

## SHARDELOES MUNIMENTS—IV

## THE TOWN OF AMERSHAM

1702-1730

The narrative of the Revd. B. Robertshaw, already referred to in these articles, affords several facts about the rectory and the school which carry all the weight belonging to the unimpeachable testimony of a contemporary witness. Mr. Robertshaw expressed himself vigorously when he chose; his spelling is usually very modern, and the reader has the text as written, with the mere addition of heads to the various sections.

## EARLY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Benjamin Robertshaw, y<sup>e</sup> eldest son of Benjamin & Margaret, was born at Copt Hall in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of New Church & Forrest of Pendle (a part of y<sup>e</sup> old extensive Parish of Whalley), in y<sup>e</sup> County of Lancaster, on y<sup>e</sup> 16th day of March 1679. What instructions I had in Grammar & other Books usually learnt at School was under y<sup>e</sup> care of my Father, who was elected Master of a Free-School at Burnley in that neighbourhood about 1695. From this School my Father sent me to Brazen-nose College Oxford, where I was enter'd on Friday 24 of March 1698, & matriculated on y<sup>e</sup> Tuesday following. I there remain'd under y<sup>e</sup> care of Mr. Richard Fielding, one of y<sup>e</sup> Fellows of that College, who was my Tutor, till Michaelmas 1702 when hearing of a Vacancy in y<sup>e</sup> Free School at Amersham, Bucks, I desired my Tutor to recommend me to it, which he did, by means of Mr. Humphrey Drake, then Curate & soon after<sup>1</sup> Rector of Amersham, Mr. Drake having been also a Fellow of Brazen-nose & an intimate of Mr. Fielding's. I arrived at Amersham on Friday evening, October 2d, 1702, and undertook y<sup>e</sup> School on y<sup>e</sup> Monday

<sup>1</sup>He was actually presented on 22 Dec., 1702. He was son of John Drake, of Ripon, Yorks, and apparently no connection of the Bucks family—Lipscomb most improperly makes him brother of M.G.D.

after, & continued intent upon that arduous business till y<sup>e</sup> next Lent-term, when I set out for Oxford to take my Degree of Batchelor of Arts & Determin.

But finding my Tutor dead y<sup>e</sup> very moment I arrived at Oxford, upon whom I depended in a good measure to supply me with money in order to take my Degree, & having nobody else to apply to for such assistance, I was advised to get a Bene Discessit from y<sup>e</sup> College & enter at some Hall where I might take my Degree much cheaper & be able to defray all expences of it (or very near all) with what money I brought in my pocket from Amersham. This accordingly I did, & was admitted of Alban Hall from whence I took my Degree in Lent 170 $\frac{2}{3}$ , & having Determin'd I returned home to Amersham. As soon as [I] was of competent age for holy Orders M<sup>r</sup> Drake who was then become Rector of Amersham, gave me a Title for Deacon's orders, which Orders were confer'd upon me at Michaelmas Ordination following, viz. September 19<sup>th</sup>. 1703, by D<sup>r</sup> James Gardiner, Bishop of Lincoln, at Buckden, and on 10<sup>th</sup>. December 1704 y<sup>e</sup> same Bishop ordain'd me a Priest, being then also curate to D<sup>r</sup> John Hammond at Chalfont St. Giles.<sup>2</sup> These Curacies & y<sup>e</sup> School kept me so close confined that I cou'd by no means get an opportunity of keeping Terms at Oxford in order to my Master's Degree. However, getting proper certificates from y<sup>e</sup> University Register of my being a compleate Batchelor of Arts &c I went, in Summer 1706, to y<sup>e</sup> Commencement at Cambridge, where having perform'd all that was requisite by way of

<sup>2</sup>Instituted 14 May, 1701; he had been Prebend of Aylesbury since 1674, and was a Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, where he was buried in 1723, aged 83.

Exercise I was admitted Master of Arts of Kings College in that University together with my old friend & most intimate Acquaintance Mr. Tho<sup>s</sup> Carte<sup>s</sup>, who was enter'd also at Brazenose y<sup>e</sup> very same day with me, viz 24 Mar. 1698. From whence taking a short tour into Lancashire to visit my Relations, I return'd home to Amersham in August, having got a friend from Oxford to officiate in y<sup>e</sup> Church & school during my absence. Some-time in y<sup>e</sup> year 1708 being at Oxford I embraced y<sup>e</sup> opportunity of going out ad eundem Gradum there; being presented to y<sup>e</sup> Vice-Chancellor in convocation by M<sup>r</sup>. James Smethurst of Brazenose, one of y<sup>e</sup> Proctors for that year. For my acquaintance being mostly of that College my affections were consequently most there. On July 3.d 1709 I married Mary, y<sup>e</sup> daughter of M<sup>r</sup>. David Salter of Amersham.

