

## Jottings about Old Derby.

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**T**HE following paper consists of a few jottings, which were put together in the hope of interesting a social gathering of the parishioners of S. Peter's, Derby, a short time back. Though roughly arranged, they contain many items unknown to the present generation, and which will soon be utterly forgotten; no apology is, therefore, necessary for placing them in the hands of the D. A. and N. H. S.

It may interest many to read some little account of the town of Derby in and from 1781.

We will divide the subject into two: matters ECCLESIASTICAL and matters CIVIL.

As regards matters ECCLESIASTICAL—In the year 1781 there were but five parish churches in Derby—viz., All Saints', S. Peter's, S. Alkmund's, S. Werburgh's, and S. Michael's.

ALL SAINTS'—as you will find from the interesting and beautiful monograph of that church by Rev. J. C. Cox and W. H. St. John Hope—had anciently attached to it the CHAPELS OF S. MARY-ON-THE-BRIDGE and QUARNDON. In 1781, the Incumbent of All Saints' was my grandfather, the Reverend Charles Hope, M.A., the patrons being the Mayor and Burgesses of Derby. The services, as far as I can make out, consisted of Sundays—morning and afternoon—and in the morning on Wednesday and all Saints' Days. On Friday morning also was delivered the Crowshawe Lecture (founded by Richard Crowshawe, merchant, of London, by will, dated 26th April, 1631, for the benefit of the market people), until the death of the Rev. James Bligh, who was

lecturer, and also Head-master of the Free Grammar School. The Corporation, in whom the presentation was vested, changed it to Sunday evening, by what authority I do not know, but clearly against the will of the founder, who instructs that the lecture was to be delivered *every Friday*, in the forenoon, in the Parish Church of All Hallows, in Derby, and that £20 should be paid to the preacher.

S. PETER'S comprised the chapelries of BOULTON, NORMANTON, and OSMASTON. In 1781 the vicar was the Reverend Beaumont Dixie; patron, Willoughby Dixie, Esq. The services consisted of two Sunday services, morning and afternoon, excepting every third Sunday, when there was an afternoon service at Normanton instead. And this was the only service held at Normanton, *i.e.*, once in three weeks! Up to 1780 morning prayers were said *daily*, and £10 per annum paid out of the Liversage Charity to the vicar for saying them. Since then the Liversage Lecture has been established—for which £35 per annum is allowed for a sermon or lecture every Sunday evening—and daily service and weekly communions. S. Peter's was, I believe, the last church in the diocese, within the memory of man, where a man, habited in a white sheet, did open penance for defamation. It took place when I was a boy, and when Rev. R. R. Ward was vicar. He was sentenced to the punishment by the Court of Lichfield.

S. ALKMUND'S contained the chapelry of LITTLE EATON. In 1781 the vicar was the Reverend Thomas Manlove, also, I believe, Head-master of the Grammar School. Patrons, the Mayor and Corporation of Derby. Services, so far as I know, on Sundays—morning and afternoon, and on Thursday mornings.

S. WERBURGH'S.—This parish had no chapelries within it. In 1781 this living and S. Michael's were held together by my grandfather. The patron was the Lord Chancellor.

S. MICHAEL'S comprised the Chapelry of ALVASTON.

With regard to the services at this church and S. Werburgh's in 1781, there was one Sunday service given alternately once in three weeks; and at S. Werburgh's Matins was said on Saturdays. These, you will see, were in the days of Pluralities—my

grandfather holding together three livings, viz., All Saints', S. Werburgh's, and S. Michael's; but then it must be borne in mind that the population of the whole town did not reach 8,563 until 1788, which is very little more than the population of that part of S. Peter's parish now under my own immediate charge.

I may mention a custom in certain of the churches, of ringing the bells on Sundays, Holy Days, and ordinary days—At All Saints', S. Peter's, S. Alkmund's, and S. Werburgh's one bell was rung from 7 a.m. to 7.15 a.m., and at 8 a.m. two bells were rung. On Holy Days the same. Daily—one bell was rung at 5 a.m. at All Saints'; S. Peter's, S. Werburgh's, and at S. Alkmund's a bell was rung at 6 a.m. At S. Alkmund's a bell was also rung at 6 p.m.; at S. Peter's at 7 p.m., All Saints' at 8 p.m., S. Werburgh's at 9 p.m. Doubtless the bells rung in the morning were originally for Mass. Those rung in the evenings would be for Complin, or the last office for the day, and not, as commonly supposed, for the "Curfew."

I now pass on to matters CIVIL.

