

## CHESSHIRE'S LIBRARY, HALTON.

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SIR JOHN CHESSHIRE's Library at Halton, in the parish of Runcorn, is, with the exception of Humphrey Chetham's foundation at Manchester, the oldest public library in the northern counties. It is enshrined in a long stone building of one room, panelled and furnished in oak, standing within its own walled plot of ground near the parish church.

The best account of the library, and of the provisions of the founder as set forth in his Will and in the "Rules and Orders" which he caused to be printed, will be found in a paper read by Mr. J. D. Jones, of the Runcorn Free Library, on the occasion of a visit of the librarians of the Mersey district. But this paper was unfortunately published only in the *Widnes Weekly News* of 30th May, 1896, and hence is not very accessible for reference.

Over the entrance door of the library is a marble tablet, bearing, in fading characters, an inscription, which has been frequently reprinted, but so seldom correctly, that it may be worth while to set it out once more:—

HANC BIBLIOTHECAM  
PRO COMMUNI LITERATORUM USU  
SUB CURA CURATI CAPELLAE DE HALTON  
PROVENTIBUS TER FELICITER AUGMENTATAE  
JOHANNES CHESSHIRE, MILES  
SERVIENS D'M REGIS AD LEGEM  
D. D. D.  
ANNO MDCCXXXIII.

For the sake of what follows, I venture to intrude a translation:—"This library, for the common use

“ of lettered persons, under the care of the Curate  
 “ of Halton Chapel (three times happily augmented  
 “ with endowments), is given by John Cheshyre,  
 “ Knight, King's Serjeant-at-law, in the year 1733.”

The reference in the fourth line of this inscription to a three-fold augmentation of the chapel has been somewhat of a puzzle; but the meaning becomes clear when it is read in connection with another inscription on a marble slab which was formerly in the church, but is now set inside the east wall of the vestry:—

A.D. 1731

THIS CURACY OF HALTON WAS AUGMENTED  
 WITH LANDS OF £1280 VALUE  
 WHEREOF WERE GIVEN BY  
 QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY £600  
 S<sup>r</sup> JOHN CHESHYRE KN<sup>t</sup>  
 HIS MAJESTY'S SERJEANT AT LAW £600  
 AND THE REMAINDER WAS  
 THE MONEY OF THE CHAPEL £80

In Gastrell's *Notitia Cestriensis*, there is mention (1715) amongst other endowments, of the “ Interest “ of £81 given by several persons,” which probably represents the last of the three augmentations.

It may be convenient to give now two other inscriptions connected with the Halton Library. Upon a leaden spout-head on the library itself, is the following:—

S	C
I	A
1730	

On the old Vicarage, a stone house closely adjoining the library:—

M C  
 1739

CHARLES MADELEY.



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The following corrections should be made in this note:—

Page 176, line 6, *dele* long.

Page 176, line 5 from bottom, *for* D'M *read* D'NI.

Page 177, line 20, *for* CHAPEL *read* CHAPPEL.

Since the note was written the marble tablet over the library door has been removed, having fallen to pieces, and has been replaced by a new stone bearing the same inscription. LIVERPOOL  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY. The Rev. G. D. Wray, Vicar of Halton, has published in pamphlet form a reprint of the Rules and Orders, 1732, and Catalogue of Books, 1733, from the unique original copy in the library.—C.M.

John Moubray William of Lathum  
ham Justices and afterwards recorded on the octave of St. Hilary (Jan. 14) between Henry of Scaresbrek plaintiff and Simon del Holmes and his wife Dionisia unjustly occupying  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land and the 6th part of one messuage with appurtenances in Hurlerton and Scaresbrek They agree that the said Simon and Dionisia acknowledge that the aforesaid tenements and appurtenances are the right of Henry of which the said Henry has 2 acres with appurtenances by gift of the said Simon and Dionisia and they the said Simon and Dionisia agree that  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land and the 6th part of the messuage which John Salter tailor and his wife Katherine hold for the term of the life of the said Katherine at her death revert to the said Simon and Dionisia and after their death such revert to Henry of Scaresbrek and his heirs And for their acknowledgment and agreement the said Henry paid to Simon and Dionisia 10 marks of silver.

102. [1369.] [Will of Thomas of Lathum] In the name of God Amen On Saturday the morrow of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14) in the year of the Lord 1369 I Thomas of Lathum sound in mind and body make my Will in this manner In the first place I bequeath my soul to God and B. Mary and all the Saints and my body to be buried in the Church of B. Nicholas of Burscogh And I wish my funeral and expenses be arranged according to the settling of my executors In the first place I bequeath to the Prior and Canons of B. Nicholas of Burscough that they have me in special remembrance and pray for me 100 shillings Also to the brothers of