

**Richard Thornton's Endowments
Sesquicentennial Year at Burton in Lonsdale**



Sesquicentennial Year 2004

The year 2004 was the 150th anniversary of the building of Burton in Lonsdale Village Hall, above. It was converted in 1854 from a tithe barn into a Sunday School following a public appeal in 1853 for subscriptions, which duly came from local property owners. Principal among the benefactors was Richard Thornton (1776-1865), who the same year endowed Burton's Voluntary Aided Primary School, below.



The Thornton Legacy

Richard Thornton's business was based first near the Southwark end of London Bridge, originally as a hop merchant when in 1798 he was admitted as a member of Lloyd's [1]. However, he moved across the river in 1815 to Old Swan Wharf, Old Swan Stairs, a little west of Fishmongers Hall. From these stairs boatmen, mostly from across the river at Southwark, competed for rowing people up and down river. Kept on the premises at Old Swan Wharf and shown to visitors, including Evans [2], were models of the Schools and the Church built by the Thorntons at Burton. Evans [2] describes meeting Richard a few months before his death, and similarly Thomas a few months before his.

The present Church, All Saints, which is visible behind the Village Hall in the picture, was built in 1870 by Thomas Thornton, nephew of Richard Thornton, on the site that included several cottages, in one of which he was born. The detail below from a contemporary painting by an unknown artist shows the group of cottages on the south side of the green, between Hill House and the old Chapel of Ease.



On his death in 1865, Richard's estate was worth some three million pounds--*'by far the largest fortune of the century to that date'*. In a long list of charitable bequests, Richard left £10,000 *'upon trust for maintenance of schools built at my expense in Burton for poor children'*. Thomas Thornton inherited one million pounds but survived his uncle only by five years. These benefactions by the Thornton family are of considerable national interest since Richard Thornton became a millionaire and in his lifetime one of the richest men in England, earning the sobriquet *'Duke of Dantzig'* from his strategically important commercial shipping interests during the Napoleonic wars [1, 2].

Burton Village Hall

The site of the original tithe barn was on Church land then belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, the patrons of the parish of Thornton in Lonsdale, which housed the mother church of the Chapel of Ease in Burton in Lonsdale. Burton became a separate parish with its own vicar in 1866; his son, Laurence Binyon the poet and art historian, was born in 1869 and in 1914 wrote *'The Fallen'* which is read at all Remembrance Day services. The Sunday School replaced the *'very incommodious and disagreeable'* barn premises in the yard of the Black Bull Inn (now Bull Farmhouse) which had been in use since before 1831.

The Village Hall originally was used not only as a Sunday School but also as a day school for the under 6 year olds, who were too young for normal school. At its opening in January 1854 the Endowed School was intended for 46 boys and 46 girls, then the village population was over 700 with active potteries and textile making [3], [4]. The Hall was held by the Diocese and administered by the incumbent curate, after 1866 by the vicar and churchwardens, and from 1921 through the newly formed Parochial Church Council. It was a meeting place for the Parish Council and village organizations and for various kinds of social events, for example in 1921 a meeting of depositors of the Yorkshire Penny Bank.

It continued as the Infants' Department of Richard Thornton's School until about 1900, and as a Sunday School until the Second World War, since when it has served as a Community Centre.

A Public Meeting in 1952 appointed a Committee to plan fundraising and events for Coronation celebrations in 1953 and the Village Hall was used for numerous special events, including a Tramps Ball on Boxing night 1952 with a record attendance. The BBC TV coverage of Coronation Day 2nd June was screened in the Hall and the Queen's Speech was relayed there during the evening followed by a dance after the celebration bonfire on Castle Hill. The photograph shows the Coronation Committee at a celebration Tea in the Village Hall.



The High Street photograph shows the vicinity of the then Sunday School in the early 1950's, before the demolition of Kidd's Barn opposite to open the route for Manor Close and the new estate.



In 1954 the Parochial Church Council delegated the management of the Hall to a subcommittee, including representation of parishioners by co-option. Increasing costs and need for repairs led to the setting up in 1972 of a subcommittee to investigate future possibilities.

In 1973 it recommended obtaining a valuation for selling the Hall to the Parish and an estimate for converting the north aisle of the church. Negotiations between the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council to set up a Trust were made rather fractious because the Secretary of the former coincided with the Clerk to the latter.

