

THE BYE-LAWS OF ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.

By Eric Hardwicke Rideout.

Read 15 November, 1928.

THE document described below was bought some years ago at an auction sale by a Liverpool bookseller from whom I purchased it.

The document consists of four leaves of tough parchment roughly sewn in a skin cover, and comprises ten pages, two of which are written on the insides of the cover, back and front. The whole measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. The penmanship is clear, and the document, though in a good state of preservation and entire, has evidently been much used. When purchased, and apparently for a considerable time previously the book had been folded down the centre, presumably the more readily to be placed in the pocket. Indeed it seems a reasonable inference from the condition of the book as well as from its contents that it was intended for and used as a handbook of reference to the many rules and regulations of the manor, possibly by the Steward or other official charged with the observance of such rules. The order, or apparent lack of order in which the rules are arranged seem to confirm this view and it would seem likely that they had been transcribed from the court rolls to serve as an index to the principal laws passed at successive sessions of the court. All save the last (No. 37) are written, apparently at the same time, by the same hand. No. 37 is added in another less careful hand and the attestation by yet another writer, presumably on 13th April 1682.

The laws are not unusual, and may be compared with others of the same or earlier date. Like the "Ancient Customes, Statutes, and Ordinances of the Towne of

Warrington " ¹ of 1592, they were " established, used and continewed for the good government, comon'wealth and profit of the saide Towne." As such they throw an interesting light on the many national and local acts and bye-laws by which all communities are governed, comprising at the same time many laws now administered by the central government, as well as the more local bye-laws of modern towns. ²

AN ABSTRACT OF SEVERALL RULES, OR BY LAWS SOE CALLED, FOR THEIR PRIVAT CONCERNES, TO BEE OBSERVED WITHIN THE LORDSHIPE, OR MANNOR OF ASSHETON UNDR LYNE.

1. Wee agree & order, That all psons within this pish. That owe suit & service, att this Court doe make their severall appearances, upon lawfull warninge, att their Call, And their Attend until the bee dismissed or loose in amercement to the Lord of this Manor iij^s iiij^d
2. Wee agree & order, That all psons, that sell or buy ; by waight or measure to bee sealed and alsoe bringe them unto the markett lookers when Called upon, And those that neglect, or keepe either unjust waighte or mesureres may bee reformed or loose in amerciemient to the Lord of this manor x^s
3. Wee agree & order That every pson : or psons That sell Oate meale, shall sell & allow ffourtie pounds waight to the winchester hoope ; or loose in amerciemient to the lord of this Mannor x^s
4. Wee agree & ord^r That the Constables, & all other officers that Collect & gather any money : do give up a just account, unto the Grand Inquest then in being to bee examined & approved of ; or loose in Amerciemient to the Lord of this Mannor xxx^s

¹ A transcript of this document by James Kendrick, M.D., is in the Library of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.

² For further details of the Ashton Court, reference should be made to Harland, J., *Custom Roll and Rentall of the Manor of Ashton, 1422*, Chetham Society, 74, (1869) ; also to Webb, S. and B., *English Local Government : The Manor and the Borough* (1908), p. 115.

