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## Some Historical Notes

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# CAISTOR

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Historical Notes

by Peter B. G. Binnall, F.S.A.

*Canon of Lincoln and  
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*How lovely, from this hill's superior height  
Spreads the wide view before my straining sight.*

*(Henry Kirke White)*

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## PREFACE

ONE OF MY EARLIEST recollections is that of seeing the sun shining on the walls and windows of houses in Caistor, as viewed from the road above my father's Rectory at Manton. I must have been about three or four years old at the time and I remember thinking what a lovely sight this was and wondering vaguely whether it was Heaven or Fairyland (the two were not very clearly distinguished in my mind). Then I remember the benign figure of Canon Westbrooke, arriving in top hat and frock coat to attend meetings at our house of the Brigg and Caistor Clerical Book Society, a venerable club, whose members dined once a month at each other's houses at two o'clock, a time originally selected for the convenience of the Reverend Charles Cotterill, headmaster of Brigg Grammar School, more than a hundred years ago.

Years later, when I was about to leave my theological college, I had to find a "title" and at a meeting of the same Society at Bigby, the Reverend A. J. Arch, Vicar of Caistor, asked my father whether he knew of anyone who was seeking a curacy. The outcome of the conversation was that I was ordained deacon in Caistor church in 1932 by Bishop Blackie (being the only person whom he ever ordained) and was fortunate enough to begin my ministry under such a splendid parish priest as Mr Arch. I stayed at Caistor for four years and was most happy there.

I am now glad to offer this revised edition of a little book which I wrote in 1934 as a token of the affection for the place and its inhabitants which I developed during those four years and which has never diminished.

PETER B. G. BINNALL





*Caistor Church, about 1845*



*Caistor Church, after 1863*

Plate I

## CAISTOR

### EARLY DAYS

*"Twas a Roman town of strength and renown."*

THE SALISBURY BALAD

IT IS PROBABLE that Caistor has been an inhabited place for at least 7,000 years, but archaeological finds from pre-Roman periods have not been numerous and perhaps the most important link with the bronze age is to be found in the megalithic tradition, from which the legend of the Fonaby sack stone is derived. This is dealt with later.

There is no doubt that in Roman times a fortified town occupied much of the site on which the western part of Caistor is built. It was probably rectangular and surrounded by four walls, of which the eastern and western were about 500 feet long and the northern and southern about 400 feet. The north-west corner of this area, between the Grammar School and the Union Road has fallen away, but the line of the other boundaries can be traced fairly easily and there remains the solid core of a large projecting bastion at the south-east corner of the churchyard. This fortification may probably have been built about A.D. 300 and there is little doubt that Caistor and Horncastle were intended to serve as twin defence bases against barbarian raiding parties.

The place had doubtless been occupied for a considerable period when the fortifications were made and, since we know that the famous Roman Ninth Legion was stationed at Lincoln in the first century, and coins dating from the reign of Vespasian, who became Emperor in A.D. 69 have been found at Caistor, we may assume that there was continuous occupation from about that date.

The most important Roman find at Caistor was a remarkable lead casket, inscribed CVNOBARRUS FECIT VIVAS, which was unearthed in three pieces when a drain was being dug beneath the road west of the churchyard in 1863. Part of this is in the British Museum and part is in the City and County Museum at Lincoln. It was evidently intended as a treasure chest and must, from the style of its decoration, be assigned



to a date near the end of the Roman occupation. It is impossible to say who Cunobarrus, the maker, was, but his latinized Celtic name is believed to be of Irish origin. *Cuno* in ancient Irish names (*Cyn* in Welsh names) means *hound* and it is interesting to speculate on a possible connection between Cunobarrus, the Romano-British craftsman and the origin of the name Hundon of which a reminder is to be seen in the little carved hound beside a clerestory window on the north side of Caistor church.

In the fifth century, when the Roman legions had left Britain, places like Caistor, not far inland and occupying strategic positions for both attack and defence may well have attracted the Teutonic invaders and, even though the historical accuracy of the story told by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century about the marriage of the British king Vortigern with the beautiful Rowena, daughter of the Saxon chief Hengist, can easily be disproved, it may indicate that the place called "in the British tongue, Kaercorrie, in Saxon Thancastre, that is, Thong Castle" was one of some importance. This place has been identified with Caistor by successive writers since the seventeenth century and as the chapter in Geoffrey's book in which it is mentioned relates to Lindsey, the identification is probably correct.

The fifth century is one of the most obscure periods in the whole history of Britain, but there is sufficient archaeological evidence to justify the assertion that an early Anglian settlement existed at Caistor and the conjecture that we have here an example of continuous occupation since the first century A.D.

By far the most important discovery so far made at Caistor was that of a broken flat stone in or about 1770, bearing a fragmentary latin inscription in a form of lettering which has been assigned by expert opinion to the early part of the ninth century. This stone, which is now lost, bore the name Egbert, whom early commentators identified with a king of Wessex, whose defeat of the Mercians in 829 is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and consequently it was assumed that the battle took place at Caistor and that the stone had formed part of a memorial, erected on or near the site.

Unfortunately, this speculation has been repeated regularly,

(amongst others, by the present writer in his earlier book on Caistor), but it can have no historical foundation. The Egbert of the inscription was obviously a person of importance who probably founded a church here and he may well have been an Ealdorman whose jurisdiction extended over this part of Lindsey.

The nature of this large and elaborate *titulus* or dedication stone, implies that the Church, and hence the place in which it stood were of some importance and a very good case has been made out for identifying Caistor with the mysterious Sidnacester, the site of the early bishops' see of Lindsey, which existed in the eighth and ninth centuries, before the diocese of Lincoln came into existence. Sidnacester has, for nearly 300 years, been identified with Stow and the fine church there is often called "the mother of Lincoln Minster," but, for a number of reasons Caistor has a better claim to the title.

When we come to Domesday Book we find that the Bishop of Lincoln claimed the Church of Caistor, and the men of the Wapentake of Yarborough bore witness that King William had given it to St Mary of Lincoln and that there belonged to it 2 bovates of land, two villeins and a mill, with the soke of one carucate of land in Hundon. The association is still preserved by the prebendal stall of Caistor in Lincoln Cathedral, the holder of which was, until 1847, patron of this benefice.

## THE CHURCH

AS WE HAVE SEEN, it is extremely probable that a relatively large and important church existed here twelve hundred years ago when the dedicatory inscription was set up by the unidentified Egbert, and there is good reason for suggesting that this may have been the cathedral of the Anglo-Saxon diocese of Lindsey. The last bishop of Lindsey was Sigferth whose name occurs in 997 but the diocese as an effective unit had come to an end almost one hundred years earlier and the last bishop *de facto* was Berhtred who was consecrated in 838 and ruled over the diocese for some 22 years. If, indeed,



the see was at Caistor, bishop Berhtred must have been the last occupant who resided there. Then came the invasions of the Norsemen and Christianity was, to a large extent, obliterated in this part of England.

