

THE NAPTON CHARITIES

In the early 1900's the poor of Napton were able to rely, at least at certain times of the year, on the three charities which were run in the village. One distributed money, another bread and also coal. The following extract is taken from the minutes of the Charities Trustees meeting on December 7th 1911, chaired by the Reverend Armstrong and Messrs Alsop, Makepeace and Heritage...

"The Reverend is to write a letter to the secretary of the charities commission asking if section 14, sub-section 9, of the Local Government Act, 1895, be necessarily carried out. The problem being that there would be difficulty appointing trustees."

The Act read as follows...

"Whilst a person is a trustee of a parochial charity he shall not, nor shall his wife or children, receive any benefit from the charity."

This suggests that the trustees were in need of some of the benefits of the charities themselves. At the same meeting the bread and coal lists of Bates' Charity were revised. It was decided that one shilling and ninepence was to be given to each widow and everyone on the bread list was to receive an extra loaf. The Co-Op was to supply the loaves at the distribution which took place on St. Thomas' Day, December 21st. The Parish Council would publish a list of the names of the recipients of the three charities and this would be displayed on the Church or Chapel door or 'some other conspicuous place'. On Thursday December 14th 1911 a letter was received in reply to the Reverend's letter to the Charities Commission. It stated that the section of the Government Act was to be upheld. The Trustees decided to continue in office and forego receiving the charity. Two years later, in 1913, on November 18th the coal and bread charities were distributed as follows...

"Householders, special cases and widows, two hundred weight respectively together with half a hundredweight for each child of fourteen or under."

It would appear that the lists were constantly revised. Only 'deserving' cases would be considered. Widows and children were always deemed to be deserving cases and came top of the list while married men of working age came bottom.

In 1916 a tender for the supply of coal at £1. 15s a ton was received from Mr W.E. Bull of Marston Doles as well as one from W.F. Kendall.

Both of these were rejected; the first for being too expensive and the second because the coal was of inferior quality. The Trustees applied to the Charities Commission for permission to distribute the charity in cash for that year but the commission refused and so Mr George Kendall's tender for 'coals, free from slack, from Wyken Colliery, at 30s 6d per ton, the coal to be weighed at Napton Station,' was accepted.

In November 1918 the charity had no more than £24 available for the purchase of the charity coal and £2 6s 10½d available for bread, to be distributed on Good Friday and St. Thomas' Day. As there were to be one hundred and thirty recipients of both coal and bread they first decided to distribute on Good Friday only but a month later that decision was reversed and the distribution went ahead on St. Thomas' Day as well.

In 1928 Kelly's Directory mentions the following...

"Cox and Whiteheads' Charities, producing annually £90, are for the maintenance of schools, supporting Friendly Society and the allotments.

Bates' Charity of £1 12s a year was distributed among twenty poor widows.

£2 6s is distributed in bread on Good Friday and St. Thomas' Day."

Grants of money or services are still available and can be made to individuals in need, hardship or distress.