

Beckford with Ashton-under-Hill Parish Magazine

OCTOBER 1900

Ancient records prove that there was a Church at Beckford in the 8th century, and that the place was known as Beccanford in those days. In Domesday Book, compiled three hundred years later, the name is changed to Beceford, and further alterations in the spelling occur subsequently e.g., Becheford, Bekeford, Beckeferd, Beckaforth, and finally Beckford, but the pronunciation probably never varied very much. Happily deeds of violence are unknown in our quiet village now-a-days ; but once upon a time the peace of Beckford was disturbed by a dreadful tragedy. In Pleas of the Crown for this County in 1221 it is recorded how a certain strange knight with one attendant received hospitality in the ville of Bekeford, in the house of Fulco ; and in the course of the night they permitted six robbers to enter, and they bound Fulco and all his family, plundered the house, and ham-strung two servants who came to help. Does not this give us an insight into the lawlessness which prevailed in ye olden time?

It is interesting to note that in the autumn of 1315 the then Bishop of Worcester visited Beckford Church for the purpose of dedicating the great altar. Probably the first object which met his lordship's eye as he approached the village was the Church steeple, which is said to have been of wood. Doubtless that faithful monitor continued for centuries to point men heavenward, but at last it became quite worn out. For in Notes on the History of Beckford by the Rev. J. Melland Ball, it is stated that a spire steeple dangerous by decay was totally removed in 1622.

The yew trees which adorn the Churchyard were planted in the year 1721. Many interesting facts can be gleaned from the parish books. It would seem that Beckford folk have never been wanting in liberality or in loyalty. In 1720 a collection was made in aid of sufferers through Thunder and Hail in Staffordshire. In 1818 the clerk received five shillings for ringing the bell at Princess Charlotte's Funeral, and in 1820 a like sum for ringing on occasion of the Funeral of King George III.

Beckford School

Messrs. E. E. Bennett and J. J. Smith have been elected Managers. On September 17th, through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, the Teachers and scholars were entertained at tea in the Orchard of the Towers. On September 28th H.M. Inspector visited the School. The number of children at on the books is 124. Parents should note that the penalty for keeping children from School has been greatly increased by the new law, and that in future the number of attendances required for an exemption certificate for a child over 13 will be 350.

Baptism at Ashton.

Sept. 9 - Fred Shirley, son of Edwin Richard and Mary Ann Miles.

Burials at Beckford.

Sept. 26 - George Freeman, of Grafton, aged 83.

27- Elizabeth Grimmitt, aged 48.

“Lord, a11 pitying, Jesu Blest,
Grant them Thine eternal rest.”