

CHURCH & CHARITY

The ecclesiastical parish of Worton with Marston was formed in 1852 from that of Potterne. The living was in the gift of the Vicar of Potterne. It was amalgamated in 1932 with the rectory of Poulshot (q.v.) and is now in the gift of the Bishop of Salisbury. Christchurch, Worton (built in 1843), is a small building with a wide nave, small chancel, north and south transepts, and small vestry. It is a plain stone ashlar building of a nondescript 'gothic' design with a west entrance and bell-cote for one bell. The pulpit, low box pews, and gallery at the west end are contemporary with the church. Painted on the gallery front is a list of charities. The single bell was cast by Mears in 1888. The plate consists of a silver flagon, large paten, chalice, and small paten, all dated 1843. The registers begin in 1843.

Two bequests were made for the benefit of a Sunday school at Worton. Sarah Bolter, by her will proved in the Consistory Court of Salisbury, bequeathed £100, and Sarah Gaisford by her will, proved 1863, bequeathed £20 for this school. In 1884 by order of the Charity Commissioners the administration of these two charities was settled upon the vicar and churchwardens of the ecclesiastical parish of Worton and Marston. The capital of the two charities was £120. 11 s. in 1904, yielding £3. 6s. 4d. a year. This was spent on Sunday-school prizes, class books, coke, and an honorarium to the schoolmistress for sitting with the children in church.

In 1834 it was stated that a field in the tithing of Worton called High Meadows was let to Mr. Glass for £1 a year, which was applied to the support of Potterne church. It was not known when the charity originated, but it was said to have existed, in the same form, from time immemorial. High Meadow later became known as Church Mead. By the Inclosure Award of 1835, made under the Act of 1824, a piece of land of about 3/4 acre situated in the Lower South Field in the tithing of Marston was allotted to the churchwardens of Potterne. These two endowments of the church of Potterne were evidently transferred to the church of the new ecclesiastical parish of Worton and Marston when that was created in 1852. In 1904 there was a third endowment known as Church Plot, in the parish of Marston, of about 1/2 acre, which belonged to the church of the ecclesiastical parish of Worton and Marston. Its origin was not known. At that date the combined annual income from these three pieces of land was £5. 19., which was used towards the general expenses of the church.

The subdivision of the ancient parish of Potterne by the creation of the new ecclesiastical parish of Worton with Marston and the new civil parishes of Worton and Marston, led to confusion concerning the administration of charities created before 1852. Administration had previously been in the hands of the vicar and churchwardens of Potterne, and in 1859 the situation was regularized by an Order of the Charity Commissioners. This provided that such existing charities in the ancient parish as had not been previously restricted to one or two of the tithings of Potterne, Worton, and Marston should be divided between the ecclesiastical parish of Potterne (now identical in area with the tithing) and the new ecclesiastical parish of Worton with Marston. Potterne was to have two thirds of the funds. After 1859 the vicar and churchwardens of Worton with Marston administered the charity funds thus allotted to their parish: these were one-third of Poor's Land, of Pitt's charity, and of Kent's charity. The same vicar and churchwardens also administered the shares of Worton and Marston in the charity (1855) of the Revd. George Edmonstone, and they naturally became the trustees of the Church Lands of Worton and Marston, Worton and Marston Schools charity, and Sarah Gaisford's charity. The charity of Sarah Bolter, originally vested in the vicar and churchwardens of Potterne, was vested in those of Worton with Marston in 1884. Worton Poor's Land (after 1852) and the charities of Shorter, Hezekiah Goodall, and Mrs. Eleanor Gaisford, which were limited to the tithing or civil parish of Worton, were vested in the churchwardens of Worton with Marston and the overseers of Worton. Sarah Charmbury's charity (1888) was a non-ecclesiastical charity for the benefit of the poor of the combined tithings of Worton and Marston, and was vested in the vicar and churchwardens.

The Local Government Act of 1894 (56 and 57 Vict. c. 73) which provided for the creation of parish councils and parish meetings, laid down (§14(2)) that where overseers and churchwardens of a rural parish as such, either alone or jointly with any other persons had previously been trustees of any non-ecclesiastical parochial charity, they should be replaced as trustees by parish councillors appointed by the parish council. It was also provided in the act (§14(3)) that where the governing body of a non-ecclesiastical parochial charity did not include any persons elected by the ratepayers or parochial electors or inhabitants of the parish, or appointed by the parish council or meeting, the parish council might appoint additional members of the governing body not exceeding the number allowed by the

