

BARNET AND DISTRICT RECORD SOCIETY

HALF YEARLY BULLETIN

No. 4.

DECEMBER 1950

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN
THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST,
CHIPPING BARNET

WHEN this church was first built is uncertain. It must have been standing in 1361, because John Botiller, "corder," of Bread Street, London, in that year left in his will ten shillings to the works at the chapel of St. John, and the same amount to the works of St. Mary. St. John's was a chapel of ease to St. Mary's in East Barnet, where the rector lived, he being responsible for service in the church of St. Mary and the chapel of St. John, an arrangement that lasted until 1866.

That St. John's was loyally supported by the parishioners may be seen from numerous bequests to be found in their wills, but they were not content with the services there, as appears later. It is also a sign of development that John Lanum, parson of East Barnet, and his parishioners in Chipping Barnet, in 1415 acquired a plot of land 60 feet by 40 feet next the churchyard of St. John for the purpose of enlarging it, and another plot, 18 feet by 14 feet, to build a house for the "utensils" of the church.

John Smyth, rector of Barnet and a deputation of his parishioners in Chipping Barnet, waited on the Abbot of St. Albans, John Bechamstede, on 3 March, 1435, when it was agreed that the parishioners might at their own expense engage a priest to hear confessions and say mass, provided that the rector's tithes and other emoluments were not affected. Three years later the will

of Thomas Holmes contained a bequest of 12d. to the light of the Holy Trinity and 3s.4d. to the light before the crucifix (on the rood screen), as well as money to the "new works" there. Thus by 1438 an altar dedicated to the Holy Trinity had been set up in the church. Money was found to provide a priest to serve the altar and offer daily prayers there. Such prayers met the desire to follow with intercessions, those whom death had separated from the communion of the living.

In 1449, on payment of a fee of £13.6s.8d. to the Court of Chancery, letters patent were obtained allowing a Guild or Chantry of the Holy Trinity to be formed. From the preamble to this it is evident that a petition had been sent from "the poor inhabitants of West Barnet," showing that people flocked daily to the town on foot or horseback, with carriages or otherwise, on journeys from St. Albans to London, but could not support the chaplain. The patent was directed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Robert Monter, clerk, Robert Kirkham, clerk, Thomas Norton, clerk, John Beauchamp, John Marton, Thomas Nicol, John Lyons, and Reynold Williams. They might found a Guild of one chaplain to celebrate divine service daily and pray for the good estate of the king and queen and the said founders and for the souls after death. Others might be admitted as brethren and sisters of the Guild, which was to be a corporation with a common seal, capable of pleading and being impleaded in any court with licence to acquire in mortmain lands to the value of £10 a year, and be capable of acquiring possessions. The members might clothe themselves "in one suit" (i.e. in uniform robes such as are worn by the City Companies on ceremonial occasions). A Master and two Wardens were to be elected yearly to hold the property of the Build and manage its affairs.

Regarding the "Foundation Members" mentioned above, the following particulars are

recorded. Thomas Norton, clerk, was rector of East Barnet, and died in 1466. John Beauchamp was a brewer, and died in 1454, leaving to the rector 6s.8d. to the high altar, an altar cloth and a silk cushion, and to the altar of Holy Trinity a towel. To John Belle, chaplain, he left £6.13s.4d. to say mass and pray for his soul during 5½ years. This will was printed in full by the Rev. F.C.Cass in his EAST BARNET, page 167. His memory is perpetuated in a metal plate in the present church, inscribed in Latin, "Pray for the soul of John Beauchamp, founder of these works." The first words of the inscription have been defaced, presumably by Puritan zeal. When the church was greatly enlarged in 1875, this plate was fixed high up in the middle spandril of the arcade on the south side of the nave, which is about the least appropriate position that could have been found. It must have been fixed originally near the chantry altar, probably on the north wall of the north aisle, but Sir H. Chauncey (1700) stated that it was in the "middle aisle facing the north door."

In the name of John Lyon we have the landowner of the Downs in New Barnet, hence "Lyonsdown." Thomas Nicoll, of West Barnet, who died in 1455, desired in his will to be buried before the altar of the Holy Trinity, and left £5 for the new galleries before the crucifix there, as well as £20 to the Brotherhood.

In the same year, 1455, Stephen Westowe, of Chepyng Barnet, in his will desired to be buried in the churchyard of St. John, and left to the high altar and the curate 16d. He also left for repair of the ornament of the altar in the chapel of the Gild or Brotherhood of Holy Trinity 12d., and for making a picture in memory of the passing of St. Katherine in the said chapel, 8d.

