

REMEMBRANCES (2)

Keep me, O God, from pettiness; let me be large
in thought, in word, in deed.

Let me be done with fault finding and leave off
self seeking.

May I put away all pretence and meet others
face to face, without self pity and without
prejudice

May I never be hasty in judgement, and always
generous.

Let me take time for all things; make me grow
calm, serene, and gentle. (O God Please)

Teach me to put into action my better impulses,
straightforward and unafraid (O yes please)

Grant that I may realize it is the little
things that create differences; that in the
big things of life we are as one.

May I strive to touch and know the great
common human heart of us all and
O LORD GOD, LET ME FORGET NOT, TO BE KIND.

THE KING OF LOVE MY SHEPHERD IS



H.R.

• EX LIBRIS •

D·R·H·WILLIAMS











CHAPTER V

If the war had temporarily brought an end to the normal working of local government the return to peace signalled much work to be done to compensate for the lost years.

For me it brought in its wake a difficult decision which resolved itself into a choice between remaining in my then present post with all its powerful inducements as to colleagues, environment and administration but with no prospect of increased financial benefits or, having regard to my age, seizing the opportunity of applying for a post in a larger local government unit which would naturally involve higher financial rewards. In the end I decided on the latter course and later applied for a vacancy which had occurred at Huddersfield owing to the retirement of Mr. Samuel Procter who had been Town Clerk there since 1930, and prior to that, the Deputy Town Clerk since 1914. There was a final short list of eight consisting of the Town Clerks of Stockton-on-Tees, Wakefield, Swindon, Warrington and Retford and the Deputy Town Clerks of Huddersfield and Newcastle-upon-Tyne and myself. This short list was further reduced to three and we appeared before the full Council in Committee and finally I was appointed to the post to take over the duties of the office on the 1st October, 1945.

The Huddersfield local newspaper in recording the appointment was good enough to refer to many matters which had engaged my attention in Rochdale including parliamentary matters, boundary extensions and the alteration of municipal ward boundaries, slum clearance and the acquisition of markets and cold air stores from a private company together with extensive areas of shops and office property in the centre of Rochdale. They also referred to my experience in advocacy and public local inquiries and litigation in the High Court and Court of Appeal. In fact it was a resumé of the work which I had been able to do in Rochdale and which was interrupted by the outbreak of war.

My appointment gave me the opportunity of using my experience in a new environment and in a postwar world and it was an exciting prospect.

First, may I refer to some of the reports on my farewell meetings in Rochdale. I include these reports because I wish to present these memoirs of my professional life in as complete a fashion as possible. The leader of the Council said they were not surprised that I had been selected by Huddersfield and they offered their sincere congratulations, those congratulations being tempered with the knowledge that they were losing a capable, conscientious and thoroughly reliable official. He said that my advent amongst them thirteen years before as assistant to their former town clerk, Mr. W. H. Hickson, soon convinced them that they had secured a young man of outstanding ability and they had had "sufficient confidence in him to elect him to the major position of Town Clerk when Mr. Hickson retired." They had never regretted that choice. At the last Council meeting which I attended in September 1945 the then Mayor on behalf of himself and the Council gave me his best wishes on my new appointment. In my reply to the Council I mentioned that I should always be grateful that I had spent my first years as a Town Clerk in a town with such high civic and administrative traditions as Rochdale. I also referred to the fact that in Rochdale I had found that public business, both in Council and in Committee was transacted with a dignity and a discipline which, in my opinion, would serve as an object lesson in any city or town of the country.....

One of the first interesting events which took place in Huddersfield some days after my appointment and commencement of duties, was the presentation of the Freedom of the Borough to Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery (as he then was). I went with the Mayor in the Mayoral car to meet Monty at the Borough boundary at Cooper Bridge in order to escort him to the Town Hall for the ceremony of presentation. Monty had flown from the London area to Church Fenton aerodrome in a Dakota where he was picked up by car for his journey to Huddersfield. Unknown to the Mayor and myself Monty's car on the journey had a punctured tyre and he was rescued by newspaper men who took him in their own car to Huddersfield and to the Town Hall! Naturally neither the Mayor or myself recognised

the newsmen's car at the borough boundary and it flew past and we continued to wait until we received the news that Monty was already in the Town Hall and no Mayor to receive him! We immediately drove post haste to the Town Hall and a further complication met us when we turned into Ramsden Street to get to the Town Hall front entrance. In order to control the crowd the police had erected crush barriers at the entrance to Ramsden Street whilst leaving a space for the Mayoral car with Monty to pass through. When Monty went through in the Press Car the police blocked up the vacant space and the huge crowd surged across and formed an impenetrable mass across Ramsden Street. What were the Mayor and myself (fully robed bear in mind!) to do to get into the Town Hall? We got out of the car and pushed our way to the barriers and then we had to crawl under them to the huge delight of the crowd who laughed and cheered our efforts. I have never felt so embarrassed in all my life. Of course the Mayor explained to Monty what had happened and all was well. I gained some first-hand knowledge of Monty on that occasion and it made me realise how reserved and sensitive he was beneath his military exterior. I had asked him if he would kindly sign a program which contained his photograph and which I wished to keep as a souvenir of the unique ceremony and as he did so he sat at the Mayor's desk in the parlour and he looked sharply at me and said, "You must protect me from other autograph seekers." Only the older generation like myself today will remember what a great national hero he was in the Second World War with his Eighth Army and his tanks which rolled back the enemy.

* * * *

I must confess that when I entered upon my new Town Clerkship I sorely missed and continued for a long time, to miss my old Town Hall and its magnificent setting in that wonderful town centre of Rochdale. Comparisons are odious and I do not, therefore, propose to state anything beyond affirming that Huddersfield was entitled to a finer town hall and centre than the one they had. The Ramsden Street building was completely devoid of architectural style and had no outlook of any description.

I learned later, when I grew familiar with the manorial history and the town developments inspired by Sir John William Ramsden (the 5th baronet) that a great opportunity had been missed in the middle of the last century which could have provided a building and a town centre worthy of the town in St. George's Square.

CHAPTER VI

I don't know where to begin! "Each change of many coloured life" wrote Shakespeare. Having lived and laboured under the Red Rose I now transfer my days to the White Rose; I am being historical and not inferring that a move from Lancashire to the West Riding is like a move to a foreign land. James, one of my Rochdale friends said "You are going out of the wrong end of Standege Tunnel!" Be that as it may, there is no doubt that I had to start afresh and learn a "different" style of local administration. I am not implying that it was inferior in any way but it was "different." I have already mentioned the change of building and lack of a well-defined and attractive Civic Centre but the differences did not end there. I remember from my student days in the Spanish language which I studied for some years, a sentence which read "Todo principio es difficile" (all beginning is difficult) and strangely enough this thought occurred to me many times. Looking back one can make light of these early trials. The office of Town Clerk in those days, before local government had been largely nullified by later legislation, involved an intimate relationship with every aspect of civic life and I had to make and foster these contacts anew.

Apart from the Mayor, who was in office normally for one year only, the most important contact was the Chairman of the Finance Committee and my first Chairman was Joe B. He was also Chairman of another important Committee which controlled the old manorial estate of the Ramsdens which had been acquired by the Corporation a quarter of a century before my appearance on the scene. Another link he had which made him an outstanding personality in the town was his connection with the local football team which had a national reputation gained during his chairmanship of the Club, when for a number of years they were the leading First Division Team in the country. I should mention that at the time of my early days in my new post the Chairman of the Football Association itself was a local man nationally known who had received a Knighthood for his services to football.

To return to Joe, he was proud of the fact that he was a Birchencliffe man and he liked to drop into the dialect mode of speech occasionally. I remember one of his favourite sayings went like this - "When way sez naw i' Birchencliffe way mee-ans naw!" When he came into my room - which he did quite often, he would take the chair opposite me and swing his legs on to the top of my desk and lean back smoking his pipe. I was quite embarrassed on the first occasion but, of course, I soon became accustomed to his ways. My thoughts strayed back to my great friend Sydney, of Rochdale, who would discourage any member of the Council, whether Alderman, Councillor or Chairman, from entering his room without first going to the enquiry office in his department and having his arrival announced by the enquiry clerk. I tremble to think what he would have made of Joe! Joe was certainly one of the leading members of the Town Council and if he made up his mind that something had to be done he sometimes went ahead and obtained confirmation for his action later. I know of two occasions when his bargaining skill was employed in this manner to the lasting benefit of the Town to the present day.

He was always friendly disposed towards me in his blunt kindly way and I always remembered that when he said "Naw" he meant "Naw!!"

I am looking back over a period of forty years on my introduction to the municipal life of Huddersfield and endeavouring to describe some of the personalities with whom I came in contact at that time.

I remember one who said to me that if you can 'get on' in Huddersfield you can succeed anywhere and at the time this statement made me somewhat apprehensive. I soon found out, that in its implication that in Huddersfield there were more difficult people than in most other places it was quite untrue. We had no more than our fair share - which is another way of saying that it was like anywhere else and one soon learns in life that wherever you are there are all kinds of people.

