The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No. 29 February 1997 50p

Contents

The Tenant of Bowdon Hall and the 'Great Cordial Elixir' by Marjorie Cox.
Peel Causeway: A Populous Place.
Bowdon Church Silver by Maurice Ridgway.
Timperley Tom: Local Highway Man.

ISSN-0265-816X

The Tenant of Bowdon Hall and the ‘Great Cordial Elixir’

In writing in Bowdon Hall and its People of George Edmonds, absentee tenant of the hall in the first half of the eighteenth century, I had to confess that his activities and personal life in London were something of a mystery. His accounts (in the Dunham Massey archive) for business done in the 1740s and early 1750 are for Thomas Walton, house steward to the Earl of Warrington, and, occasionally, for the Earl himself, revealed that he moved in the financial world of the City of London, in particular making investments in government loan stock, but little else emerged.

A recurring feature of these accounts, however, was the ordering and sending to Walton, and twice to the Earl's daughter, Lady Stamford, of an item called 'Stoughton's Elixir'. This came by the three dozen at £1. 7s. 0d. and was, as I commented, 'clearly a prized remedy’. After George Edmonds' death, his widow rectified Walton's account for the elixir and later, sent him a box of Stoughton by carrier. Following up this intriguing name, with help from the Guildhall Library and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, I discovered the story of the 'elixir' and, with additional research at the Public Record Office, a personal connection between George Edmonds and the Stoughton family.

The story of the Elixir gives an interesting and amusing side-light on eighteenth century life. It is told in lively and scholarly detail by the late Raymond E.M. Davies in an article in The Pharmaceutical Journal (19 March, 1988) on 'Dr Richard Stoughton and his Great Cordial Elixir'. Richard Stoughton was an apothecary, in practice first at the sign of the Unicorn in Southwark and then across the river in the City of London in Bartholomew Lane, off Threadneedle Street, near the Royal Exchange. He began making and selling his 'elixir' about 1690 and by 1708, according to his own advertisement, many of his retail customers were selling 40 to 50 dozen bottles of it a year. It was sold at coffee houses and booksellers in London and also in Dublin and Edinburgh. In 1712, to protect his interests, he obtained a patent for what was known as 'Stoughton's Elixir Magnum Stomachicum, or the Great Cordial Elixir'. For those interested in its 22 secret ingredients, Mr Davies lists likely ones and remarks that its popularity must have gained from the fact that it could be taken in various drinks, including beer, ale, tea and white wine. Although the elixir was primarily for disorders of the stomach, the advertisements claimed its efficacy for numerous ailments, and from about 1730 its fame and market spread to America.

Richard Stoughton died a wealthy man in 1716 leaving his patent, which still had ten years to run, to his widow. She died in 1720, also wealthy, leaving the patent equally to her two sons, Richard, the elder and Aram. Aram died in 1722, but when, in 1726, the patent expired, his widow, Elizabeth, staked her claim to produce the elixir against that of her brother-in-law. Each claimed (as did another female claimant) to be the only one with the true formula and capable of supplying the genuine article. Mr Davies quotes at length the lurid charges and counter-charges made in competing advertisements in The London Journal in the summer of 1726. Richard Stoughton complained of 'ignorant Pretenders who now swarm about the Royal Exchange and Bartholomew Lane', 'artfully placed' near his own old warehouse to mislead 'a Gentleman's Servant that is sent to buy my ELIXIR'.

The focus of our interest is Elizabeth, widow of Aram Stoughton. She claimed, in an advertisement in the same paper, to supply from her warehouse near the Royal Exchange in Threadneedle Street according to another source the elixir made from the original recipe, with the help of a servant formerly employed in the business. According to her, first Aram and later she herself were co-partners with Richard, but when the patent expired, he wished to have a monopoly of the production, thereby injuring her and her children. Richard responded by casting personal aspersions on Elizabeth, which may or may not have had any foundation. He referred to 'the old tatter'd Station my Brother found her in' and to her sudden remarriage, after his death, to one, Moore, whom Aram 'mortally hated'. Moore had died in 1726, and Richard suggested that she was advertising as much for a third husband as for trade.

By this time you may well be asking what this rather sordid squabbling has to do with the tenant of Bowdon Hall, George Edmonds of Clifford's Inn, London. At the time of writing on Bowdon Hall, I knew only that he had a wife named Elizabeth, who was apparently not local, and a daughter, Mary, born about 1735. Although the date of his death (25 November 1752) was known, no will or probate record has been found and no place of burial. Now most of these problems have been solved. Despite a reference to 'executors' in the Dunham Massey papers, it turns out that George Edmonds died without leaving a will. Letters of administration were granted by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury to his widow, but, unfortunately, these are much less informative than a will. However, they do reveal that he was of the parish of St Bartholomew near the Royal Exchange, the area of the Stoughton warehouses. The registers of this church, in Bartholomew Lane, contain the record of his burial on 3 December 175 2, but no other information about him. Mary, the daughter of George and Elizabeth Edmonds was baptised in the same church on 22 June 1735, but neither there nor elsewhere has a record of her parents' marriage been found.