The earliest part of the existing church is the lower stages of the tower, probably dating from the first half of the eleventh century. This has many puzzling features and it is impossible to be clear about the form of the church of which it was a part. There are blocked arches in the north and south walls, but the latter does not at all correspond internally and externally. It is obvious that numerous repairs and alterations have been carried out and possibly the stones marking the external arch are not in their original position. A similar explanation may apply to the west face of the tower, in which a low Norman doorway may have taken the place of a wider Saxon arch, traces of which can be seen to the south of this door. The internal measurements of the tower at ground level are  $17\frac{1}{2}$  feet x  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet and the walls are almost 5 feet thick. These dimensions considerably exceed those of other pre-Conquest towers in north Lincolnshire and may indicate a comparatively later date. It is possible that the Saxon church was cruciform with a central tower.

Probably about 100 years after it was erected the limbs of this church were taken down and a long, narrow, Norman church was built, extending eastwards from the tower, of which the surviving traces are to be seen in the two slender cylindrical pillars at the entrance to the present sanctuary. These probably marked the division between the nave and the short, apsidal chancel. The Norman corbel table over the south wall of the chancel can be seen on the nineteenth century lithograph (plate Ia). At the same time the tower was carried up to its present height (without the parapet) and round-headed windows were inserted in the top stage. These can now only be seen from inside as they were covered in the fourteenth century by the large existing windows.

The next development, which may have taken place between the years 1240 and 1250, was a very important one. The nave walls were taken down and replaced by arcades of four bays, each with octagonal pillars on high square bases, north and south aisles were made, access to the latter being gained

by a door-way with nail-head ornament. A new wide chancel arch was made and a south aisle was added to the chancel. The windows of this building were probably tall, narrow lancets such as were reproduced in the nineteenth century chancel. The steep-pitched roof reached to a point just below the present tower windows and there was an opening in the east wall of the tower commanding a view of the whole interior of the building.

Some indication of the date when these enlargements and attachments were made is given by the unusual corbels over the north arcade, which are practically identical with several in the stone screen-work of the choir aisles in Lincoln Cathedral. The screen-work was erected during the episcopate of Robert Grossetete (1235-1253) and it is reasonable to suppose that masons employed at the Cathedral also worked at Caistor, where the church was in the hands of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln. Somewhat similar corbels occur at Bracebridge and in the prebendal church of South Carlton. It is interesting to note that, when repair work was in progress at Caistor in 1862, a coin of Louis IX of France, who came to the throne in 1236, was found beneath the floor.

Bishop Oliver Sutton visited Caistor on June 29th, which would be the patronal festival, in the year 1291 but whether he did so with the intention of consecrating an altar or any other addition to the church is unknown.

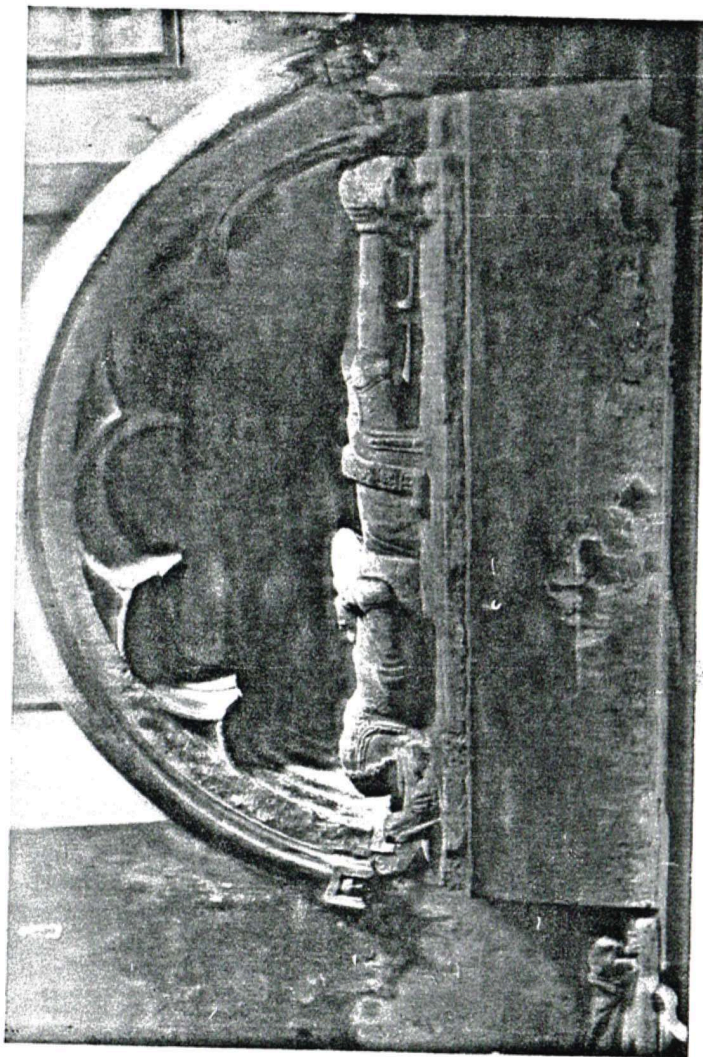
There do not seem to be any architectural features remaining which belong to that period.

On April 3rd, 1311, Roger de Mortival, prebendary of Caistor, who later became Bishop of Salisbury, received licence to dedicate an altar in his prebendal church and it is possible that the Hundon chapel at the east end of the north aisle was built at this time.

In the middle of the fourteenth century new windows were inserted in the tower and aisles. (The latter were replaced in the nineteenth century). A new doorway on the north side was also provided. The trefoil headed three-light windows, with quatrefoils in the tracery and the ball-flower ornament of the door are characteristic of English architecture of the Decorated period.

The Guild of the Purification of the B.V. Mary was founded





*Sir John Hundon's Monument*

Plate II

in 1358 and this institution may have been associated with the improvements to the church.

After this, no major alterations appear to have been made until the re-building of the chancel in 1848, except for the addition of the parapet and eight pinnacles to the tower in the fifteenth century. Much damage was done to the tower by a great storm in 1663, and four of the pinnacles were subsequently removed.

Modern alterations have been as follows :

1806. The old lead from the roof was taken off and sold and a new roof, of lower pitch, covered with Westmoreland slates was substituted.

1842. The church re-pewed by voluntary subscription.

1848. Chancel rebuilt.

1863. New iron gate provided for the churchyard and now carried out to the church. Windows, etc., altered.

1873. Interior of chancel restored and sanctuary rebuilt at a cost of £1,519 and reredos inserted (now removed).

1894. Roof and walls painted.

1899. Tower repaired and sanctuary and chancel redecorated.

1904. Extensive repairs to tower.

1907. Nave panelled at a cost of £60, provided by the Ladies' Needlework Society.

1911. New lectern presented by the same society.

1929. Rood, designed by W. Bond, F.R.I.B.A., presented.

The following details are worthy of notice :

(1) A blocked recess in the tower over the apex of the present nave roof.

(2) A curious graffito, which has erroneously been considered a Mass-dial, on the southern face of the first pier east of the south doorway, 4 feet 1 inch above the present floor level.

(3) Several fragments of mediaeval coffin lids. These are those incorporated in the tower buttresses in 1904.

