

SOME NEW SIDELIGHTS ON STRATFORD-UPON-AVON'S MEDIEVAL GUILD BUILDINGS

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IT is now more than half a century since the attention of members of this Society was called to the wealth of ancient domestic architecture in Stratford-upon-Avon.¹ In 1898 Mr. W. Salt Brassington, F.S.A., contributed a paper which he called 'Notes on the Old Houses in Stratford-upon-Avon'. At the time he was very concerned at the apparent lack of interest shown in preserving the old buildings of the town and asserted that, unless some measures were taken to preserve the ancient character of the buildings, Stratford would soon lose its quaint, old-world appearance. To reinforce his plea for preservation he offered a list of old houses compiled from personal observation and added a note or two about each.

Salt Brassington's plea was not altogether in vain for, although there have been some unnecessary demolitions and spoliations during the last half century, Stratford has been fortunate enough to retain most of its important buildings and to preserve in general its market-town character and atmosphere.

Outstanding among the architectural features of the town is the group of medieval guild buildings occupying the corner site of Church Street and Chapel Lane, a few yards from the centre of the town, near to New Place, the Falcon Hotel and the Shakespeare Hotel. Most people are probably familiar with the panoramic view, from Church Street, of the long, half-timbered range of buildings comprising the Alms-houses, the Guildhall and Grammar School, and the tower of the Guild Chapel. It is a view rendered famous and popular the world over because it was in the school part of the premises that William Shakespeare, without any reasonable doubt, received his early education.

THE GUILD OF THE HOLY CROSS

These picturesque buildings, with others standing behind the street frontage, are physical links with a most interesting and important medieval institution, the Guild of the Holy Cross. If the Clopton Bridge be excepted, the Guild probably influenced the life of Stratford-upon-Avon more during the Middle Ages than any other single factor—and incidentally still does so, because the revenues of what were formerly the Guild's estates still provide an income devoted to certain essential town purposes.

The history of the Guild is extremely fascinating and could with advantage be re-written,² but here only a few words about it can be mentioned. It came into existence about the middle of the thirteenth century, and was formally recognized by Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, in 1269, when he granted a licence to the

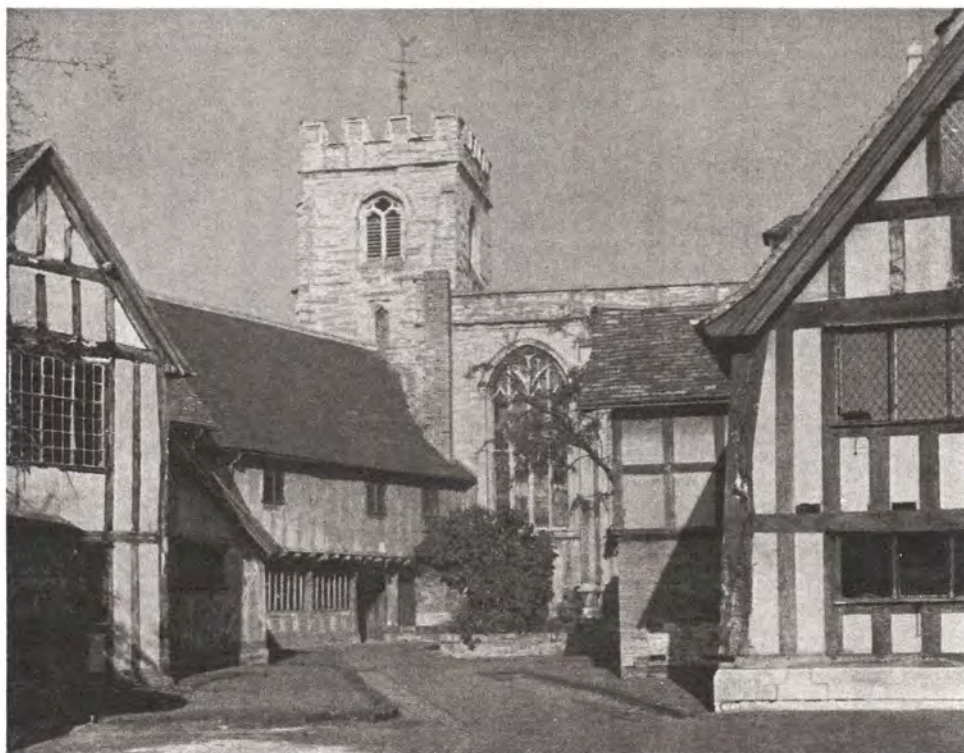
¹ This paper was delivered to the Society, with illustrations, on Feb. 20, 1952. Subsequently, an inspection of the buildings was included in one of the Society's Summer Excursions, of which an account

appears on p. 61 of this volume.