The Mayor of Derby in 1781 was John Hope, who was first cousin to my grandfather. The Members for the Borough were Lord George Henry Augustus Cavendish and Edward Coke.

There were many old buildings standing in 1781 and later which no longer remain. At the corner of Babington Lane stood the old Gate-house with a chamber over it, forming the entrance to Old Babington Hall, which stood between Babington Lane and St. Peter's Church. It belonged to the family of that name, who also had another seat at Dethick. Here Mary Queen of Scots was lodged on her way from Winfield Manor to Tutbury Castle. It was purchased by the Beaumonts, and was afterwards the residence of Sir Simon Degge. What is now called "Babington House" was built by the Mellors, who were then a considerable family in the town. It was afterwards owned by the Degges, and Lord Massareen lived there, and was married at S. Peter's. Henry Mellor, who

I believe lived there, was the first Mayor of Derby under Charter of Charles I., 1636. He died there and was buried at S. Peter's.

CASTLE FIELDS HALL, surrounded by stately cedar trees, stood on or near the site of the factory of Mr. Alderman Roe. The stables belonging to it now form the Siddals Lane School Rooms, belonging to S. Peter's parish. I remember it well, and what is now covered with houses, etc., intersected with streets, was then an open space, clear of buildings, from Traffic Street to Canal Street, and from London Road to Siddals Lane, called Castle Fields Park.

It is not often that we can trace the origin of the names of places, but as "Hope Street" forms now one of the streets I am alluding to, I give you the tradition why it is so called, as it was told me by my father.

When my grandfather was vicar of S. Werburgh's he held two acres of land in Castle Fields Park, where the street is now made, as vicar of that parish. The owner, who then possessed and lived at Castle Fields Hall, considered these two acres (being nearly in the middle of the park) a nuisance, and removed the land marks by which they were distinguished; whereupon my grandfather brought an action against him at the County Assizes, which was decided in my grandfather's favour, the judge remarking that the owner of the estate had offended not only against man but against the laws of God, insomuch as he had removed his neighbour's land-mark. However, it ended in an apology to my grandfather, and in lieu of the land in the park he was offered a fenced field containing a barn on the Ashburne Road, which my grandfather accepted, and it is now the property of the vicars of S. Werburgh. The judge told my grandfather that in consequence of the treatment he had received he could take his two acres close up to the drawing-room windows if he chose to do so.

On Cockpit Hill stood an old mansion, built by a Mr. Beardsley in 1712, and afterwards the dwelling about this

time (1781), of an elderly lady who went by the name of "Madam" or "Dame" Chambers, and who, I believe, was sister to the then Marchioness of Exeter, behind which were grounds and an orchard reaching to S. Peter's Street, now built over and intersected by Albion Street, Albion Place, Bloom Street, and Eagle Street.

The old Town Gaol was built across the brook in the Corn Market, nearly on a line from the Royal Hotel to Albert Street. The coach road and also two foot-bridges passing underneath it; one bridge leading to the gaol, called the Gaol Bridge, the other, forming the highway, called S. Peter's Bridge. The coach road was through the bed of the brook. All this was altered in 1787, when it was removed, first to the west side of the Corn Market, and then into Friar Gate. S. Peter's Bridge, which somewhat resembled the present S. Mary's Bridge, was erected during the second mayoralty of John Hope, and I distinctly remember a large stone on which were carved the Arms of the Borough, the name of the then mayor, and the date of erection. Previous to the demolition of the old foot-bridge, I have heard the late Dr. Forrester (who lived at Abbot's Hill) say, that the water was so pure that his cows were driven to water there. I don't suppose if it was still open they would be driven there for that purpose now.

In 1786 Sadler Gate Bridge was built, during the mayoralty of Henry Flint, and there was a similar inscription on a stone there to the one on S. Peter's Bridge; and previous to its erection, carriages, etc., were driven through the brook, and passengers crossed by a foot-bridge.

In 1789, during the mayoralty of Thomas Mather, S. Mary's Bridge was begun to be rebuilt. The Chapel of S. Mary stood, and stands now, on an arch of the former bridge, and I well remember the old piers which were removed a few years ago by the Corporation, and over which, in my boating days, I had well nigh several times made shipwreck, and got a good ducking.