The section which follows has had to suffer a few "cuts"; Mr. Robertshaw put down a good deal of detail which possibly he might have reduced if he had made a fair copy; he had not "time to make it short," perhaps. Some of his sentiments are interesting though, it is clear that he was not only a Tory, but almost a Jacobite; as he died on 2 Feb. 1743 he was spared the fatuous rising of '45.

#### THE LIVING OF AMERSHAM

On y<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> May 1714 I might probably have y<sup>e</sup> next Presentation of Amersham Rectory to myself, by means of some noble & Gentlemen who were then at Shardeloes; whose friendship I was made sensible of, & who did, some of them, offer me to speak to M<sup>r</sup>. Drake about y<sup>e</sup> Living. But I fancying (for indeed I had been told), he was already engaged, judged it better

<sup>3</sup>Historian; there is a letter from him with a good biographical note in *Letters by Eminent Persons*, 1813, vol. I, p. 262. For a longer biography see Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, edn. 1812, vol. II, pp. 471-518. He refused to take the oaths at the Hanoverian accession, and was actually accused of high treason in 1722. See also a letter from him to Hearne naming Mr. Robertshaw in Lipscomb, vol. III, p. 166.

not to have my friend presst & teased in a matter which he was perhaps not at liberty to answer favourably, & which I was sure he would very reluctantly deny. But in truth he was not then engaged, which if I had been sure of I shou'd have embraced y<sup>e</sup> offer they made me, & cou'd not have fail'd of success. L<sup>d</sup>. Lansdown, L<sup>d</sup>. Gower, D<sup>r</sup>. Bathurst, S<sup>r</sup> John Hynd Cotton, S<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. Wyndham, M<sup>r</sup>. Talbot of Wiltshire, M<sup>r</sup>. James Murray, M<sup>r</sup>. Charley Kynnard, & M<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. Collier were y<sup>e</sup> persons<sup>4</sup>. M<sup>r</sup>. Humphry Drake dying in November 1721 the Hon<sup>ble</sup> D<sup>r</sup>. Henry Brydges, Arch Deacon of Rochester, Prebendary of S<sup>t</sup>. Pauls London, & visitor of Balliol College Oxford, being brother to his Grace James Duke of Chandos, was instituted y<sup>e</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> of December following. D<sup>r</sup>. Brydges was of Christ Chuch, Oxon, from whence he went Chaplain to y<sup>e</sup> Factory at Aleppo. He took occasion from thence, in company with some Merchants his Countrymen, to visit y<sup>e</sup> once holy City Jerusalem, of which journey I have often heard him give a delightfull account, highly applauding M<sup>r</sup>. Maunder's book on that subject as a very just & faithfull account or description of y<sup>e</sup> most observable particulars to be met with in that formerly celebrated but now almost desolate country.

<sup>4</sup>Of these some were pronounced Jacobites; Lord Lansdown was George Granville, M.P., 1702 until 1712, when he was made Baron Lansdown; he was Secretary at War. He was imprisoned in the Tower as a Jacobite in 1715, but released, and died in 1735 when the peerage became extinct.

Sir John Hynd Cotton was the fourth baronet, also a pronounced Tory and Jacobite M.P. from 1702 until his death in 1752; he was a friend of Rev. Tho. Carte, mentioned above.

Sir Wm. Wyndham was the third baronet, a strong supporter of Ld. Bolingbroke; Secretary at War 1712. After the 1715 rising he was committed to the Tower, but afterwards released without undergoing trial.

Lord Gower was the second baron (made an Earl in 1746); he was Privy Seal in 1742 and 1744, and Lord Justice of the Realm during the King's absence in 1740, &c. If he originally had Jacobite leanings he dropped them, for he raised a regiment of foot for the Government at the rising of 1745.

"Mr. Talbot of Wiltshire" was probably John Ivory—Talbot of Lacock Abbey, who was M.P. for Ludgershall in 1714, and afterwards for the county of Wilts.

