

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Chandos Justice

by E. S. Lindley
1952, Vol. 71, 170-172

© The Society and the Author(s)

This last remark is a useful commentary on the criticisms of John Smyth's honesty which are sometimes now heard: his purchase of an estate in Nibley is quoted, and the allegations about his trusteeship for Wotton Grammar School which led to his long libel action. It is forgotten that standards of honesty have risen, and that even now they vary according to the person and the country.

I have sometimes wondered whether the probity for which Sir Mathew Hale was renowned would be as remarkable now: he was able to invest freely in manors. Forty years ago in Russia I heard that it was not only the emoluments of an official post which a candidate would consider, but also what I translated as 'not dishonourable bribes.' India has its common talk of judges who honestly take bribes from both sides and then decide the case on its merits. In a household of decent Indian servants, it was safe to leave loose cash about, though they would exact a percentage on the marketing, share some household goods, and perhaps block the entry of anyone who would not give a customary *douceur*.

To judge a man one must know and remember the standard of his time and place and class.

E. S. LINDLEY.

CHANDOS JUSTICE

In the 'History of Wortley'¹ an incident was reported in which three well-to-do brothers, land-owners and clothiers, were in 1595 robbed of no less than £400 on the highway. While completing the History, further information was found which made the incident of doubtful credit to the Bridges family of Lord Chandos. Still more information has since come to light which completes a pretty picture of one aspect of the times.²

The culprits were of the entourage of the first Lord Chandos, and one of them was an illegitimate son of his second son

¹ *B. & G. Trans.*, LXVIII, p. 65.

² *B. & G. Trans.*, LXIX, p. 188.

Charles. After a hue-and-cry had been raised, they turned up and were detained, and were examined, obviously not without some use of 'police methods.' They had concealed some of the swag near the spot, and this was found. During their detention another of Lord Chandos' men came to reproach them, and was the obvious means of getting the rest of the swag away: however, some of this too was recovered.

A curious point is that several local magistrates refused to hear the case: also local magnates advised against bailing the accused, and against accepting the recovered money without the Chief Baron's opinion. Two magistrates were found to take the case, and bailed the accused who absconded: the case was then laid before Lord Chief Justice Popham, whose examinations of witnesses, taken down in his own hand, are on record¹: but there is no record whether the stolen money was restored, or if the culprits were punished.

The first side-light was the discovery that the fourth son of the first Lord Chandos had been a notorious robber and pirate in his youth, till he reformed, was pardoned by King James, and married respectably: and, reading between the lines, there was ground for suspicion that John first Lord Chandos was not without interest in his goings-on. This latter surmise is supported by another incident of an unstated year of King Henry VIII² concerning Sir John a Bruggs Kt and Thomas Bruggis his brother and others, who at Gloucester Assizes 'labored the acquittal of two errant thieves and robbers by the King's hie wheys': the 'labors' included sword attacks, and quite a little battle against the upholders of law and order. There were several other similar charges, of less interest, against Sir John. Though there are at least fifty years between the incidents, the Sir John of the earlier one must be the Sir John who was created first Lord Chandos in 1553: the pedigree³ shows no earlier Sir John with a brother Thomas.

¹ *Cal. State Papers* (domestic) 1595, June 11-12.

² *Glos. N. & Q.*, v, p. 62.

³ *Glos. Visitation*, 1623, p. 237.

The reluctance of local magistrates to deal with the case is further explained by the recent compilation of a list of the early Lords Lieutenant of the County.¹ On creation of this office, Edmund, eldest son of the first Lord Chandos and brother of Charles and Henry of our case, and himself second lord, was appointed. After his death and an interval of thirteen years, his eldest son Giles the third Lord was appointed; and in the interval of nineteen months after his death the robbery of our story took place. Giles was succeeded by his brother William the fourth Lord, jointly with Lord Berkeley, who was responsible for John Smyth's military census 'Men and Armour,' followed by the latter's son Gray the fifth Lord. After two others in succeeding twenty years, George the sixth Lord was appointed.

A final *bon bouche* concerns Lord Chief Justice Popham of the King's Bench. Aubrey the historian, whose statement should perhaps be taken with reserve, says that in his youth he was skilful with sword and buckler, wild and consorting with profligate companions, and even at times went to take a purse with them.² But as a judge he was said to have been severe towards thieves, and to have advised King James to be more sparing of his pardons to highwaymen and cutpurses.

E. S. LINDLEY.

SAPPERTON CHURCH

The first record of the parish dates from 969, when Bishop Oswald of Worcester leased 'quatuor Mansas aet Saperetun' to Eadric. (The parish remained in the diocese of Worcester until the Reformation). Sapperton is next mentioned in Domesday Book, where it is described as 'Sapelthorne and Frantone'; Frantone is the village now called Frampton Mansell.

A Norman church was evidently built at Sapperton in the 12th century; the two side jambs of the doorway leading to

¹ *B. & G. Trans.*, LXX, pp. 153-4.

² *D.N.B.*, *Popham*.