

HISTORICAL NOTES

ON THE

BRADFORD CORPORATION

WITH

RECORDS OF THE
LIGHTING, AND WATCHING COMMISSIONERS AND
BOARD OF HIGHWAY SURVEYORS.

BY WILLIAM CUDWORTH,

Author of "Round About Bradford."

BRADFORD :
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1881.

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P R E F A C E.

The publication of this volume seemed to be called for because the matter which it contains has not hitherto been accessible in a permanent form. Bradford has passed through such marvellous stages of development that the history of its governing body is of great importance ; hence my desire to place the main outlines of that history upon record.

In no sense, however, can this effort be regarded as exhaustive ; the endeavour has been to present an epitome of corporate work rather than an elaborated history. The information I am enabled to give has been compiled from various sources. The books of the Corporation, comprising the early records handed over by the Lighting and Watching Commissioners and the Board of Highway Surveyors, have been placed at my disposal by Mr. McGowen, the Town Clerk. The Municipal Year Book, originated and for some years compiled by the late Alderman Joseph Farrar, has supplied some information, and I have had the privilege of making use of Corporation documents left by him. It may be that in dealing with so many facts and figures inaccuracies have crept in, but no pains have been spared to avoid them. I may add, that in order to preserve some degree of continuity where it appeared desirable to conclude the narrative of any particular event, it has been necessary to depart occasionally from strict chronological arrangement.

Having a high regard for men who have assisted in raising Bradford from a place of comparative insignificance to its present high position among the municipal towns of

England, I have added brief notices of many who have been especially associated with the public bodies referred to in these "Notes." In numerous cases I have been successful in securing portraits, and I should have been glad if the collection were even more complete.

In every instance the artistic work has been done by Bradford artists. To Messrs. Appleton & Co. and Mr. A. Sachs, of Bradford, I am indebted for the photographic portraits of Mayors which embellish the volume, and which have been excellently reproduced by the Woodburytype process; Mr. John Sowden, the late Mr. Regester, Mr. Arthur North, Mr. McArthur, Mr. John Thornton, and Mr. T. T. Empsall, junior, have supplied the sketches for the electrotype illustrations; and I am indebted to Mr. William Scruton for two interesting views. Mr. Abraham Holroyd, of Eldwick, voluntarily offered me the use of the woodcut depicting Bradford as it was, and the steel plate showing the town as it now is; and these I thankfully accepted. For permission to reproduce the beautiful plan showing the area covered by the waterworks scheme of the Corporation I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. A. R. Binnie, C.E., and of other corporate officials.

Mr. W. G. Hird, of Bradford, kindly undertook the difficult work of indexing the many items contained in the volume; and in its completed form the Author trusts that it may be found a not unimportant contribution to the history of his native town.

October, 1881.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the compilation of the earlier portion of the following records, the author has been indebted almost entirely to the information contained in the manuscript volumes preserved at the Bradford Parish Church. Valuable as these records undoubtedly are, the merest scraps of information, with no regard to continuity, are all that are obtainable from them, a circumstance the more marked when placed in contrast with the voluminous records of the present day. In one volume, commenced in the year 1687 and concluded in 1825, the proceedings of the overseers of the poor are mixed up with minutes referring to Church matters, instructions to the two surveyors of the town, and entries of the appointment of constables. Even from the meagre debtor and creditor accounts which the overseers or the highway surveyors of the past vouchsafed to their constituents, and with which it would appear they were satisfied, we are able, however, to draw comparisons invaluable for reference, and the information is such as cannot be obtained elsewhere.

Coming forward to the beginning of the present century, a more ample supply of material is available in the records commenced by the Lighting and Watching Commissioners, instituted by the Act of 1803; and in the year 1843 the Board of Highway Surveyors, appointed under the Highway Act of 1835, came into existence, thus supplanting the two surveyors elected yearly by the vestry. From the year 1847, the period of incorporation, the material at hand is of course ample, but for obvious reasons we have culled only those items which presented features of interest.

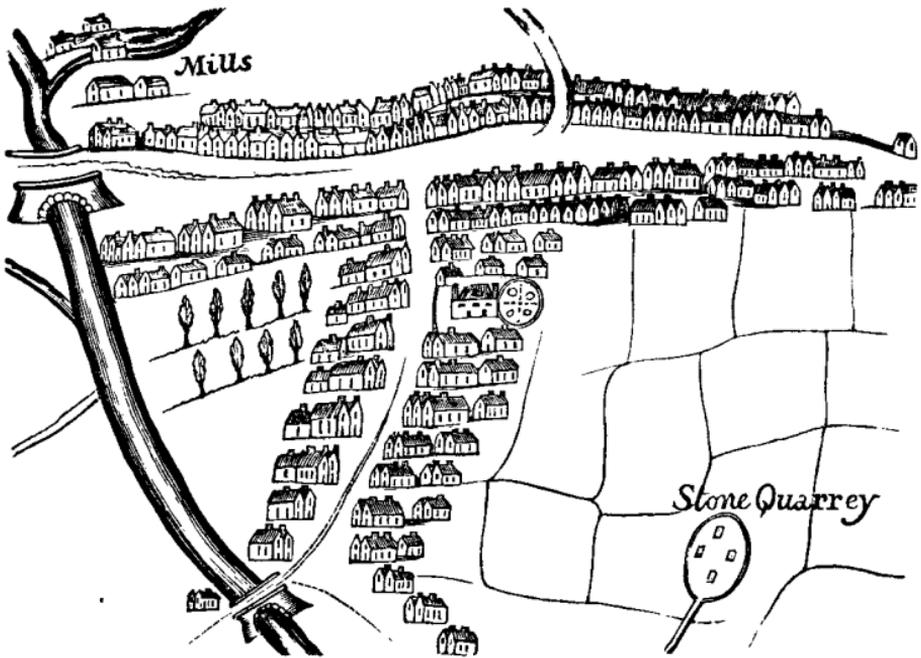
Many of the entries even in the Corporation books refer to matters of detail not here alluded to. Other references are often so slight that they but give the cue to events of more general interest, and in such cases we have made up the deficiency from other sources. The documents left by both the Commissioners and Highway Surveyors are now invaluable to their successors, the Corporation, containing, as they do, a record of the periods when various streets were "declared," *i.e.*, taken in hand by the authorities, and maintained as public highways. The books preserved at the Parish Church and the Town Hall are in excellent keeping, but it is to be regretted that the documents at the latter place are unclassified. With all deference to this method of treating past records of the town, we cannot refrain from suggesting that the cumbrous mass of documentary material should undergo a thorough overhauling, and that a complete classification be made of those books and documents which are worthy of preservation.