**The Monuments.** The three stone effigies in the north-western members of the Hundon family, whose manor formed a part of the parish of Caistor. The oldest figure, that of William de Hundon, is in a fair state of preservation and shows the knight in the military dress of the thirteenth century. It is highly probable that he financed the building



of the north aisle and endowed a chantry in what is now the Lady Chapel, which used to be called the Hundon choir. On the floor of this chapel, and obviously moved from some other position, is the effigy of a lady in costume of the same date as Sir William, presumably his wife. Under a cusped recess in the chapel is the extremely fine figure of Sir John de Hundon, in which almost every detail of the armour is perfect (Plate II). Sir John was Sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1343. His monument used to be boxed in by boarding, which perhaps saved it from suffering greater mutilation,—as it is the hands are broken, the dagger sheath has gone and the angels supporting the cushion on which his head rests are much damaged. Little is known of the Hundon family, who seem to have become merged through the female line in the Truesdales at an early date.

Next, in chronological order, comes the brass of John Ousteby and Joan his wife, A.D. 1461. This is in the floor of the chancel and consists of an incomplete inscription and the symbols of the Evangelists, SS. Mark and Luke, those of SS. Matthew and John having disappeared. After her husband's death the widow took religious vows and was professed by the Bishop of Limerick, acting on behalf of Bishop John Chedworth, of Lincoln.

In the present sacristy, formerly known as the Maddison Choir, is a good coloured mural effigy in alabaster of Sir Edward Maddison, of Fonaby. On the opposite wall is a damaged tablet commemorating Katherine, daughter of Ralph Bosville of Bradbourne, in Kent, who married Edward Maddison of Fonaby, grandson of old Sir Edward. She died in 1619.

On the wall of the north aisle is a brass, fixed there for safety, but formerly on the floor of the chancel, which perpetuates the memory of Godfrey Carrington, sometime vicar of Caistor, who died in 1670, and was buried before the High Altar, and also Ann, his wife, who died in the same year as her husband.

Other mural tablets in the Church are fairly modern. The small brass plate near the organ refers not to the present instrument, but to its predecessor which was removed many years ago.

The Church plate is all modern, with the exception of a very fine Elizabethan chalice of silver, lacking its cover. It bears no maker's name or other stamp.

The Registers are of some interest and date from 1584. The entries for several years are missing and the early pages have been carelessly bound in a single volume without regard to chronological order.

The Bells. There are six bells, of which the following are particulars :

(1) Inscription : JOHN TAYLOR & CO. LOUGHBOROUGH 1871. RECAST 1904. W. F. W. WESTBROOKE VICAR F.R.S. GAMAN R. J. WATSON CHURCHWARDENS. Diameter 30 inches.

(2) Inscription : JAMES HARRISON OF BARTON FOUNDER 1833. Diameter  $31\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

(3) Same inscription as (2), but different decoration. Diameter  $32\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Both were purchased with money left for the purpose by Mr Martin Munday, of Caistor, who died on Lady Day, 1832. His tombstone, near the north-east corner of the Church, records the benefaction.

(4) Inscription : 7661 SW snedraW hcruhC WOT iroM otneM. This inscription has been reversed by the letters being impressed the wrong way (i.e. the right way for reading) on the mould. W.S. stands for W. Sellars or Seller, copper-smith and bellfounder, of York. The other initials denote the Churchwardens in 1667, viz., T.O., Thomas Osburn ; W., William Ashton, the initial of whose surname is hidden. Diameter  $34\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

(5) Inscription : sanc te petre (In Old English lettering) Diameter 39 inches. This bell, dedicated in honour of St Peter, one of the patron saints of the Church, bears the stamp of the Oldfields, famous bellfounders of Nottingham, and probably dates from the early sixteenth century.

(6) Inscription : GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO 1712. Diameter  $42\frac{1}{2}$  inches. This bell bears the stamp of Samuel Smith of York. Its weight is approximately  $14\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.

There were many peculiar uses of these bells until recent times, but, unfortunately, as is the case all over England, local customs are rapidly dying out.

No. 3 was formerly rung daily at 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. It is



rung daily at 8 p.m. for the Angelus, though it is popularly called the Curfew. Twice three tolls are rung for a male and thrice two for a female. An "invitation bell" is rung before funerals. No. 4 was formerly rung at 11 a.m. on Shrove Tuesday, and all the bells used to be rung for some days before Christmas. It was also the custom here to ring a muffled peal at 3 p.m. on Good Friday. The treble and tenor were rung for a fire and No. 3 was rung to summon the vestry meeting.

**Windows.** There are 12 stained glass windows inserted at intervals between 1848 and 1916, of which the best is the westernmost one in the north aisle, designed by Kempe and commemorating Canon W. F. W. Westbrooke, vicar from 1886-1916. The window in the tower was given by the "Maries" of Caistor in 1889.

**The Gad Whip (Plate III).** By the generosity of the descendants of the late Mr William Brooks of Fonaby and Hundon, the church now possesses a specimen of the whips used in the curious and probably unique custom connected with the observance of Palm Sunday in Caistor Church in bygone years. This whip is exhibited in a glass case near the Lady Chapel and consists of a stock, six feet in length, and a lash of seven feet one inch. At the upper end of the stock, which is partly bound with hide, is a small purse, a replica of the original one made by the late Mrs Stephenson, daughter of Mr Brooks, in whose memory the whip was given by her daughters. This purse contained 30 silver coins (some say 24) one of which, a halfpenny of the reign of Edward II, may be seen near the whip. Also attached to the stock are three pieces of wych elm. There were supposed to be four of these, of differing length, a possible emblem of the Four Gospels.

There are many printed accounts of the peculiar ceremony connected with this whip. The details of the custom seem briefly to have been as follows.

Every Palm Sunday, the tenant of certain lands in the parish of Broughton, belonging to the lord of the manor of Hundon, had to provide a whip of the type described above, and send a man with it to Caistor church. During the reading of the first Lesson at Mattins this man cracked the whip

thrice in the north porch. At the beginning of the second Lesson, he waved it three times over the clergyman's head and then held it in the same position until the conclusion of the Lesson, when he folded the lash around the stock and deposited the whip in the pew belonging to the lord of the manor of Hundon.

This quaint usage came to an end in 1846, when the land at Broughton changed hands. It is easy to speculate upon its origin, but hard to formulate any theory which can provide a satisfactory explanation of all the details. It is safe to assert that the custom was one of great antiquity and had originally some kind of religious significance. Its association with the office of Mattins must have been a post-Reformation development.

When silver pennies were no longer minted, a florin was substituted for them.