² For a general account of the Guild written since this paper was read, see Levi Fox, *The Borough Town of Stratford-upon-Avon*, 1953.



(a) The Guildhall and Grammar School prior to the restoration of 1892
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of Shakespeare's Birthplace)



(b) View of the School quadrangle prior to the restoration of the Old Council Chamber (left) and the Pedagogue's House (right) in 1952-3
(Reproduced by courtesy of Jarrold and Sons, Ltd., Norwich)



(a) The Upper Hall, or Big School, following the removal of the interior plaster in 1949-50
(Reproduced by courtesy of Jarrold and Sons, Ltd., Norwich)



(b) Original doorway in south-east corner of Big School, discovered behind the plaster in 1949
(Reproduced by courtesy of T. F. Holte, Esq., Stratford-upon-Avon)

brethren of the Guild to build a chapel and to found a hospital which he committed to the protection of his bailiffs of Stratford.

Its progress during the Middle Ages can be traced in detail from the considerable documentary sources which survive in the Stratford borough archives and elsewhere. Re-founded in 1403, the Guild had evidently become very influential and wealthy by that time and, during the first quarter of the fifteenth century, it embarked upon a programme of building operations, certain sidelights upon which I intend to give in this paper, linking up where possible with the surviving guild buildings as we know them.

THE GUILD BUILDINGS AND THEIR PURPOSE

The buildings erected by the Guild were naturally linked with its objects. To begin with, since the fundamental object of the Guild was to ensure the safety after death of the souls of the faithful, it had to have a chapel, where the chaplains it employed could say their masses and lights be kept burning before the altar. The Guild Chapel of the Holy Cross was probably begun as early as 1269 and part of the fabric of the south and east walls of the existing chancel may possibly be of thirteenth-century date. The evidence of the guild accounts, however, shows that the chancel was considerably altered in 1450, whilst the present nave, tower, and porch as we know them were added at the end of the fifteenth century by the munificence of Hugh Clopton, who had also given to Stratford-upon-Avon its great stone bridge over the Avon and the cross aisle of the parish church. This is not the place to attempt to deal with the history of the fabric of the Guild Chapel, but I am satisfied that a re-examination of the sources could produce a most desirable 'historical revision' on the subject.

The Guild needed physical headquarters as well as a chapel. Its insistence on fraternity and good fellowship involved frequent meetings and feasts, whilst the conduct of its business required not only a hall for assembly but lesser rooms or houses for administration and residence. The Guild was a considerable landlord, owning numerous properties in the town and locality, while the pageantry and feasts which came to be associated with its fellowship were an integral part of its activities. Furthermore, it exercised a certain civil jurisdiction over its members by insisting on the adjudication of disputes which might arise among them.

The Guild also provided for its members' well-being in other ways. If a Guild member fell into distress, sickness, or poverty, the fraternity came to his assistance. Almshouses were provided to accommodate some of the aged and sick members who, judging by entries in the accounts, received a variety of welfare benefits at the expense of the Guild.

At the opposite end of the scale, the Guild was concerned from an early date with the education of the children of its members. At first there are references to a schoolmaster, such as to a certain Richard in 1295 or John Scolemayster who had a chamber in the hall in 1403; then come references to a school and a school house. So that alongside its chapel the Guild came to have not only its Guildhall or general headquarters but also a school and almshouses.

SOURCES

Leaving aside then the Chapel, what is known about the history of the Guildhall, the School, and the Almshouses?

