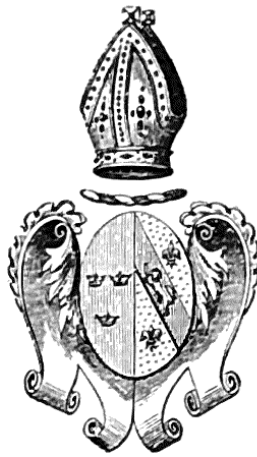


NOTES
ON
THE HISTORY
OF



Bishop Laney's Charity

FOUNDED A.D. 1674

B I S H O P L A N E Y ' S C H A R I T Y

Benjamin Laney D.D. was born in Ipswich in 1590 and studied in Cambridge, first at Christs College and later at Pembroke Hall. In 1630 he was elected Master of Pembroke Hall, and in 1632 Vice Chancellor of the University. In 1639 he was appointed Chaplain to King Charles I and promoted to a Prebend of Westminster. Because of his loyalty to the King he was turned out of his Mastership in 1644 by the Earl of Manchester, the Parliament's Visitor, and also lost his ecclesiastical preferments, whereupon he went abroad and attended King Charles II as Chaplain during his exile.

On the Restoration, Dr. Laney was appointed Bishop of Peterborough, but was subsequently translated to Lincoln and finally to Ely in 1667. During his episcopate at Ely he rebuilt a considerable part of the Bishop's Palace which had been allowed to fall into decay under the Commonwealth.

In January 1674/5 Bishop Laney died at the age of 84 and was buried in the South Aisle of the Cathedral. By his will, made shortly before his death, the Bishop bequeathed £500 to Pembroke Hall and also devised his lands, messuages and hereditaments in Soham to his executors upon trust to convey them to six substantial freeholders, inhabitants of Ely or Soham, who should be charged to use the rents and profits in putting out the children of the poor inhabitants of those parishes to some honest trade, provided that not more than £10 should be allowed for any one child. The will directed that, when the number of trustees should be reduced by death to three, three other substantial inhabitants should be added to their number; it was also directed that the trustees should render an account annually to the Vicar, Churchwardens and Overseers of Soham, on which occasion a dinner was to be provided for the trustees.

On 23rd November, 1675 the Bishop's Executors duly carried out the directions in the will by conveying the testator's Soham properties to the first trustees selected to administer them. The estate comprised in this conveyance consisted of four tenements in Meere Street, Churchgate Street and Brooke Street and approximately 100 acres of pasture and arable land mainly lying in the open field round Soham.

Evidently successive bodies of trustees were able to add to the original estate by purchase, since by 1813 it had increased to 195 acres and 3 houses. For example, on 31st August 1803, the then trustees James Merist, John Peachey, Thomas Waddington D.D. and Francis Bagge purchased an additional acre of pasture, presumably out of surplus income.

In 1810 an information was filed in the Chancery Court concerning the Charity with a view to obtaining an order which would facilitate the management of the Charity and enable its objects to be better implemented. It is clear that the maximum apprenticeship premium of £10 laid down by Bishop Laney's will in 1674 was no longer adequate to enable the trustees to induce masters to accept apprentices, and there were other administrative matters on which a direction was necessary. The Master's Report showed that, at that time, one half of the rents was being received by two trustees at Ely and the remainder by two trustees at Soham and that each pair of trustees applied their share in binding out children of ~~their~~ respective parishes without reference to the other pair. Another trustee in each place acted as Treasurer and received a moiety of the balance at the annual audit. The Report also showed that the Charity estate consisted of 3 houses and 155 acres 1 rood in Soham and 39 acres 3 poles in Fordham, all being freehold, with the exception of 1 acre which was copyhold of the Manor of Netherhall Tindall in Soham.

Following upon his Report, the Master approved a scheme for the regulation of the Charity which provided for the raising of the apprenticeship premium to £20 per child and for the keeping of records of the names of the children, particulars of their apprenticeship and accounts of the other expenditure of the Charity. The accounts were to be settled by the Vicar, Churchwardens and Overseers of Soham on the Monday before Easter, and copies were to be made for the Trustees, Churchwardens and Overseers of Trinity Parish in Ely, the inhabitants of both places being at liberty to attend and inspect the accounts. The scheme also directed that the trustees should appoint a Treasurer and should have power to appoint a Clerk at a salary not exceeding £10.

In 1819 the trustees received £300.0.1 for the sale of timber and £103.16.10 for the sale of gravel. In the year 1821 they possessed £2474.14. 6 3% Consolidated Stock producing £74. 4.10 per annum and raising the income of the Charity to £378. 2.10 per annum. The newly authorised premium of £20 was not being paid in full at the commencement of each apprenticeship, since the trustees thought fit to reserve one half of this sum "in order to insure attention and proper conduct on the part of the masters". This practise of reserving one half of the premium until the end of the apprenticeship has continued up to the present day.

In 1831 the Charity's estate was vested in J. Page, William Harlock, Luke Dench, George Hall, John Harlock and John Garnett. Shortly afterwards, a new survey of the estate was made, and this showed it as comprising 2 houses and a cottage and 188 acres 1 rood and 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ poles. This shows a discrepancy of some 6 acres from the Master's Report of 1813, but, while there may have been some sales or exchanges of land during this period, it is likely that there is also some discrepancy between the old traditional acreages and the surveyed acreage of about 1831. At the time of the survey, the Charity's Rent Roll amounted to £303.18.0 per annum and the drainage rates were about £10 per annum. A small amount of tithe was payable but no land tax. The 1 acre of copyheld land was subject to a small quit rent and fine arbitrary. The Survey states that the lands and buildings were in good condition, the tenants held from year to year, and the rents were regularly paid.