In the middle of the street now leading from the Market Place to Exeter Bridge, and at the point of junction with the Market Place, stood a large ancient mansion, with a quadrangular court in front, the entrance to which was under an archway, with a dwelling-house above, and houses on both sides within the archway. At this house King Charles I. stayed when visiting Derby. It once belonged to the Every family, afterwards it became the property of my grandfather. There was a large garden behind the house which went down to the river, where, or near where, Exeter Bridge now stands. It subsequently became the property of my father, who sold it to my uncle, Rev. Charles Stead Hope, who again sold it to Messrs. Smiths, the bankers. It was afterwards pulled down, and the road to Exeter Bridge and the bridge itself made, and the road continued to Exeter Street, formerly called "Ford Lane." For many years the road under the archway was called "Darby's Yard," from Mr. Thomas Darby having purchased the buildings on the right side of the court. From the description given to me by my father and others, especially by Mr. George Darby, it must have been a fine old place. The entrance was reached by a flight of stone steps, which opened into a large entrance hall, where was a very handsome old oak staircase.

In Full Street, or Fuller's Street, stood Exeter House, at one time one of the residences of the Marquis of Exeter. As most of you know, this was the head quarters of Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1745; and had he marched on towards London, as was his original intention, it is very problematical whether the House of Stuart or that of Brunswick would have now possessed the Throne of these Realms.

S. Peter's Vicarage stood in S. Peter's Street, where the premises of Messrs. Dick, Wilkins, etc., now stand. Some years after I was presented to the living, I sold it, and with the consent of the then Bishop and patrons, built the present Vicarage House. One reason for my doing so was that I had then S. Peter's and Normanton both to serve. I was anxious

to have the house as equi-distant as possible from both Churches. It was a fine old house, and like many of the old houses in Derby, had a very handsome old oak stair-case with alternate round and twisted balustrades. On taking down the old building, which had been added to, I was told that under one of the beams of the latest part were found several coins of the reign of Charles II. My predecessors had been very careful to make very good and capacious cellarage underneath the house, and what was very remarkable, a stream of pure clean water flowed through one of them in the direction of Old S. Peter's Well, which is still under the pavement near Mr. Peach's premises in S. Peter's Street. I always fancy the water came from the same spring that supplies S. Thomas à Becket's Well. I am under the impression that the old Vicarage abutted upon the churchyard, and have reason to believe that the space between the house and the church was from time to time encroached upon and built over.

I remember also the old hostelries called the Red and White Lion, in the Corn Market. The White Lion was a very picturesque-looking gabled building, with stone-mullioned windows, one side fronting the Corn Market, the other facing south, overlooking the open brook, by the Brook-side, now Victoria Street. The entrance to the stables was over a wooden bridge leading from Victoria Street, opposite to Green Lane. Then there was the fine old mansion in the Wardwick belonging to the Jessop family, part of which now only remains; Becket Street runs through it and the old Park that was behind it.

There was also a curious old building on Sadler Gate Bridge, with an oaken mullioned window. According to tradition, a subterranean passage connected it with the College of All Saints.

I also remember several old wells—S. Peter's Well, close by Mr. Peach's, in S. Peter Street; one on the Osmaston Road, nearly opposite some lofty new houses, and another in Victoria Street; with pumps placed over them. Becket Well, with its quaint domed covering, still exists in Becket Well Lane, as also does

S. Alkmund's Well. There was also a spring, discharging from an iron lion's mouth, at the bottom of Bradshaw Street.

The old Grammar School still exists in S. Peter's Churchyard. I cannot help thinking that it was originally built on a part of the churchyard, because, after the death of the Rev. J. Bligh, when the Corporation caused some repairs to be made to the flooring, many skeletons were discovered—feet to the east; and still more recently, when the present owners, the Liversage Charity Trustees, were laying down a new wooden floor, several skeletons were found under a plaster floor lower down; one or more were in an upright position, with what appeared to be quicklime spread around them; and very many bones, which I saw myself. What forms now the School Play-ground is, undoubtedly, part of the old churchyard. I remember very well, after the death of Mr. Bligh, the ground being taken in. It was an irregular transfer made between the parishioners of S. Peter's and the Corporation of Derby for some buildings on Liversage property in S. Peter's Churchyard, but there was no faculty obtained. When I first knew the School, a narrow passage was railed off on both sides leading from S. Peter's Churchyard to the School-room. When the exchange was made, the churchyard now forming the play-ground was taken in, and buildings erected upon it, to do which bodies were removed; one body I particularly remember being removed, and also a grave being opened and a body discovered, which still rests there, and a head-stone still marks the spot. Before and since I have been vicar, several interments have taken place in this part. In fact, the Faculty Plan of what is called the New Ground shows it completely.

The upper rooms, I have heard my father say, were occupied by the under master or masters.