To begin with, there is no satisfactory book or article dealing with the subject. The accounts in the numerous guide-books to the town are repetitive and second-rate, and the account in the *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, Volume III, is concerned more with the architectural rather than the historical aspect of the property. Moreover, recent discoveries have shown that the dates attributed to the various component parts of the building have proved in some cases to be incorrect.

Yet in the Guild records, particularly the magnificent series of Accounts containing the annual accounts of the Proctors and Masters from 1353 to 1504, there is a wealth of evidence.¹ I do not say that it is conclusive in all respects, more especially since the accounts for certain years are missing, but it is extremely illuminating. The detailed record of money spent on repairs and on rebuilding of Guild property throws new light on the construction and constructional features of some of the surviving Guild buildings, and even contributes something to the general study of the subject. Some of you will have seen Mr. L. F. Salzman's recent work on *Building in England down to 1540*. It offers a comprehensive treatment of the subject, but its glossary of technical building terms would have benefited by the addition of a few words had the author consulted the Guild accounts of Stratford-upon-Avon.

STRATFORD'S FIRST GUILDHALL

The earliest reference to a Guildhall in Stratford-upon-Avon that I have found is a small undated Latin document, in the form of a grant by Geoffrey de Baginden and Margery his wife to the Fraternity of the Holy Cross, granting free ingress and egress to and from a hall called *Rodehall*, to hold there their 'mornspeche' as often as they will during the year, and a drinking once a year, viz. for one week; the said Geoffrey and Margery to keep the hall in repair at their proper costs, with oak and thatch, and after their death whatever they have built to remain the property of the said Fraternity.

The witnesses and the handwriting place this grant about 1296, so that it is reasonable to suppose that here was Stratford-upon-Avon's earliest guild headquarters, a timber hall with thatched roof, situated in all probability on or near the site of the present Guildhall and Grammar School.

The earliest reference in the Guild accounts to a hall is in 1375, when the miscellaneous payments included a payment of 22*d.* for making a wall *apud Aulam*. That it had a cottage attached or near by is indicated by the purchase of straw for the cottage at the hall of the Holy Cross and payment to a thatcher and his servants for thatching the cottage in 1388. The name *Rodehall* is again used in these accounts and is clearly the Guildhall in question; but by now its roof was no longer thatched but tiled, for 2*s.* 7*d.* is recorded as having been spent on the purchase of tiles at Warwick for the hall of the Holy Cross, with their carriage and all drinks (*omni beverage*). Ten years later Thomas Plummer was paid 1*s.* for contriving a gutter at *Rodehall* and John Sclatter received a similar payment for his contribution to the job.

¹ The Guild records form part of the archives of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, which are preserved at Shakespeare's Birthplace.

REPAIRS TO GUILDHALL

As time goes on, the accounts disclose further items of repair and improvement to the hall, some of them of special interest. In 1403 a carpenter was employed to make the windows of the hall (wages 1s. 4d.) and *hukes* and *twystes* were bought for the doors and the windows of the hall and chamber (3s. 2d.), as well as *caches* (7d.). Some material called *recudbord* costing 2s. was bought for making the windows there. Minor repairs were also carried out to the kitchen and the chamber of the priests or chaplains. There are frequent references to *camera*, that is, a room or suite of rooms, in the hall—presumably living quarters. Generally they were occupied by the chaplains whose names are frequently given, but occasionally by the schoolmaster. John Scolemayster, for instance, occupied the new chamber in the hall for a term in 1403.

It was not long after this time that considerable repairs and improvements were effected to the hall and its amenities. The roof was evidently giving trouble in 1405 because Thomas Sclatter and his man had to be called in to put on a hundred slates, and the following year a thousand tiles were bought for mending the holes in the roof. At the same time masons were employed to make a stone bench in the hall and a hearth in the kitchen; 300 laths were bought for the walls of the larder and a wall was constructed between the stairs and the chamber of the priests; lattice for one of the windows was bought; timber and tiles were used to construct a porch or entrance to the Guildhall, the kitchen was enlarged, and a number of other items done. More tables, shelves, and racks were fitted in the kitchen and larder, and the images in the hall cleaned at a cost of 5s. This operation was evidently part of a spring-cleaning process which involved the re-decoration of the hall because, among the materials bought, appear the purchase of *lime* (5d.) and *okyr* (7d.) for whitewashing the hall; the man who did the work was paid 11d. while Thomas Peyntour made his contribution (*pro pictacione in dicta aula*) for 2d.