Before January, 1755 Elizabeth Edmonds had also died, probably not long before. She, too, died intestate and in that month grant of administration of her goods, chattels and credits was made to John Conrad Heinzelman, the husband and guardian of her daughter, Mary, who was still a minor. He also completed the administration of George Edmonds' estate, which his widow had left unfinished. The grant describes Elizabeth as of the parish of St Peter-le-Poer, a church in Broad Street, (forking off Threadneedle Street), where, incidentally, her first grandchild,

Sophie Heinzelman, was baptised in July, 1756. Most interestingly, her name is given as 'Elizabeth Edmonds formerly Stoughton': Moore was omitted presumably because the marriage was short-lived and of less importance than her connection with the Stoughtons and the elixir. The document records that her son, Samuel Stoughton (her last child by Aram), had renounced any claim on her property, so that it went to her daughter by George Edmonds.

Although Elizabeth Edmonds' name had been put into a lease of Bowdon Hall in the spring of 1734, there is nothing to suggest that she ever came to Bowdon from London. However, as a result of our knowledge of his marriage to Aram Stoughton's widow, George Edmonds has a more solid London background than before. Even after the expiry of the patent, Elizabeth must have brought with her a share of the profitable trade in her father-in-law's invention. It appears, too, that George Edmonds went to live in the locality (the parish of St Bartholomew near the Royal Exchange) where the Stoughton family carried on business. Here he was in the financial and mercantile heart of the City: close at hand were the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England, the great handler of government borrowing and public investment in it. To his role as London man of business and finance for his associates in Cheshire, George Edmonds added that of supplier of his wife's famous medicinal remedy. It would be interesting to know if surviving accounts show any other purchasers in Cheshire.

Sources:

Raymond E M Davies, *Dr Richard Stoughton and his Great Cordial Elixir*, The Pharmaceutical Journal (19 March 1988)

Proprietaries of other Days, The Chemist and Druggist, 106 (1927)

M Cox, P Kemp and R Trenbath, *Bowdon Hall and its People*, (1994)

Public Record Office, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Grants of Letters of Administration:-

George Edmonds	PRO B 6/128 f. 226
	PRO B 6/130 f. 229
Elizabeth Edmonds	PRO B 6/131 f. 177

My warm thanks are due to the staffs of the Guildhall Library, the Reader Services Department of the Public Record Office and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and its Museum.

Marjorie Cox

Peel Causeway: A Populous Place

In a local newspaper, on the 23rd September 1891, the following report was published:-

PEEL CAUSEWAY
THE CHESHIRE MIDLAND HOTEL.

On Monday.at the Altrincham Petty Sessions, before Mr, Joynson, Mr. W. H. Higgin, QC., and other magistrates, Mr. Hockin, solicitor, on behalf of Richard Brundrett, landlord of the Cheshire Midland Hotel, Peel Causeway, made an application, under section 32 of the Licencing Act, 1874, that the justices should declare the Peel Causeway district a populous place.—Mr, Higgin: I suppose this Court has only to recommend to the Licencing Committee, which meets at Knutsford on October 5th Mr. Hockin: Yes, it is merely for this Court to express an opinion that it considers the Peel Causeway district a populous place. Continuing, Mr. Hockin said that though population of the district had grown enormously, and at present it was over 2,000.—Mr. Higgin: A district is deemed a populous place when the population is over a thousand?—Mr- Hockin: Yes. Mr. Hockin further stated that in addition to the large population, the traffic at the railway station at Peel Causeway was very large. The station master had prepared some figures, which showed that in June 9,954 passengers asked for and received tickets at the station, in addition to holders of contract tickets. In July, the number was 11,935, and in August 10,705. At the present time, the Cheshire Midland Hotel was the only fully licensed house in the neighbourhood, and, because the district had not been declared a populous place, the hotel had to be closed at ten o'clock at night, The inconvenience, in consequence, was very great, as farmers attending the Cheshire markets usually returned to Peel Causeway by the 10.21 train. Others did not return from Manchester until the 11.5 p.m. train. A considerable number of people who lived in the neighbourhood attended the concerts in Manchester, and in the evening the stables at the Cheshire Midland Hotel were filled. But at 10 o'clock, the landlord was compelled to turn out the horses,who, together with the drivers, were compelled to stand at the station, in all sorts of weather, until the arrival of the last train.—Mr. John Macnamara, surveyor, produced a plan of the district, and spoke to the rapid growth of the population. There was no other licensed house in the area shown on the plan.—Mr. W. II. Hadfield, assistant overseer for Hale, said that in 1874 the population of the district was 875, and in 1881 1,385. There was now a population of 2,005.—Mr. David I Hewes, station-master, Peel Causeway, gave evidence as to the ' traffic at the station.—The Chairman said the Bench had heard sufficient evidence to justify them to express an opinion that by reason of the density of the population, the Peel Causeway district- should be declared a populous place.