There then follows rather a tedious conversation between Dr. Brydges and his curate (as Mr. Robertshaw was at the time) repeating some handsome expressions which M.G.D. had used about Mr. Robertshaw, concluding with the words

he vow'd he wou'd take care of you if he liv'd to find an opportunity—I had afterwards reason to believe it, for about y<sup>e</sup> year 1725 S<sup>r</sup> William Drake, of Ash in Devonshire, Bar<sup>t</sup>, came hither to visit his kinsman, & staid a month or more. He, S<sup>r</sup> William, taking some notice of me one day told me he had a Living call'd Axminster, worth a good six score pounds per annum upon which was a very old Incumbent, & said he wou'd give it to me if I wou'd promise to come & live there. I told him I wou'd very gratefully think of his kind offer for a day or two, & wou'd then give him my answer. In y<sup>e</sup> interim I took occasion to mention S<sup>r</sup> William's freindly overture to my better friend M<sup>r</sup>. Drake, who thereupon said: 'I wou'd not have you accept of it, but be thankful to him, & express your sense of his goodness in what terms you think proper. For besides that you are already as well as Axminster can make you, I hope to do better for you myself one of these days'; I believe he then thought of Malpas in Cheshire. D<sup>r</sup>. Brydges was taken ill of a Dropsical indisposition in Autumn 1727. He went to London soon after to have y<sup>e</sup> advice of D<sup>r</sup>. Friend & other Physitians, but grew worse & worse instead of better,

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On February 13<sup>th</sup> 1727 M<sup>r</sup>. Drake, who was then at London attending y<sup>e</sup> Parliament, came down to Shardeloes & call'd at my house in y<sup>e</sup> Town as he pass't through, desiring my wife to send me unto him as soon as I shou'd come home. Accordingly I went in y<sup>e</sup> evening, & finding him in a Great Chair by y<sup>e</sup> fire side alone & not well in health, after usual compli-

ments I ask'd him how D<sup>r</sup>. Brydges did? I saw him, said he, yesterday, but so very bad that I shall never see him again alive. I said I was truly sorry for it; & indeed y<sup>e</sup> shocking news went to my heart, for I had before apprehended no such danger to my Friend. . .

Mr. Drake then explains that if Dr. Brydges dies, Mr. Robertshaw shall be his successor at Amersham, at which "we shed a few tears together; which was all that was said about y<sup>e</sup> matter that night." In the end it was M.G.D.'s fate to go first, for he became ill soon afterwards, went to Bath and died there "having, as appeared afterwards upon his being dissected, some inward, incurable disorder, occasion'd chiefly by an irregular Fit of y<sup>e</sup> Gout." Meanwhile

D<sup>r</sup>. Brydges did not die so soon as was fancied by all about him, for I went up to London to visit him. When I came into his lodgings in S<sup>t</sup>. James's Street I found him, tho' alive, yet so far from being like to recover that I was not a little struck at y<sup>e</sup> first sight of him, all emaciated, pale, wan, & short breathed. I went out with him for y<sup>e</sup> air in his Coach, along with D<sup>r</sup>. Theophilus Leigh, Master of Baliol College, his nephew. But tho' we went not so far as Kensington, & very gently, taking as it were a turn in y<sup>e</sup> Park, yet at his return he was so much fatigued that we were hard put to it to get him out of y<sup>e</sup> Coach. I took my leave that night, being obliged to be at home y<sup>e</sup> next day before noon. Before we parted he told me he was also advised to go to Bath (whither y<sup>e</sup> London Physicians commonly send their Patients to be out of y<sup>e</sup> way when they can get neither nor money nor reputation by attending them at home). . . . His journey to Bath gave him less uneasiness than was feared, & he survived poor M<sup>r</sup>. Drake there, not dying till y<sup>e</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1728.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> An allusion to the deaths of Mr. Drake and of the Hon. and Rev. Hy. Brydges occurs in the *Atterbury Epistolary Cor.* (in a letter from Mrs. Morice, 29 July, 1728). This is quoted, together with a biographical notice of Mr. Brydges, in Nichols's *Literary Aneodotes*, edn. 1802, vol. I, p. 205, and vol. V, p. 101.

