

The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No. 12 October, 1988

40p

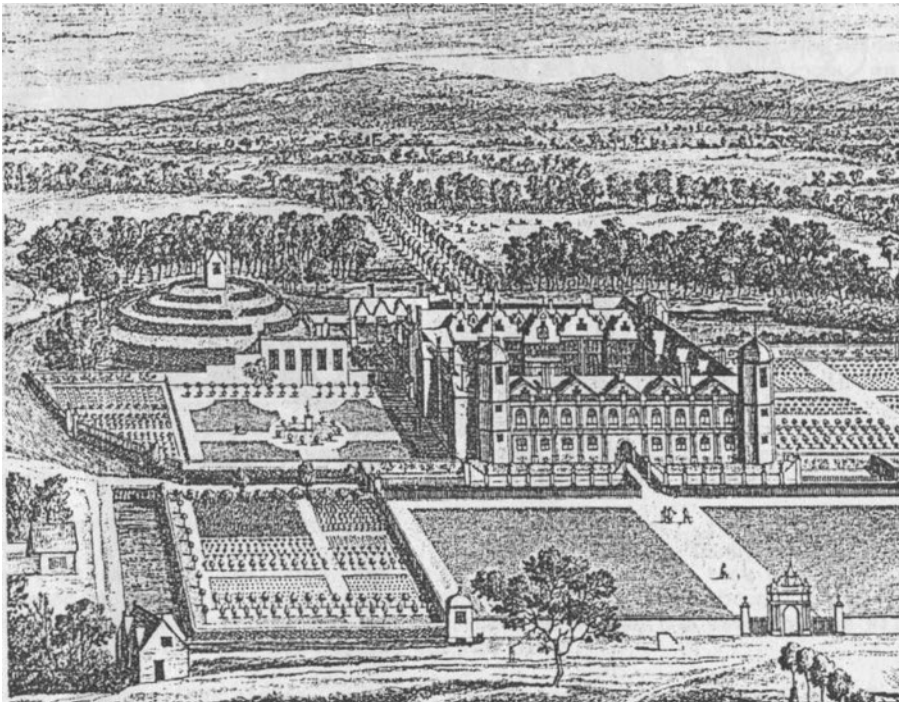
Contents:

Henry Booth & the Glorious Revolution by Marjorie Cox.

Richard Wroe, Vicar of Bowdon 1681-1690 by Maurice Ridgway.

A Murder Hunt at Moss Farm by Alice Walker.

Memories of Adolf Brodsky by Ronald Gow.



*Bird's-Eye View of Dunham Massey Hall from the South
by Leonard Knyff, engraved by J. Kip, 1697 (detail)*

The Bowdon Sheet
A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION



WILLIAM III



MARY



LANDING OF WILLIAM III. AT TORBAY.

WILLIAM III & MARY II

HENRY BOOTH AND THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION by MARJORIE COX

1988 sees the celebration not only of the defeat of the Spanish Armada but also of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, a turning-point in English history.

This tercentenary is of special interest to us in Bowdon because of the part played in it by Lord Delamere of Dunham Massey Hall, the local manorial lord. The Revolution and settlement of 1688-9 laid the foundations of that stability which, by the middle of the eighteenth century, made England the admiration of Europe. This stability was in sharp contrast to the previous century marked by Civil War, and after the Restoration by the violent episodes of the Popish Plot, the Exclusion crisis and Monmouth's rebellion. Symbolically, William and Mary accepted the Crown and the Declaration of Rights in the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace, from whose window Charles I had stepped out to his execution.

For eighteenth century Englishmen, particularly Whigs, the Revolution was the ark of the covenant, its 'glory' most eloquently celebrated, in contrast to the French Revolution, by Edmund Burke. Part of its 'glory' was that in England, though not elsewhere in the British Isles, it was bloodless and the product of joint action and compromise by hitherto bitterly opposed parties of Whig and Tory. Hence it has also been called the 'sensible' revolution.

It is appropriate in this autumn number of the Bowdon Sheaf to concentrate on the events of the autumn of 1600, for they reveal the mechanism and nature of the Revolution. By the summer of 1688 James II (king, despite fierce Whig attempts to exclude him as a Roman Catholic) had managed to alienate his natural supporters, the Tories and the Church of England. His arbitrary use of the royal prerogative had sorely tested their belief in the divine, hereditary right of kings and the duty of non-resistance. One June 30th (a few weeks after the birth of a son to James) seven leading men, four Whig and three Tory, wrote the famous letter inviting William of Orange to invade, promising him their support and assuring him of widespread discontent and disloyalty. William had long been waiting in the wings: as both nephew and son-in-law of James he had the reversionary interest and he desperately needed the co-operation of England in opposing Louis XIV in Europe.

