great pleasure to me to see work being so preserved."

The work of restoration is now practically completed, as shown in illustration No. 2* (1905), leaded lights to the windows

* The Plates are from photographs taken by Mr. Le Blanc Smith.

having been added since the photograph was taken. The maintenance and repair of the roadway in the main street was attached to the market, extending from the front of the building about seventy yards in a westerly direction. By agreement this has been transferred to the Bakewell Rural District Council, £20 having been paid to that body as consideration money. The market rights and the tolls accruing therefrom have been vested with the Winster Parish Council. About £120 has been expended in the work of rebuilding. The credit of the whole undertaking may be justly given to Mrs. Childers Thompson, who has acted as hon. treasurer, and to whom is due the first inception of the restoration.

The building is about to be conveyed to The National Trust, and its future preservation will be thereby secured.