Bowdon Church Silver
by Maurice Ridgway

An early foundation of Saxon origin and later linked with the Benedictine Priory of Birkenhead with which it remained until the Reformation when the advowson was vested in the newly created Diocese of Chester (1541) with whom it remains. From the 19th century onwards its large parish has been sub-divided into numerous separate parishes.

The church has been connected with the occupants of Dunham Massey Hall from an early period, and the private chapel of the Earls of Stamford at the Hall remains one of the most interesting 18th century examples in the country and retains all its early 18th century plate complete with furnishings, most of it by the Huguenot goldsmith Isaac Liger.

At Bowdon, where a fine array of plate existed until the Reformation, gifts were still being made, or were attempted by will as late as 1559 when Robert Booth of Dunham further endowed the church of Bowdon with a 'sylver challice with a patten and shillings of money... to be contynewally prayed for their...' Whether his wishes ever materialised at this uncertain period in history is not known, but it is interesting to note the words 'challice and patten' being used in the reign of Elizabeth, when the more common descriptions Communion Cup and plate (or cover) were being encouraged.

It seems that the church at Bowdon was re-equipped with silver in 1688 by William Meredith of Ashley Hall (then in the parish) and Mary Meredith his wife who came from Lincolnshire. This information is gleaned from two remaining pieces now at Carrington (St George), and will be referred to in detail under that church. They bear inscriptions to this effect, along with the additional inscription that William Meredith's gifts were later 'bought by Mary Countess of Stamford and given for the use of St Georges Carrington in 1759 when that church was built by her family and endowed under Bowdon. How much she paid for them and what Bowdon did with the purchase money is not known. A Benefactor's board in Bowdon Church says that in 1744 Oliver Bellefontaine Gent gave to buy gilt plate for ye Communion table £105. This was a very large sum of money and when bought must have made redundant the earlier plate given by William Meredith referred to above, hence the desire to dispose of it and the willingness of the Countess of Stamford to purchase it for Carrington.

Bowdon Parish registers provide the additional information that:

'Mr Oliver Belfountaine came from Dunham Hall and was buried in Bowdon on June 5.1744. But no plate exists at Bowdon belonging to this bequest nor to this decade. The plate given by Mr Bellefontaine remained at Bowdon for only a short time. Adam's Weekly Courant published at Chester for May 10 1774 reads...

Whereas on Thursday Night the 5th instant May 1774, the Parish Church of Bowden, in this county, was broke open, by some Person or Persons unknown, who stole thereout the following plate... viz:

two large Silver flagons holding three wine quarts or more
two silver cups
two silver salvers one large and one small all double gilt and engraved underneath 'The Gift of Oliver Bellefountaine, Whoever shall apprehend the offender or offenders shall upon Conviction receive a reward of Twenty Guineas from the Church Wardens of the said parish.
NB. All silversmiths etc, are desired to seize the above plate, if offered for sale, and to take up the persons offering and send information thereof to the above Church Wardens'.

The plate was not recovered and it was replaced by a similar set the following year. One piece (if it was at the time part of the church plate) escaped the attention of the thieves as no Alms dish is listed amongst the missing plate nor carries the Bellefountaine inscription. This is a very large silver gilt alms dish weighing over 83 ounces and 18 inches in diameter and carries the London assay date for 1712/13. (see No. 1)

No further plate was added to the Parish Church until 1910 when a gold chalice and paten (copied from a 13th century chalice from Iceland and now in the Victorian and Albert Museum, London) was given to the Church by the Gore family in memory of Archdeacon Gore.

Bowdon Parish Church

Timperley Tom: The Local Highway Man

In the late 18th Century Bowdon, and neighbouring districts, were subjected to much violence and robbery, particularly in the vicinity of the Chester Road. One of the most notorious of these criminals was Thomas Brennan, known as Timperley Tom, whose highway robberies caused fear for those travelling in the region.

Posters, similar to the two illustrated here, were circulated in the hope of bringing about his arrest which was eventually accomplished when he was brought to trial for the murder of Mr Jacob Pitt, of Hale on the night of December 30th, 1790. He was duly found guilty and executed at Chester, after which his body was exhibited hanging from a tree at Bucklow Hill with the warning:-

> "Good people now be warned by me If I had never done this deed
> I would not hang upon this tree But be alive in Timperlie."

It is claimed that his ghost still haunts the Pelican Inn, at Timperley, to this day.