5. Wee agree & ord^r That all psons that have Turfe roomes on the mosse : shall make no wilfull wast thereof, but for every such offence shall forfeit & loose to the Lord of this Mannor x^s
6. Wee agree & ord^r that that no Tenant shall sett or lett his mosse roome, to afarriner that is not a tenant to the Lord of the Mannor but for every such offence shall forfeit to the Lord of this Mannor vj^s viij^d
7. Wee agree & ord^r That every pson or psons That shall steal Turfes shall forfeit for every burden vij^d And for every horse load ijs & Cart load iij^s iiij^d
8. Wee agree & ord^r That no pson, or psons shall putt or suffer their Cattell to goe to the Mosse from the first day of May yearly untill the Eleventh day of August but for every one offending therein shall forfeit and loose to the Lord of this Mannor xij^d
9. Wee agree & ord^r That all psons that are appointed by any officer ; or officers, sworne within this Leet, to doe any necessary worke, as makeinge of hayment ; Clensing of water courses ; ditchinge on the moore or the like, within estinted time, but shall refuse or neglect soe to doe ; shall forfeit & loose in a Merciemnt to the Lord of this Mannor vj^s viij^d
10. Wee agree & ord^r That every pson, or psons That shall or doe over Charge the Common of pasture & Launds or putt unlawfull Cattell thereunto shall forfeit & loose to the Lord of this Mannor x^s
11. Wee agree & ord^r That the sworne Mosse Reeves shall twice every yeare view & looke over the Mosse & give a true account of what misdemeanors they shall fynde unto the Jury then in beinge, or loose in amerciemnt to the Lord of this Mannor vj^s viij^d
12. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons doe digg delve or fletee the Lords wast or any pte thereof shall forfeit & loose in aMerciemnt to the Lord of this Manr vj^s viij^d
13. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons whatsoever doe erect any buildinge Conterary to the Statute, or make any encrouchments upon the Lords wast, shall for every offence therein forfeit & loose to the Lord of this mannor xx^s

- 14. Wee agree & order That no pson or psons shall harbor any beggers or vagabounds wanderinge or Idle psons to lodge stay & abide att his, or their houses to play att any unlawfull games or to gain a settlement within this pish, but shall forfeit and loose for every offence to the Lord of this Mannr x^s
- 15. Wee agree & ord^r That all Inn Keepers that have Convenience for lodgeinge And shall refuse to lodge any Travelor Comeing before eight of the Clock to require lodgeinge haveinge ready money to pay ; or shall harbour mens sonnes or servants after ten of the Clock in the night to tippel, shall for every such offence to the Lord of this Mannor vj^s viij^d
- 16. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons doe resett or in secrett receive from the hands of any pson suspected to bee a Theefe, or of any mans Children or servants, any goods, shall forfeit and loose in aMerciement to the Lord of this Mannor xx^s
- 17. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons do make any reskew, upon any Cattell or Chatteles, or assault any officer in the due execution & Pformance of their office shall loose in a Mercie-ment to the Lord of this Mannor . . . xx^s
- 18. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons do throw stones against any mans doores, house, or break his windows, or do break the Church win- dows, shall forfeit for every such offence to the Lord of this Mannor . . . x^s
- 19. Wee agree & ord^r That no pson or psons shall harbor any pson to drinke, tippel, play, or Idle away the Lords day (Called the Sabboth, or Sun- day) within their house, or houseinge, or garden in time of prayer & preachinge, shall forfeit and loose in aMerciement to the Lord of this Mannor . xx^s
- 20. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons do keep a Mastive doge to goe abroad unMusled shall for every such offence forfeit & loose in amer- cie-ment to the Lord of this Mannor . . . vj^s viij^d
- 21. Wee agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons do keepe any Curr dogg, or doggs that useth to runn att other mens Cattell, or that useth to runn att horse heeles, as men Ryde on the high way, or any

- that sett doggs att horses travelinge the roade, shall for every such offence forfeit to the Lord of this manor iijs iiij^d
22. We agree & ord^r That if any one shall breake other mens hedges, Carrey away his woods, or Cutt up yon ye oakes, or defyle any well or springe where water is fetched for publique use, or shall fish in any other mens pitts or ponds with netts hookes lynes or other devices to destroy fish: shall for every such offense forfeit & loose in amercement to the Lord of this manor xx^s
23. We agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons shall or do keepe any deflowred woman, or wandreinge psons of any other pish in his house or houseinge there to gaine an abroad shall for every Moneth forfeit & loose in a mercient to the Lord of this manor x^s
24. Wee agree & ord^r That if any person or psons shall or do accustomearily goe over other mens feilds, and [? Break] downe fences to the prejudice of others shall for every such offence, forfeit & loose in aMerciement to the Lord of this manor xij^d
25. We agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons shall or do destroy the Lords game by killing any old hawkes, or younge hawkes, or their eggs, or any phesinet partridges, or their eggs, or any hare with guns grine or nett, or snare or in asnowe by any other unlawfull meanes, shall for every such offence forfeit & loose in a merceint to the Lord of this Mannor xx^s
26. We agree & ord^r That all Tenants or other persons that are bound by Covenant, to grind their Corne & graine att the Lords Millnes within this pish & all others that are Tyd by Custome shall for every default forfeit & loose to the Lord of this Mannor vjs viij^d
27. We agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons doe neglect, or refuse to Aide & Assist any of the Constables, beinge required in his Ma^{ty}s name thereunto or to the Bayliffe in his office, shall forfeit & loose in amerceint to the Lord of this Mannor xx^s
28. We agree & ord^r That all psaons, that are Employed att the Lords Millnes, as Millner, dryer, or their