Mr. Robertshaw was a little uneasy about his chance of the living, but M.G.D. had left proper directions and

I was instituted May 22<sup>d</sup>. 1728. The Duke of Chandos made an awkward push for it for a friend of his (I remember M<sup>rs</sup>. Drake shew'd me one of y<sup>e</sup> Dutchess's Letters), & he was thought by y<sup>e</sup> Guardians so far to stomach his disappointment as to behave in an opposition that was then made against M<sup>r</sup>. Alington,<sup>6</sup> (one of y<sup>e</sup> Guardians who offer'd himself for a successor to M<sup>r</sup>. Drake in y<sup>e</sup> Borough), with far less gratitude than might have been expected from one whose Brother had been so Beneficed by y<sup>e</sup> Family. But for my own part I fancy his Grace could hardly deserve what was said of him on that occasion,—not that I think there is much stress to be laid upon y<sup>e</sup> honour of a Courtier, a modern one especially.

#### THE RECTORY

We are given some interesting particulars of the Rectory, which seem in place here:

In y<sup>e</sup> year 1732 I began building y<sup>e</sup> Parsonage House, & finish'd it in less than 3 years, tho' I did not remove from y<sup>e</sup> Town to live in it till Lady Day 1736. The old House was a large rambling Building, shamefully out of repair. The front of it stood where y<sup>e</sup> upper wall of y<sup>e</sup> Garden now stands, & y<sup>e</sup> Hall adjoyned to those two Rooms which I have left standing; & repair'd for an infirmary, or a Garden-house,

<sup>6</sup> This Marmaduke Alington actually did succeed M.G.D. in Parliament; there is a singular document headed "A short Account of Mr. Alington's behaviour to Mrs. Drake and her children in the execution of his Trust." He had made wills for M.G.D. and for his mother, taking handsome legacies under each; he then persuaded M.G.D. to make him and his brother trustees, with a yearly salary; the document, which looks like material for a brief, alleges considerable abuse of his trust, though no direct misappropriation of money is suggested. A letter from him to the steward of the day is clearly aimed at M.G.D.'s widow, to whom he was certainly offensive, trying to thwart all her wishes. She took the management of the estate into her own hands,—and this incensed Mr. Alington still more; "whether he was apprehensive he shou'd have no pretence for taking his salary, because he was eased of all trouble, or for what other reasons, she knows not."

or for a poor man to live in. Dr. Brydges never lived in y<sup>e</sup> old house, it being indeed scarcely habitable; nor did he ever lay out one shilling in repairing it in above seven years that he held y<sup>e</sup> Living. He talk'd indeed often (& I believe he was in earnest), that he would build a new Parsonage House, but alas! his Family was too numerous (having 7 or 8 children & no estate but what came by his Lady), to allow him to do anything of that kind. I might have recover'd a great summ of his widow for Dilapidations; & indeed I was advised to do it by some who had y<sup>e</sup> greatest power with me; but my heart wou'd not yield to bring y<sup>e</sup> widow & children of my dear good friend, who loved me as his own Brother, into any kind of distress. So I frankly forgave them y<sup>e</sup> whole, & I bless God, nay & God bless'd me, because I did so. I afterwards, viz. about y<sup>e</sup> year 1737 rebuilt an old house in y<sup>e</sup> Town (which Dr. Challoner when he founded y<sup>e</sup> Grammar School desired his successors wou'd continue to be a house for y<sup>e</sup> Schoolmaster) at y<sup>e</sup> expense of above 220 pounds out of my own pocket, besides y<sup>e</sup> old materials. It was before a miserable cottage; sometimes lett for 30 or 40 shillings per Annum, & sometimes standing empty. As soon as I had compleated it I lett it for eight pounds & ten shillings per Añ., & gave it immediatly to y<sup>e</sup> Schoolmaster, tho' I might have laid out so much money much better for y<sup>e</sup> interest of y<sup>e</sup> School if y<sup>e</sup> cursed Statute of Mortmain had not prevented me. Such are y<sup>e</sup> blessings entail'd upon us by Republicans & Whigs!

MRS. BENT.

Mr. Robertshaw has a good deal to say about Mrs. Bent, a benefactor of Amersham, whose gifts are duly recorded on a tablet in the Church. Mrs. Bent was a widow with property at Cosby, Leicestershire, and when she died in Amersham made the Rector one of her executors.



It is unnecessary to give all the particulars of the charity here, they will be found in full in the *Report of the Charity Commissioners 1819-1837*, pp. 29-32; some of the details of the original investment have local interest however, and one of the Rector's anecdotes throws some light on political feeling at the time and on his own character.