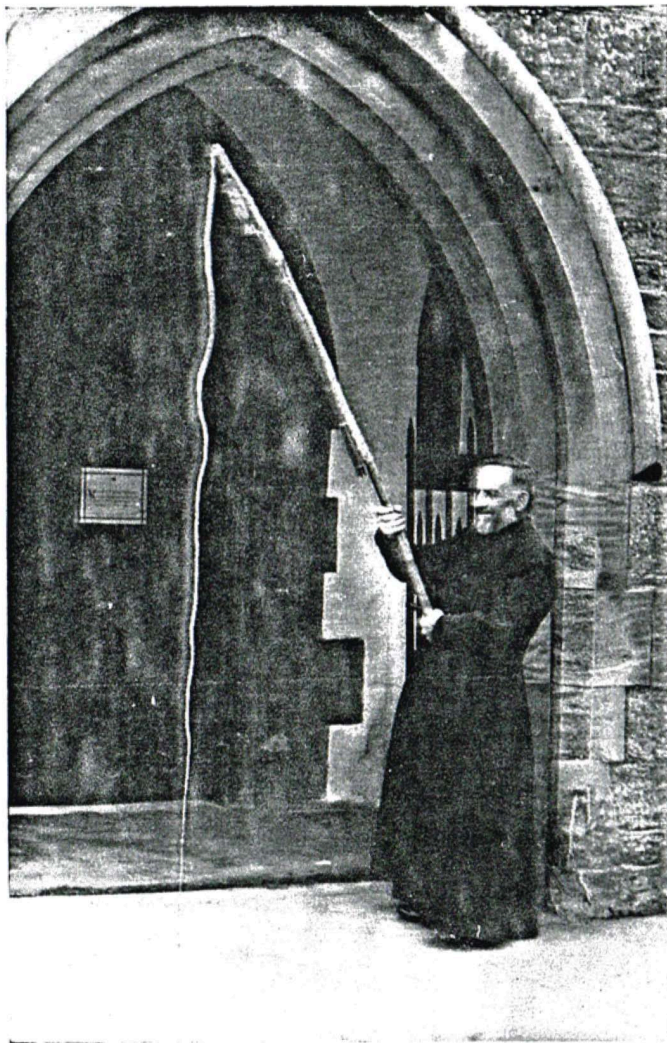
The origin of the name is doubtful. It seems not unlikely that it is derived from the term "goad," denoting the pointed staff with which oxen are driven. In this connection it is significant that the Caistor whip has a distinctly pointed butt to the stock.

## PARISH CLERKS

WILLIAM LINGS, parish clerk, was buried in November, 1749, aged 35, and was succeeded by William Jollands, who held the office for 29 years and was buried in April, 1775. John Foster, the next clerk, was buried in September, 1825, after having discharged his duties for just over half a century. He was succeeded by his son, Joshua, who was clerk until his death in 1847, when the latter's son, another Joshua was appointed to the vacant office. He was buried in June, 1871, and was followed by his son, yet another Joshua (Plate III), who faithfully discharged his duties until his decease on December 5th, 1905. He was succeeded by George Lovelock who retired in 1949 when Charles Pegg was appointed. He died in 1955, and no successor has been appointed.

The remarkable record of the Foster family is mentioned on a headstone at the south-west corner of the churchyard.





*The Gad Whip*  
Plate III

The first of the three Joshuas was an eccentric character and he lived in an age of great laxity in Church matters. It is related how, during the incumbency of Isaac Wilson, who was for 56 years the non-resident vicar of Caistor, a certain curate who was responsible for carrying out the duties which ought to have been performed by the absent parish priest, used to be very fond of taking a pipe of tobacco in the vestry before the sermon, while the congregation sang a psalm. On one occasion the psalm ended before the pipe and Joshua Foster came in to tell the clergyman that the people were waiting; "Let them sing another," said the curate. Presently, back came Joshua to announce that the second psalm was finished; "Let them sing the 110th" said the curate! Eventually, however, the pipe was done and the parson began to put on his large, black preaching gown but the folds were troublesome and he called Joshua to his aid. "I think the devil must be in this gown," he remarked, as he wrestled with it. Old Foster waited until the garment was duly on and then dryly remarked, "I should say as how he is, Sir." This anecdote is related by the late P. H. Ditchfield in his book, *The Parish Clerk*, but it is only fair to state that the same story may be found, told of other places also.

At the time of the enclosure of Caistor a small field on the Brigg road was allotted to the parish clerk by virtue of his office and is consequently known as "The Clerk's Piece."

#### JOHN BARNARD

THIS MAN, whose name is sometimes spelt Bernard, was sufficiently prominent in English history to be accorded a place in the Dictionary of National Biography. He was the son of a lawyer and was born at Caistor in 1628. Having received his early education at the recently founded Grammar School here, he was admitted at Queens' College, Cambridge, in 1645 and migrated to Oxford three years later. He graduated B.A. and became a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford in 1650 and eventually proceeded to the degrees of M.A., B.D., and D.D. In 1656 he became Rector of Waddington and in 1683, Vicar of Gedney and Prebendary of Asgarby in Lincoln



Cathedral. He married Lettice, daughter of the celebrated Dr Peter Heylin, whose biography he wrote. He died at Newark in 1683, being buried at Waddington, where a black marble stone at the east end of the former church commemorated his virtues in a Latin epitaph.

In the first half of his life he was a vigorous Puritan and wrote a book which was intended to discourage the restoration of Anglican clergymen who had been ejected from their livings by the Commonwealth Parliament, but later he, himself, conformed and acquired a great reputation as a champion of the orthodoxy which he had formerly condemned. No doubt he was prompted by conscientious motives and was fortunate in that his conscience coincided with his interest. His son, also John, was another undecided divine, who became a Roman Catholic in the time of James II, but returned to Anglicanism under William III and eventually became Rector of Ludford and Vicar of Kelstern. He also finds a place in the Dictionary of National Biography.

## THE FAIR AND MARKETS

THE CAISTOR PALMSUN FAIR, held from time immemorial on the Saturday before Palm Sunday for the sale of sheep and cattle, was an institution famous all over this part of England. A very interesting record of Chancery proceedings in 1626 tells how Sir Edward Ayscough of South Kelsey brought a complaint against his neighbour Sir Ralph Maddison of Fonaby and others, stating that they had rendered both the fields in which the fair was held in alternate years, useless for the purpose by ploughing them and defacing the landmarks.

The defendants' reply is enlightening as to alleged sharp practice "they deny that the market was always kept in that field of the two that lay fallow, but put into pen yards and other convenient places for that purpose, and many thousands of sheep have been sold in one year out of sheep pens and pen yards in Caster, and sometimes a thousand sheep have been sold there in one day."

They go on to affirm that penned sheep can be better examined by prospective buyers who can "thereby find out the deceits that are often used by the sellers, for that the said sellers of sheep doe oftentimes put Rigalds and Rammes in the company of wethers and likewise motherlesse lambs . . . and also sue loose wooll upon the backes of sheepe that wanted wooll and many tymes colour the wooll upon their sheepe backes to make them seem to be sheepe that came from high grounds and such as could not roll in mose places. All which deceits cannot be well discerned when the sheepe are at libertie in the open Feilds but may be well proved and discovered by the buyer when the sheepe are brought out of the sayd pen yards or other convenient places where they may be handled."