In 1973 the Parochial Church Council agreed the price of £4500 with completion in 1975; the next year the Conveyance was signed for the Parish by the first four Trustees and the Village Hall became a Registered Charity in 1977 with further Trustees elected from village organisations.

Diocese
Westminster Ltd
100, Cannon Street,
LONDON,
E.C.4.

Gifts Conveyance

ENGLAND REVENUE
PRODUCED
30 JUL 1976
FINANCE ACT 1971

is made the Twenty First
day of July

One thousand nine hundred and seventy six B E T W E E N THE BRADFORD
DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE (hereinafter called "the Diocesan Board") of
the one part and PET R EDMONDSON of 6 Greta Heath Burton in Lonsdale
in North Yorkshire MARGE ROBINSON of Meadow Side Burton in Lonsdale
aforesaid VERA DODGSON of Gallaber Farm Burton in Lonsdale aforesaid
and WILLIAM MATTOCK MASON of Lowfields Burton in Lonsdale aforesaid
(hereinafter called "the Trustees" which expression shall where the
context so admits include their successors in title) of the other part

W H E R E A S : -

- (1) The Diocesan Board is seized in fee simple in possession free from incumbrances of the property hereinafter described and has agreed to sell the same to the Trustees at the price of Four thousand five hundred pounds
- (2) The Trustees have requested the Diocesan Board to convey the said property in manner and upon the trusts hereinafter appearing

NOW THIS DEED W I T N E S S E T H as follows :-

1. The Interpretation Act 1889 applies for the interpretation of this deed as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament
2. The Trustees are the trustees of the Burton in Lonsdale Village Hall (hereinafter called "the Charity")
3. In pursuance of the said agreement and in consideration of the sum of Four thousand five hundred pounds now paid by the Trustees to the Diocesan Board (the receipt whereof the Diocesan Board hereby acknowledges) the Diocesan Board as Trustees hereby convey unto the Trustees
ALL THAT plot of land situate at the junction of Chapel Lane and High Street Burton in Lonsdale aforesaid with the building erected thereon or on some part thereof and known as Burton in Lonsdale Church Sunday School Hall All which said property is for identification purposes only shown edged red on the map or plan annexed hereto TO HOLD the same unto the Trustees in fee simple upon the trusts and subject to the powers and provisions set out in the Schedule hereto
4. IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the transaction hereby effected does not form part of a larger transaction or of a series of transactions in respect of which the amount or value or the aggregate amount or value of the consideration exceeds FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS

IN WITNESS whereof the said parties hereto have hereunto set their respective hands and seals the day and year first before written

THE SCHEDULE above referred to

Addendum

Burton in Lonsdale '*Borctune*' in Domesday and '*Burtona de Lanesdala*' in Pipe Rolls of 1130, was the Head Manor for Burton Chase from pre-conquest times, and it had a market charter from 1306 [5]. It has remains of a motte and bailey, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in the centre of a Conservation Area containing 33 listed buildings, including the former Earl of Derby's Courthouse [6, 7].

References

1. W.G. Hoskins, *Richard Thornton A Victorian Millionaire*, *History Today*, Volume XII, 8 (1962) 574-580
2. D. Morier Evans. *Within and Without: The Old House in the City' Old Swan Wharf, Old Swan Stairs.* *Gentlemen's Magazine* (1870) 307-312.
3. Muriel Humphries, *Quarries, Coal, Clay and Cloth, Hudson History, Settle 2003.* (72pp)
4. M. and G. Woolnough, Editors, *Glimpses of Burton's Past, Burton-in-Lonsdale, Millennium History Group, Burton-in-Lonsdale, 2000.* (60pp)
5. M.C. Higham. *The effects of the Norman Conquest on north west England with particular reference to the honors of Hornby and Burton-in-Lonsdale, PhD thesis, Lancaster University 1992.*
6. T. Stephens. *The Earl of Derby's Manor, Yorkshire History Quarterly, Volume 6, 1 (2000) 42-51.*
7. C.T.J. Dodson, *The Earl of Derby's Courthouse at Burton in Lonsdale, Hudson History, Settle 2003.* (68pp)