- Assistance, takeinge toule or moultter, above their due & just right, or more money for dryeing than is due, or Change peoples Corne or graine or grynde their Corne bad & to their damage shall for every such offence forfeit & loose in a merciemt to the Lord of this Mannor vj^s viij^d
29. We agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons do spoyle or defyle any water where Cattell use to drinke in any Common watteringe place, or in any other mens ground by layeing Carrion, or steeping heme or any other way shall for every offence forfeit & loose to the Lord of this Mannor vj^s viij^d
30. We agree & ord^r, That if any of the Constables do neglect to keepe up apaire of stockes, renges post, tumbrill, and a paire of Butts for Artillery a bridle & a Cooking Chaire for Scoulds for upon such offence to loose in amercement to the Lord of this Manor x^s
31. We agree & ord^r That all supervisors of the high wayes that do Collect & gather money shall give a just account of what they gather, And what they disburse & alsoe what remaynes in their hands, with the names of such psons as refuse to discharge their just Impositions to the Grand Inquest or loose in amercement to the Lord of this Mannor xx^s
32. We agree & ord^r That all psons that bake bread to sell shall bake it well And sell it according to the Statute And when Oatmeal is sould in the Markett for ij^s viij^d the winchester hoope, their bread in Cakes waigh two pounds for apennie And soe answeare as the price of Corne shall bee, every one Acteng Conterary for every default the officer shall distribute such bread as is not lawfull to the poor & for every such offence shall forfeit to the Lord of this Mannor x^s
33. We agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons speake revillingly or reproachfully against any officer sworn in Court, Concerneinge the execution of their office or do any wayes defame the Jurie shall for every such offence forfeit to the Lord of this Mannor x^s
34. We agree & ord^r That all such psons as are sworne

- in this Court to execute any office whatsoever, And shall slight or neglect in the execution of their office, shall for every offence soe Committed forfeit & loose in a mercement to the Lord of this Mannor xx^s
35. We agree & ord^r That if any Tenants belonging to the Lord of this Mannor That shall sue any Anon: in any other Court, that is or might be sued in this Court, without the Consent of the Stewards shall forfeit & loose in amercement to the Lord of this manor vj^s viij^d
36. We agree & ord^r That if any pson or psons do fetch or procure any warrant or warrants precept or precepts upon their owne account (beinge not a matter Concerneinge the pish account) shall defray & Clearly pay all Charges Concerneinge the same, that may or might any ways tend to the damage of the Constables or of the pish in generall or loose in amercement to the Lord of this Mannor xx^s
- ¹ 37. Wee doe agree and ord^r that all and every the Lords tennants yt have any Tenement lyinge or adjoininge unto the Lords demesne shall make their Sevrall and Respective hayments, Fences and ditches towards the said Desmesne, or in default thereof Loose in Amerciement to the Lord of this Mannor x^s [ij^d ?]
- ² Wee whose names are Subscribed to witt ye The Steward & Grand Jurye have dilligently read ye sevrall rules and by Lawes in yis Booke menten^d and doe agree thereof and Confirme ye same as Witness our hands yis 13th day of Aprill 1682.

[Signed] R. BIRLEY.

¹ 37 in a different hand.

² Again in a different hand.