Probably the walls of the church were covered with such frescos similar to many found elsewhere, hidden under the covering of whitewash

applied after the Reformation.

As to the subsequent activities of the Brotherhood, we know nothing. The chantry priest very likely had a little school to educate boys, particularly in Latin, and the members would render assistance to such of their fellows as were in need of it.

The Guild was dissolved in 1547 under the Acts relating to "Superstitious Uses," and its possessions were swept into the Court of Augmentations to supply the king's empty Treasury. It had evidently flourished during the 98 years of its existence, as may be seen in the Report made by the Royal Commissioners remaining in the Public Record Office. The rent roll was as follows:-

- £3.6s.8d. The Brotherhedd Howse with a croft adjoining and $11\frac{1}{2}$ acres of meadow; tenant William Bunne.
- £2.6s.8d. A house, garden, and 3 acres of meadow; tenant William Blackwell.
- £1.0s.8d. A house and $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of meadow; tenant, William Edwardes.
- £1.10s.4d. A house, garden, and close of $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of meadow; tenant Robert Petit.
- £1.0s.0d. A field of 5 acres; tenant, William Chester.
- £1.10s.0d. A house, garden, and 3 acres of meadow; tenant Thomas Elie.
- 6s.8d. The Brotherhedd Prestes Chamber, "newly arrented."

The above were all in Chipping Barnet.

- £1.6s.8d. A field called Catalle Close, containing 16 acres of meadow, and pasture and $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of underwood of 4 years' growth near the village or hamlet of Potters Barre, in Southmymes; tenant, James Nedham, for 20 years from 1536.

Total, £12.7s.8d. from which had to be deducted 8s.8d. payable yearly to the king as Lord of the manor of Barnet, and 2s. to

William Stanford (lord of the manor of Willliotts).

The priest's stipend was £6.13s.4d. and 10s. was given yearly for "obits," i.e. prayers for the dead. The Brotherhood owned no plate, but had household goods valued at £3.9s.8d. Ready money amounting to £15.0s.4d. was in the hands of some eight persons. Thomas Broke, the priest a man of 80 years of age, received a pension from the Crown of £5 yearly.

Within a few months of the dissolution all the Guild's landed property was sold in two lots; Catalle Close to James Nedeham, of Westminster, brewer, for £10, being 30 years' purchase of the rent of £1.6s.8d.; and the Barnet property to William Chester of Barnet, yeoman, for £265.4s., being 20 years purchase of rents amounting to £10.12s. Catalle Close has been located at Potters Bar by Mr. Butcher, as being on the south side of Billy Lows Lane.

Unfortunately, the brief descriptions of the Barnet properties, as given above, are not sufficient to identify them confidently, but the tenants named there certainly held the following houses then, which suggests that they were, in fact, the same.

William Chester owned the Rose and Crown, standing in High Street, between the Bull on the West and the Swan on the east. The present-day "Mitre" was divided from the "Swan" before 1673, and added to the "Mitre", therefore it does not form part of the original "Mitre" at all. The Rose and Crown developed into the old Mitre, now 60, 62, 66 High Street (Ryley Pratt, Hudson Brothers and Clark). Chester had a licence to keep a tavern in his dwelling house in 1553, and let the Rose and Crown to Robert Conway and William Bunne in 1558, with 12 acres of land extending as far as the boundary of Hadley Parish. When he died, on 1 December, 1565, he held the Man, the Rose and the Crown, then one inn called the Crowne, valued at £3.6s.8d., which is the value

recorded before of the Brotherhedd Howse with 11½ acres let to William Bunne.

William Edwards, in his will, proved in 1553 devised to William Lawrence his copyhold house next the Lyon, which must have been the "Bull and the Hart."

Robert Petit was the tenant of an inn called the Lyon, with 27 acres of land that Edward Taylor bought in 1553, apparently on the site of Numbers 72, 74, and 76, High Street, which does not tally with his house and 3½ acres as above, but the larger area might have included the smaller owned by the Guild.

Although the identification of the Brotherhood property thus suggested is quite tentative and to be received with reserve, it can hardly have been a coincidence that their tenants are known to have lived on this part of the High Street. The Crown surveyor in 1548 noted that "Certain of the tenements above be much decayed for that the tenants did hold them, but at the will of the Wardens of the said Brotherhood," and that the woods growing upon the premises would not suffice to repair the houses standing upon the same. A considerable amount of rebuilding and division evidently ensued after the sales.

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