The same person who made the statement to which I have referred also said that Huddersfield was really a collection of villages and I came to realise that in some respects this was true. If you read the local paper you would find a whole section devoted to news about events in these "villages" with interesting photographs of the individuals who had taken part in them. I have already mentioned Birchencliffe but there are many others with picturesque names like Almondbury, Lockwood, Newsome and Birkby, each with its own church and chapel and shopping areas. I suppose you could say that every large town has its suburbs but somehow, these 'villages of Huddersfield seemed to have an individuality of their own which transcended their kinship with the town or, that existed side by side with it.

In my view this enriched the town and also added to the vitality of its conduct of local affairs. It should not be overlooked that I am talking about the great years of local government when the various tiers of authorities and certainly the local County Boroughs controlled their own local areas and the concept of local administration had not been stretched over so wide an alien area as to dissipate interest and destroy local patriotism.

The Town Council was a true reflection of the life of the town containing representatives of the professional, business and commercial interests therein and what I think was most important, the political aspects took second place to the prime objective which was the general good and improvement of the borough.

I was never conscious, then or at any time thereafter of politics playing a dominant role in any matter which came before the Council from any of its Committees. In this, Huddersfield was probably only like most local authorities at that time, when, after local elections had taken place, the governing body took up the task of local government and forgot the colour of their voting day ribbons.

I have mentioned Joe and now I recall another Sidney who was a solicitor member of the Council and Chairman of an important Committee. He was small in stature but he made up for that by being large in every other quality that a public man should possess. I had a great deal to do with him in the realm of parliamentary matters concerning local legislation and I accompanied him to London for meetings of the Association of Municipal Corporations - he being the representative of the Huddersfield Corporation on that body. He was an agreeable travelling companion and what one could call a "clubbable" man. We had lunch together often when we were in London at the Eccentric Club of which he was a member by reason of his membership of the Gentlemen's Club in Huddersfield.

Another solicitor member, David, was Chairman of the Waterworks Committee and we both saw a great deal of each other in connection with the construction of the new reservoir at Digley. It is a matter of strange coincidence that each of the three County Boroughs in which I served had a new reservoir in course of construction and I have referred to this in an earlier chapter of my memoirs.

Sir Harry Hill was the consulting engineer in each case and so I had many opportunities of talking to him although I don't ever remember hearing him say "What! You again."

The first sod for the Digley Reservoir was cut with due ceremony in November 1945 at the beginning of the mayoralty of Miss Mary Sykes who was also a member of the legal profession. In fact she was (she told me herself) one of the first eight women solicitors to be admitted to the Rolls and she was, indeed, an interesting personality, well read and fond of literary discussions. I remember she once asked me who was my favourite poet and I told her, after reflection, that I thought it would be Wordsworth. On one occasion when we were returning by train from a meeting in London she suggested that we should each write a sonnet on the journey and this we promptly did and exchanged sonnets. I regret very much that I lost Miss Sykes' sonnet which I recollect was interesting and well constructed.

My effort was the following:-

SONNET (written on the Train on an evening of May 1946)

The train relentlessly pursues its way,
Now like an outworn ancient ambling slow,
Then with a forward plunge, a leaping doe
It parodies, and showers the scents of May
From its steel hide, to drench the dying day:
Here fragrance from a far-off-field, and lo,
There is the sweetness of the flowers that blow
On yonder hedge in dresses flaunting gay...

So ran my thoughts the while Earth spins away
On her unfathomed journey; fast or slow
It reckons not, old man or leaping doe,
Will world like train ne'er make a final stay?

What will be journey's end? What welcome mark
the homing of poor travellers in the dark?

I shall always remember her reception of the query raised in the final couplet of the sonnet, not so much by her words, as by her manner and expression, which conveyed to me that she might not believe in life after death.

Some facts about the Digley Reservoir may be of interest. The length of the bank is 1,000 feet and the height from the stream coast bed to the top of the bed is about 144 feet. The capacity of the reservoir is 700m gallons and the water area will cover about 41 acres - the maximum depth is 135 feet.

Throughout the course of its construction I was able to visit the site with David and members of his Committee and on one visit four of us were bundled into a Blondin (a sort of iron bucket) and ferried across the valley on a long cable.

David was Mayor in 1948 and had the honour of a Royal visit to the town in the persons of Her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth accompanied by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and I remember vividly one incident which took place in the course of the visit. The Mayor was with the Princess and the main party in the reception room and I was at a respectful distance, attending upon Prince Philip and his equerry as they went into the Mayor's Parlour where I followed them. They were discussing smoking and in fact, the equerry was smoking a cigarette. I heard the Prince say to him - "I will tell you why I don't smoke - just lend me your cigarette for a second." This was duly done and the Prince took a puff and then emitted the smoke through a white handkerchief which he had taken from his pocket. He then handed back the cigarette and displayed the white handkerchief and the brown stain clearly visible thereon to his equerry and said, "That is why I don't smoke!"

Another interesting event which took place on David's mayoralty was the centenary of the Priory Church at Bridlington which was celebrated on a Sunday in May 1948 and to which all Yorkshire civic representatives were invited. I remember that the service in the Priory Church had been arranged for the afternoon of the same Sunday of David's Sunday morning civic service in Huddersfield and when I heard of the invitation I had assumed that David would wish to send in his apologies for non-attendance as there would be great difficulty in arriving on time at the point where all the civic parties had been told to assemble for robing at 2.0 p.m. This only left barely two hours between the time of the finish of the Huddersfield civic service and arriving for the centenary procession to the Priory Church! But, no, David had it all arranged in his mind. We were to leave immediately in the Rolls after the Civic Service in the Parish Church and take sandwiches and flasks of tea and eat and drink on the way and this is exactly what we did. Plant was the Mayor's chauffeur at that time - a tall military looking man who really looked the part in his smart blue uniform. I had the privilege of being driven by him many times (in company with the Mayor of the year of course) until his retirement several years later. We duly arrived at the assembly point

in time to take our place in the procession to the Priory Church. The procession to the Priory was an inspiring sight. After the Bridlington representatives the invited towns followed in order of their incorporation and I learned for the first time that a little town called Hedon was the senior in this respect and also they bore the smallest mace! Apparently a small mace is a reliable sign of ancient ancestry and some of the maces present were almost as long as curtain poles!

When everyone was seated in the nave of the Priory it was a colourful scene; the pews ablaze with the crimson of mayoral robes and the glitter of gold chains of office. Then the moment for the commencement of the service arrived and the organist seated himself before the keys of the majestic instrument with its gilded columns on either side and overhead - the choir had reached their stalls and he began to play and after two or three sounds the organ music faded out with a whimper. The organ had broken down! It was tragic because for the solemnity of organ music there had to be substituted the tinkling of a piano and yet, in spite of this the service had its solemn moments and was worthy of the great occasion.

I think it is clear from what I have written about David that we were friends as well as being associated in local government affairs and it was not long before we discovered our common interest in the Masonic world. He invited me to attend his Lodge on one occasion which also meant an invitation to dinner after the business meeting. The Masonic Lodge of which he was a member was in Milnsbridge and I only had a vague idea of its situation, so on the evening in question as I arrived in the village I went to the main street in the centre and asked two ladies who were approaching me where the Masonic Lodge was situated. They looked at one another quite puzzled by my enquiry and then the dawning light of knowledge flashed across the face of one of the ladies and she cried out to her companion, "Ah! 'e means 't belly club!" and then I got my directions and spent a pleasant evening at the Club with David and his fellow members. I learned that they were fully aware of their local name!

Not many years afterwards David was at his Lodge and dinner when he was taken ill and died at the table and his tragic death was greatly deplored by the many who knew him. Looking back, I think he drove himself too hard. He was a busy solicitor and in addition he undertook a great deal of work for the local authority and not content with that he was an ardent local preacher and spent many Sundays in that roll. I can only say when I think of him and our friendship, "Requiescat in pace." Alas, poor David, I knew him well. David's place in the Waterworks world in Huddersfield was taken by Major John who had been his deputy for a number of years. I went with John to London on waterworks affairs on many occasions and he it was who presided at the Reservoir on the great day when the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Scarbrough, turned on the valve on the handsome stone valve chamber before a large company and the Mayor (Alderman Mallinson), and declared the great Digley Reservoir duly 'open'. At this point it is interesting to quote the following paragraph about Huddersfield's water supply which appears in the centenary brochure issued by the Corporation in 1968 which reads as follows:-

"In 1743 Sir John Ramsden, the Lord of the Manor, constructed the first Waterworks for the town. These consisted of a force pump, worked by a water wheel, a pipe line and a small service reservoir. The pipe line was made of large tree trunks with a 3½ inch diameter based waterway.... The pump was installed in a small building by the River Colne at Folly Hall and the reservoir was at the bottom of George Street."

The paragraph goes on to praise the quality and purity of the water and gives the astounding information that there seemed to be an abundance of trout in the river as it was not uncommon for the supply to fail because a large trout became lodged in the pipe line!

COUNTY BOROUGH



OF HUDDERSFIELD

W. M. JOLLANS
M.A., M.I.C.E., M.I.W.E.
Waterworks Engineer
and Manager

WATERWORKS DEPARTMENT

HIGH STREET BUILDINGS,
HUDDERSFIELD.

Telephone No. 22133

Ext. No. 281

Your Ref.

Our Ref. EM/GH 5/12-2A

Please address all communications
to the Engineer and Manager

14th March, 1966

H. Bann, Esq.,
The Town Clerk,
Town Hall,
HUDDERSFIELD

Dear Mr. Bann,

I am enclosing two fossil specimens which I think will be of interest to you.