Charity Commissioners. These provisions did not apply to charities founded less than forty years before the passing of the Act (§14(8)). The provisions led to controversy at Worton and Marston. At a meeting of the parish council of Worton, held 22 July 1895, three trustees were appointed for the administration of the Worton charities. The charities were not specified, but were presumably all those for the benefit of the parish of Worton other than ecclesiastical charities and charities founded less than forty years before 1894. Another election of a trustee for Worton took place in 1898. Meanwhile on 3 August 1895 the parish meeting of Marston had appointed trustees for the parish. In January 1900 the parish clerk of Worton communicated the above resolutions of Worton and Marston to the Charity Commissioners, who in reply stated that the churchwardens of Worton were not in their opinion to be regarded as the churchwardens of a 'rural parish' within the meaning of subsection 2 of Section 14 of the Act of 1894, they being churchwardens of a larger area. The Commissioners pointed out that the appointments of trustees purported to have been made by the parish council of Worton and the parish meeting of Marston were therefore irregular. They stated that the vicar, churchwardens, and overseers of Worton appeared to be the trustees of Poor's Land charity and that the churchwardens would continue to be the trustees of the charities of Pitt and Kent. They pointed out that if the parish council of Worton and the parish meeting of Marston wished to be represented on the trusts of the other non-ecclesiastical parochial charities (except that of Sarah Charnbury, which had been founded less than forty years before), recourse might be had to the provisions of Subsection 3 of Section 14 of the Act of 1894. There was further correspondence in 1902 and 1903, and the Assistant Charity Commissioner held his inquiry at Potterne on 29 October 1903. Shortly before this (on 11 September) the parish clerk of Worton had informed the Commissioners that his council had decided to rescind their petition for authority to appoint additional trustees. This meant that there was no change in the trustees for Worton and Marston charities. In Potterne there were changes, where relevant, in accordance with the above provisions of the Local Government Act, 1894.

Poor's Land or Grubb's charity. By indenture of release dated 1751, Philip Smith of London, son and heir of William Smith, late of Potterne, conveyed to the churchwardens of Potterne a piece of meadow called Marsh Mead. The consideration was £120, of which £100 had been bequeathed to the churchwardens by William Grubbe (then deceased), the interest to be distributed to the poor at Christmas. In 1834 Marsh Mead was let for £10. 10s. a year, and this money was then given to the poor of the tithing or hamlet of Potterne. By their order dated 25 March 1859, the Charity Commissioners ordered that the issues of this charity should be divided between the then ecclesiastical parish (i.e. the tithing or hamlet) of Potterne and the new ecclesiastical parish of Worton and Marston, in the ratio of two parts to Potterne to one part to Worton and Marston. In 1903 'Little Marsh Mead', containing 3 a. 3 r. 34 p. was let for £10 to the occupier of Whistley Farm, who also paid the tithe on the land. The income was then given away together with that from Pitt's charity.

Pitt's charity. By his will proved 1784, Robert Pitt bequeathed to the vicar and churchwardens of Potterne £500, the interest to be given to the poor of the parish. The capital was invested in 1792 in £911. 3s. 2d. Consols. By the Charity Commissioners' order of 1859 the interest on the latter sum was to be divided between the ecclesiastical parishes of Potterne and Worton with Marston in the same ratio as Grubbe's charity (see above). The incomes from this charity and from Grubbe's charity were jointly distributed in each ecclesiastical parish in 1903. There were stricter tests of means and character governing the distribution in Potterne than in the other parish.

White's charity for bread. By his will proved 1827 James White left £200 to the vicar and churchwardens of Potterne, the interest to be used to buy bread for the poor at Christmas. The bequest was not limited to the tithing of Potterne as distinct from the parish, and it is not clear why the Charity Commissioners did not in 1859 allot a share of it to Worton and Marston. In 1903 the capital value of this charity was £230. 1s. 7d., and the interest was £5. 15s. The distribution of bread was subject to the same qualifications as the previous two charities.

The Revd. Henry Kent's charity. By a codicil to his will, dated 1775, the Revd. Henry Kent, D .D., late of Potterne, directed that £200 be paid to the vicar and churchwardens of Potterne, the interest to be used to buy outer garments for five of the oldest and poorest men of the parish and the same number and kind of women. The capital was invested in £307. 3s. 8d. Consols. In 1859, by the order of the Charity Commissioners, this was divided between the parish of Potterne, which received £204. 15s.

2d., and that of Worton with Marston, which had the remainder. In 1903 5 old men and 5 old women were said to receive garments each year in Potterne, and 3 old persons in Worton and Marston.

Poor's Allotment, or Potterne Common Lands. This charity has already been mentioned above in connexion with the inclosures in the parish. In 1834 'about 35 or 36 acres' in the former waste lands called Furzehill, Rushey Common, and Stroud Common in Potterne were being let as allotments to between 70 and 75 poor persons of the parish, in quantities of from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ acre each, at rents varying from 4s. to 40s. an acre according to the number of dependant children of the tenant. This arrangement had existed since before 1832, by virtue of the Inclosure Act of 1824. By 1832 £182. 5s. 5d. in rent had been saved and deposited in the Devizes Savings Bank; the rest of the rent had been laid out for the benefit of the tenants and their families. The gross annual rents had amounted to £24–£30, which indicates that the charity had been in operation for at least six years before 1832. The benefit of the charity was confined to the tithing of Potterne. In 1904 the lands of the charity, comprising a little more than 36 acres, were situated in Furzehill, Stroud Common, Wick *alias* Rushey Common, and Common Plot. They were being let at an annual rent of 2d. or 3d. a perch. All the land at Wick Common and Furzehill was then let but there was little demand for that at Stroud Common. By this time the accumulated rents from the allotment amounted to £350. From the interest on this an annual donation of £4. 4s. was given to the Devizes Cottage Hospital, £3. 5s. was paid in prizes at the Potterne parochial schools, about 2 cwt. of coal was given at Christmas to the households of every poor parishioner, and the balance given away by means of tickets for boots, coats, or cloaks.

