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SHORT NOTES
ON
LINCOLN'S INN.





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LINCOLN'S INN.



THE Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn have their origin in a group of lawyers, who between 1286 and 1310 were brought by H. de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, to settle near his Manor House in Holborn.* Here they occupied a house in Shoe Lane (known in later years as Thavy's Inn), acquiring the title they still bear by being under the patronage of the Earl of Lincoln. Thence at a date previous to the death of Lord Furnival in 1383, the larger part of the Society, taking their title with them, moved to Lord Furnival's two messuages in Holborn, leaving a minority to occupy Thavy's Inn as dependents of the Society. By the year 1422 again a majority had moved from Furnival's Inn and are found occupying, as tenants to the Bishop, the Palace of the Bishops of Chichester in Chancellor's or Chancery Lane, and holding Thavy's Inn and Furnival's Inn as dependencies.

The "Hospitium de Lincoln's Inn," as the heading of the first Black Book of 1422 calls the Palace, has remained ever since in the possession of the Society, who acquired the fee in 1580. The Records of the Society incidentally give details of the site.

* Black Books of Lincoln's Inn, Vol. IV., pp. 263-298. The Site of Lincoln's Inn, by W. Paley Baildon, F.S.A.

It was separated from Chancery Lane by a ditch and a mud wall, thatched with reeds ; at one point a gate, near the present old Gatehouse, gave access to the Lane. A similar boundary marked the North and West sides of the property, and the latter was pierced in the North end by an opening to the space now known as Lincoln's Inn Fields. The West ditch and wall ran along the line of the present wall, across the present gateway to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and over the site of No. 11 and 11a New Square, till abreast of a point now marked by a white stone and inscription on the East wall of No. 11 New Square.

On the South side a wall ran eastward from the point just mentioned along the line of the South front of No. 13 New Square and continued South of the front of Old Buildings to Chancery Lane. The Eastern end was, at one time, marked by a palisado and ditch some sixteen feet to the South of the line of buildings. A postern gate, just opposite to No. 13 New Square, gave access to Fickett's Fields, now in part New Square.

Among the buildings were the Bishop's Hall, a Chapel of St. Mary and another of St. Richard, or, it may be, one building containing two chapels, and several two-storey living houses built of timber and plaster or "dawb." None of these buildings now exist, though their sites are conjecturable. The rest of the property to the Northward was taken up by a garden bordering on Chancery Lane, and a coney garth or rabbit warren lying on the West of it. The herb or kitchen garden close to the postern gate before mentioned, of which traces still remain in the trees between the South end of Old Buildings and the North end of New Square, East side, was added to by the Society at the later date of 1585.

OLD HALL.

The oldest building of Lincoln's Inn is the Old Hall, which in 1489 replaced the Bishop's Hall. Successive alterations and adaptations have left little visible of its original form.

It was in every way the centre of the social life of the Inn. For more than a century after it was built, the great fireplace in its middle provided the only fire to which the majority of members had access. In it took place the eating, teaching, recreation, meetings of the Society, and the solemn dancings by the members of the Inn at great feasts. Here, too, in 1662, on the occasion of a visit from Charles II., the members performed a masque, of which a rare copy is preserved in the Library. In the last two centuries it has served as a Chapel and a Law Court, and is now used as a Lecture Room. It contains a screen of uncommon type.

On the walls are the arms of King Charles II., the Princes and Nobles who dined here and were admitted into the Society on February 29th, 1671.

GATE HOUSE.

The Gate House, opening into Chancery Lane, was begun in 1517-18 and finished in 1520-1. The building of it was currently attributed to Sir Thomas Lovell, but the records only credit him with a considerable contribution, and state that William Sulyard, a Barrister of the Inn, was entrusted with the erection. Sir Thomas Lovell, K.G., was long a valued fellow of the Society; admitted in 1464 he

served every office in succession ; in 1485, after fighting for Henry VII. at Bosworth in August, the Society elected him a Governor in November, and before the end of the year the King had made him Chancellor of the Exchequer for life ; the Borough of Northampton had returned him to Parliament ; and the House of Commons had elected him Speaker. He is known to have been a great builder, and may well have assisted the Society with advice, and in this way connected his name with the Gate House. His last contribution was in 1520, four years before his death.