Though I cannot be quite certain of the identification I think that the lamellibranch is *Aviculopecten carboniferus* (Stevens) and the goniatite is *Reticuloceras reticulatum* (Phill) mutation α

Yours sincerely,

Engineer and Manager

Encl:

Before I leave the subject of water supplies I must refer to the Scammonden Scheme which followed the opening of the Digley Reservoir. This Scheme was not only unique in its engineering aspects but also (and this was of importance to me) in its legal aspects and it required for its fulfilment an Act of Parliament which was at one and the same time a Public Act and, so far as the Corporation was concerned, a Private Act of Parliament.

The scheme was necessary because of increased industrial requirements and also because of increasing population. The engineers referred to the necessary works as "dramatic and exciting" and estimated that on completion they would increase the Corporation's water storage by about 75% and the reliable yield by 50%. The engineering works involved the largest earth embankment in the country which would dam up the Black Brook and carry the M62 motorway across the Scammonden Valley. In addition there was a 3,000 yard long tunnel linking the Colne and Scammonden Valleys as well as pumping stations, catchwaters and miles of pipe.

I was in constant consultation with my parliamentary agents in London on the contents of the Bill which led to the Act of Parliament. It will be apparent that the Public side of the Act was concerned with the M62 which was also our embankment!

Our engineer, Bill, was a brilliant man and he sent me some interesting souvenirs from the borings made in the early part of the works. These consisted of circular pieces of slate about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch thick. The borings had taken place on high ground and had gone to a considerable depth and the circular pieces showed in their surfaces the fossilised outlines of shellfish which had lived in that area thousands of years ago and proved that it had once been below sea level! This was the first time that a dam had been designed to carry a motorway on its crest. The powers were granted in the Huddersfield Corporation Act 1965.

Scammonden Water, as it was called, was inaugurated by the Queen on the 14th October 1971 and to my great disappointment I was unable to attend the ceremony although I had been invited. This was

because I had by that date retired from my office as Town Clerk and was an Inspector for taking inquiries and on the very date of the ceremony I had been instructed to take an inquiry which had been duly advertised and could not be postponed.

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CHAPTER VII

PERSONAGES

I am in the habit, as I suppose many people are, of looking at the rows of books on my book shelves in leisure moments, reading the titles and momentarily recalling the contents of this or that book and sometimes turning away without selecting any book.

I did a casual inspection the other day and then I took up a book entitled 'Through the Years'. It was an autobiography by someone whose name I shall disclose later. He gave me that autographed copy of his book and I read once more his simple introduction which said:-

"This book has been written to express the views I believe in, not to impress any person who may read it, also, to record interesting true life happenings spread over the last 50 years and more, and last but by no means least, some of the personalities I have met".

I am impressed by this introduction and admire its directness and honesty, all the more because it expresses exactly what I have been trying to do in recording the years of my own professional life over much the same period of time.

On the last page of the book there are some lines headed 'In conclusion' which are as follows :-

I believe in all things beautiful,
I believe in music, where melody is quickly found,
And poems that sound like song,
I believe in books that hold no ugly thought,
In pictures that rest the eye,
In plays that keep the heart young,
I believe in Joy, in Love, in Youth, in Reverence,
In Truth, in Travel, in Friendship,
Above all, I believe in God.

What a wonderful creed for any man to hold on to in life.

Someone wrote about him that he was one of nature's gentlemen and also that one amazing feature about him was his ability to be in the right place at the right time. It was my good fortune to have first hand experience of this quality of his.

I had gone to London with a member of the Council to attend an important meeting which was to be held in a building not far from the Houses of Parliament. We had walked from our hotel for exercise along the Embankment and then up some steps which brought us onto Bridge Street almost opposite Big Ben. My companion had slackened his pace and I had gained some yards ahead of him. As he did not catch up with me I looked round and saw him standing still and he appeared to be looking up to Big Ben as if he wanted to check the time. He did this for a few seconds and then without warning he slumped down and lay writhing on the pavement. I ran to him and got hold of his hands to assist him to stand but it was of no avail and I saw that his face was swollen and he was frothing at the mouth.

In a matter of minutes a small crowd had gathered round us and a tall man pushed his way through the spectators, took off his overcoat, folded it and bent down and cradled the sick man's head on it. He then dashed off to phone for an ambulance.

Who was this man who took charge of the situation in such masterly fashion and helped me to put my companion in the ambulance and saw us both safely despatched to the Westminster Hospital. It was Tom Joyce the author of 'Through the Years' and the man who said of him that he had an amazing ability to be in the right place at the right time never spoke a truer word. Imagine, here were two individuals from a northern town in deep trouble opposite the Houses of Parliament and suddenly another man from the very same town appears and takes charge of the situation. I learned later that Tom, who was a prominent member of the National Executive of the Property Owners Association, had been attending a meeting in their offices in Bridge Street which are almost opposite Big Ben.

Before taking leave of Tom I should mention that the amount of voluntary public work which he undertook in the town over the years was immense. He was a member of the old Board of Guardians until its abolition, a member of the Assessment Committee; he served on the Education Committee for 19 years, and for 21 years he was the President of the Huddersfield Property Owners Association. He took a great interest in sport and was Vice President and Founder Member of the Huddersfield & District Tennis League.

He was greatly interested in foreign travel. I remember one day as I was sitting at my desk in the Town Hall my Enquiry Clerk came into my room and said that Mr. Tom Joyce would like to see me so I said "Show him in". This would be in 1959; Tom entered wearing a large Russian style fur hat which astonished me. In answer to my enquiry he said he was about to go on a trip to Finland and Russia (Leningrad and Moscow). As he was born in 1878 he would then be over 80 years of age! Not that he was unused to foreign travel because, according to his writings he had visited America and Canada and many European countries in years gone by.

On this trip he wrote me from Copenhagen where there was a short stay and then I heard from him twice in Moscow where he said he had seen "all the principal places of interest" and there were no restrictions. Meals and service were good "but if you wish to purchase any goods then they are dear in comparison to our £".

Tom was, indeed, a remarkable man of many parts and I shall never forget his timely intervention in the incident opposite Big Ben which amply proved his ability to be in the right place at the right time!

Another friend on the Council in the early days was G.B. (I am giving his forenames) the second letter standing for BISHOP. There was, indeed, something episcopal about him and he told me that in the large industrial undertaking of which he was the Manager, he was known as the BISHOP. He was likeable in every way and we much enjoyed one another's company. He had at that time the Chairmanship of the Electricity

TEL : WAKEFIELD 5349
THE BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD

10.11.68

BISHOP'S LODGE
WOODTHORPE
WAKEFIELD, YORKS.

My dear Keny Bann, (if I may address you so familiarly!)

I must write and thank you for the quite
wonderful way in which you organised my visit to the
Borough Council last week. But not only that. You
spent the whole day over it. That meant a fearful
lot of catching up on things, I am sure. Yet every
visit was so much easier because you were there to pave
the way. It was most kind of you. If it has helped
to strengthen the relationship between the Diocese and the Town
that will be good. It has certainly helped the Bishop
to appreciate the Town more than ever.

Yours very gratefully
+ John Wakefield

Committee in those halcyon days when the electricity undertaking was municipally owned and one of my outstanding memories of him was on the occasion of the very last meeting of the Committee prior to the transfer of the undertaking to the new Electricity Board set up by Act of Parliament. He was in the chair and he made that last meeting a truly great event. On the morrow he was to be made the Chairman of the Fire Brigade Committee and before the meeting ended he donned a large shiny fireman's helmet in anticipation of the change!

I think one of the reasons why I recall the meeting so vividly was because of the unspoken regret that everyone felt on saying goodbye to a piece of local and municipal endeavour which had been built up over the years as electricity developed and which would be transferred to an organisation with its headquarters many miles away. This was to happen to other undertakings - water and gas - which also were transferred to area boards. I am not arguing that these transfers should not have taken place and, no doubt, from a national point of view they were desirable but one could not help feeling deprived locally.

Today the headquarters of the electricity undertaking in Huddersfield which comprised five ground floor showrooms and office accommodation and committee room are no longer on their old site in the centre of the town as they were acquired by one of the leading grocery firms in the country who razed the building to the ground and erected in its place a handsome supermarket in the interior of which all day long one can hear the noise and bustle of eager shoppers and the clashing of wire trolleys, as they collide with each other in the commodity laden aisles. Who shall say that the site of the old electricity headquarters has gone down in the world and that the sale of bread and other essential food stuffs is inferior to the sale of electricity and electric irons? Times change, and we must change with them!

One of the most enjoyable features of my own office (apart from its interesting legal aspects) was the opportunity which is afforded of accompanying the Mayor on civic and other ceremonial occasions. This often involved meeting eminent persons and sometimes

even royalty from time to time.

I always enjoyed attending the presentation of honorary degrees at the Leeds University. The University Authorities made the presentations enjoyable civic occasions and they invited the Mayors and Town Clerks of surrounding towns and seated them on the platform in what I think is called the Whitworth Hall in the old Town Hall almost alongside the Chancellor and the other University dignitaries - a ring-side seat as it were, so that one felt intimately involved in the proceedings.

