

# THE EARLY CHURCHWARDEN'S ACCOUNTS OF HOLY TRINITY, LEVERSTOCK GREEN



stitching which binds the pages, is in excellent condition.

It's the sort of small pocket account book a Victorian Gentleman would have purchased for his own household accounts, but in this instance was used by John Evans to record *the receipts and expenditure of the Churchwardens of the Church of Holy Trinity Leverstock Green* in 1850. Seen in this photo (1), Evans was John Dickinson's son-in-law, and later became a leading Victorian Gentleman. He was created a Knight Commander of the Bath in 1882. His numerous accomplishments included being a Fellow of the Royal Society, an Antiquarian, a Geologist, a Paper Manufacturer, a Trustee of the British Museum and an inventor. Holy Trinity was fortunate to have such an illustrious Churchwarden. Subsequently the account book was used by John Evans and the Churchwardens who served with him and followed him, to continue to record the accounts until 1890. They make fascinating reading. They provide a beguiling snapshot of the life in the newly created Parish of Leverstock Green for the next 40 years.

The very first entries show that in the early days of the church, the "gentry" of the parish were expected to pay the church a small annual rental for the privilege of sitting in a particular pew. This was common practice in Victorian England. Holy Trinity Church was designed to seat 404 persons, and we know from a ground plan of the church, that the "*Encorporated Society for the Promotion of Enlarging Building and Repairing of Chapels & Churches*" gave Holy Trinity Church a grant of £200 to ensure that 350 of these seats were to be "*declared to be free for the use of the poor for ever*". The word FREE was to be painted in a conspicuous manner on the front of each pew. From the plan we can see that the pews which could be rented were those six pews towards the front of the left hand side of the nave. The front pew on this side was to be free also and I find this a little strange, unless although "free", it was reserved for the family of the clergy.

Studying all the pages of the accounts it would appear that not just whole pews, but individual seats within pews were rented. Amounts of rental varied from £2 down to 2s 6d per annum. It is difficult to judge from the entries whether or not there was a basic seating charge of 2s 6d per individual seat and £1 or £2 for a whole pew, or whether the amounts paid depended simply on status/income. The list for the year 1850-1851 began as follows: Mr Dickinson £2,

Mr Longman £2, Mr Evans £1. These were the heads of the families associated with the Paper Mills at Nash Mills, now part of Leverstock Green parish, whereas previously they had been part of the parish of Abbots Langley. St Mary's Church, Apsley, wasn't to be built for another 21 years. (John Evans was to serve as Churchwarden there also for many years.) Then followed other "worthies" from the parish: Mr & Miss Saunders 10s, Miss Edwin 5s, Mr Joseph Finch 10s, Mr John Saunders 5s (John Saunders was the other Churchwarden), Mr George Saunders 10s, Mr Bedwin 5s, H. N. Neale Esq. £2, Revd B. Richardson £1, Mr Jennings 5s, Mr John Childs 5s, Mr William Smith 10s, Mr J. Ebbert 5s and Mr D. Headech 2s 6d.

Entries of pew rentals, sometimes referred to as "seatings", continued to be accounted for in this way until 1868; thereafter they are lumped together as "contributions" or "subscriptions" and it is difficult to know how long the practice really lasted.

Heating costs both in the church and at the school were a considerable and continuous expense, coke and faggots having to be purchased annually; and Mr Cranstone, of Hemel Hempstead's Cranstone Ironworks, was paid £2 5s 6d for a stove in March 1853.

A replacement stove was purchased from G. & J. Jennings in March 1855 for £2 13s. A further entry, in November 1861, was to repay the Revd C. J. Framton £1 for a stove for the vestry as per receipt. By 1865 it would appear that the heating arrangements for the church school had become unsatisfactory as well, as Mr Jennings was paid £2 16s 3d for "*taking down old, fitting & fixing and repairing second hand stove*", with an entry lower down reading "*of Rev Helme (for National School) second hand stove £1 10s 0d*". Such expenses were obviously deemed to be met by the church, which had responsibility for the school, and indeed much of the Church's archival documents are related directly to the schools, first in Bedmond Road and later, after the new school was built in 1930, to the school in Pancake Lane.