On September 30th William issued a declaration blaming 'evil counsellors' for James's arbitrary actions and asserting that the sole aim of his expedition was 'a free and lawful parliament' to redress matters. On November 1st he sailed with 12,000 - 15,000 troops, (far fewer than James's), had the benefit of the 'Protestant' east wind, and somewhat unexpectedly landed at Torbay on November 5th. The area may have been the same as that of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, but the conduct of the enterprise was totally different: calculation rather than impulsiveness, the gradual coming in of influential figures, Whig and Tory, rather than mass rallying.

William moved gradually - he remained at Exeter from November 9th to 21st: confrontation and civil war were to be avoided. By November 17th James and his army were at Salisbury, where there soon began a series of desertions to William, notably James's nephew, Lord Cornbury and his second-in-command, John Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough. James was paralysed by indecision. In the south, where the opposing armies were, the Revolution was a waiting game, diplomatic and quiet. In the north and midlands, however, things were different. Two of the signatories of the letter to William moved decisively. The Tory Earl of Danby seized York on November 21st and on the 22nd the Whig Earl of Devonshire took Nottingham, where he was joined by Delamere's relative, the Earl of Stamford. But though their actions were bold, their declarations disclaiming rebellion showed the same tone as William's and the same intent to unite all parties against James.

However the earliest rising was that of Henry Booth, second Lord Delamere, who, on November 15th called out 200 or more of his tenants, exhorting everyone with a good horse to take the field or provide a substitute. According to Macaulay, he promised his tenants (some in Bowdon?) that if they fell in the cause, their leases should be renewed to their children. In Manchester he appeared with 50 men

and the number had trebled before he reached Bowdon Downs. On November 21st the Governor of Chester Castle reported that he expected the rebels soon to form a great body and to march on London. Under Charles II, Delamere who had strong Non-conformist sympathies, had been an outspoken Exclusionist Whig, a suspect after the Rye House plot and a supporter of Monmouth who had been entertained at Dunham in 1682. Under James II he was imprisoned in the Tower after Monmouth's rebellion and was fortunate to be found not guilty of high treason by his peers, an acquittal he commemorated annually. He was set in the mould of bitter anti-popery and Whig/Tory antagonism and his declaration lacked the tact characteristic of William's (which he thought not condemnatory enough of James) and of the Revolution as a whole.

"I see all lies at stake, I am to choose whether I will be a Slave and a Papist or a Protestant and a free man." "I am of opinion" he wrote "that when the Nation is delivered it must be by Force or Miracle", and he was ready to use force. Two historians, Maurice Ashley and J R Jones, believe that the provincial risings, though militarily not very formidable, had a decisive impact on James's troubled mind, even among the many other blows that rained on him. They completed the demoralisation which led him to return to London on November 26th, send his wife and child to Louis XIV and himself take flight to France on December 12th. He aimed to leave a vacuum, throwing the Great Seal in the Thames and disbanding, though not disarming, his large army: it was desertion amounting to abdication.

The smooth progress of the 'Revolution', guided by peers and gentry and by William, was suddenly interrupted by the anti-papist zeal of some Kentish fishermen who seized James off Sheerness. His return to London touched popular sentiment and tugged at Tory and Anglican loyalty. William, then at Windsor in his steady approach to London, skilfully laid the onus on the peers and nominated a delegation of three peers, including Delamere, to get James out of London. Fortunately, James's only wish was to reach France and he asked to go to Rochester. Nevertheless, the replacement of English guards in Whitehall Palace by Dutch and James's embarkation from London on December 18th, surrounded by Dutch soldiers, created an impression of enforced departure which undermined the Tory theory of his 'desertion'. Curiously Delamere, James's enemy, was touched by his plight and James later recorded that he had treated him better than the other two lords to whom he had been kind.

The peers of England played a key role during the 'vacancy' of the throne (a nonsense in English law) and Delamere was one of six peers who, on December 25th, presented a request to William to take over the administration and arrange the election of a Convention. The Convention met on January 22nd and subtle and lengthy debates produced a decision on the change of succession satisfactory to all but a few Republican Whigs and High Tories. On February 13th the crown was offered to William and Mary and the Declaration of Rights, condemning James's arbitrary actions against liberties and properties was read to them.