I attended many of these ceremonies but the one which stands out in my memory was in 1948 in the Chancellorship of the Princess Royal ("Your Royal Highness and Chancellor"!:) and the recipient of the Honorary Degree who captured my attention was no less a person than Edith Sitwell. She was, of course, an established literary figure - an exponent of the new poetry! She was an enigmatic, yet attractive figure and her brother Osbert was in attendance upon her. Her deathly pale features with their sharp lines and her exotic dress made a profound impression. She had bright green and startling red in her ensemble - the bright red being her Turkish style shoes with their pointed upturned toes and the green her turban-like hat and a long necklace of beads over a long black gown. One could sense the joy and pride which she obviously felt at the award.

Her majestic tall figure held your gaze; she received an Honorary Degree of D.Litt. and although no-one obviously knew this at that time she was to receive a similar honorary degree from the University of Durham and from the University of Oxford. It is mentioned in a recent book on the Sitwells that she sometimes signed herself "D.Litt, D.Litt, D.Litt" and particularly if she disliked the person to whom she was writing!

The reference to the Princess Royal reminds me of a meeting with her on one of her visits to Huddersfield quite a number of years ago. She was there to grace with her presence some event arranged by one of the Women's organisations in the town and the organisers had laid on a

small luncheon party at the George Hotel for the Princess and her Lady in Waiting, Miss Loyd, and they had invited the Mayor and one or two others, including myself. It proved to be a most pleasant and informal occasion.

I do not know from memory how many things were discussed during the course of the luncheon but I do recall that at one point the subject of fishing arose and I recited a short piece of verse which I had heard and which I submitted summed up quite brilliantly the trials of the fisherman in seeking the ideal spot and where to throw in his line!

I think it was the Princess who was quite taken with the rhyme and she probably prompted Miss Loyd to get a copy for her which, of course, I dictated to the lady.

The rhyme is marked Anon in an old fishing book in my library and reads as follows :-

Sometimes over early,
Sometimes over late,
Sometimes nae watter,
Sometimes a spate.
Sometimes over thick,
Sometimes over clear,
There's aye something wrong
When I m fishing here.

CHAPTER VIII
BEAUMONT ARCHIVES

This chapter deals with the acquisition by the writer of these archives and the part I was able to play in this interesting event.

The word "archives" conjures up in the minds of many people a vision of untidy piles of dusty papers and parchments giving off a dank and musty odour, far better burned or, at the best, hidden away in some attic where they can be conveniently forgotten. Indeed, the expression "put it in the archives" is used in modern speech to convey the idea of consigning something to oblivion. There is a tiresome desire to "tidy up" strongly developed in some people which must have resulted in the destruction of many important documents and records down the centuries!

For history depends on research and research depends on archives or records. They are, therefore, the raw material of history. They provide "the reading of an ever changing tale".

In my room at the Town Hall I had a picture over the fireplace which was a photograph taken at close range of a 12th century Feoffment by one Roger de Lascy Earl of Lincoln and Constable of Chester whereby he granted to Wm de Bellomonte 12 Bovates of land in the Township of Hudresfeud with a moiety of the meadow of the demesne of the said township with a moiety of the woods of the same township and a rent of 4 marks out of the mill of the same township.

This document is of particular interest because it is the earliest deed relating to the Manor of Huddersfield.

(A bovate of land, by the way, equals 15 acres)

Wm de Bellomonte was the founder of the fortunes of the Beaumont family and, apparently, he had been a personal attendant of Roger de Lascy during a crusade to the Holy Land and evidently had gained the favour of his master.

The Whitley Beaumont archives were handed over to the custody of the Corporation as a result of a conversation I had with Mr. Arnold Drake who was a partner in the firm of the Beaumont family solicitors. He asked me if the Corporation would be interested in taking over a mass of old papers which reposed in some old iron boxes amongst collections of office papers on their premises and which related to the Beaumonts. Mr. Drake represented the surviving members of the family - Mrs. Drake of Shepley (who was his wife) and Mrs. Goodhart of Kirby Moorside, her sister. These ladies were descendants of Henry Frederick Beaumont who was a Member of Parliament for the Colne Valley Division. He it was who gave Beaumont Park to Huddersfield in 1880 and this was the first of the town's parks. His name was added to the Freeman's Roll of the Borough in 1894.

At Mr. Drake's invitation I went to his office and saw the boxes in an upstairs room amongst old office papers and made arrangements for their transport to the Town Hall. When the papers had been handed over I obtained authority to appoint an Archivist on my staff and a great deal of work then followed in scheduling and arranging the collection so as to make it available to students and other persons interested in the history of the locality.

I remember that later Mr. Drake showed me a beautifully painted representation of the Beaumont family coat of arms showing all the quarterings of families with whom they had intermarried over the centuries. This was retained by the family. It should be borne in mind that the Beaumont family traces its ancestral history back to the days of the Plantagenets.

The other notable family in the history of Huddersfield was, of course, the Ramsden family and the two families became connected by marriage in 1571 when Edward Beaumont of Whitley married Elizabeth, daughter of John Ramsden of Longley. The son of this marriage was Sir Richard Beaumont ("Black Dick") who was born in 1574.

Another piece of ancient history which I should mention is that it was in 1599 that William Ramsden purchased one half of the Manor of Huddersfield from Queen Elizabeth I for £965 and that the remaining half which belonged to Sir Richard Beaumont was ultimately acquired by the Ramsdens.

The Beaumont Collection contains a fine series of medieval deeds and wills; 17th and 18th century correspondence and 17th century household papers, rentals and surveys.

The Archivist's Report stated that the Collection consisted of the muniments of the Beaumont family of Whitley Beaumont. The family had held land in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield from the 13th century and generations of them had made an important contribution to the history of the West Riding. Their papers reflected their activity. During the Civil War Sir Thomas Beaumont became Governor of Sheffield Castle; his papers and those of John Beaumont dealing with the Yorkshire Volunteers in the next century were especially interesting. The bulk of the collection consisted of medieval charters, later deeds, rentals, household accounts and correspondence contained in six large tin boxes.

I think I have quoted enough to show the importance of these archives from a historical and local point of view but I should like to include also a paragraph from the letter which the Registrar of the National Register of Archives of the Historical Manuscripts Commission wrote to me in which he said:-

"May I take this opportunity of thanking you and your Committee most warmly for enabling this important Collection not only to be preserved, but in having undertaken the production of this excellent report so that the documents can be fully utilised by scholars".

Before I retired from my office of Town Clerk I handed over the whole of the Collection to the Borough Librarian and I understand that it is now housed in the Local History Library. I did give some lectures on the Collection myself before retirement.

This is not the place to go into a lot of detail on the documents which form part of the Archives but I have copied a few examples in the Schedule following this chapter, which I personally found most interesting and which I think show how the people of those early days lived and enable us to learn something of their thoughts and emotions.

INSCRIPTION ON BEAUMONT MONUMENT IN THE
BEAUMONT CHAPEL IN KIRKHEATON CHURCH

"MEMORIAE SACRUM

HERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODY OF SIR
RICHARD BEAV-MONT OF WHITLEY HALL, IN YE
COVNTIE OF YORKE, KNIGHT & BARRONET, WHO
DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 20th. DAY OF OCTOBER
ANNO AETATIS SUAE 58, ANNO. DOMINI 1631;
EXPECTING A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION, AT THE
COMING OF CHRIST: WHO DYINGE UNMARRIED MADE
THOMAS BEAV-MONT, SONN & HEIRE APPARANT, TO
RICHARD BEAV-MONT OF KEXBRUGH IN YE COVNTIE
OF YORKE ESQ.: ONE OF HIS EXECVTORS, & HEIRE
TO HIS PARKE AT SANDALL, AND TO HIS ANCIENT
IN-HERITANCE IN WHITTLEY, SOUTH CROSSELAND,
MELTHAM AND LEPTON LYING IN THE SAID COVNTIE
WHO HAVING PERFORMED YE TRVST IN HIM REPOSED,
IN MEMORIE OF HIS WORTHIE KINSEMAN, HATH
CAUSED THIS MEMORIAL TO BE ERECTED.

VIVET POST FUNERA VIRTUS."

THE
SCHEDULE

Sir Richard

I am affraid you doe abandon yor self out of all good Company, that your frends in Leicestershire can not see you one in a yeare. I doe assure you, you shall be better welcome to no place. I writt to you of late for a settinge Spanell or two, I heare this last Statute will make them farre more easier to be come by, and yet I am of ye saure minde that I would gladly have a good one or tow and if a fleete hounde come he shall be welcome. Sir Henry Savail promised me at ye Court that I should see him in Leicestershire and that he would furnishe me withe some good dogges you must be my meanes ever, and so I most kindly salute you.

Coleorton this 23rd of July 1604

Your assured ffrend

Henry Beaumont

To the Right Worshipful His very loving Cosen Sir Richard Beaumont
Knight att Whithall

To the Right wor - my assured frend
S^r Richard Beaumont Knight at
Whitley Hall deliver theise in
Yorkshire.