Continually recurring expenses were for items such as Sacramental wine, coal, coke, wood, the washing of surplices, cleaning & trimming church paths and clearing them of snow in the winter. There were the salary payments

1850 to 1851	John Evans & Co.	John Saunders Churchwarden
	Receipts £ 5 0	Capenditum £ 5 0
1851		Jan 15 Visitation Fees 10s 1 8 0
Jan 21 Mr Dickinson Present	2	July 7 Mary & John's wedding
Mr Longman	2	Sept 4 Mary & John's wedding
Mr Evans	1	10 Pairs Seats 2
July 27 Balance of 1850	1 1 6	Aug 4 Materials for seats
Sept 21 Mr J. Saunders	10	Nov 11 Barrow's Book
Mr Bedwin	5	1851
Mr Joseph Finch	10	Oct 10 Bunting's Minute Book
Mr John Saunders	5	Jan 15 Bunting's (Buckingham)
Mr George Saunders	10	Mr Childs & John's wedding
Mr Richardson	5	10 Pairs Seats of Church
Mr R. Neale Esq.	2	Sept 22 School House
Rev B. Richardson	1	Jan 31 Mr Longman's (Wine)
Mr Jennings	5	Repairing Church
Mr John Childs	5	Nov 15 Bunting's up J. Childs
Mr William Smith	10	April 20 Bunting's Box for Seat
Mr J. Ebbert	5	March 25 Mr Childs Salary
Mr D. Headech	2 6	March 25 Mr Childs Salary
Carried over	£ 13 14	Carried over £ 13 3 11



of various persons: Mrs Doult ½ yrs salary January 1850 17/6d, Mrs Doult March 1851 16/-, Bob Peat 1½ yrs salary March 1851 £1 10s; Mrs Doult ¼ yrs salary August 1851 10/6d, Mrs Doult ¾ yrs salary £1 11s 6d, Bob Peat 1 yrs salary April 1852 £1 (for extra services throughout Lent and Passiontide 6/-), Mrs Doult ¼ yrs salary April 1852 10s 6d, Mrs Doult 2 yrs salary March 1853 £1 1s (presumably for a different job as a usual year's salary for her presumed cleaning job (she it was who was paid for the broom) was 2 guineas (£2 2s), and indeed she was paid £2 2s for a year's salary in April 1853. By 1859 she was being paid £3 a year and by 1866 the cleaner, by this time Mrs Ratford, was being paid £3 10s a year.

As the Churchwardens themselves changed, so the details of some of the entries. Many of the early entries just gave the name to whom a bill was payable and the amount, but on occasion intriguing and/or interesting detail was given:

- 1858 – Carriage of Hamper for Benham – 3s
- April 1859 – Mr Benham for stone – £1 4s 6d
- July 9<sup>th</sup> 1859 – Beer to men oiling bells – 6d
- 24<sup>th</sup> June 1860 – Mr Joseph Chalk for building Toolshed at back of school £8 10s 0d and repairs to Church 5s 6d
- June 1860 – W. Doult, compensation for Garden Ground, cite<sup>1</sup> of New Toolshed – 5s 0d
- June 1860 – Oil & Grease & Assistance to oiling Bells – 2s 6d
- 13<sup>th</sup> October 1860 – New Surplice Closet as per bill – £3 3s 0d
- December 1860 – Binding Mates & Materials making a Form<sup>2</sup> – 1s 8d
- April 1861 – Mr Jennings, taking down & repairing stoves in church and vestry & new piping to tool shed as per bill – £3 4s 8d
- April 1861 – Mr Walk whitewashing vestry room as per bill – 9s 4d
- October 1861 – Mr Chalk, a new pair of front Gothic Doors for Church hung and painted complete with wire for Porch windows £5 12s 9d, repairing churchyard gates £1 6s 6d
- November 1861 – Mr Jennings, taking down, cleaning, repairing and putting up again Stoves in Church and Vestry £5 9s 10d, repairing and painting spouting £1 5s 6d, New Iron Chest £4 as per bill – £10 15s 0d
- 1861 – R. Peat, tolling bell Prince's funeral – 6d [This was HRH Prince Albert]
- March 1863 – R. Peat, ringing bells for Prince's wedding day – 2s 6d [This was wedding of Prince & Princess of Wales]
- 1863 – Mr Sears, altering Pulpit & Reading Desk – £5 8s 10d
- 1864 – Mr Sears, for new Oak Stools and altering Forms – £5 15s 9d
- December 9<sup>th</sup> 1865 – Cocoa matting as per bill – £1 11s 4d
- 1867 – Mr Sears for repairing roof and putting new window in church etc – £5 3s 0d
- 1872 – Organist £2 15s 0d, 1873 – Organist £7 10s 0d, raised to £15 pa 1883
- 1873 – Organ blower – 10s<sup>3</sup>
- 1877–1882 George Wilson was paid £2 pa. for bell ringing, this was raised to £2 10s in 1881
- 1880 – Mr Bish Clock Bill – £5 9s 0d, 1881 – Mr Bish winding 1884 – £5, 1886 – Mr Bish winding and cleaning clock – £8 3s 0d (amount continues to vary each year)
- 1888 – Mr Sears for re-roofing church – £27 10s 0d

Barbara Chapman

<sup>1</sup> This as spelt.

<sup>2</sup> Presume as in the type of school forms used as benches one way up and gym equipment the other.

<sup>3</sup> This was the money paid to the choir boy who pumped the organ bellows. An electric blower was eventually installed in 1942.

## Tuesday Tours at Two – Take a Closer Look

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at a museum? The Dacorum Heritage Trust is pleased to announce that the Tuesday Tours at Two are back.

A tour of the Museum Store in Berkhamsted not only reveals the diverse collection of Dacorum, but also allows members of the public to view objects in their museum 'home' – a very different experience to seeing them on display.

The Dacorum Heritage Trust cares for a wide selection of objects relating to the history and heritage of the Borough of Dacorum. On the **second Tuesday of the month** we open our doors to allow people to see the treasures of Dacorum.

Every object tells a story, from ancient funerary pottery discovered by school children to sketchbooks used by soldiers, the Dacorum Heritage Trust cares for a wealth of history.

**"The tours are an ideal way for people to find out more about Dacorum and its history"** said Richard Lewis the Museum Curator (photograph below).

Starting in November, with a general tour of the store, tours will be given regularly on the second Tuesday of each month on a wide variety of themes. With over 2,000 objects, there is always plenty to see.

**Tours need to be booked in advance – please call the Dacorum Heritage Trust on 01442 879525 or email [assistantcurator@dacorumheritage.org.uk](mailto:assistantcurator@dacorumheritage.org.uk) to reserve your place. Unfortunately the Store is not wheelchair accessible, although alternative arrangements can be made.**



## HEMEL HEMPSTEAD LOCAL HISTORY & MUSEUM SOCIETY

An addendum to the list in Newsletter 48

- 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 AGM followed by a buffet supper and a Fun Quiz organised by Roy and Margaret Wood
- 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008 *Through the Eyes of Youth* – Another presentation by members of Hemel Hempstead School. Organised by Joan Hands
- 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 *The Bicentenary of the End of the Slave Trade – How Did Hemel Hempstead Artist Lefevre Cranstone Come to Paint a Slave Market?* by Elizabeth Buteux MA
- 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008 *Sir John Evans – A Remarkable Hertfordshire Resident* by Mike Stanyon
- 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008 *Road Dahl's War – The Career of the Writer Who Enchanted Millions* by Graham Laurie MVO
- 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008 *The Dacorum Heritage Trust – The Art of Collecting* by Richard Lewis