On the Chancery Lane front is a tablet of three panels. The central one has the arms of Henry VIII.—France and England quarterly within the Garter and surmounted by a Crown. The left hand panel has the arms of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln (or, a lion rampant purple). On the right hand panel are the arms of Sir Thomas Lovell ; Lovell, quartering Muswell (vert, two chevronels argent, each charged with a cinq-foil gules) also within the Garter. A label gives the date 1518.

There are but three other such Gate Houses left in London.* The Guard Room still exists on the South side. The Vaulting in the archway, which was repointed in 1542, according to the Records, has since disappeared.

The Gate House can only be considered old in general appearance and in form, so many reparations having swept its surface. Its construction and foundations are defective and have been strengthened in recent years.

* Those of St. James's Palace, Lambeth Palace, and St. John's, Clerkenwell. v. "The Old Gatehouse of Lincoln's Inn," by W. Paley Baildon, F.S.A.

OLD BUILDINGS.

The houses called Old Buildings, extending from the South side of the Old Gate House to the corner of New Square, are the surviving examples of the general rebuilding which began by the making of "a Bevy of New Chambers at the Back Syde of the Hall by the Kitchen" in 1524, and continued to about 1613. The internal arrangement of a Set appears from an inventory of a Bencher's Set in 1605 to have been as follows: it comprised two "studies" and an inner chamber, shut off from each other by wainscot partitions which formed a central ante-chamber into which the three rooms opened. Each of these three rooms had a window on the outer side, and windows in the partitions gave a through light to the ante-chamber, in which was a wainscot bed with a curtain. There was no fireplace. A Set was occupied by one Bencher or two Barristers.

John Thurloe, who was one of the Council of State under the Protector Cromwell, occupied the ground floor of No. 24 Old Buildings from 1647-59. He then moved to No. 13 Old Buildings (now pulled down), which he left in 1661, and never after had Chambers in the Inn. The State Papers which were published by Birch in 1742 were said to have been discovered in a false ceiling in No. 13 during the reign of William III.

CHAPEL.

The Chapel, begun in 1620 and finished in 1623, was designed and built by Inigo Jones. It has since been restored and much altered by Wyatt in 1797, and restored and lengthened by Salter, under the superintendence of the

late Lord Grimthorpe in 1882-3. It was built on pillars, in view of using the cloister below as a place of burial. Stow's Survey of London* thus criticises the cloister: "The raising this Chapel on Pillars affords a pleasing melancholy walk underneath, and, by night, particularly when illuminated by lamps, it has an effect that may be felt but not described."

The six original windows in the body of the Chapel are best described as figure and canopy windows, and have the arms of the donors placed beneath the feet of the figures. Some bear the signatures of makers of them. On the figure of St. Matthias is the signature of "Bernard." On those of St. Andrew and St. John, "R.B." combined in a cipher. The St. John bears "R.B." also in a cipher and an imperfect inscription. The St. James has part of an inscription. The St. Thomas has the initials "R.B." The St. Bartholomew shows the letter "R.," and in the background a representation of the Chapel and part of the Old Hall. Finally, that of St. Matthew bears a cipher which appears to contain (besides other letters) "R.B.," and the letters making up "Fecit." The remaining eighteen figures in the windows bear no signature.

Horace Walpole ascribes these windows to the family of Van Linge, showing the current tradition, and has been followed by subsequent writers. This family are stated to have been Dutchmen, but little seems to be known of them except their works. Windows made by them still exist at Oxford, in Christchurch, and in the Chapels of Wadham, University, and Queen's. Mr. Winston thus describes their style:—"Coloured glass is used by them in the draperies, and enamel colours applied as in a painting are much used in the heads and the naked parts of the figures and in the

* Ed. 1755, p. 72.

backgrounds of the design." Another characteristic is that one background is often prolonged through all the lights of a window. An instance of this is the window showing the Chapel and Old Hall.

The names of two of the family are known. The fine East Window of Wadham College Chapel bears the signature of Bernard Van Linge 1622 : that in Christchurch is signed Abraham Van Linge 1630 and the seven windows in the Chapel of University College also bear the name of Abraham Van Linge, but with the date 1641.