The £800 which the good lady left for the use of six poor widows was applied by Mr. Robertshaw towards the purchase of

Stock Place Manor & Farm in Coleshill, 850 pounds in all, besides being at great expence to get y<sup>e</sup> Lande made free by M<sup>r</sup>. Waller of Hall Barn, Beaconsfield, whose grandfather y<sup>e</sup> Poet having been born at Stock Place March 3<sup>d</sup>. & baptized 9<sup>th</sup> 1605, M<sup>r</sup>. Waller wou'd fain have got y<sup>e</sup> purchase out of my hands & indeed I having some regard to y<sup>e</sup> Poet's memory offer'd it to him for a good equivalent. But after a long time wasted in seeking for such an equivalent without success, he did at last consent to make it free, as his Father D<sup>r</sup>. Stephen Waller had by conveyance obliged himself & heirs to do to Daniel Roberts, of whose heirs I purchased. But they, not without much sweetening & souring, sometimes courting, & at other times leting him know y<sup>e</sup> right & claim I had upon him; for he being a Member of Parliament,<sup>7</sup> I was too well aware that it would be dangerous suing him, who might insist upon his Privilege, & have my Attorneys arrested, &c. I found means at length however to prevail with him, but not till 1737.

#### THE ALMSHOUSES

*The Victoria County History* (vol. iii p. 142), refers to "very disorderly scenes" which took place at the almshouses in 1699 "when several poor old women were turned out at the instigation of the governors" to obtain additional votes; the suggestion being that Drake nominees were placed in houses occupied by women who were moved to the almshouses, where room had to be made for them by force.

<sup>7</sup> This Edmund Waller was M.P. either for High Wycombe or Marlow for a good many years; he was appointed Cofferer of the Household in 1744.

A bundle of the Shardeloes papers refers to the legal action which arose from this, and a somewhat different aspect is thrown upon what looks like an ugly incident, as the *V.C.H.* puts it.

As we all know the almshouses were built by Sir W<sup>m</sup>. Drake, the baronet, in his lifetime; his will<sup>8</sup> made provision for its endowment and appointed ten governors, amongst whom were such well-known Bucks worthies as Sir Ralph Verney, Dr. W<sup>m</sup>. Denton, Charles Cheyne.<sup>9</sup> "Edward Waller of Beaconsfield Esq<sup>ro</sup>,"<sup>10</sup> and Sir William's two nephews: William his heir, who became a knight, and Francis, his elder brother, who was a less estimable person. Four of these governors were to form a quorum, and vacancies were to be filled just as in Crabbe's almshouses in *The Borough*:

Six are the guardians of this happy seat  
And one presides when they on business meet  
As each expires, the five a brother choose.

Unfortunately in the Amersham case nine had died without being replaced, and the only one left was Francis Drake, who lived at Woodstock Park, Oxon. The almshouses had been left to manage themselves, and abuses had crept in; for example Joanna Crofton had been elected a "sister or member of the said corporaçon" but had not lived in the Almshouses.

Sir John Garrard, who was father-in-law of Mountagu Drake and held one the Amersham seats in Parliament, thought that the Almshouse affairs should be put in order; Mr. Thomas Smith of Beaconsfield, the Drake solicitor at the time, got into touch with Francis Drake, who filled the vacancies by nominating (by a deed poll) his nephew, then nearly seven; his own son William, also a minor; Sir John Garrard and his brother Samuel, who soon succeeded him in the baronetcy and in the Parliamentary seat; Sir Edmund Denton, the last baronet, and others. Since Francis Drake was only one the nomination was of doubtful validity; on the other hand the required quorum of four was impossible,—it was clearly a case for confirmation by legal authority.

Meanwhile the new governors made their formal visitation to the Almshouses, where they

found the Gate of the Outward Court locked  
and their entrance opposed by [the inmates]

<sup>8</sup> Dated 17 Dec., 1667.

<sup>9</sup> One of the M.P.'s for Amersham in 1660.

<sup>10</sup> Neither the poor pedigree of Waller given by Lipscomb, nor the very full one given by Berry includes any Edward at all; there is no doubt, however, that the Governor was Edward, not Edmund.

who not only denied to open the said Gate but also uttered very undecent, threatning, and scurrilous speeches, which caused [the governors] to require the petty constables of the Burrough of Amersham to attend that they might keep the peace, and prevent any Tumults, Disorders, or Riotts that might be ocasioned thro' the obstinacy of the Warden and sisters, whom they still endeavoured to pacify and persuade to conform to their visitaçon.