This is about all that is known concerning Stratford's first Guildhall, except that there was a *well* within its precincts and a herbary or garden (*herbarium*). The question naturally arises as to how long it continued to be used and when it was replaced by the two-storied, half-timbered building which survives.

BUILDING OF THE PRESENT GUILDHALL

It has been generally stated that the present range of half-timbered buildings was erected in 1473, but I can find no evidence to support this claim. As it so happens the accounts for that year show that the Guild was financing the building of a hall at that time, but it was a hall at the Angel, a big property owned by the Guild at the top of Bridge Street. This may well have been confused with the Guildhall. On the other hand, there is evidence in the accounts to show that a new hall for the Guild's own purposes was erected in 1417 and there is no doubt in my own mind but that this can be identified with the present building.

The Master's account for 1417-18 contains a payment of 8 marks, 3s. and 4d. to Richard Swyfte, carpenter, for the new building of the Guild and a further 20s. to him to 'find' all the cost of the carpenters about erecting the said new building.

Simultaneously another carpenter, Richard Hewe, received part payment for making the Almshouses, and stone and timber were bought for the purpose. The stone came from a local quarry and cost 3*d.* a load, plus 4*d.* a load for carriage.

That building operations on a considerable scale were proceeding is suggested by the following intriguing entry in the accounts: 'for *one stockfish* bought for the carpenter at the sealing of the indentures for the new buildings, 4*d.*; wine 3*d.*; parchment for the indentures and rolls of account 6*d.*' Stockfish is cod or hake, &c., prepared for keeping by being split and dried without salt. It was evidently regarded as a delicacy forming part of special hospitality bestowed by the Guild on some such important occasion as this.

It is very unfortunate that there are no extant accounts for the four years following, that is, from 1418-22, so that the details of the materials and the remainder of the wages expended on the erection of the new hall have not survived. What is quite certain is that the operation was carried to completion. The accounts for 1424-5 include the expenses of Sir Thomas Burdet, knight, being there on the business of the Guild in *aula dicte Gilde de novo edificata*, i.e. in the hall of the said Guild recently built, while in the same year further improvements took place.

BUILDING OF ALMSHOUSES

Simultaneously with the hall three almshouses were rebuilt by the Guild, and though it is impossible to say for certain whether these can be identified with part of the existing range of Almshouses adjoining the Guildhall fronting on to Church Street, it seems improbable that this is so. Fortunately the building accounts of these almshouses have survived and they serve to give a contemporary sidelight on the kinds of materials and categories of labour, with their respective costs, which went into the construction of these half-timbered buildings.

Translated literally, the main items of cost were as follows:

Item, in rebuilding three almshouses

In primis, 3 pairs of *forkes* bought—5*s.* of which one pair cost 2*s.* and two pairs 3*s.*

Main timber for *silles*, *sydderasowes* [beams] and *fyrstpeces*—12*s.* 6*d.*

Rafters and *stodes* [studs]—8*s.*

Timber for doors and windows—3*s.* 6*d.*

Hokkes and *twystes* and nails—4*s.* 6*d.*

Bordnailes—10*d.*

100 *latten*—2½*d.*

Six cartloads of stone with carriage from Drayton—3*s.* 6*d.*

Wages of a mason for *groundsillyng*—7*d.*

Wages of two carpenters making the said three houses—12*s.* 4*d.*

Teryng [daubing] of the walls there—12*s.* 4*d.*

100 *kyddes* with carriage—8*s.* 10*d.*

Wages of a *wattelar* for 5 days.

Transport of 40 loads of earth [i.e. clay]—3*s.* 4*d.*

Wages of 2 men digging and filling the carts.

800 laths bought—20*d.*

1,000 lathnail—13*d.*

Straw bought.