The Lincoln's Inn Windows are dated within two years after that of Wadham. It may be that the signature of Bernard to the figure of St. Matthias is that of the author of the Wadham window: but so far no real light has been thrown on the signatures to the windows of this chapel.

A comparison of the whole series of figures, one with another, reveals a variety of composition and treatment, suggesting that several artists have contributed to the series who were assistants only to the Van Linge.

Where the background so requires, architectural details are given with great delicacy—and the view of the Old Hall adjoining the Chapel (in the second window on the South side) has the further charm of giving the view which presented itself to a spectator entering the Inn by the Old Gate House, at the date of the window.

The small landscapes over the heads of St. Paul and St. John the Baptist, are full of detail.

The East window is composed of the coats of arms of

each Treasurer of the Society, beginning with the year 1680 (in which Luke Astry was Treasurer) to the present time.

The West window contains the remaining fragments of the arms of some early Readers and worthies of the Inn, the earliest being of Anthony Irby, Reader in 1590. The glass we learn from the "Black Books," was made "by a Dutchman in 1624" at a cost of 22/- a piece. Probably this Dutchman was of the Van Linge family.

The woodwork of the pews dates from 1623, and was made by "Price the Joyner" for £220.

The Registers show that marriages were celebrated in the Chapel from May 1695 to March 1754. The burials begin June 1695, and the last (of a Bencher) was in May 1852.

HALL AND LIBRARY.

The Building comprising the Hall, Benchers' Rooms, and Library, was designed by Philip Hardwick, "in the collegiate style towards the end of the 16th century before the admixture of Italian architecture."* Begun in 1843, it was opened on October 30th, 1845, by the late Queen Victoria and her Prince Consort, who was then admitted to, and made a Bencher of, the Society.

The Hall is 120 feet long, 45 feet wide, and 62 feet high. On entering by the South door, the fresco on the North wall by the late G. F. Watts, O.M., R.A., is well seen. It is fully described on pp. 12 to 14. Affixed to the panelling of the Hall are the arms of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales,

* Black Books, Vol. IV., p. 215.

Treasurer 1904, and of members of distinction in politics who have been invited to the Bench ; of Bishops who have held the post of Preacher to the Society ; and of the many members who have attained Judicial office in England or Ireland. At the upper end of the Hall below the fresco is the dais on which stands the Bench table ; at this table dine "The Worshipful the Masters of the Bench" (the Benchers), who (to quote their earliest appellation in the Records) are "the Governors of the Society." The cross table below is that of the "Outer Barristers" (now termed Barristers), and the tables running lengthwise are reserved for the "Inner Barristers" (now the Students), who are in process of being called to the Bar of Lincoln's Inn.

Among the busts behind the Bench Table is one of W. Pitt, a copy by Theed of an original by Nollekens.

Among the pictures on the walls are those of Gilbert, C.B., 1725, by Dahl ; Bathurst, L.C., 1771, by Sir N. Dance ; Grant, M.R., 1801, by Harlow ; and Thomson, C.B., 1814, by Opie.

The Hall and Library are joined by a Corridor, on either side of which lie the Benchers' Council Chamber and Drawing Room.

In the Corridor is a chest, presented by Mr. H. Heydon in 1549, then Treasurer, for the "safe custody of the purchase of this House and all other books of account concerning the same." Against the North Wall is a lead cistern, characteristic of the date it bears, and a bust of Inigo Jones, Architect of the Chapel, presented by G. W. Reynolds, Esq., in 1904. A glass case against the wall further on contains relics which have been dug up within Lincoln's Inn. A carving of two figures, in alabaster,

of a kind known to have been made at or near Nottingham, which was dug up in 1822, much below the foundation of the present chapel, is probably a relic of the Bishop's chapel and represents the Annunciation. The several earthenware jugs, more or less ornamented, were in use in the Inn, and the smaller ones, ornamented with green glaze, held the ration of beer served out to each member in the fifteenth century and after. A sixteenth century charm engraved on lead, and made to the end that "nothing may prosper nor go forward that Raufe Scrope taketh in hand" may be contemporaneous with the Benchership of Scrope from 1558-1571. A bronze figurine of Greek Art, dating from 600 B.C., also dug up in the New Garden, must have an interesting history.

