

CORNISH PARISHES IN 1753

V—BODMIN

This account of Bodmin was sent to William Borlase by the Rev. Anthony Hosken on 23rd March 1753, and is printed as corrected and amplified in a further letter dated 28th May. (Borlase MSS., Morrab Library, Penzance, Original Letters V 76, 78).

P.A.S.P.

HERE are to be seen the ruins of several places of worship, of which the sites and names, as far as I can discover them, are as follows. At the west end of the town, St. Leonard's chapel in ruins. About the middle of the town, a chapel now a poor house, still called the chapel, and I think must have been dedicated to St. Anthony. On the south side, the Assize Hall, formerly a place of worship, there is still a vault in the wall; this is what B. Willis calls a house of Grey Friars. On the south east, St. Nicholas chapel, now in ruins. On the east, the church in present use, and behind the prior's house which is nigh the churchyard, a chapel in ruins, but there is a piece of one pillar still standing, and the present school house, which is within the churchyard, looks like an old chapel. On the north, Bury Church, of which the tower is still standing.

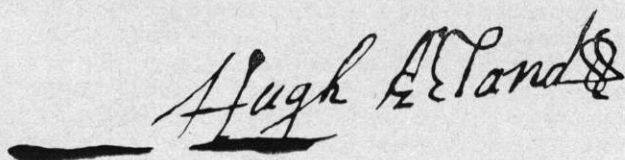
On the commons is a round piece of ground, surrounded by a ditch and a rampart of earth about breast high, which I presume was the work of the Danes, and is called by the name of Castle Kinnick. I think Carew saith in his book that this town is poorly supplied with water, but in this he is mistaken, for besides a river constantly running on the backside of the town that supplies several mills, there are many pipes constantly running and that they are never unsupplied with water in the driest summer, besides several wells of good water.

There are still some rooms of the Prior's House standing and in the church a tomb of Prior Vivian with this inscription:—*Hic intumulatus est venerandus Pater, Thomas Vivian Magarensis Episcopus, hujusce domus Prior, qui obiit anno domini 1533 primo die Junii, cujus anima misereatur Deus, Amen.* On a board hung up in the church we have an account of several charities to the poor, one of which is, "Degory Dagg a young man gave to the use of the poor of St. Anthony's Chapel in Bodmyn 40s." But the inhabitants do not now know where St. Anthony's chapel was, and though some of these charities are perpetual annuities, yet they are likewise lost or swallowed up by the Corporation.

I shall only mention of the hospital of St. Lawrence (which was probably taken out of this parish) that it is a charity greatly abused; for though it was designed for Lazars, yet there is no one of that sort at present in the place, and they frequently take in as members of the hospital young people for a sum of money, who have no other disorder than a little lameness or the like. But this is not the worst, for this being

little to write about—" I am much troubled that I write so often and so insignificant"—reveals a comforting realism and humility. Altogether he emerges from the letters an endearing figure, a man of considerable old-world charm.

In the 1680's, as William Culliford makes clear, Hugh was showing his age. He was not so incapable in 1688 as to be unable to undertake the mayoralty of Truro. But in the late 80's he was discharged from the customs service as being "superannuated and unable to execute his office."¹² In January 1691, no doubt finding his resources insufficient, he applied for restoration to his office "for the relief of himself and his family."¹³ His application was unsuccessful and thereafter one imagines there was only decline. At the end of January 1694 he died and on 2nd February he was buried inside the church of St. Mary's, Truro. His wife died four years later and was buried in the same church peculiarly enough on the same date, 2nd February.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Hugh A. Tard" with a decorative flourish at the end. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

NOTES

1. P. Fraser "The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State & Their Monopoly of Licensed News 1660-1688." 1956, pp. 28-9.
2. *ibid.*, p. 140 and the Calendars of State Papers in those years.
3. Calendar of State Papers Domestic (CSP Dom) 1665-6, pp. 470-1; 1667, p. 451.
4. CSP Dom 1671-2, p. 340.
5. Calendar of Treasury Books (CTB) 1672-5, p. 423.
6. Public Record Office E. 179 244-44 .
7. St. Mary's, Truro Parish Registers; Royal Institution, Taunton MSS—I am indebted to Mr. Douch for this reference.
8. St. Mary's, Truro Parish Registers.
9. Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Vol. IV, Part 4, 1964.
10. Petronious relates in "The Satyricon" that fishermen in Nero's time were keen to salvage vessels that were wrecked on the Italian coast. Mentor Classic edition 1964, p. 123.
11. Public Record Office T 64/140, f. 83.
12. CTB 1689-92, p. 1430.
13. *ibid.*
14. St. Mary's, Truro Parish Registers.

an extra-parochial place, with some houses belonging to it, it is a place of refuge for all sorts of rogues and vagabonds, for hither they fly and find room and entertainment without any questions asked, this little district being exempt from the inspection and jurisdiction of any parish officers; and I mention this much of it, to represent it in such a manner that the gentlemen of the county may take notice of it, and if they think proper convert this greatly abused charity to some better use.

About the town we have many good meadows, contiguous to which on the east north and south we have large commons, fit either for pasture or tillage, but it is generally stocked with sheep. We have on the side of the hills several large woods. The corporation extends only into part of the parish, the other part hath officers appointed by the justices of the county.

There are two short pieces of causeway about a quarter of a mile distant from each other and about midway between this town and Lostwithiel. The longest of them is not above 100 yards, and the other not so much, they incline a little with the road, are about ten feet wide, and are raised above the common level about a foot.