S^r I have receaved all y^r lres (Letters) and all shalbe carefully
done If god pmitt. I have beene at Eaton and Sattisfyed the Lady
to her content and so much she will signifye to you by her lre,
Also I have made M^r Provost understand monney is come by and he hath
apointed me to send it to him but the nond he hath not there that
he could finde but he promised to send an acquittance under his hand
and seale my journey to Eaton was more grievous and more (?harmi)full
then from Maunsfield (in the frost) to Whitley. Horsehire I have and
yet ill horsed and rid to and backe of a day that I shall not be
well againe betide. (We)ather soft this weeke M^{rs} (?Sproyton)
hath been sore sicke at Eaton but it is thought she will nowe escape
this fitt yet she keepeth her bed. M^r Woodrowe the mercer o^r (our)
countryman is deade and is said worth xc or xcj thousand pounds
Richard Tailor hath beene out of toun so that I cannot satisfye you
anuthing Concerning S^r Wm. Craven Upon yo^r first lre I toul him,
but he is somewhat scrupelous and would not move it upon yo^r first
writeinge I will not forget that bussines. I have not had any
monney of Richard Tailor I have made sore shift to doe it I pray
you send by, without order of some private profitt, he will disburse
none aforehand And I have not greatly demanded of him, --
M^r John Savile M^r Salton Halls Coffen the good honest student of
the temple is this day buried he died of the sickness but the matter
was so handled that he was buryed on the day many gentlemen &
frends there, and in the Temple Church, and a Sermon. -
the sickness encreased this weeke, 3 (?0) 6 died of all deseases
and 210 of the plague, Heere is no newes nor newe bookes to send
downe, the queres were burnt at Pawles Cross, none to be bought
for monney, till next week I cease and humbly take leave Resting
dewtyfull at command.

London xxiiijth
September 1609

Thomas Beaumont

1773 Aug. 22. TO MR. JOHN GRESHAM

Arksey. 22nd August 1773

To Mr. John Gresham

My request is that my Corps be carried to Church by four Labourers with Towels (viz) the two at the Vicarige the other as you think proper. No one to follow as mourner. Each of the bearers to have a pair of white gloves and half a crown. Yourself Mr. Caley and Mr. Howson white gloves and black scarfes and hatbands. The Clark a pair of gloves and hatband. The bell to Toll only one quarter of an hour.

VIENNA, March 19th 1838

My dearest Henry,

I only last week received your letter of the 16th Feby, for which accept my best thanks, pray mention in your next if Katy received one from me, and I hope she will put in a few lines in your next letter informing me of it herself & also giving me her opinion of your health which I am glad to find is better, and also what she thinks of the change that is going to take place in my situation! I am so happy to find you really do not object to a foreigner, for I trust I have found one to suit me; last week I pledged my hand and gave my heart to the Baron de Buttler Brandenfels! he is of an ancient Saxon Family, which he tells me is connected with the Families of Butler in Ireland, the truth of which I ascertained by referring to the Peerage and Baronetage which I have with me, & I find that all the Peers that have Butler for the Surnames, such as Ormonde, Carrick, Glengall, have all a Coronet & Plume of Feathers for their Crest, which is the same as the Baron's. Sir Thos. Butler has also the same for his Crest; your advice was very good about the money, but a rich German Baron would be a rara avis which I do not pretend to have caught; he tells me he has sufficient to prevent money being his first object in matrimony, and as he is always well dressed and very clean, he must evidently have enough to pay for his washing and Tailor's Bill, for he has given me his Parole d'honneur he has not a debt in the world, so that speaks well for his principles also. We are as near as possible the same age, though on account of his rosy cheeks I think he looks younger than me, he is a little like Jane B^t in the face with her kind of good humoured happy look, but not blue eyes, his are more hazel, I think him much better looking than our new Brother in law; he is about Edward Beau^{t's} height but stouter, his appearance is more gentlemanly than W. Booth's but perhaps his manners are too German to please you, for you know the Germans are not like the French famed for this Polish, however I believe him to be what you would call a thorough "good fellow", for he is very good hearted, cheerful & good tempered, quite opposite to Marie's sullen looking husband, he was always too sombre & dull to please me; to her I neither praised

nor abused him, for I did not wish to influence her, and she did not ask my opinion; I saw by the way people congratulated her, that they did not think much of him at Baden - I have been introduced to the Baron's Father, a regular Veteran, with several Orders, he was formerly Col. of the Hussars of the Grande Duke of Hesse; my friend has also been in the Hussars - He has given me a beautiful Opal & Diamond Ring & a Guard Ring, and I have promised to accept the plain gold one, in three weeks or a month, when I hope to have received Edward Beau^{t's} answer to my letter, in which the Baron wrote in French, and I have told Ed. to answer in English, for he understands a little of the Language, having been a little time in England, and praises it for its cleanliness very much; he says he smokes very little, & has promised me never to smoke when I am with him, for he says he is not very fond of it - I have been acquainted with him six months; the evening before Mr. Booth's departure from Baden, I went to the Reunion or Public Rooms with an English Lady, while Marie was making love at home, a foreigner asked to introduce a friend who was just arrived, I only spoke three words to him and he went away; I never thought of mentioning him to Marie or in fact anything more about him till I met him by chance at Munich, and again at Vienna - One of his Sisters is Maid of Honor to the Grand Duchess of Hesse - I rather think we shall be married at Gotha, for his Father's house is near there & and old man is gone home - I wish it was all over, I am glad he did not wish to be married at Vienna, for there would have been more people perhaps - I am sure you will agree with me that the Baroness is a more respectable title than Mademoiselle to travel through the world with - I cannot say that I liked the idea at first of giving up my independence so soon, but I thought in a couple of years I might wish to marry and not be able to find one I liked so well - Since you were so good as not to believe the malicious reports that were spread about me, I will tell you in strict confidence that my German Master had the audacity to write me a proposal after Marie left, and I have no doubt I am indebted to him for the reports you have heard - I had the King's Physician at Munich to attend me & he must needs propose to me!

but Henry though you may laugh with Katy do not let her breathe a word of it to anybody; I have told you because I thought you deserved my confidence; Marie knows of the first offer, but I have only told you of the second; there are plenty of envious people to set about reports, and they will always talk as long as they can find people to believe them - you mention an old flame is coming abroad, I can only tell you this, that I would not exchange my bright one now, for any one of the old ones, he beats the one you mention hollow in every respect, having plenty of natural quickness, more wits, manner, experience of the world, information, but still he is no prodigy, for the other, partiality aside, is below par; Wentworth even told Dy he was ungentlemanly & heartless - Will you think me conceited if I tell you that I think the Baron de Buttler likes me as well as my money, for he is not a man of professions, or a complimenter, but he has asked me so little about my money, and told me so fervently & sincerely that he loves me that I believe him, and feel no apprehension for the future - I only hope & trust I shall not be so fruitful as Katy; Marie manages well, I shall make her give me the Receipt, but perhaps 40 is rather late to begin, so she may escape entirely - Pray do not repeat the nonsense I sometimes tell you, but I believe it amuses you, and you will not tell it again in order to abuse me, or to amuse other people at my expense - I am very busy with my Trousseau, he likes to see me well dressed - Perhaps you may have heard that I wore false hair in front after my illness, before I left England; I am happy to say that my hair is all come back again, and as well as ever it was; so I hope not to see my wigs again for another ten years, I have done a great deal it appears in the six months I have been by myself - If Dy should get stronger I should advise her coming abroad with Sophy Lee, in order to leave off their Wigs and get Husbands - My best love to Katy, & recollect I do not mind the length of your letter but write soon, Poste Rest. Vienna; my letters will follow me if I am gone.

I am dearest Henry your ever affect^e Sister

Sophia Beaumont

Neither Marie or I change our Initials.

There is a town in Saxony called Buttler (Bootlar as it is pronounced in German) from which the name is taken.

1729
Jul 11.

Bill for Clothes - received

July 11 1729

To Mdm. Beaumont

One pair of tubby stayes	1.	16.	0.
Miss Beaumont stayes tick back	1.	7.	0.
Miss Susan stayes tubby	1.	15.	0.
Miss Eve stayes tick backs	1.	7.	0.
Miss Molloy - Coate		14.	0.
Miss Harriott - Coate		14.	0.
Miss Sharlott - Coate		10.	0
1 1/8 yd. of linn at 2/4d yd.		2	7½
Silk lf 6" leads 6		2	0
24 yd. of Galloune att 2d yd.		4	0
		-----	-----
	8.	11.	7½
		-----	-----

Revd the contents

Tho: Tottington

Galloon - A kind of narrow close lace made of cotton,
silk, gold or silver threads.

1740 Oct. 30
1741 Mar. 20

THREE RECEIPTS FOR WAGES DATED 1740 Oct. 30
1740 Nov. 7. 1741 Mar. 20

Oct. 30th 1740

Received of Henry Beaumont Esq. the sum
of Tow Pounds for a years wages.

By me

Ann White.

November 7th 1740

Received of Henry Beaumont Esq., the sum
of Too pounds Ten shillings for a year
wages.

by me

Ann White

March 20th 1740/1

Received of Henry Beaumont Esq., Three
pound fifteen shillings for a year and
half wages.

by me

Mary Hirst

CHAPTER IX

THE COMMON GOOD

In those days before the last "reform" of Local Government in 1972 there was a local government authority or unit known as a County Borough and those of us who were Chief Executives of such authorities met from time to time and discussed our problems together and compared notes on all manner of subjects which arose in the course of our daily work.