To the left of the Glass Case, on the wall is a picture of Paul before Felix, by W. Hogarth, painted for the Society by him in 1748. It was bought with a sum of £200 left by Lord Wyndham, Chancellor of Ireland for the ornamenting of the (then) Hall. The terms of the bequest and an autograph letter and receipt from Hogarth are on the walls of the Drawing Room.

In the Council Chamber are portraits of Kindersley, V.C., 1851, by G. Richmond; Selborne, L.C., 1872-4 and 1880-5 by G. F. Watts, R.A.; Lord Russell of Killowen, L.C.J., by Sargent, R.A. (this is on loan to the Society); and the Prince of Wales, when Treasurer of the Society for the year 1904, by Oules, R.A. There are in this room a series of engravings and mezzotints of past worthies and a notable number of crayon drawings and stipple engravings by the late G. Richmond; also a water-colour drawing representing the opening of the Hall by the late Queen and her Consort.

The busts of Eldon, L.C., and Cairns, L.C., stand on either side of the Drawing Room Door.

On the walls of the Drawing Room are Rainsford, C.J.K.B., 1676, by Gerard Soeste ; Skynner, C.B., 1777, by Gainsborough ; Wm. Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1783-1801, by Gainsborough ; F. Hargrave, Treasurer, 1813, by Reynolds ; and Erskine, L.C., 1806, by Lawrence. There are also engravings of many persons of distinction in their day.

The Library, which has been lengthened since it was built, is now 131 feet long, 40 feet high, and 44 feet wide, exclusive of the two Oriels, 6 feet in length and 17 feet wide. It contains mainly books treating of the Law—one notable series being the MSS. of Sir Matthew Hale, left by him to the Society of which he was a Member. There are some old volumes in the wooden boards used for binding from the 13th to the 15th Century, and some fine examples of early printing and binding ; also a Book of Common Prayer, mounted with silver engraved plates, and dated 1634.

A Statue of Erskine, L.C., by Westmacott, stands in the centre.

NEW SQUARE.

We return now to other parts of the Inn. New Square, originally called Serle's Court, was built between 1682 and 1693. Serle and the Society each claimed to be interested in parts of Ficket's Field, which lay between Lincoln's Inn and the Strand. By mutual consent the buildings were erected which at present form New Square. Considerable litigation took place between Serle and others, claiming under him or against him, one of whom was Dr. Barbon, supposed to have been the son of Praise God Barebones, whose name is often mentioned in connection with the Puritan Party.

The "Stone Buildings," which lie between Chancery Lane and the Eastern side of the present garden, were begun in the year 1775. On the face fronting the gardens is a sun-dial, put up by Wm. Pitt when Treasurer, as the initials on it testify. The buildings in red brick in the vicinity of the Old Hall and Chapel date from 1845-1880.

THE GARDENS.

In the time of the occupation by the Bishop of Chichester the Northern part of his property, from Chancery Lane to Lincoln's Inn Fields, was taken up on the Chancery Lane side by a garden, and on the Western side by a coney garth. When the Society came into residence the rabbits formed part of the weekly fare, and became an inducement to poaching by the young gentlemen of the Inn. But from 1506 the garth and garden supplied clay for thousands of bricks, and elms for the rebuilding of the Inn, and the rabbits disappeared. Then walks were laid out, trees were planted, and the present terrace walk was made in 1584. By 1629 the gardens, it is clear, had become a favourite resort of the public: for in this year a Royal Messenger, holding a warrant to arrest a man unconnected with the Inn, searched Lincoln's Inn Gardens in his ordinary course and there found his man. The remarkable sequel is thus detailed by Sir Robert Heath, A.G., in his letter to King Charles I.: "The messenger, out of respect to the place, forbore to attach him: notwithstanding, when the messenger was quietly gone into the street, about thirty gentlemen (*i.e.*, of the Inn) fetched him into the House violently, pumpt him, shaved him and disgracefully used him."*

* Black Books, Vol. II., 452.

A century and a half later Stone Buildings were begun to be built in the garden site, and in 1834 the Hall and Library took up a great piece of the rabbit warren, and a further piece was occupied by the New Gate and road into Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Garden of New Square dates from 1845. Enough of the Bishop's garden and coney garth remains to please the eye and to preserve the quiet of the Inn.