It is a curious fact, that for *three years* I was the *only* scholar of the Derby Grammar School, and the Rev. James Bligh the *one* master! The present condition of the School is happily different.

I remember the old Town Hall, which stood nearly in the



middle of the Market Place, built of brick, now supplanted by the present structure.

There is one subject more connected with old Derby I cannot altogether pass over. I mean the Derby Football. This was one of the most extraordinary games, I think, ever witnessed, the origin of which is lost in obscurity, but it existed for ages. The contending parties were the parishes of S. Peter's and All Saints. It was formerly played on Shrove Tuesday. The ball was a very large one, filled with cork shavings; in fact, there were two—one called the men's, the other the boys'. The men's ball was thrown up in the Market Place, on the stroke of two, and when they had cleared out, the lads' ball was thrown up. Afterwards an encroachment was made upon Ash Wednesday. The men played on Shrove Tuesday, the lads on Ash Wednesday. All Saints' goal was one of the shutters of the water wheel at Nun's Mill, in the Brook from Markeaton, and which still exists; S. Peter's was a gate in Grove Street, close to the Osmaston Road, facing north; the land where it was, is now built over. Both parties used what they thought the best means of settling the game. The favourite course which the parishioners of All Saints tried for was to get the ball down Sadler Gate, Bold Lane, Willow Row, and so on until they got into the brook below Nun's Mill, and then worked for the goal under the mill arch.

But don't for one moment suppose the game was what we understand by Football, for it was nothing of the kind. As soon as the contending parties were ready, All Saints' people ranged themselves on the Royal Oak side of the Market Place, and waved their hands towards All Saints' Church. S. Peter's ranged themselves under the old premises of Cox, Bowring, and Co., and waved their hands towards S. Peter's Church. Both parties then advanced. The ball was generally thrown up in the midst, between them, and both sides immediately closed into a compact mass, with nothing but their heads, faces, and uplifted hands visible. Whichever representative of the sides got the ball had the best advantage for his party, as he could act as a sort of steersman in the middle for the way he wished his

supporters to go. S. Peter's usually tried to work down Tenant Street, and get into the River Derwent as soon as they could. I have seen them swimming down the river when it was freezing hard and snow lying on the banks, and sometimes snowing all the while—one of them having the ball. Some would swim down, others walk down the banks, to about what is called "The Dead Waters," at Osmaston, the holder of the ball in the river. This part of the *sport*, so-called, was pleasantly enlivened by the partizans of each parish going in to seize the ball, when a grand ducking performance commenced. If All Saints' got possession of the ball, they got out on the Chaddesden side of the water, and the game virtually began *de novo*; but if S. Peter's held their own, it was generally carried through Osmaston Park, towards where the Arboretum is now, and into Grove Street and goaled. Whichever side won, the winner was raised shoulder-high, carrying the ball, by his fellow-players, and they proceeded through the parish of the winning parties, soliciting pecuniary reward, the church bells of the winning parish ringing merrily.

There is a tradition that on one occasion, when S. Peter's men and lads both won, the joy was so great that both balls were hung by blue ribbons on one of the pinnacles of S. Peter's Church tower.

This game, as you know, has been put down for many years, and is almost forgotten; but I have some old parishioners now living who were renowned champions for S. Peter's, and with whom I sometimes talk over the old game.

Taking all things into consideration, it was very desirable that it should be put a stop to; at the same time, like fox-hunting, athletic exercise, boat-racing, and all sports of the kind, I do think it helped to keep up the hardiness, the manliness, and the good old pluck and "Never say die" of Englishmen.

There is just one more "tradition" I should like to mention, though doubtless known to many. It is this: Several years ago, it is said, two Englishmen, strangers to each other, met in the United States of America, and, in the course of conversation, each one told the other that he came from Derby; and, in

order to test the truth, one man said, "All Saints for ever!" the other instantly replied, "S. Peter's for ever!" This at once settled the question, and a staunch friendship immediately sprang up and ever afterwards existed.

I am old enough, also, to remember the old watchmen, who had what were called "watch boxes" in various parts of the town, before the introduction of the present police force. They were habited in thick drab coats reaching to the heels, low-crowned hats, a rattle hanging to a leather girdle which surrounded their waists; and each one carried a thick stick and a horn lanthorn. Every half-hour he called the time, and gave a description of the kind of weather it was. I also remember the time when a considerable part of the town was, so called, lighted by oil lamps. I say so-called, for they really only served to make "darkness visible." Gas has now superseded them, and it is not unlikely that ere long the electric light will supersede gas; and if I have thrown any light on the state of old Derby from 1781, my efforts will not have been in vain.