There is no doubt in my mind that for large cities and towns the County Borough was an ideal form of local government and an ideal unit because (a) it had all the powers of local government over its own area with no complications arising over a superior tier of authority (apart from Whitehall of course!) and (b) the area contained its own citizens who were naturally interested in their own local affairs. In other words the area had not been enlarged by the inclusion of outside local government areas to such an extent as to annihilate local interest and substitute for it an attitude of indifference.

After that nostalgic aberration I must revert to the matter which prompted me to mention discussions with one's colleagues. It relates to a talk I had with one who was the Chief Executive of a large city which to me was almost a second native place as it was within a few miles of the place where I was born. We talked of many things and then the subject of local charities arose.

It should be borne in mind that in all localities there are many small and practically obsolete charitable trusts in existence which could well be merged with others in order to create an endowment of sufficient size to produce a reasonable yearly income. In addition, new advances in social legislation and other relevant changes had produced new needs and rendered others redundant.

Following the talk with my colleague I began to explore the possibility of forming in Huddersfield a trust which would facilitate the administration of charities - a type of trust which at that time was only in operation in a few places and which could provide a new impetus to the whole conception of local charity. This new form of charity is called a Common Good Trust.

This is a trust of a general charitable nature and is not limited to one or two specific purposes.

Its object is to enrich the social and cultural life of the people of a particular locality. Trusts of this kind can do much, either by themselves or in concert with local voluntary bodies, for social welfare in their area and can assist in relating their activities to the needs of the area and to the services being provided by public authorities. They can also stimulate experimental work and encourage the best use of the charitable resources available in their area.

A further important aspect of trusts of this kind is to act as repositories of other large or small endowments from charities whose objects are obsolete owing to modern development.

Charity in its legal sense was always a matter of strict definition and it was not until 1960 by an Act of Parliament that it became easier to modify charitable objects or the original purposes of a charitable gift so as to enable that gift to be used for common purposes. This was a most useful power but not too easy to put into operation. The consent of the Charity Commissioners had to be obtained to set up such a trust and, of course, for the merging of endowments there would have to be consultations and consents from the trustees affected.

Another important point was that individuals who wished to leave small sums of money which by themselves would be insignificant could leave these sums to the Common Good Trust knowing full well that they would be applied for the benefit of the people of their home town.

The first step which I took in order to arouse some local interest in the matter was to address a meeting of the local Rotary Club's Community Service Committee and at that meeting the then Vicar of Huddersfield happened to be present and he followed on by enthusiastically supporting the formation of a Common Good Trust in his New Year message to the Club. He said he had searched in his mind to find an outlet for true charity when we had a Welfare State which provided for many of our needs but it was necessary for our own conscience and spiritual and moral health to find charitable outlets and this was the solution.

The next step was the calling of an inaugural meeting which was held in the Town Hall and presided over by the Mayor and at which I addressed the audience on the proposal to form the Trust. I referred to the interest taken in the matter by the Community Service Committee of the Rotary Club and said it presented a wonderful opportunity for the carrying out of charitable work of all kinds in the town. It would be more embracing than the normal type of charity and it would enable help to be given in almost any charitable direction. The essential element of a Common Good Trust was that it should be used for the benefit of the community as a whole.

I also explained that it was not the intention that these Trusts should be run by the local authority and if they were going to be successful they had to be managed by an independent body of responsible citizens.

Further meetings were held and in the meantime I had consulted the Charity Commissioners and ascertained their interest in the proposal to set up a Common Good Trust in Huddersfield and that they had suggested that the matter should proceed and a body of trustees chosen.

Ultimately a draft Trust Deed which I had prepared was submitted to the Charity Commissioners and approved and the Common Good Trust came into being.

The deed provided that the Trustees should hold the capital and income of any money and other property secured for the Trust to use for any charitable purposes for the benefit of persons resident or employed in the County Borough of Huddersfield or in the immediate neighbourhood thereof.

CHAPTER X

RUS IN URBE ET SEQUENTIA

When reading my address on the public inquiry which is the subject of this chapter it should be borne in mind that, although it delves into the past, it is principally concerned with endeavours to adjust to a post-war world and to adapt the local environment so as to meet the challenges of the future - all this in response to an important Act of Parliament which was in force at that time. The address is interspersed with my reflections on various matters which crossed my mind in my later years.

The public inquiry was held by an Inspector of the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government in May 1952 into the Development Plan for the County Borough. The technical aspects of this plan were the responsibility of the Borough Architect and Planning Officer of the Corporation but I had the responsibility of presenting the Corporation's case and of cross examining the objectors and their witnesses during the course of the inquiry which occupied two days.

The Corporation had a legal obligation to submit a Development Plan for the Ministry's approval and also to advertise such submission and invite objectors to send in their objections to the Minister.

In the course of my opening statement I began by saying that Huddersfield lay at the junction of the Rivers Colne and Holme on the eastern side of the Pennines and was a principal centre of the Yorkshire Woollen industry. Like most industrial towns of the North it owed its rise industrially to good water supplies and to its proximity to the coalfields. The area was over 14,000 acres in extent and it was of a hilly nature. Now that fact had had a remarkable influence on early development, because the nature of the contours had undoubtedly saved the town from the dense development which one associated with the average industrial town. Instead the

development was interspersed with hills and valleys and even woodlands and there were many scenes of quite a rural nature within the confines of the Borough area.

(I did not mention this reflection during the opening speech at the Inquiry but as I said the above words I thought of one of the most striking illustrations of their truth and indeed, one which struck me quite forcibly the first time I saw it and has remained with me ever since and that is the view of Longley Wood when one is walking along the Wakefield Road at Aspley.)

I went on to state that the old Manor of Huddersfield was owned by the Ramsden family right from the days of Queen Elizabeth I. In the days of Charles I the same family acquired the village of Almondbury which comprised the south western part of the town. In the old days it was the more important part but he would be a bold man who would say today which was the more important part!

The Ramsden family had great influence on the shaping of the present day town of Huddersfield. It was they who developed the centre during the 19th Century and there they erected the main buildings of architectural interest which dated from that period.

(I did not mention, although it is true, that it was not their fault that Huddersfield was without a civic centre from that period until the 1960's and even today (1984) such a centre has still to be completed. However, I have referred to this matter of the civic centre in another part of my memoirs.)

The family spent considerable sums of money - more than half a million pounds - from 1848 onwards in improvements of one kind or another. They widened Westgate and Kirkgate and generally they laid out the centre of the town with wide and spacious main streets which were far in advance of their time in street layout, as witness John William Street for instance.

I then referred to the acquisition of the Ramsden Estate in 1920 from Sir John Ramsden which made the Corporation the freeholders of over 5,000 acres of the County Borough area and that area included the whole of the centre of Huddersfield. This acquisition had a tremendous value in assisting the Corporation in carrying out its town planning duties and powers, instead of, as most other local authorities would have to do, acquiring the land for the most part, because they were already the freeholders of that very large estate. As regards land which the Corporation leased they could not only ensure that the provisions of the Town Planning Acts were carried out and that good development ensued but also the covenants in the leases were a powerful aid to their authority in planning matters.

(Again I interpose on this question of leasing on the Ramsden Estate which was to express a doubt whether letting for periods of 999 years was advisable because in later times it enabled sub-lessees to reap the benefit of higher rents and particularly from shop properties. When the time arrived for the execution of the various phases of central area development, this was rectified to some extent although the Corporation had first of all to buy out the long leasholders.)

As regards undeveloped land - and two thirds of the Ramsden Estate still remained to be developed - the Corporation were in an unrivalled position to carry out wide planning policies on many acres of land already in their ownership.

In 1949 the Corporation secured extensive powers of development of the Ramsden Estate under a Local Act and those powers were in addition to those under the Town Planning Act.

(I must refer here to a meeting in London at which I had an opportunity of discussing with no less a person than the then Minister of Town Planning (afterwards Lord Silkin) the powers of the Corporation under the Local Acts and the relevance of such powers in relation to the general Act powers. I was then reminded of the superiority of the latter powers in the case of any conflict.)

I then gave particulars concerning the early development of the town especially in regard to the age of property. The first stage was the development of hillside terrace houses along river valleys following the erection of the textile mills and in conjunction with isolated village development and central area housing. A large proportion of the houses in the town were erected before 1875. This date was the most significant date in the realm of public health and in regard to building byelaws it being the date of the great Public Health Act of that year. It was not surprising therefore, that it was estimated that there were 5,000 sub-standard houses in the Borough which would require to be replaced. Huddersfield was not peculiar in that respect as these facts could be applied to any northern industrial town and it was a melancholy thought that but for the intervention of the War and restrictions on materials and labour which followed the War the bulk of these houses would have been condemned and cleared.

I pointed out that the existence of this sub-standard housing accommodation and of overcrowding and also estimated increases in population during the period of the Plan had all been taken into account and they had created a housing problem of some magnitude and it was considered that it would ultimately involve a total of no less than 19,000 persons. But Huddersfield was in a peculiarly favourable position to provide new housing areas owing to some of the factors which I had already mentioned and the new housing areas could be provided without making undue encroachments on agricultural land.