ARMS OF THE SOCIETY.

The Coat of Arms of the Society, as certified by the Herald's Office in 1701, were in 1516, and still are, azure semé de fers de moline or, on a dexter canton or, a lion rampant purple*; of these the lion rampant purple in a field or belong to the family of de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, whose name the Society has always borne.

THE RECORDS.

The Records of the Society (known as the Black Books), which begin in the year 1422 and continue to the present time, have been kept with great regularity, and show the inner life of the Society with extraordinary minuteness for nearly 500 years. These Records have been printed, and are obtainable at the Steward's Office, Lincoln's Inn. They comprise two volumes of Admissions and four volumes of Records.

THE WATTS FRESCO.

In 1852 the late Mr. G. F. Watts, O.M., R.A., proposed to the Bench to decorate the North wall of the New Hall

* Black Books, Vol. III., pp. 207-8.

with a painting on fresco called by him "Justice, The Hemicycle of Law Givers." His proposal was accepted, and the work (45 feet in width and 40 feet in height) was completed in October, 1859.

Fresco painting is the art of mural painting upon freshly laid plaster lime, whilst it continues damp, with colours capable of resisting the caustic action of the lime with which they are mixed or brought into contact, and this particular painting was executed on plaster freshly laid, piece by piece as required, in tempera colour with egg medium. Much interest was taken in this experiment, as the painting was the first real fresco on any public wall in England.

By the year 1890, defects were apparent in the surface, and Professor Church, of the Royal Academy, was instructed to advise upon the best means of cleaning the painting and to report upon the condition of the surface. It was found impossible to arrest the decay of the surface, which continues to be caused by the nature of the plaster, and will in time destroy the whole painting.

The following letter, written by Mr. Watts in 1869 to his friend, Mr. C. H. Rickards, of Manchester, is of much interest :—

"I must own that your friend's* expressed opinion of my Lincoln's Inn Fresco is very gratifying to me, for I know that the work is one of my very best efforts and I cannot but be regretful that very few persons see it or care to see it. The faith I have in the justice of time would console me for this, but I hear it is beginning to decay, and suppose it will go the way of all Frescos in England, and speedily crumble away, so that my best

* George Falkner.

chance of going worthily down to posterity will be lost, especially as the design has had no other existence of any kind. It is but natural that engravings and repetitions of all kinds should be made of popular subjects, while more serious efforts should not be cared for, and I have no sort of right to complain. Time is the only judge whose dictum is a serious matter to serious workers, but the destruction of one's work, before it can receive judgment, is a thing that you will allow may reasonably cause regret even to the least vain."

Mr. Watts, in 1903, wrote that this Fresco "is Real Fresco and the only one, I think, on any public wall or anywhere perhaps in England."*

When Mr. Watts died in 1904, a desire sprang up to have a record which should recall the artist and his gallant attempt to establish in England this noble branch of the pictorial Art. The Bench, sharing this idea, in the Treasurership of Lord Alverstone, L.C.J., commissioned Mr. Niels M. Lund, a gold medallist of the Royal Academy, to paint a copy of the work, on the reduced scale of a 9 feet base. This will be hung in the Bar Library of the Royal Courts of Justice, and, in view of the impossibility of photographing successfully the painting itself, will be the best obtainable record of the great artist's work.

Two details may here be interposed. The signature, "G. F. Watts, 1859," will be found in the left hand bottom corner beneath some thistles at the point of Edward I.'s sword; and secondly, "many of the heads are portraits more or less," as Mr. Watts states in a letter of 1903.

* These two letters are part of the Memoranda relating to the Fresco collected by Mr. Warwick H. Draper, of Lincoln's Inn, the initiator of the movement for securing a record of the Fresco.

The description which follows shows the names of the personages represented, beginning at the top of the painting with the figure on the left hand of the spectator, continuing to the last on the right in each row of figures, and beginning again with the left hand figure in the next line, and so on through the rows into which the painting may (roughly) be divided.

Below will be found a nominal list, which states the name of each personage represented, next, the historic description of each personage, and, lastly, the name of the person (if any) of whom the painting was more or less a portrait.

J. DOUGLAS WALKER,
A Master of the Bench of Lincoln's Inn.



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