- Wages of a thatcher, thatching the 3 houses and preparing the straw, by contract—
 11s. 4½d.
 11 bushels of lime bought—16½d.
 Wages of a man for the *parchetyng* [rough-casting] and treatment (*locione*) of the walls—9d.
 Transport of sand—4d.
 Litter bought for dawbing—20d.
 Making a wall in the other house there—12d.
 Two cartloads of thorn bushes for making a hedge here—12d.
 Making the same—4d.

It will be noted that the Almshouses were thatched and this continued to be so at least until the early part of the sixteenth century. Later accounts contain frequent references to repairs of the thatch and to re-thatching at intervals of approximately ten years. There are also references to improvements carried out at the Almshouses, repairs to plaster, and the like.

BUILDING OF A 'SCOLEHOWS'

Having provided itself with new headquarters and Almshouses it is not surprising to find that the Fraternity decided to make more adequate provision for the educational side of its work. Hence in 1427 it erected a *Scolehow*, the detailed cost of which has survived in the Master's account for that year. But not merely the account; the building itself has survived and can be identified with the Pedagogue's House, a two-storied timber-framed building (altered a good deal in later centuries) standing to the east of the Guildhall. So far as can be ascertained it was used by the Guild for school purposes up to the time of the Dissolution, but following the re-foundation of the School in 1553, the School itself came to be held in the upper floor of the Guildhall.

Since this account may well be the earliest extant record of the building of a half-timbered school in this country—and especially since the building to which it refers still exists—it merits special attention. Details of the cost are as follows:

- Timber bought for making a *Scolehow*s with a chamber above—45s.
 28 *sparrys* for the same chamber, at 3½d. each—8s. 2d.
 Wages of 2 sawyers hired for 4 days, each at 6d. a day, by piece-work—4s.
 Paid to the same for sawing 500 ft. of boards at 17d. per 100—7s. 1d.
 For sawing of the *standardes* and *lacys*—3s. 6d.
 Wages of John Hasill, master carpenter, being there 35½ days, at 6d. a day, by piece-work—17s. 9d.
 Wages of another carpenter for 34 days at 5d. a day—14s. 2d.
 Wages of a third carpenter for 29½ days at 5d. a day—12s. 3½d.
 Wages of 2 labourers hired for 2 days to help the said carpenters to set up the said *scolehow*s and chamber, each taking 4d. a day, by piece-work—16d.
 Six cartloads of stone bought at the quarry at Drayton and carriage, each cartload at the quarry 4d. and carriage on each load 5d.—4s. 6d.
 15 cartloads of earth and clay for *floryng*—2s. 6d.
Lytter—2d.
 Wages of 3 workmen hired for 2 days for *groundsylllyng* and *floryng*, each taking 4d. a day, by piece-work—2s.

600 long *latten*, at 8*d.* per 100—4*s.*

2,500 *lattennayles* at 13*d.* per 1,000—2*s.* 11*d.*

3,500 tiles for roofing the said house with carriage from Warwick to Stratford, at 7*s.* 4*d.* per 1,000—25*s.* 8*d.*

3½ qrs. of *lyme* at 13*d.* per qr.—4*s.* 1*d.*

3 cartloads of sand (*zaboli*) with digging and carriage from *Engon* [Ingon] to Stratford, at 6*d.* a load—18*d.*

Wages of one tiler for roofing the said house, at 20*d.* per 1,000—5*s.* 10*d.*

800 *spykyngnayles*, at 6*d.* per 100—4*s.*

500 *semnayles* [? partition nails] at 5*d.* per 100—4*s.*

Boards for making 2 doors anew—2*s.* 6*d.*

2 pairs of *hengys* with 2 pairs of *hokys* for the said doors—2*s.* 2*d.*

Wages of 2 carpenters making a bench (*scanna*) in the Scolehows and mending defects in the new *parlur*, for 1 day, by piece-work—11*d.*

Great nails bought for footing (*pro fotyng*) of the *sparrys* and for *euespolles*—2*d.*

Two plasterers hired for 6 days, each taking 6*d.* a day by piece-work—6*s.*

The wages of their mason for the same 6 days at 5*d.* a day, by piecework—2*s.* 6*d.*

For 2 cartloads of *plaster* from Welcombe with carriage of the same to Stratford—9*s.*