From 1837 Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into Charities we learn that the greater part of the Charity's Trustees then resided in Ely and that by far the greater proportion of the children were bound from that Parish. No Meeting for putting out apprentices had been held in Soham since 1813 and the children of that place were required to produce a certificate from the Minister, Churchwardens and principal inhabitants, which was only demanded in Ely when the parties were unknown to the Trustees.

For comparison with the number of apprentices bound in recent years by the present trustees, it may be of interest to see the figures for the period 1828 - 1834 as under: -

<u>Year</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>	<u>Location</u>	
1828	12	4 from Ely	8 from Soham
1829	13	7 from Ely	6 from Soham
1830	15	9 from Ely	6 from Soham
1831	12	7 from Ely	5 from Soham
1832	15	11 from Ely	4 from Soham
1833	16	11 from Ely	5 from Soham
1834	15	10 from Ely	5 from Soham

In considering the proportion of apprenticeships between Soham and Ely in this period, it is material to remember that the population of Ely was double that of Soham in the mid 19th century; the then trustees also state that they selected on the basis of greatest need. (Commissioners' Report 1837). It appears that the object of the Charity's assistance were selected without regard to the receipt of parish relief, and that several orphan children were apprenticed from the workhouse. So it seems clear that the Laney Trustees of that time were carrying out their Founder's intentions to the letter in a hard and materialistic age. The commissioners' Report mentions that, in a number of cases, children were being apprenticed to their fathers, but they concede that these children were properly instructed during their apprenticeships.

In recent years the number of applications to the Charity for financial assistance with apprenticeships has shown a substantial decline, as will be seen from the number of apprentices bound between 1966 and 1971: -

<u>Year</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>	<u>Location</u>	
1966	4	2 from Ely	2 from Soham
1967	3	3 from Ely	- -
1968	5	3 from Ely	2 from Soham
1969	1	1 from Ely	- -
1970	6	4 from Ely	2 from Soham
1971	2	2 from Ely	- -

. At the same time, improvements to the Charity's properties and regular reviews of tenancies and rents have produced an average annual rent roll of £1,700 and the Charity also receives some income from invested balances. In these circumstances, the Trustees have applied to the Department of Education and Science for a Scheme enabling them to use income not required for apprenticeship purposes for other objects consistent with the general charitable intention of the Founder. The following draft scheme has been prepared by the Department and approved by the Trustees, and, subject to any representations made to the Minister after the publication and deposit of the draft, an order establishing the Scheme will follow in due course.

For nearly 300 years, the Charity has been administered by the "Six inhabitants of Ely or Soham" as directed by its Founder, and from time to time new Trustees have been appointed in succession to those who died or retired from their trusteeship.

The list of past Trustees includes the names of many well-known persons in Ely and Soham, such as J. Muriel, W. Harlock, E.W. Harlock, F.L. Harlock, C. Bidwell, G. Willis, A. Slack, W.A. Slack, G.W. Cooper, W.J. Evans, M. Pate, W.J.C. Luddington, L.H. Luddington, J.G. Cowell, P.S. Bidwell, R. Clark and G.L. Archer.

The present Trustees are B.J. Slack, J.G.A. Beckett, J. Cowell, C.J. Ford, G.R. Mason and F.G.A. Beckett.

January 1972

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J.G.A. Beckett

Published Draft Scheme

Scaled

Administrative County-CAMBRIDGE AND
ISLE OF ELY

No.

Urban District - ELY

Ancient Parish - SOHAM

Foundation - Bishop Laney's Charity
scheme

SCHEME MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
UNDER SECTION 18 OF THE CHARITIES ACT 1960.

The Foundation

1. In this Scheme the expression "the Foundation" means the Foundation of Bishop Laney's Charity, in the Ancient Parish of Soham and Urban District of Ely, in the Administrative County of Cambridge and Isle of Ely, founded by the will of Benjamin Laney, Bishop of Ely, dated 21st January 1674 and regulated by the said Will and a scheme of the County of Chancery made in 1813.

Application of Income

2. (1) If and so far as, in the opinion of the Trustees, the net income of the Foundation cannot usefully be applied in apprenticing, the Trustees may apply the net income of the Foundation in one or more of the following ways: -

(a) in providing financial assistance, outfits, clothing, tools, instruments or books to enable beneficiaries on leaving school, university or any other educational establishment, to prepare for, or assist their entry into a profession, trade or calling;

(b) in awarding Exhibitions or Grants tenable at any secondary school, college of education, university, or other institution of further (including professional and technical) education, approved by the Trustees; and

(c) in otherwise promoting the education (including social and physical training) of beneficiaries.

(2) In this clause the expression "beneficiaries" means young persons who have not attained the age of 25 years, who are resident in the Administrative County of Cambridge and Isle of Ely with a preference to those resident in the Ancient Parish of Soham of the Urban District of Ely, and who, in the opinion of the Trustees, are in need of financial assistance.

(3) Within the limits prescribed by this Scheme, the Trustees shall have full power to make rules for the award of Exhibitions, Grants, Bursaries, Maintenance Allowances, or other benefits, including rules as to the value and period of tenure of the awards, and the qualifications and the method of ascertainment and selection of beneficiaries.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science Orders that the foregoing Scheme be established.

Given under the Official Seal of the Secretary of State for Education and Science on

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