Finally they had to summon Eleazor Retherupp, blacksmith, to break open the gate,—not without Susan Batcheller, “the pretended Warden violently assaulting him by giveing him severall blowes.” Clearly it was a scene fit for Thomas Rowlandson, who was not born until 1756 unluckily, to record.

Then followed the ejectionments, and the filling of the places by more suitable “discreet and vertuous widdowes qualified in all respects.” During the painful scene the pretended warden, Susan Boreton, and Mary Pratt set about Mr. Francis Drake “arrogantly disowning the Family from whence the Charity they received proceeded.”

Although not mentioned in the case which afterwards came before Chief Baron Ward in the Court of Exchequer, it is clear that there was a strong undercurrent of political feeling about; a printed broadside, without date or name on it, called for a Commission of enquiry into the abuse of Amersham charities, and the ejected sisters, and a summons for such a commission was called for 23 Dec<sup>r</sup>. 1700 “att the house of James Child, gent<sup>n</sup>, called or knowne by the name of the signe of the Crowne in Amersham.” One of the Orders allows “a sufficient Relator” to appear for the “poor, indigent persons,” who were nominally bringing the case.<sup>11</sup>

Although there are many documents relating to the legal proceedings, and many letters as the case developed, it is not quite clear how it was finally settled. Some of the letters are from Francis Drake, either written when staying at Hillesden with Sir Edmund Denton who invited Mr. Smith to join them there; or from Woodstock, and one contains an interesting phrase. It is dated Aug. 15, 1699, and, after saying he will be at home on Thursday, he adds:

<sup>11</sup> One of original inmates frequently cited in the pleadings bore the wonderful name of Merlin Castle. It is offered gratis to any novelist seeking a perfect title; since it can be either a personal or a place name,

I hope when you come you will take a hard bed with me, and order your Affairs so as to be here in y<sup>o</sup> morning or else on Wednesday evining, y<sup>t</sup> I may have the more of your good Company, where you will be sure to find an Hearty Wellcom from

Your obliged & faithfull Humble Servant  
F. Drake.

Francis at that time was about sixty, and clearly very amiable; probably he had mellowed since he upset his uncle in his youth.

There was certainly a political taint in the whole business, and either for that reason or because he was a sick man<sup>12</sup> Sir John Garrard refused to serve as a governor. It is easy to see how the Almshouses drifted into this state of disorder without involving the demon of politics: Sir William Drake, the knight, died in 1690, leaving his son Mountague<sup>13</sup> aged 17, and there is no improving upon Mr. Robertshaw's account of him; it is as follows:

he married Jane, y<sup>o</sup> only daughter of S<sup>r</sup> John Garrard, Bar<sup>t</sup>, of Lamer in Hertfordshire, a very courteous and meek temper'd lady. But her father not making her fortune or portions so good as he had promised, and being a man of more art than honesty, occasion'd some family discontents, & perhaps hasten'd y<sup>e</sup> death of his son in Law, who is said to have been one of y<sup>e</sup> handsomest persons of his time, & a delightful companion. But perhaps too much laying to heart, & ill usage he had met with; & not so cautious what company he kept as one of a sourer & more reserved temper would have been, he made too free with a good constitution. He had a fall from his horse in y<sup>e</sup> night on y<sup>e</sup> London Road near Acton, y<sup>e</sup> effects of which he never cou'd get clear of, so died young, about y<sup>e</sup> year 1698, aged about 24 or 25.

<sup>12</sup> He died on 13th Jan., 1701.

<sup>13</sup> This spelling has been adopted as it was sometimes, but not always used by him and his son; it was certainly that which Sir Wm. Mountague, Chief Baron 1676-1686, used.

The meiosis which breathes through that gentle character-sketch proves that the good rector did more than merely preach Christian charity. At any rate, Mountague Garrard Drake, the only son, was not six years old when his father died on 27 June, 1698; his mother did not live much longer, dying in Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1700, and the only relative looking after him was his great-uncle Col. John Drake, who as M.P. had to spend much time in Red Lyon Square, London.

The episode at the almshouses occurred before Mr. Robertshaw's time, so he does not mention it. In the last article he was quoted to show the part he played in acquiring houses in the Borough which carried votes; we must be grateful for what he has told us, but we sigh to think what a picture of Amersham in the days of Queen Anne and George I so able a writer might have left us, if that had been his intention.

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This concludes the series of papers suitable for appearance in the *Records*.

G.E.