Poor's Money. It was reported in 1834 that a tablet in the church stated that £60 was given by several unknown persons about 1670, the interest to be applied to the use of the poor of Potterne. According to the same statement Walter Grubbe, Esq., by his will dated 1715 bequeathed £10, the interest to be similarly applied, and Mrs. Thomasine Grubbe, at a date unspecified, bequeathed £50 for the same purpose. Of the total sum (of £120) £20 was paid out towards the purchase in 1751 of Marsh Mead (see Poor's Land above). In 1786 it was reported that another £50 was vested in Thomas Maundrell. Until about 1816 Thomas Henry Maundrell paid the interest of this £50 to the vicar's churchwarden, but in 1834 it was reported that Henry Maundrell, son of the Thomas Maundrell of 1786, was not living in Wiltshire and was insolvent. In 1834 and 1904 nothing further was known of the money held by the Maundrells or of the remaining sum of £50 which had gone to make up Poor's Money.

The Revd. George Edmonstone's charity for the Poor of Potterne, Worton, and Marston. By his will proved 1855 Edmonstone bequeathed £700, the interest to be applied for the relief of the poor in the ecclesiastical parishes of Potterne and Worton with Marston. The parish or tithing of Potterne was to receive interest on £500 of this sum, and the tithings of Worton and Marston each the interest on £100. In 1870 the £700 was transferred to the Official Trustees. In 1904 the interest of the £500 of Potterne, amounting to £13. 15s., was applied in a subsidy to the Potterne Coal and Clothing Club. At that time any resident of the parish of Potterne could join this club, which gave bonuses to each member who had paid his subscription. At Worton in 1904 the interest of £100, amounting to £2. 15s. a year, was spent on the purchase of calico for the making of shirts for the poor. At Marston at the same date the same amount of interest on £100 was used, as at Potterne, to subsidize a coal and clothing club.

John Glass's charity. By his will proved in 1877 John Glass intended to bequeath £100, the interest on which was to be used to buy overcoats for poor old men of Potterne. The testator, however, left no assets and the charity never came into operation.

Sarah Charmbury's charity. By her will proved 1888 Sarah Charmbury gave to the vicar and churchwardens of Worton and Marston £19. 19s., the interest to be given to 12 poor parishioners. In 1904 the capital was £20. 1s. Consols.

Shorter's charity. By his will dated 1785 John Shorter of Worton left £100, the interest to be for the benefit of the poor of the tithing of Worton. In 1834 the sum of £200 Consols stood to the credit of this charity and the income was being spent on bread for the poor of Worton. The capital was transferred in 1866 to the Official Trustees and in 1904 produced £5 a year, which was administered with the income from Hezekiah Goodall's charity (see below), and applied to the purchase of bread.

Hezekiah Goodall's charity. By his will proved 1866 Hezekiah Goodall bequeathed £100, the interest to be used to buy bread for the poor of Worton. This sum, less legacy duty, was invested in £94. 1s. 1d. Consols which in 1904 was producing annual interest of £2. 7s. This charity was administered jointly with Shorter's charity (see above).

Mrs. Eleanor Gaisford's charity. By her will proved 1872 Eleanor Gaisford, widow, gave £100, the income to be used to buy clothing or other necessities for the poor of the tithing of Worton. The legacy was invested in £96. 7s. 6d. Consols in private names and in 1883 was transferred to the Official Trustees. In 1904 the income of £2. 8s. was being applied for the purchase of calico for the use of the poor.

Worton's Poor's Land or Waste Lands. At a vestry meeting of the tithing of Worton, held on 3 December 1829, it was resolved that certain common lands in the tithing should be inclosed for the benefit of the poor, and that the lands should be managed by a committee consisting of five local residents. The lands were inclosed and at a meeting of the vestry of the tithing in 1848 the managers of the lands were empowered to exchange certain pieces, containing about 2 acres of an old inclosure or piece of land in Worton called Further Common Piece, containing about 1¼ acre. This exchange was effected in 1849. In 1862 the vestry meeting resolved to take steps to make a legal settlement of the Poor's Land. Application was made to the Charity Commissioners who in 1867 appointed as trustees the vicar and churchwardens of Worton and Marston and the overseers of the poor of Worton. In 1872 a small amount of timber from the Poor's Land was sold and invested in £7. 16s. 4d. Consols in the name of the Official Trustees. In 1902 the gross annual income from Poor's Land was £13. 11s. 3½d. This was used to buy sheets and blankets for the poor of the civil parish of Worton. Since 1900 the charity had been managed by the parish council of Worton.