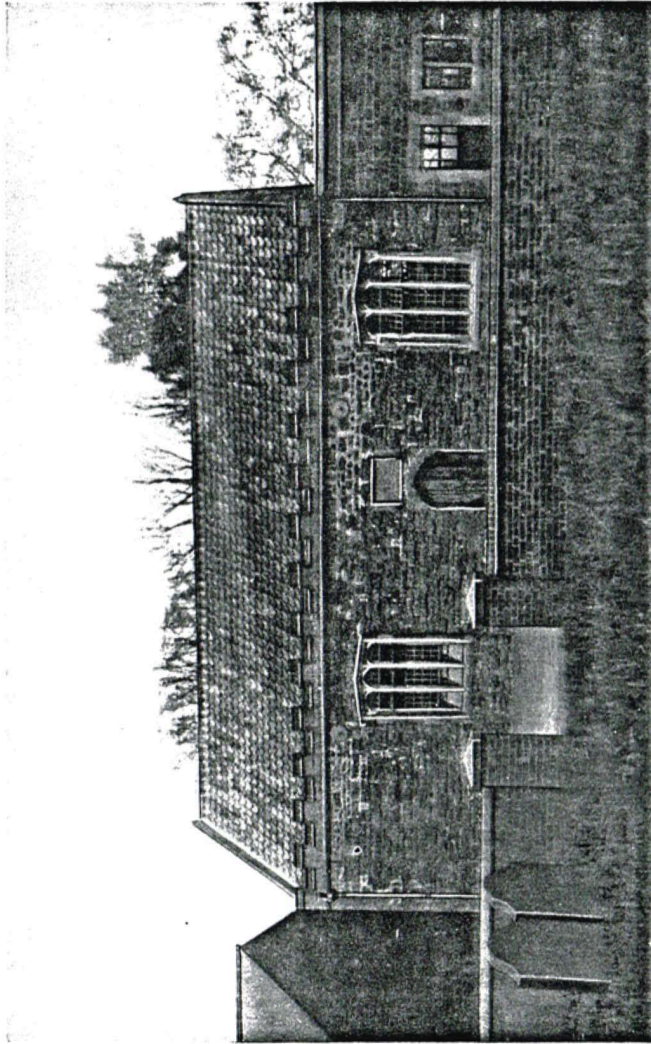
Whatever may have been the outcome of this dispute both the Palmsun and Michaelmas Fairs continued to flourish and in 1694 Abraham de la Pryme, the observant curate of Broughton, recorded in his Diary: "Octob. 3. Yesterday was Caster fair: there was almost no silver to be seen at it, nothing but gold. Everyone had five, or ten, or twenty, or one hundred guineas a piece. There was nothing almost to be seen for all sorts of things but gold."

These fairs probably reached the height of their prosperity during the nineteenth century. In 1826 at the Palmsun Fair, 20,000 sheep were penned, the prices being 10/- to 19/- for hogs, 18/- to 25/- for ewes, and 20/- to 30/- for shearing wethers. By 1858 the number sold rose to about 60,000 and the price of hogs, which was considered poor, was 41/- to 47/-.

In 1860 the weather was bad and few buyers came from away, but prices averaged 50/- to 54/- each, some reaching £3. The Michaelmas Fair that year was the worst for a long time and "the beast fair was less by near 1,000 head of cattle than of late years." By this time the Whitsun Fair had degenerated into a matter of a few amusement caterers and cheap-jacks attempting to attract custom and the only comment in the local press was that two arrests for drunkenness were made.

The following year produced beautiful weather in March and the Palmsun Fair was well attended. The price of hogs remained in the neighbourhood of 54/-. Even so, decline





*The Grammar School*  
Plate IV

had set in and the Barton, Brigg, Caistor and Winterton News for March 28th, 1861, carried the following remarks : " Whatever the cause, whether intellectual progress, increase of attachment to their own firesides, facilities of trading for every personal and domestic requisite with itinerant shopkeepers at their own doors, or all these together, certain it is that our fairs are less beneficial to trading interests than they used to be. Fair days are no longer remarkable for large gatherings of villagers in our streets. The few who come look as if they had a specific object for their visit, and seldom delay their return."

The arrangement by which fairs were held in the third week of September and at Michaelmas was showing itself unpractical and both were poorly attended. Lincoln April Fair had almost killed Caistor Whitsun Fair by 1861 and the latter had begun to " show unmistakeable signs of decay in importance."

The year 1872 showed a considerable revival of trade at the Palmsun Fair and the average price of hogs was 75/-. At the Whitsun Fair there was a brisk trade in sheep, cattle and horses and " the pleasure fair was numerously attended, although the day was disagreeably cold." Incidentally, on the fair day (Saturday, May 18th) the materials of the toll house on the Brigg and Caistor turnpike were sold by auction at the George Hotel, the total realised for house, gate, posts and " pump and belongings " being £12 12s. 6d.

The 1870's were bad years for agriculture and trade was described as being in a " lethargic condition." The fairs, and particularly Palmsun, gave a fresh, but not a lasting, impetus to business and the importance of Caistor declined as that of Grimsby increased. It is perhaps significant that at about this time the name of The Golden Fleece Inn was changed to The Fleece.

By 1888 only 6,000-7,000 sheep were penned for the Palmsun fair and prices remained the same as they had been 30 years before. The Whitsun fair had almost died completely but those in September and at Michaelmas were well patronized and there was a good dog show, followed by an evening entertainment in the public hall, entitled " Funny Fancies," given by Mr G. A. Foote, the popular comedian.



In 1889 14,000 sheep were penned and prices ranged from 55/- to 62/- per head. Prices were a little higher in September but milch cows only sold at from £10 10s. od. to £14 and no calves were offered.

The Palmsun fair was a fairly flourishing institution in the early part of the present century. In 1905 there were some 10,000 sheep offered and these sold for an average price of £3, being an advance of about 5/- on the previous year. The September and Michaelmas fairs were still held but were much reduced in importance and "there was reason for the general complaint that prices were not remunerative to the grazier."

I remember the late Mr Tom Glew, who died in 1934, at the age of 90, telling me how he had attended the Palmsun Fair of 1874 when a record number of 45,000 sheep were penned, and had witnessed the steady decline and final extinction of Caistor's markets and fairs. He attributed this to several causes, including the fall in demand for long-wool sheep and the increasing patronage of the weekly auctions at Brigg, Gainsborough and elsewhere.

The agricultural depression of the 1930's finally brought these ancient institutions to an end.

### INNS

*"No, Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is provided as by a good tavern or inn."*

DR JOHNSON

The dates given are not necessarily terminal but are those at which the land-lords occur.

**The George**, existing 1755. Robert Haddlesey, landlord. 1792, Robert Haddlesey, Junior, whose widow Barbara, neé Bullock, gave up *The George* about 1807, married the Rev. Samuel Turner, Senior, and died in 1827, aged 63. She was a native of Goxhill and was celebrated for her beauty.

**The Red lion**, existing 1748 (the present house was built in 1835).

1748, Thomas Henderson, owner, Thomas Robinson, occupier.

1828-59, John Quickfall.

In 1872 the house was offered for sale but was withdrawn at £1,600.

**The White Hart**, existing 1838.

1838-56, Robert Pickworth.