Delamere was immediately, on February 13th, made a Privy Councillor and in April became Chancellor of the Exchequer, second in the Treasury Commission. But at heart he was a pre-Revolution Whig, wary of royal power and still feeling old party antagonisms, one for whom the 'sensible' revolution had not gone far enough. In 1690 he resigned office: he was rewarded, by promotion from the title of Lord Delamere, given to his father at the Restoration, to the Earldom of Warrington and with the promise of a pension to compensate for his considerable expenses at his trial and during the Revolution. His monument in Bowdon Church records with Whiggish pride:

In the year MDCLXXXVIII
He greatly signalised himself at the Revolution
on behalf of the Protestant religion and the rights of the

RICHARD WROE Vicar of Bowdon 1681-1690 (concluded)
by Maurice Ridgway

Dr Stratford, at this time the Warden of the Collegiate Church (now the Cathedral) at Manchester, and at variance with the Fellows there, finally resigned. Bishop Pearson of Chester then commended William Wroe, his friend, to the Archbishop in such glowing terms that Archbishop Sancroft after satisfying himself that the Vicar of Bowdon could also be Warden at Manchester, finally appointed him in March 1684. It is interesting to note that in the Bishop's pleadings, he says that Wroe is the "only person among the Fellows there who is a Bachelor of Divinity" and that "ye boundaries of ye parishes (Manchester and Bowdon) join."

It appears to have been a popular appointment among the Fellows, marked by voting him on his election a sum of money to be expended in re-building and repairing the Deansgate residence of the Warden. Wroe's link with Bowdon appears to have been maintained. In any case, he was invited back to preach the funeral sermons at the funerals of the Countess of Warrington, at Bowdon, April 6, 1691 and of the Earl of Warrington, at Bowdon on January 14, 1693/4. Two years later Wroe became Rural Dean of Manchester, and the same year Rector of West Kirkby, though he probably left the parish work there to a curate, and as the custom was in those days, was content to have the stipend!

Whilst at Manchester, Wroe took a great interest in the then wayside chapel of Stretford, where John Collier was curate (he was the father of Tim Bobbin), and it is interesting to note that he gave a silver Communion Cup to Stretford church, which bears the inscription... R Wroe. S.T.P. Stretford Chapel 1707, and he also worked to have it recognized under Queen Anne's bounty. Though opposed to the Byrom family in politics he was on intimate terms of friendship with them.

Wroe was married three times. His first wife was called Elizabeth. An official biography says she narrowly escaped drowning on July 7, 1689 but as we know she died on July 30 and was buried at the Collegiate Church on August 1, it would appear that recovery was only temporary. Wroe married again in 1693 (one Anne Radcliffe) who died a year later, and took a third wife, Dorothy Kenyon of Peel in 1698. By this marriage he had four children, only one of which survived infancy.

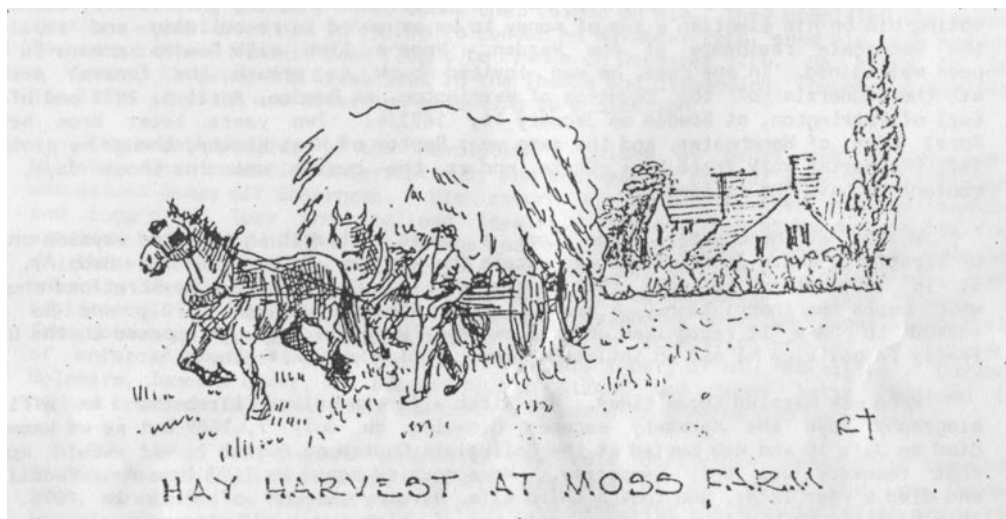
He died on New Year's Day 1718 and was buried in a vault in the Collegiate Church, where his stone and inscription in Latin could still be seen and read until it was covered up by another stone. The words of the inscription have survived, and although it made reference to his Rectorship of West Kirby and his Wardenship of the Collegiate Church for thirty-three years, made no reference to Bowdon! He was seventy-six.