Leaving the first problem of housing I came to the question of roads. The internal main road system of the town was developed along the lines of the original routes to the neighbouring towns and all the main roads leaving and entering the central area assumed a fairly radial pattern. For instance, the main road from Manchester to Leeds passed down the main shopping street and carried the heaviest flow of traffic through the town. This flow of traffic was our second problem.

(The flow of traffic at that time along the main shopping street was 632 vehicles an hour) Attempts had been made to divert as much of that traffic as possible. Signs had been erected indicating a by-pass but much of the traffic did not make use of the by-pass. It was admitted that the existing by-pass was tortuous and in many parts quite inadequate to take the large vehicles which were commonplace in the flow of traffic along the main street.

When one considered that volume of traffic in the central area, intermingled with the town's buses which we had to run as a public transport authority, such vehicles having their stopping places along the main street, and with the additional hazards of crossings one could see there was really here a major problem in town planning which required a solution.

Turning now to the industrial aspects of the matter I had said that Huddersfield was a principal centre of the woollen trade. It was not only that; it was an important industrial town in other ways. In addition to textiles, there were engineering, chemicals and dyestuffs which provided much of the local employment of the town. It also had breweries and other industries and the Planning Officer had elicited the interesting fact that the town possessed one of the oldest breweries in the country going back to 1795.

Generally speaking it was considered that the siting of the industries was satisfactory in relation to the residential and road framework. There were also, as one would find in any industrial town, isolated engineering and textile works which were situated among the cottage development which had grown up in their neighbourhood. It was considered, where industries were badly sited, that it was more economical to move the sub-standard houses from around the industrial areas.

These facts about local industries and their diversity, had not been without their effect on other problems with which we had had to deal.

I referred to sewage disposal and the treatment of trade effluent and the provision of increased water supplies.

The increasing quantities of trade effluent had demanded special consideration in sewage works extensions then being carried out at Bradley. In addition, the Corporation would in the future undertake the treatment of trade effluent and domestic sewage from the Colne Valley area. Similarly we were constructing a new reservoir at Digley which would provide adequate water supplies for industrial expansion well into the future. I mentioned these matters because they all formed part of the general pattern of the Development Plan and the proposals which were indicated in it.

Finally, another matter which required some mention was the question of the Civic and Cultural Centre. This was recognised as one of the needs of the town. The necessary group of buildings would provide for municipal offices, Law Courts and Police Station.

At this point I referred to the list of buildings compiled by the Minister which showed that in the County Borough we had quite a considerable list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

(This point has always been a puzzle to me and I never did understand why in the face of this historical fact there never had been any attempt to provide an adequate and worthy civic centre for such a wealthy and prosperous town. In this respect Huddersfield was quite unlike the vast majority of provincial towns in the North of England.)

At the end of my address I referred again to the outstanding factors which had influenced planning policy. First, there was the provision of the necessary rehousing over a 20 year period; secondly the provision of land for individual development which would relieve

the present congestion and this would affect land principally in the Leeds Road area; the provision of more playing fields and open spaces; the provision of new schools; the improvement of the road system to provide better circulations of traffic and to relieve congestion in the central area. This required the provision of the inner ring road and a by-pass from Leeds Road to Longroyd Bridge; finally the provision of the Civic and Cultural Centre.

In conclusion I pointed out once again that the Plan was based on careful surveys carried out by the Planning Officer and his staff. I did not think that the general public realised the extent and intricacy of the surveys. They covered the physical features of the area, water supply, soil fertility, minerals, the growth of population, industries, housing, open spaces, public buildings, the projects of transport authorities and local industrialists and statutory undertakers.

The plan which has been prepared and submitted was, I submitted, a sound and sensible plan which amply provided for all the amenities which the Act required for the efficient town planning of the County Borough and at the same time it did not indulge in impracticable dreams which had in the past tended to bring town planning into disrepute.

The Plan looked with confidence into the future and it made provision for those things which were of basic importance in any local government unit, namely, new houses for the increased population, new schools for the children, sites for industry, a civic centre and improved roads for carrying modern traffic. The plan kept its feet on the ground and only sought to achieve the possible and we trusted that the Minister would be first to approve it substantially in the form in which it was submitted.

The objectors were not raising questions of a serious nature to the Plan as a whole and I made this point at the conclusion of the Inquiry. The Inspector was good enough to say that the presentation of the case had simplified his task considerably. At the present day (1984) if one wishes to see some of the results of the Plan one could

remember the word which was used in connection with the memorial
to the great architect of St. Paul's Cathedral - Sir Christopher Wren -
CIRCUMSPICE!

CHAPTER XI

When I saw the announcement (1959) that he had been elected Speaker of the House of Commons I thought of the many times we had met and I also thought of his kindness and geniality, his wit and eminence as one of our leading legal Luminaries. Was he not our Recorder also in days gone by? It had always been the custom for the Mayor to entertain the Recorder to lunch when he visited the town to hold the Quarter Sessions and it was at these luncheons that I frequently heard his graceful and witty speeches when thanking the Mayor for his hospitality. Incidentally, I used to attend to the wine for the luncheon and was pleased many times to see his appreciative look after tasting the wine. From conversations during luncheon I learned that he was interested in fishing and this gave me the opportunity of talking about my own experiences which inevitably brought in the River Hodder and sea-trout. He must have been impressed with my description of the river because he told me later that during one of his holidays when he had been making a fishing tour that he spent a few days in Whitewell on the river. I can honestly say that I never at any time boasted to him of my own fishing capabilities (which are terribly modest!) but my praise of the River Hodder and Whitewell in particular knows no bounds and is fully explained in my fishing memoirs which, of course, had not been written in the days which I am now describing.

He was a tallish handsome man and his Lawyer robes and wig enhanced still more his attractive appearance and when he sat at the table at lunch he followed the general custom of dining in his legal garb. I always thought his presence added a kind of lustre to the occasion.

There were other 'legal' personalities present at these luncheons - there was sometimes the Deputy Recorder - always the Clerk of the Peace who was my Deputy in the office of Town Clerk - and they also wore their robes.

If there was a visit to the town by any member of the Royal Family the Recorder would attend any reception or function at the Town Hall and he and I would walk together in our robes of office in any procession.



4th April 1950

Dear Mr. Bann

Despite your gentle prohibition I must just write a line to say how much I appreciate your kind congratulations about Hull.

Rightly you think that I have been very happy at Huddersfield — you were all so very good to me — and to that extent we know ledge that I am lucky to get Hull

I have not mentioned his name so far but I am, of course, writing about Sir Harry Hylton-Foster. He died in 1965, I think, and his widow is now the Baroness of that name and she was the daughter of the Speaker who preceded Sir Harry in that office.

May he have much pleasure fishing in the Elysian Fields!

My recollection of Sir Harry and his love of fishing have reminded me of another eminent legal personality it was my good fortune to meet during my professional life.

This goes back to my early days as a young solicitor. The gentleman in question was also young and he practised at the Bar. His chambers were in Manchester in St. Ann's Passage which connects King Street with St. Ann's Square.

I had always been much interested in this charming little thoroughfare because it led to the beautiful old Church of St. Ann whose history had a great attraction for me. This was because its first Rector was one, Nathaniel Bann, and if one walked to the end of the passage one saw the slab which had been removed from his grave during alterations and whereon it was recorded that he died on the 9th September 1736. He was born in Manchester and baptised in the Collegiate Church on the 14th December 1671. It is stated in an old diary (Edmund Harrold, a Manchester Wigmaker) that the Church was dedicated to St. Ann to commemorate the virtues of the reigning Queen and the beneficence of Lady Ann Bland. It was Lady Ann Bland, who could be called the foundress of the Church, who chose Nathaniel as the first Rector, he being the son of her mother's medical attendant. The Banns appear to be connected with Manchester for several generations. Before he became Rector of St. Ann's Nathaniel, who was an old Scholar of Manchester Grammar School was appointed in 1693 (then 22 years of age) librarian of Chetham's Hospital where some of the manuscripts are preserved.

There is a fascinating entry (to me!) in the old diary which I have mentioned, about the Consecration of the Church. This reads as follows:-

"1712 July 17. Remarkable for St. Ann's Church Consecration, and a great concourse of people. Good business and I sober at 8 o'clock at night, but I was merry before I went to bed. Bishop Dawes performed the consecration; Mr. Baguley endowed it, the clergy responded at entrance. Mr. Ainscough read prayers. Beatman acted as clerk. The Bishop read the gift both in Latin and English. Mr. Bann (the appointed Rector) preached on 'Holiness becometh Thine House O Lord'; then the Bishop and Clergy and who would stayed sacrament. Thus they were about four hours in this great work."

I have records to 1754 on the genealogical tree of my family and know that it goes back to the areas (Congleton, Macclesfield, Prestbury etc.) from where Nathaniel Bann's forbears lived.....

I must return to the young Barrister in St. Ann's Passage waiting for briefs and hope he will forgive me for this long digression.

I called upon him many times to discuss points and to deliver cases for Counsel's opinion. It was not long before he became a County Court Judge and this promotion removed him from my area for a while. Then after an interval of some years (I cannot state exactly how many) he was made a judge of the High Court and if I happened to be in London and had business in the Law Courts I would sometimes look into his Court, whilst it was in session and if he happened to spot me from his eminence on the Bench he would give me a most gracious smile! But the story does not end there for he was again promoted and became a Lord Justice of Appeal in the Appeal Court. I do not know whether his career was unique but it probably was for he started his 'legal' life as a solicitor and then became in turn a barrister and then County Court Judge, then a High Court Judge and then a Judge of the Court of Appeal.