**The Talbot**, existing 1642.

The house belonged to the Skipworth family.

About 1744 Edmund Gee, followed by Thomas Gee and William Freeborough and later Sarah Gee, widow, who was buried November 5th, 1756.

1770, Newark Douthwaite.

1789-1805, John Walesby.

1806, Mrs Ann Walesby.

1833-7, — Gilliat.

1837-9, Mrs Gilliat.

1841-56, John Parrish.

1859-69, William George Codd, who found the old carved sign of a bunch of grapes in a lumber room and hung it outside the house. He later kept the inn at Moortown Station and died there May 13th, 1874, aged 58.

**The Fleece**, (formerly *The Golden Fleece*).

1826-42, John Day.

X **The King's Head**, (in South Street, later Martyr's Shop). *see also Re Charms*

Described as new in 1771.

1793, John Varlow.

1828, Charles Wardell, died July 17th, aged 82, "for many years landlord of the King's Head Inn."

1831-52, Robert Crampton, owner and occupier.

1856-72, William Hartley. A soup kitchen was established here for the benefit of the poor, during the distresses of 1870.

**The King's Arms**, (on site of the Public Hall).  
"Lately erected," in 1801, and occupied by Thomas Watmough, who occurs as a victualler in 1789, and 1792.  
1811, Jonathon Watmough, owner. Thomas Watmough, tenant.  
1826, John Watmough:  
1833, property of the Duke of St Alban's.

**The Plough**, (at the foot of Plough Hill, to which it gave the name, on the east side of the road).  
1792-1826, James Taylor.  
Sold 1834. John Tateson, landlord.  
1836, John Wells.  
Existing in April, 1860, but gone before 1871.

**The Griffin**, (later the Constitutional Club, in South Street, now R.D.C. offices).  
1825-45, John Kennington.  
1856, William Blackbond, who brewed there.  
There was a skittle yard here in 1874.

**The Angel**, (at the north-west end of South Street).  
1811-37, Matthew Waller, who bought the premises in 1818.  
1840-42, John Rysdale, probably the man of these names who was footman at Holton Hall, 1829-c.1836.  
1855-6, David Cavill, who ran a horse bus to Moortown Station.  
Ceased to exist by 1858, when "Mr John Varlow will shortly commence an enlargement of his premises, which is to take in the remaining part of the Angel Inn."

**The White Horse**, (existing before 1781. William Dixon of Holton who died in that year, used to put up here).  
1811, — Ross.  
1826, William Maddison.  
1833-45, William Aby.  
1856, Mary Aby.  
1871, John Ringrose, Junior.  
1872, Robert Scaman.  
1889, Charles Dawson.

**The Falcon or Falconer's Arms** (east of the *King's Head*. Gone before 1856).  
1730-50, John Wray (buried July 27th, 1750).  
1841-2, Thomas Brears.

**The Joiner's Arms**. (on site now National Provincial Bank. Later on south side of Bank Lane).  
Existing before 1818, when the widow of George Jackson, who had been "for many years landlord of the *Joiner's Arms* public house" died.  
1826, John Cuckson.  
1838-72, John Starkey.

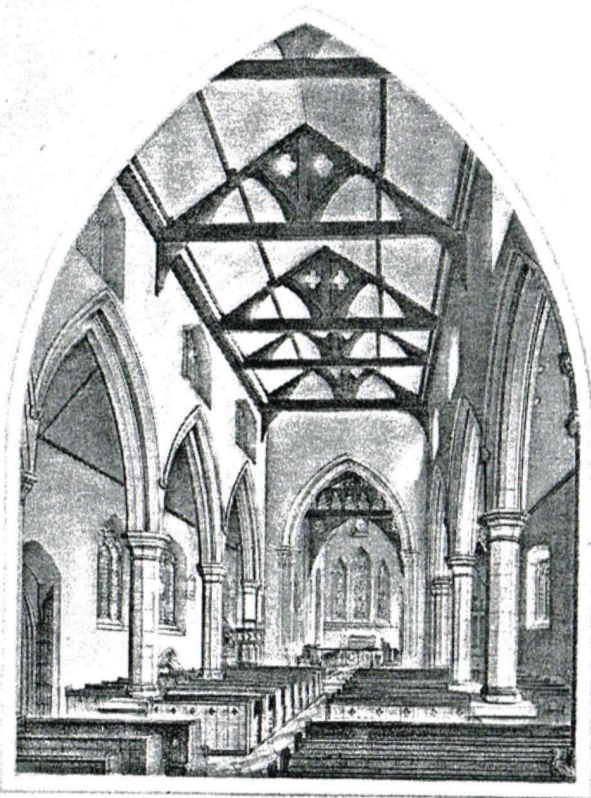
**The Victoria**, (on the west side of Westgate).  
1833-44, Edward Thompson, who brewed there.  
1856, Elizabeth Shepherd.  
Still existing at the beginning of the present century.

**The Windmill**, (on the east side of Westgate, which was formerly called Windmill Hill).  
This house went by different names including, *The Crane*, *Pied Bull* and *Wheatsheaf*. The previous house was burned down in 1772.  
1826, John Simpson.  
1829-37, Matthew Chant, who had a butcher's shop attached.  
1837-56, Ann Chant.  
Sold and ceased to be an inn September, 1859, the purchaser being James Button.

**The Reindeer or Old Reindeer**, (on the west side of South Street).  
1823, Thomas Cordock (house advertised for sale).  
1826, William Dunn.  
1836, John Shearsmith (owner, — Hobson).  
No later reference found.

**The New Reindeer**, (on east side of South Street, almost opposite the last).  
1861-89, George Thorpe.





Caistor Church (after 1873 and before 1889)

Plate V

**The Ship, (site not identified).**

1836, Robert Pickworth. If he were the same man who was landlord of the *White Hart* in 1841 *The Ship* may have ceased to exist at about that date.

**The Marquis of Granby, (in Bob's Lane).**

1826, Francis Foulston.

1833, Richard Coulton and J. Whitham.

1836, Thomas Briggs (owner Richard Coulton).

In July, 1826 George Green, alias John Hartley, who had been captured at the *Marquis of Granby Inn*, Caistor, was sentenced to transportation for life, for having robbed John Lawrence, blacksmith, of Swallow on the high road in the parish of Irby.

**The Little John, (later Cleveland House on Nettleton Road).**

**The Horse and Jockey, (later the lodging house in the horse market).**

**The Cross Keys, (in the beast market).**

**The Black Swan, The Royal Oak, The Bow and Arrow—sites not identified.**

No further details of the last six have been found.

**THE LEGEND OF THE STONE SACK AT FONABY**

IN 1846 Dr George Oliver wrote in his book on Lincolnshire Monasteries, "Castor was evidently a British town, for on one of its hills, a stone idol was placed, which I inspected a few years ago, and heard the popular traditions concerning it, which were certainly of a Druidical origin."

This doubtless refers to the story of the stone sack of which the following is the version which was current in Caistor 25 years ago and which I first heard from a farm labourer near Kirton Lindsey, about 1916.