Richard Wroe

A MURDER HUNT AT MOSS FARM by Alice Walker

In a letter she wrote to Josephine Greenwood in 1944 Alice Walker recounted the following local incident "Have I told you about Jack Garner, the son of Paul, the 'Town' blacksmith, and a wild good-looking chap, whose young ways were generally disapproved and talked about? There was a servant girl named Bess at the Moss, and I suppose he courted her along with others who took his fancy, and she had other admirers later on too. Unhappily, Jack was in low company in Altrincham one time, and a woman - whether specially his acquaintance I don't remember - although it is probable - made a taunting speech about him, which infuriated him so much that he struck her down dead. I think he had some knowledge of boxing, and so ought to have known how fatal the blow could be. Anyhow, he fled, and there was great hue and cry, and the "Manchester runners" on his track up and down.

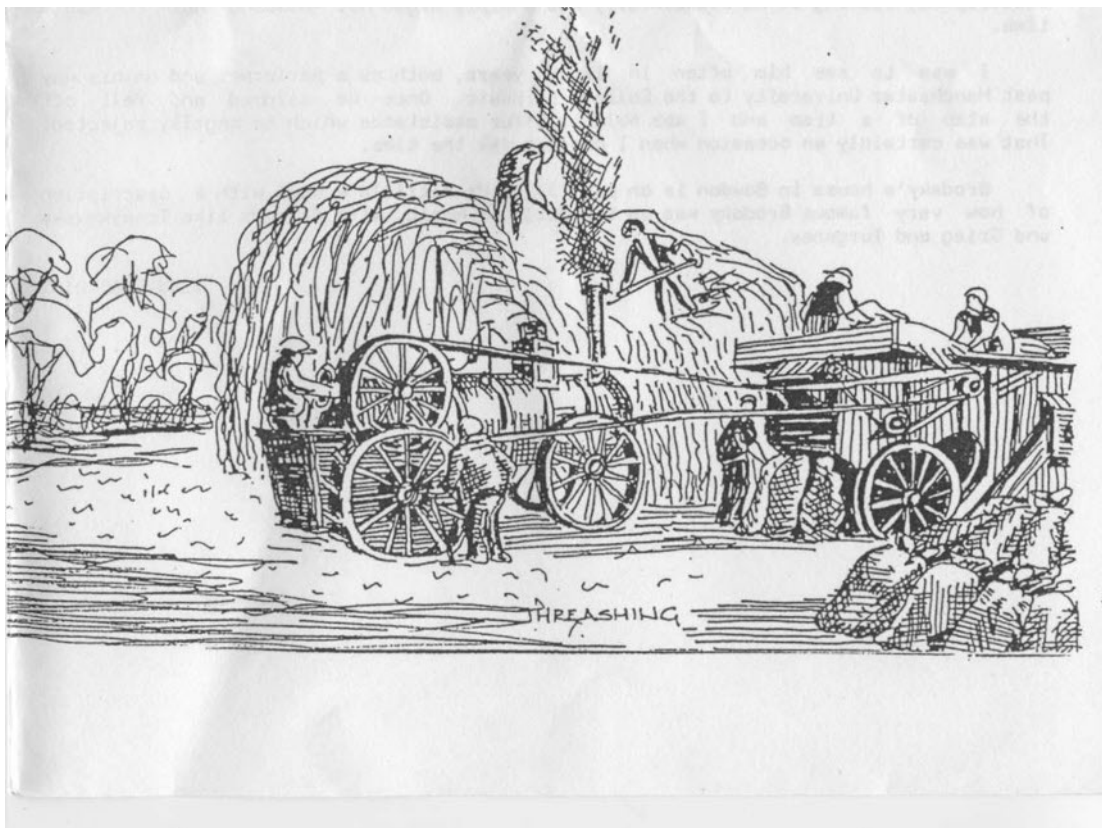


And Jack, having been about the Moss, knew of the owl-loft and made for it, and might have lain there long enough unsuspected, but in mistaken confidence, and, as I expect, in need of food, he let Bess know where he was hiding. Bess was a Delilah, and making a plausible excuse for wanting to 'run up to the Top', had permission from Grandmother or Great-grandmother Walker (not quite certain which, but think Grandmother) to do the errand that day.