He was indeed an eminent lawyer and a charming person to meet and moreover he came from that part of Lancashire which is bound up with my beloved River Hodder. I suppose he lived in London most of the time but he had a small country cottage at a little hamlet with the entrancing name of Bashel Eaves which was on the way to Whitewell.

P. Aug. 1968.

My dear Benn,

Thank you very much for your letter and for your sympathy. My wife's health had been in a precarious state for some time but the end was now the less a set wrench after more than fifty two years.

I hope you are prospering. I retired from the Bank five years ago but am keeping busy except for a troublesome knee.

Yours sincerely,

B. O. Bennett,

At one of our meetings I noticed that his forehead was scarred as if he had been in an accident of some sort and he told me that one night as he lay in bed in the cottage there was a partial collapse of the ceiling above the bed and he had narrowly missed some heavy stones falling on his head.

The last time I saw him was on the road leading from the bridge over the Hodder at Newton to Waddington and we had a few words about the delightful country round about - he was taking a few days holiday reviving, I suppose, his memories of his native north. When he retired from office a few years later I wrote to him with my best wishes for a long and happy retirement and he replied with a charming letter of thanks. He died some years ago and I look back upon what I may venture to call our friendship, with gratitude and admiration for his great achievement in the law. In spite of his well earned eminence I always think of him as Ben Ormerod who was once a solicitor in Blackburn and loved the River Hodder and its neighbourhood even as I did.

Another friend in the law who was very much a part of my early years in Huddersfield and who always attended the Mayoral luncheons which I have earlier described was the Stipendiary Magistrate, Waldo. His room in the Town Hall was close to mine and he frequently dropped in to chat about all manner of things in which we had a mutual interest. He was a member of the Club in John William Street and I often had a meal with him there during the winter months on the evenings when we were attending the meetings of the Union Discussion Society (or the U.D.S. as we called it) of which we were both members.

He was rather small in stature and of a stoutish build and wore gold rimmed spectacles and always walked with a stick because of some defect in the hip joint of one his legs. He was quite popular and well liked with all the legal fraternity in the town and certainly was a competent magistrate and if I add that he looked exactly like Samuel Pickwick Esq., General Chairman and member of the Pickwick Club it will be understood what I mean. I am quite sure that he would be amused at my description and would know that I had used the words in a Pickwickian sense!

Sometimes he would have another guest with us at the meals in the Club and I remember meeting there more than once a Colonel Willans (who was related in some way to the Asquith family) and Eaton Smith who was then our leading solicitor advocate in the Magistrates Court and certainly one of the best orators I have heard. He it was who gave the oration in the Parish Church at the service held there on the death of Winston Churchill - a truly noble oration to a great man.

It is remarkable how snatches of conversation remain in one's mind and I recall how at one of the Club meals with Waldo and Colonel Willans we had talked about the events of the period and the troubles here, there and everywhere and the Colonel came out with a quotation from Tennyson "What is it all but a trouble of ants - in the gleam of a million, million suns!" Does not this aptly sum up the state of the present world with its civil strife in every continent and nuclear rivalry overshadowing all things side by side with the modern knowledge of the boundless universe in which we live and which teaches us that we are a mere speck in its vast expanse?

At the U.D.S. the procedure was that a member gave a paper on some subject of his own choice and then a discussion would follow and everyone present made his own contribution. It invariably made a most interesting evening and also was not lacking in wit and humour.

One of my papers was entitled 'A Literary Pilgrimage' and purported to give the details of my development in literary taste from the age of five years - rather an ambitious objective! The paper itself is fully set out in my Miscellany book and I only refer to it here because Waldo was present when I gave it and no sooner was the meeting finished than he came up to me as quickly as his infirmity would allow, seized my hand and said it was the best paper he had heard! The following day I got a letter from him with his detailed comments which, to my sorrow I have misplaced.

He had to go into hospital for an operation on his hip and it was not long afterwards that he collapsed in the bathroom at his home and

ied. "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep".

Another firm friend in the law whom I have not so far had the opportunity to mention was Jim Stead a solicitor who was in the Legal Aid Office of the Law Society in Leeds. After my retirement from local government, I was given a post in that office and he and I worked closely together there. We nearly always spent a certain amount of time in the luncheon interval in my room discussing the time of day, literature and perhaps legal matters if problems had arisen. I should mention that Jim was a cripple in that he had a false leg and had to walk with a stick. I never asked him how this had come about but I believe it was the result of some accident in his boyhood. Strangely enough I was never conscious of this infirmity and, indeed, once I put myself in an embarrassing situation which was entirely due to this lack of perception. We had been talking about poetry (a favourite subject with both of us) and the Victorians in particular and I said I had quite a liking for some of this type of verse which I had learned in my young school days. I began to recite one which began "There was a lonely cottage once, upon a mountain side - And higher still above it rose the summits in their pride - A widow owned that lowly hut, she had on only joy - Alas! her care and sorrow too - He was a cripple boy! He could not climb the mountain paths - He could not run or play - nor earn the daily bread for which his mother toiled all day." I had got about as far as this when it dawned upon me that Jim was a cripple and what would his feelings be on hearing all this. However, I dared not stop and without looking at him I went on to finish the recital. It told how the cripple boy saved his village in the mountain from invasion by enemy soldiers. The underlying theme of the poem is that God has a plan for every man and it was His plan for the cripple boy that he should have the chance to do this brave deed although he was to die in the execution of it. Jim did not comment when I had finished but his face was grave and thoughtful.

Jim was a poet himself of no mean achievement. Shortly after he had retired from the office on reaching retirement age I received from him

a copy of his book "Upon a Distant Beach" which contains all his published work. In the book on the front page he has written: "To Harry Bann Esq., O.B.E. To repair a regretted omission and in grateful recollection of five years literary and professional association" James F. Stead 31.XLL.1975

He had been too modest to tell me of the existence of the book.

Looking through it was a real joy. Each poem is vitally interesting and reflects his deep feelings about his fellow men and the world about him.

He had a lot of pain in his life from his damaged legs (he told me this once) and here is part of his poem "Pain".

I know you pain, my enemy of old,
Stealer of sleep and tempter of the soul;
Your menace still makes cowards of the bold
And sets a limit to what man can thole.

Now I can bear no more, but still they come
The hosts of Pain, with red hot, sharp-tipped spears.
Wave upon Wave. Would I were deaf and dumb,
Blind and unconscious, or could drown in tears!

I'll have no more, I gather to my heart
What specks of my integrity remain,
And hold them in God's love, and so depart
Leaving my body on this earthly plane.

There is so much one could quote from this gifted book that I should not know where to stop but I must give his views on so-called modern poetry as it is extremely practised today and even attracts inordinate praise from literary critics whom one would think should know better.

Jim's views are contained in his poem:

Re-action

Is this the stuff my Shelley penned,
That lit in Keats his scorching flame,
That presaged Byron's noble end,
That polished even Shakespeare's fame?

The disciplines of metred rhyme
Were tribute which they paid their Muse,
Who offers help in our own time
On terms which lesser men refuse.

They plague us with their rigmaroles,
Speaking of "shared experience,"
But precious few the precious souls
Whose preciousness is so intense.

Fermenting freedom is a wine
Too strong for stomachs such as these,
So bring us back the lilting line,
The wordsmith's craft, and minstrelsies.

Our poetry is for the mass
Of people to enjoy and love.
Release it from this sorry pass!
Revive once more its power to move!

And now I must leave him. Jim died last year (1984) and unfortunately I did not hear of his death at the time and was therefore not able to attend his funeral but I look back on our friendship with deep gratitude. JUSTORUM ANIMAE IN MANU DEI SONT.



10 Downing Street
Whitehall

Honours - In Confidence

Please quote this
reference in your reply
O.B.E.

May 1, 1968

Sir,

I am asked by the Prime Minister to inform you, in strict confidence, that he has it in mind, on the occasion of the forthcoming list of Birthday Honours, to submit your name to The Queen with a recommendation that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to approve that you be appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.).

Before doing so, the Prime Minister would be glad to be assured that this would be agreeable to you. I should be obliged if you would let me know at your earliest convenience.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Michael Hills

Harry Bann, Esq.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF HUDDERSFIELD



EXTRACT from the minutes of the proceedings of the Town Council of Huddersfield, held on the Fourth day of December 1968.

TOWN CLERK AND SOLICITOR

It was moved by the Mayor (Alderman T.P. Cliffe),
Seconded by the Deputy Mayor (Alderman J. Sykes),
Supported by Alderman D. Graham, Councillor J.
Mernagh and Alderman K. Brooke, and

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY): That this Council place on record their thanks and appreciation of the services of Mr. Harry Bann, O.B.E. in the discharge of the responsible duties devolving upon him as Town Clerk and Solicitor to the Council during his 23 years' tenure of the Town Clerkship and extend to him best wishes for many years of good health and happiness in his retirement.

THE COMMON SEAL of the Mayor, Aldermen and)
Burgesses of the County Borough of Huddersfield)
was affixed hereto in the presence of)

Deputy Mayor

Deputy Town Clerk



580/60