Once upon a time, Christ<sup>1</sup> was riding on an ass along the High Street when he arrived at Fonaby Top and saw some men<sup>2</sup> sowing corn in a field on the west side of the road<sup>3</sup>. He stopped and asked them for a hand-full of the corn for his beast, but the request was churlishly refused, the men saying

that they had no corn. "Then what," said the Lord, "is in that sack in the middle of the field?" "Sack!" was the reply, "that is no sack but only a stone." At this the sacred countenance became severe and he loudly said, "Then stone shall it be."<sup>4</sup> Whereupon the sack of corn immediately became petrified and has so remained ever since.

The resemblance to a sack of corn is not now traceable but in years gone by the likeness was unmistakeable<sup>5</sup>.

Many generations passed and still the stone sack stood in the middle of the field until a certain man who farmed High Fonaby, finding the rock an inconvenience in ploughing decided to remove it and accordingly dragged it down the hill, though it was almost immovable and required all his horses to shift it. Within a very short time every possible misfortune visited the farm and all the sacks of corn in the granary were turned to stone. The only remedy seemed to be to return the sack stone and so an old horse, long past active work, was harnessed to it and succeeded with no apparent effort in dragging it up the hill to its former position<sup>6</sup>.

During the Building of Pelham's Pillar, a work which was in progress from 1840-49, one of the masons employed cut a piece of stone from the venerable relic, intending to make a model of the Pillar from it for his fiancée, but very shortly afterwards he fell from the summit of the pillar and was killed<sup>7</sup>.

#### Notes and variants :

1. Other versions say St Paul or Paulinus.
2. Some accounts say "a man."
3. The field in which the stone stands is very near the junction of the old High Street with its eastern branch going to a point on the Barton Street, and with a third road running north-west to the villages along the western slope of the Wolds from Clixby to Barnetby. Even as late as the latter half of the eighteenth century this last road or track was used in preference to the low road from Caistor to Clixby.
4. "Stone shall it be" or "Stone be it," sounds like part of a mystery play and is akin to many sayings in the Apocryphal Gospels and Acts. The Fonaby story and that of Lot's wife may have a common primitive origin and it is most probable

that such tales arose as means of accounting for the peculiar appearance of certain stones.

5. The resemblance to a sack was remarked upon by Charles Danby in a letter over the signature Greybeard in the Market Rasen Mail, 100 years ago. He says "I first heard the legend and went to see the stone sack in 1814, 21 years after it was broken. One end of the stone was then ribbed and indented in a manner very much resembling a sack mouth gathered up and tied. Each side of the three several fragments was also ribbed in resemblance of the seams."

6. With regard to the first sequel it is quite impossible to identify the farmer concerned. Mr C. W. Phillips in the Archaeological Journal (vol. LXXXIX, p. 202) presumably on the authority of the late Mr John Johnson, printer to the University of Oxford, and a native of this district, says that the farmer was nicknamed Bad-hat, and that he worked the land not much before living memory. However, on the authority of the late H. E. Smith, of Caistor, (1828-1908), a most careful and accurate recorder, no such removal of the stone has taken place since 1800, in which year the Kirkbys came to the farm. He suggested that the year of the cattle plague, 1747-8, in which Fonaby suffered was a more probable date.

One Mr Cook, late of Normanby le Wold, told Smith that he remembered when a boy hearing the legend from an elderly man who had worked most of his life at Fonaby, as had his father before him. This man stated that the stone was placed beside the kitchen door and that milking "kits" were put on it to dry after scouring. One William Leonard of Limber, a fellow workman of the stone-mason used to say that the stone was made a sill on which the step ladder rested going up to the granary.

7. An older version of the story of the stone's vengeance seems to be that the man concerned was employed in building the Brocklesby mausoleum (1790-4) and that he broke the stone into three pieces and three days afterwards was killed by falling from one scaffolding.

The tradition in Caistor was that the mason employed on Pelham's Pillar was a Scotsman called Wright who married a Caistor girl, Mary Brocklesby, and had two or three children.



It is said that he did not fall from the pillar but as soon as it was completed he deserted his wife and family and went to America, where he never prospered and soon afterwards "died like a dog."

It is possible that this legend represents a megalithic tradition originating in the Bronze Age but the stone is of a soft texture and subject to rapid weathering which means that it can only have been small enough to resemble a sack of corn during the last few centuries. Possibly it was once a large monolith and may have stood near a long barrow which has not so far been identified. In this case the sequel to the story is probably the older legend of the two and it is notable that it finds a close parallel in other places.

#### LATER DAYS

A GREAT DEAL COULD BE written about the later history of Caistor, but there is only room here to mention a few incidents.

The place has been subject to disasters of one kind or another from time to time.

In 1590-1, there was an outbreak of plague in North Lincolnshire and burials at Caistor rose during that year to 36 from an average of 12.

On April 7th, 1681 a great fire broke out in the house of John Sheriffe and the damage to the town was estimated at £6,786. Burials numbered 29 and included several who had perished in the flames. The Parish Register records "in the space of three or four hours (at the furthest) were consumed, and burnt down to the ground the greater half of the dwelling houses, barns, stables and outhouses in the Town, with all the Shops and Warehouses (save one Mercers shop in the Beast Market) five and fourty families were made desolate and without habitation."

The Town also played some part in National events. In 1536 the rising against the King's sweeping "reforms" broke out at Louth and when the Royal Commissioners arrived at Caistor on Tuesday, October 3rd they found the

town in confusion and "eight score priests" assembled in the church whilst ten thousand were said to be marching hither from Louth. The Commissioners harangued the people of Caistor but while they were doing so the Louth banners came in sight and so they set spurs to their steeds and fled for dear life. When the Louth contingent arrived it found the townsmen of Caistor assembled on the hill, but unarmed. Seeing a small company riding hard towards the house of Sir William Ayscough, at South Kelsey, a party of Louth men gave chase and captured some of the fugitives, among whom were Ayscough himself, Sir Edward Maddison and a Mr Booth. When they returned to Caistor they found recruits arriving from Rasen, Rothwell, Thoresway and other places. In the evening the whole company, taking their prisoners with them, returned to Louth. Eventually Sir Edward Maddison was deputed to convey the demands of the people to the King at Windsor.

He was already 82 years of age but he set out on the long journey from Louth to execute this delicate mission. The King's reply is well known, "How presumptuous are ye, the rude commons of but one shire and that the most brute and beastly of them all, to find fault with your prince."

Tradition says that when Henry VIII passed through Lincolnshire in 1541 he stayed a night with Sir Edward at Fonaby. It is to be presumed that the latter, like Agag, "walked delicately before the King."

**The Town Hall.** On June 11th, 1662, as recorded in the parish register, the foundation of a new Town Hall was laid, "there being a contribution throughout all the parishes belonging to the sessions for erecting the same, but the Chiefe Charge being upon Sir Edward Ayscough, Kt."

It seems probable that the building here referred to is the old Sessions Hall and Buttermarket, which now contains the Council Offices. Quarter Sessions for Lindsey were held here for many years.