In dealing with the period embraced in the century preceding the election of the Commissioners in 1803, we are almost by the force of circumstances obliged to notice matters not strictly appertaining to the management of the highways, if indeed the term "management" be not a misnomer, where so little was attempted by the town's authorities, and everybody did pretty much as they pleased. The vestry was the ruling authority, and was chary of spending money, being generally disposed towards the principle which has, since its day, been regarded as "economy," namely, expending as little as possible upon whatever object.

The first complete entry upon poor's account, for the year 1688, refers to the accounts of William Dixon, one of the overseers for the "west end of Bradford," and of William Webster, overseer for the "east end," or Kirkgate and Barkerend, showing that for the west end the contributions towards the maintenance of the poor amounted to £118 9s. 2d., and for the east end to £78 10s. 6d., or a total of £196 19s. 8d. The above accounts were examined and passed in vestry meeting by Thos. Ledgard, Abm.

Balme, David Parkinson, James Denham, Matthew Stead, Thos. Walker, and Thos. Hodgson.

With little variation the same form of account appears year by year, except that some overseers were more exact than others in explaining items comprising the "sundries." Thus: Thos. Hodgson returns "By loss for Will. Rawson coalmine being unpaid, £01 02s. 0d.; Henry Hoppey,* for poor's rents; by Jeremy Bower being oversessed, £00 01s. 6d.;" "received of Rich. Shepherd, one year's rent of the Black Abbey land," &c.



Failing any existing description of the appearance of Bradford about this period, the accompanying block plan of

* The Henry Hoppey referred to was usher at the Free Grammar School adjoining the Parish Church, and for many years kept the churchwardens' accounts, which are most ample in detail, but which supply no information in regard to the subject with which we are concerned. He resided at the house which formerly stood at the end of Broadstones. The bridge near to his house was known as Hoppey Bridge for long afterwards. After thirty-seven years' faithful service as usher he resigned in 1707, and was presented by the governors of the school with a gratuity of £5, "in testimony of his having for so many years acquitted and behaved himself in his office."

the town may be introduced. It was taken from the original plan drawn in 1700, now in the possession of Edward Hailstone, Esq., of Walton Hall, and was introduced into the "History of Bradford" by Mr. John James, who had no doubt of its accuracy, as it accorded, in a great measure, with a view of the town taken about the same period by Mr. Warburton, Somerset Herald, which is now in the British Museum. The streets shown are Kirkgate, Ivegat, Westgate, and Silsbridge Lane, and in addition there were a few scattered houses in Goodman's-end and Barkerend.

In 1714, a memorandum was made by the vestry, which suggests the existence of some attempt at the suppression of street begging and systematic distribution of alms, as it proceeds as follows:—

We do order and agree that none of the poor persons in this town shall, for the future, be relieved by us or any other of the inhabitants of this town, at our or their respective houses, by way of alms. But that in lieu thereof a month's additional poor assess shall from henceforth be annually collected in this town by the Overseers of the Poor for the time being, whereof one twenty-sixth part shall, every fortnight, be bestowed in oat-bread, to be by such overseers distributed every other Sunday, or Lord's Day, at the Parish Church of Bradford, immediately after divine service and sermon there in the morning, to and amongst such poor persons of this town as shall resort to the said church on those days to hear divine service there, or being impotent and unfit to repair to the said church shall send some other person thither on his, her, or their behalf.

The autographs to this memorandum comprise those of many of the influential residents of the town at that period, viz.:—

WM. RAWSON.	ROBT. STANSFIELD.
WM. SWAINE.	RICH. RICHARDSON.
ABM. SWAINE.	JOS. GARGRAVE.
JOHN BOWER.	RICH. THOMPSON.
JNO. STOCKDALE.	FRANCIS ROADES.
MATT. STEAD.	SAM. HEMINGWAY.
THOS. WALKER.	JOHN NORTHOPE.
WILL. MORTIMER.	JOSEPH HOLMES.

The William Rawson named above was an attorney and general trader, and was a man of considerable note. He