Whether Jack's mind misgave him or he only wanted an airing, he was on the top of the tree looking out, and behold there came the constables pelting in force across the Yeald, and Bess leading them! Consequently Grandmother had the shock of her life outside the back porch in finding Jack Garner kneeling at her feet and pleading her to hide him, hide him for love of mercy, for the troop was almost there. It seemed a pretty quandary for her, for she had been terribly shocked like other by Jack's deed and the torment his recklessness brought on his own father, but when she looked at the lad's curly black head and saw his agonised face, she thought she could not be the one to leave him in rick of the gallows perhaps - and Paul was a neighbour - and she had never been able to dislike the pleasant scamp - she must do something, but what could she do?

There was no time for dilly-dallying and, lying upside down on the bank near the pump was the long hamper, which the men had just been using to wash the potatoes for Shudehill Market next morning. She bade Jack drop on the ground after righting the hamper, into the same space on which it had stood, and squeeze himself to the right shape. She overturned the hamper upon him and it looked exactly as it had been left! And when Bess and her Posse tore round the kitchen on their way to ladder the gable, the "Missis" was very guilelessly busy near the pump, just emptying a water bucket by carelessly swishing the contents right on the potato basket; and how taken to she was by their arrival, you can imagine, and how interestedly she watched the heroic constables going right into the lion's den when Jack made no sign of coming out. Bess was furious when he was not there and aided the hunt everywhere. I have it in mind that the Grandmother was filled with disgust when they had tossed out sheaves enough in the barn without result, but Bess went on jabbing the battens of straw with a pike in truly murderous hope!

The Missis kept Bess well occupied in a safe region, you may be sure, after the disappointed troop had gone. I cannot tell you how Jack was disposed of till darkness fell, though probably was in the 'baulks' or barn, or back to his 'den'. But I do know that when the high-piled load of potato hampers, all ready for early morning at Shudehill, lumbered and swayed from the rough stack-yard gateway, all carefully corded as usual, Grandmother had seen to it that Jack was wedged in it, with instructions to slip down in the dark of dawn when men and horses had their 'bait' at the halfway inn (the 'Cock' at Stretford, I think), and stow himself on a barge of the near canal, making for Runcorn and Liverpool. I do not know how long it was afterwards that it was reported that Jack Garner was 'doing very well in America', and am sure nobody in Bowdon ever guessed how he started his journey - probably not even Paul. Grandmother kept a still tongue about her lawless work till it was safe to confide in her children I know that Bess got herself in trouble through one of her admirers, and I think had others, but certainly was never married. But her son, who was middle-aged when I knew him, seemed a kindly decent man - like his father, who was utterly unlike the handsome dark-complexioned Jack."



MEMORIES OF ADOLF BRODSKY
by Ronald Gow

Thomas Pitfield's book of drawings called "Recording a Region" brings back many memories of Altrincham and Bowdon. One in particular takes me back to the very early years of the century. It is the drawing of the "Dome Church" - a rather splendid building on high ground in Bowdon - sometimes called "The Sinking Chapel" because it was reputed to be unsafe. It is now demolished.

I remember it especially because it was about halfway on my walk to school, from Altrincham to Miss Wallace's in Bowdon. As a Victorian I would be about seven or eight at the time and the year around 1905. A familiar figure rounding the bend at the Dome Church was Dr Adolph Brodsky. He was on his way to Altrincham Station, where he would take a train for Manchester and the Royal College of Music. About five paces behind him walked his wife and they were always in heated argument. She appeared to be reprimanding him and he would shout back at her over his shoulder. I didn't know but it may have been the normal Russian method of progression for husband and wife.

One morning, greatly daring, I stopped him and asked him the time. He took out a large watch and told me and asked where I was going and what would happen if I was late. Then he bade me hurry and I proceeded quite pleased with the interest I had aroused. Walking to school was a lonely business. I remember the next time I met him I asked him the time again, more for company than for necessity. He told me though he looked suspicious. The next time was the last. Mrs Brodsky interrupted, looking at me disdainfully and sharply urged her husband not to waste Time.

I was to see him often in later years, both as a performer and on his way past Manchester University to the College of Music. Once he slipped and fell off the step of a tram and I was able to offer assistance which he angrily rejected. That was certainly an occasion when I did not ask the time.

Brodsky's house in Bowdon is on page 38 of Mr Pitfield's book with a description of how very famous Brodsky was in the world of music, with friends like Tchaikovsky and Grieg and Turgenev.

ISSN-0265-816X