2 cartloads of fuel for drying the said plaster—3*s.* 4*d.*

For one lock with a key bought for the door there—8*d.*

The remaining items in this account refer to the roofing of part of one of the Alms-houses. The total cost of the building operation is given as £10. 5*s.* 3½*d.*

THE COUNTING-HOUSE

Simultaneously with the building of the schoolhouse various other improvements to the Guild's headquarters were carried out. A new parlour for the chaplains was made and work carried out on the stairs between the new hall and one of the chaplain's chambers. Two chimneys were built, one in the *Countynghows* in the Guildhall and the other in the chamber above, occupied by Master John Harrys. 'Frestone' for this purpose was bought at Rowington, 'rowghstone' at Drayton, and other stone at Grafton. The Counting-house and the chamber above it can be identified with the small two-storied wing which projects at right angles from the south-east end of the Guildhall with which it is connected on both floors.

The late Edgar I. Fripp, an authority on Stratford topography, seems to have been under the impression that the Counting-house was the first-floor room, but in view of the fact that the account refers to another room above it, clearly it must have been the ground-floor apartment. Both rooms came to be used by the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon following 1553. In Elizabethan and Jacobean times the lower room seems to have been used as the Council Chamber, but later the upper chamber came to be used for this purpose and is now referred to as such. In much more recent times the ground-floor room, the original counting-house, came to be known as the Armoury.

There are frequent references to the Counting-house and it was evidently the apartment, or office, as we should say, in which the financial business of the Guild was transacted. Here the Proctors received the moneys due, made their payments, collected their receipts, and kept their records; here the accounts were audited each

year and other official business of the Guild conducted. The Counting-house was furnished with coffers (a massive elm chest of fifteenth-century date which belonged to the Guild still survives), table, benches, and other suitable furniture.

GUILD CHAPEL AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Even more important improvements took place in the Guild Chapel. The floor was re-paved with 'pavyng tyels' which cost 10s. a thousand; a new 'awtyrstone' was bought from Clifford; the interior of the chapel was whitewashed and various minor repairs done. Thomas Peyntour and his son were employed there eight days painting and mending defects in the Chapel and received payments for 'vermylon', 'ynde bawdyat', white lead, 'zalow', 'oyle and cole'. It would be interesting to know whether any of the wall paintings of which traces still remain in the Chapel were already there, especially since the account discloses that twenty-four crosses were painted on the walls of the Chapel within and without.

When all the work of refurbishing and extension had been completed it is not surprising to find that the Guild managed to get the Bishop of Worcester to visit Stratford to inspect what had been done and to re-consecrate the Chapel. An episcopal visit was something that had to be handled properly and the details of the hospitality expended upon the Bishop and his household in the Guildhall have to be seen to be believed.

FEATURES OF THE GUILDHALL

To revert to the Guildhall. There are references to an upper hall (*aula desuper* or *superior*) and lower hall (*aula inferior*), which, of course, correspond with the two apartments now known as Big School and the Guildhall. Some writers have suggested that the schoolroom was fashioned from the old Guild dormitory or infirmary, but it seems extremely unlikely that the upper hall was ever used for such a purpose. There is plenty of evidence to show that all the Guild's welfare work for the sick was carried on in the Almshouses.

Speaking of the upper hall, no evidence as yet has been forthcoming to establish whether it was divided in medieval times into two parts as it certainly was in later centuries. We know, for instance, that a dividing partition was erected in the nineteenth century, the two rooms so formed being known as the Latin and Mathematics rooms, respectively. The partition was taken down in 1892. An examination of the interior timberwork also makes it quite clear that an attic or loft at one time existed over the southern end of the hall. There is a reference to the making of a door for the loft (*ad solarium*) of the Guild in the accounts of 1501-2. This in itself does not establish where the loft was, but an entry in the Chamberlain's accounts for 1565-7 refers specifically to 'takyng down the sollar over the scole' at a cost of xij*d*.