The present Public Hall was erected in 1887 to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

**The Nineteenth Century.** The House of Industry, which later became the Union Workhouse and is now a Mental



Deficiency Hospital under the Regional Hospital Board, was established by the benefaction of Mr William Dixon, of Holton le Moor, in 1800, and its burial ground was consecrated in 1815. Overseers of the poor were regularly appointed by the parish vestry in accordance with the act of 59 George III, and the record of their activities makes very interesting reading. In 1828 it was agreed that no relief should be given to any pauper who kept a dog. In 1830 it was "agreed that Mr Dixon gives Notice to Cabourn Parish than an action is intended against them for a conspiracy against Caistor Parish in the Matter of John Langton," evidently a poor man with whom neither parish wished to be charged.

On May 2nd, 1833, a disgraceful scene occurred in Caistor Church. Thomas Clark, who had been chief musician and teacher of psalmody, had died at the age of 67 and at his funeral the choir, his former pupils, desired to sing four verses of the 23rd psalm, but before they could conclude the first verse, the clergyman, Benjamin Franklin Couch, ordered the bearers to carry the corpse to the grave, and, upon their neglecting to do so, "threw off his surplice, exclaiming they might bury the corpse themselves." Perhaps the discarded garment was the "new surplus" which had been voted to Mr Couch by the vestry in 1831!

In 1838 it was resolved at a vestry meeting that the parish constables should aid the churchwardens in the suppression of drinking and vice on Sundays, and all other profanation of the Sabbath and in 1851 Mr Joseph Johnson was allowed 2s. a week for keeping order in the streets on Sundays and on Saturday nights.

Pinders were appointed annually to keep the parish pound which used to be in the close where the Church School now stands, but these officers are not mentioned after 1866.

In 1840 the town pump was put in order and in the following year the stocks were repaired and fixed. In 1842 it was found necessary to employ the Hull police to keep order at the Spring Fair,—this cost the parish £11 4s. od.

There are many references in the vestry minutes to the Fire Engine which seems to have been a constant source of expense. Every time the engine was called away from Caistor those who summoned it had to pay a fee of £3, with an

additional £3 for every twelve hours or part thereof over the first twelve hours that it was absent from its shed. This shed was erected, or rather, excavated, in 1869, near the Pigeon Spring, but it is now used as a store place by the road-men.

In 1882 the old elms in the Churchyard, which had become dangerous, were cut down and the limes and sycamores which now adorn it were planted. Some few, however, of the existing trees had been planted in 1863 to commemorate the restoration of the Church.

In March, 1888, a new Fire Engine, costing £163 7s. od. was purchased and a fire brigade of thirteen, with Mr Charles Parker as Captain, was appointed.

In 1891 died Charles Foster who had efficiently discharged the duties of parish constable for nearly forty years.

On March 10th, 1895, the vestry met for the election of parish officers for the last time. Since that date such elections have rested with the parish council.

**The Grammar School (Plate IV).** Caistor Grammar School came into existence by the bequest of Francis Rawlinson, sometime incumbent of South Kelsey St Nicholas, who died on December 29th, 1630. It was also liberally endowed by Sir Edward Ayscough of South Kelsey, a contemporary of Rawlinson and by William Hansard of Biscathorpe who died in 1631.

During its long history the school has produced a number of distinguished pupils, including John Barnard (already mentioned), Anthony Bower who himself became headmaster in 1853, Sir Henry Newbolt, the poet, and his brother, Sir Francis, Sir Thomas Little Heath and his brother Dr R. S. Heath, Major-General F. W. B. Koe and others.

The history of the school is dealt with in detail in *Caistor Grammar School Records* by T. G. Dixon and H. E. J. Coxon (1932).

The original school building still stands to the north-west of the churchyard and is a good specimen of early seventeenth century architecture. The rest of the buildings are modern.



## A NOTE ON BOOKS

THERE IS A GREAT DEAL of printed matter relating to the history of Caistor and any readers who wish to pursue the subject further may find the following useful.

Dr George Oliver wrote two articles on Caistor in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1829, Part II, 221-4 and 1831, Part II, 203-5) and both were reprinted in *The Gentleman's Magazine Library* (English Topography, Leics.-Monmouthshire), 1896.

There is some manorial history, as well as a description of the church, in a paper read to the Lincolnshire Architectural Society by Archdeacon Trollope in 1862 and printed in the *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers* for that year. An account of the church as it was in 1847 is given in *Archdeacon Bonney's Church Notes*, edited by N. S. Harding, 1937 (p. 74). Hamilton Thompson described the church to the Royal Archaeological Institute in 1946 (*Archaeological Journal*, Vol. CIII, p. 184) and he also dealt fully with the tower in his paper on *Pre-Conquest Church Towers in North Lincolnshire* (*Associated Architectural Societies' Reports & Papers*, Vol. XXIX, Part 1, 1907). The Maddison monument is described and illustrated in *Lincolnshire Notes & Queries*, Vol. I, pp. 97-9 (Oct. 1888).

Some incidents in the late seventeenth century history of the town are mentioned in *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme* (Surtees Society, 1870).

Pedigrees of Ayscough, Barnard, Maddison and other families connected with Caistor are printed in the four volumes of *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*, edited for the Harleian Society by A. R. Maddison (1902-6).

A great many accounts of the Gad Whip Ceremony have been published but the following cover most of the ground: *The Archaeological Journal*, Vol. VI, p. 239; *Hull Museum Publications*, No. 11, Sept. 1902, p. 9; W. Andrews, *Curiosities of the Church*, 1890, p. 23; W. Johnson, in *The Lincolnshire Magazine*, April, 1939.

Canon Westbrooke frequently contributed notes on the history of his parish to the *Lincoln Diocesan Magazine* and the following are of special interest: 1886, p. 76; 1888,

p. 282; 1889, pp. 73, 95, 112, 124; 1890, pp. 79, 126; 1892, pp. 92, 124, 141; 1893, pp. 47, 112; 1894, p. 61; 1899, p. 14; 1901, p. 104.

The publications of the Lincoln Record Society naturally contain many references. All these volumes are admirably indexed.

The *Universal British Directory* of 1791 describes the town at that date and gives a list of the principal inhabitants. The *Lincolnshire Directories*, first published by White in 1826 and now produced by Kelly are obvious sources of information.

An Affray between Justices of the Peace here in the time of Henry VIII was described by Edward Peacock in a paper read to the Society of Antiquaries in 1869 (*Proc. Soc. Ant.* 2nd Series, Vol. IV, pp. 317-27; see also *The Antiquary*, April, 1882, p. 159).

The *History of the Grammar School*, by T. G. Dixon and H. E. J. Coxon, printed by Parker of Caistor in 1932, has already been mentioned. There is also a valuable article on Caistor Grammar School by T. M. O. Cross in *The Lincolnshire Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 8, 1933, p. 241.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Henry Evan Smith of Caistor (1828-1908), house-painter, rating officer, artist and journalist, was local correspondent for the *Stamford Mercury*, the *North Lincolnshire Star* and other papers and his articles are of considerable value. Many of these, as well as numerous MS. notes by Smith, are in my possession and I should always be glad to afford access to them.

P.B.G.B.

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