

THE

MAYOR AND CORPORATION OF ST. PANCRAS,
CHICHESTER.

BY EUGÈNE E. STREET.

On the seventeenth day of June, one hundred and eighty-three years ago, the good people of Chichester were startled, and, as it seems, greatly rejoiced, by the news of the flight of King James the Second and the arrival of William of Orange. The tailor laid by his goose, the shoemaker dropped his last, and the baker left his trough, in order to talk over the wonderful news with their friends and neighbours; and a worthy citizen who dwelt in the suburb called "*The Hornet*," Thomas Osborne by name, baker and mealman, and who it appears was accustomed "to make a note" of any matters which greatly interested him, failed not to record this marvellous event on the fly leaves of a book entitled "*Cheape and Good Husbandry*," in which he was in the habit of making notes of extraordinary occurrences, in order, as he says, "to be a memorial to his children and grandchildren."

Thanks to this habit of good Master Osborne, we learn both that the citizens of Chichester received the news in a sound Protestant spirit, and that they founded in commemoration of the event the curious club known as "*The Mayor and Corporation of St. Pancras*." The volume is now in the possession of Mr. Henderson, of Chichester, by whose courtesy

I have been enabled to make the extracts relating to the subject of this paper.

The first entry is concerning the receipt of the wonderful intelligence of the seventeenth of June, one thousand six hundred and eighty-nine, and is as follows:—"Wm. Compton, the cooper, call^d and told me that James 2nd, the papistical, was cut and runnd to across the sea, and that the glorious Prince of Orange was marvelously recev^d by all the nobility and gentry, and twas like a triumphal march all the way from Torbay unto Westminster."

On the fourth of August, in the same year, Master Osborne records the formation of the Club, and I believe that this is the only account in existence of the circumstances attending its establishment:—

"Went with Dick Bartholomew to a meeting held at the sign of ye Unicorn, lately built at ye corner of ye Hornet square, and in ye big room, which was filled with men of all degree, and enjoyed ye discussion, and it ended by it being resolved on to establish a Corporate Body, to consist of a Maior, Aldermen, Town Clerk, and Common counsel men, 2 Serjeants at Mace and Crier; and that the said Maior, Aldermen, T Clerk, Counsel men, and the Serjeants at Mace, and ye Crier aforesaid, should meet on the 4th day of November, on the eve of the (cruel) anniversary of the Gunpowd^r plot, and that they should dine and eat of all ye good things in Season, and that there should be a plentiful supply of Wine and Ale, and everything provided to content the Stomach; and that all that partook of the feast on that 4th November should be deem'd free burgess, and without limit to their number.—RICHD. DALLY, Solic^r, elect^d Maior; ROBT. SCALE, Tⁿ Clerk; W. WHITE & JOHN SMART, Sergt^s at Mace, and H. PARKER, Crier."

On the seventh of November following we find another entry (and the last one) referring to this matter. It is an account of the dinner, then, as now, by far the most important proceeding of the Corporation. The entry is dated the seventh of November, and was written apparently after the worthy baker and mealman had got over the headache which probably followed on the feast, although he calmly assures us of the perfect sobriety of all those who participated in it:—

“Enjoyed the dinner at the Unicorn exceedingly, and had a fatte Bucke, which was presented by the Duke of Richmond at Godwoode—all the Officers, and Thos. Miller and Thos. May, Esqs., Members of the City, was there—and when the health of King William was drunk, to hear the shouting and the noise it was very wonderful. There was no one but could walk home by himself, tho’ they kept up till nearly 2 of the clock in the mor^{ng}. I nearly lost my Spice grater, but found it under my seat the next day at the lunch. John Cloudesley was elected to succeed R. Dally for ensuing year, R. Dally resigning through bad health; the whole of the Officers chosen again, and I hope I shall be spared to attend the Corporation for many years to come.”

In a selection made from this account some years ago by a Mr. Dally, a descendant of the first Mayor, I find the name of the second Mayor given as John Chamberley.

The Club still dines together on the fourth of November, and meets on the following day for a lunch, when the Mayor and other officers for the ensuing year are chosen. There is a club-night every week, when each burgess absent pays a fine of threepence, except the Mayor, who pays sixpence. These fines all accumulate, and serve to defray the expenses of the annual dinner, the tickets for which are very low in price. The burgesses are those who in each year sign the book after the annual dinner.

For many years the Members for the City have dined with the Club, as did Mr. Miller—an ancestor of my own—and his colleague on the first occasion in 1689. Sometimes, also, the “Mayor of the other end,” as the Mayor of the City is called by the burgesses of St. Pancras, dines with the other notables at the high table, and at different times almost all the well-known names in the City and neighbourhood have been connected with this curious and interesting Club, or have been found amongst the list of guests at its festivals.

It is much to be regretted that the early books of the Club have been either lost or destroyed, and, consequently, that there is no list of the Mayors before 1804. From that date the list is nearly complete, and includes the names of several Members of Parliament, amongst others that of William Huskisson, and of many “Mayors of the other End.”



The Corporation possesses a mace and Serjeant's staff, both of which are probably the original insignia of office. The mace, which is of wood, bears the date 1689, and the staff that of 1692. They were repainted and regilt on the occasion of the marriage of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and were carried before the Mayor and Corporation of St. Pancras when they walked with the other dignitaries, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, in the procession which passed through the principal streets on that auspicious occasion.

By the kindness of the Rector of St. Pancras I have been able to search the Parish Registers and Churchwardens' books, hoping to find in them some reference to the Club, but there is no entry concerning it. I must, too, acknowledge my obligation to the late Mayor, Mr. S. Garland, and to his Town Clerk, Mr. Cutten, for their courtesy in affording me all the information in their power; and also to the present Mayor, Mr. E. Gadd, for permitting the photograph of the mace to be taken from which the drawing is made.

The pedestal of the mace, as seen in the wood-cut, is an addition of modern days. The original and proper termination of the mace is a knob such as is generally seen in maces. The date of "Incorporation" is plainly visible below the Crown, *i.e.*, A.D. 1689.