The Guild accounts also confirm that the Guildhall had the usual kind of offices: the *kitchen* for which new equipment was acquired from time to time; the *buttery* which, judging by the number of repairs to its lock and key, normally contained something worth keeping safe; the *overbotry*, presumably a room above the buttery; and a *storehouse*. As yet I have found it impossible to establish their relation to the lower hall just as it is impossible to identify with certainty the position of the various

priests' chambers or quarters. The probability is that these latter stood on the site adjacent to the schoolhouse on which, in the late seventeenth century, the brick residence now known as the Old Vicarage was built.

A detailed examination of the Guildhall and Big School as we now know them leaves no doubt that, whilst the essential original features of the fabric remain, many alterations in detail have taken place. The structure consists of five bays, originally each 14 ft., but the northernmost bay has clearly been reduced in length, the northern wall of the hall having been moved inwards, as it were, by just over a foot. Naturally one wonders why and when this happened. The answers are not easy, but it looks as though the hall may have been reduced slightly in size when the west tower was added to the Guild Chapel about 1500. It is also clear that the range has been lengthened northwards to fill up the space between it and the Guild Chapel, but this may have been done somewhat later. This extension, as it were, contains the porter's lodge and entrance passage from Church Street, with room above.

There is also evidence that alterations occurred at the south end of the hall. In 1949 a proposal to redecorate the interior of the upper hall (Big School) led to the stripping off of the plaster, behind which was discovered an original doorway in the south-east corner of the hall. Its construction was intact but blocked up with early filling of laths and daub. The reason why this entrance had to be abandoned not so very long after the hall was built is made clear by an examination of the structure of the Almshouses which link up with the south end of the hall. Apart from the evidence furnished by carpenters' marks, the northernmost bay of the Almshouses is obviously a later filling-in of the space between the original end wall and the end of the Guildhall (about 15 ft.) and the frontage is slightly askew with that of the rest of the building. When the Almshouse range was extended to join up with the hall the entrance recently uncovered inevitably had to go.

These features are mentioned as indicating the kind of problem which besets the historian of this property. It is unfortunate that the Guild accounts do not survive after 1504 because in consequence we do not know what changes, if any, in the fabric of the Guild buildings took place during the half-century or so before the Guild's suppression in 1547. Probably the thatched roofs of the medieval Almshouses were replaced by tiled roofs at this period.

CORPORATION OWNERSHIP

After passing to the Crown, the Guildhall, Chapel, and Guild property generally were granted to the newly incorporated Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon by the charter of 1553.¹ The Corporation henceforth made the Guildhall their headquarters, using the old Counting-house as their Council Chamber (and later the room above it) and the lower hall for the more public type of activities. Here, for example, the travelling companies of actors who visited the town in John Shakespeare's day were received and gave their performances. The School, re-founded by King Edward VI, was established in the upper hall, the original schoolhouse being used as a residence. A lease of March 1, 1567, refers to the leasing of 'one hows or tenement in the Church

¹ For the provisions of the Charter of Incorporation and the history of Stratford's borough government see *The Borough Town of Stratford-upon-Avon* referred to above.

Stret there commonly callyd the Old Scoll with the chamber above the same tene-ment' to one Robert Hall, 'fre mason'. Later on, it was occupied by various school-masters—hence its name Pedagogue's House—and it still forms part of the School premises.

Because the Guild property passed to the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon it follows that further information about its maintenance and use must be sought in the Corporation records, especially in the accounts of the Chamberlains, the financial officers of the Borough. I cannot claim to have examined all these records in detail as yet, but the following entries illustrate the kind of information contained in the Chamberlains' accounts:

- 1565-7 In primis payd to Hugh Aunge for repayring of the Scole—xs.
Item to Robert Hall for pavyng of the Gylde Hall—vij*d*.
Item for takyng downe the Chymney—xij*d*.
Item for carryeing the Brycke—iiij*d*.
- 1567-8 Item payd to Peter Sterkey for certen workes by him done in the Gylde Hall and other places—xxvs.
Item for ij keyes for the gylde hale dors—vjs.
- 1568-9 Item for Seven Loodes of Cleye to make the flore in the Gylde halle—ijs. v*d*.
Item to Richard Wever for makynge the flore in the Gylde halle—ijs.
- 1572-3 Pd. Mr. Bayly for nayles about the scoole floure—ijs. ij*d*.
Pd. John Salisbury for mendinge ye doore in the yeld hall—iiij*d*.
- 1573-4 Item pd. to Anthonie Tanner ffor bordes to repaire the yeld haule—xv*d*.
Item pd. to Besell for pavinge wthin the yeld haule where the maisters sitt—iiij*d*.
- 1576-7 Paid to John Bawden for mending ye quarrelles [i.e. diamond-shaped panes of glass] in ye chappell and in the halle—xij*d*.
- 1578-9 Paid to Richard Smith for making a key for the scole maisters chamber dore—iiij*d*.
Paid to Peter Starky for working about the stayres and the portal at the Scole Maisters dore—xd.
Paid to John Balden for working in the scole Maisters chamber—viij*d*.
- 1579-80 Paid to Edward Mills and his man for carpenters worke over the steares of the schoole—xv*d*.

Generally speaking then, it is the story of ordinary maintenance, a responsibility evidently taken seriously in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Corporation embellished their Council Chamber from time to time. In 1614-15, for instance, the Chamberlain paid out 21*s*. to Henry Abel 'for wainscote set up in the Councill chamber'. This was doubtless the gouge-moulded wainscotting of which part still survives in this room. The heraldic achievement over the fireplace is also noteworthy. It is the Stuart royal arms, painted by a Stratford man named Samuel Philips in commemoration of the public rejoicing at the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660.

LATER HISTORY

During the eighteenth century the exterior of the Guildhall, School, and Alms-houses was covered with stucco, as were many other half-timbered frontages in the town, and various improvements—so-thought—effected inside. These included the

building of a curious kind of staircase on the east side leading to the upper hall, the insertion of various fireplaces, internal plastering, and the like.

By this time the Corporation seem to have ceased to use the lower hall for meetings and it was partitioned across in the middle. The northern portion came to be used as a Fire Engine house, and the southern portion as the local Drill Hall. After 1871 the Corporation ceased to hold their meetings in the old Council Chamber and transferred their headquarters to the present Town Hall.

RESTORATION OF 1892

The condition of the fabric by the middle of the nineteenth century had deteriorated very considerably and the various ill-advised improvements and adaptations had robbed the building of much of its character. It was therefore exceedingly fortunate that a public-spirited burgess, Mr. C. E. Flower, came along and proposed a scheme for its restoration. Mr. Flower commissioned an architect from London, Mr. Arthur S. Flower, F.S.A., to undertake the task.

First of all, the architect made a thorough survey of the existing buildings and had a complete photographic record made. These plans, together with the photographs, are absolutely invaluable in that they record in faithful detail the condition of the Guildhall and School a century or so ago.¹ Then came the work of restoration, most of which took place in 1892.

The objective was to restore the fabric to a sound condition and at the same time to re-invest it with the character of its original appearance by removing later accretions and putting right the spoliations of earlier hands.

Externally, the stucco was removed, the timberwork repaired and replaced where necessary, and the windows refashioned. The curious staircase on the east side was taken down and replaced by the existing half-timbered entrance porch and stairs. Inside, the partitions in the lower and upper halls were removed and other encumbrances cleared. The removal of wooden boarding at the south end of the Guildhall disclosed the existence of a window clearly blocked up when the Alms-houses were joined up with the hall, as well as the fragments of fifteenth-century wall paintings on the adjoining panels between the studs. Incised on one of the panels were also discovered various entries which apparently record the sums of money expended on the purchase of fish, oil, and other items of food—doubtless a link with the days of the Guild feasts.

The programme of restoration also included the demolition of an unsightly range of boys' lavatories which had been built in the space between the hall and the Pedagogue's House, and the rescue of the latter building from its serious condition of decay. Though in general the original appearance of the Pedagogue's House was preserved the interior was considerably re-arranged.

The whole project of restoration, coming at the date when it did, is well worthy of careful study. The evidence of drawings and photographs shows that a sympathetic and well-conceived plan of restoration was undertaken just in time to save the buildings from irretrievable decay.

¹ The photographs and plans are preserved in Shakespeare's Birthplace Library.

As a result of Mr. Flower's generosity, very little has had to be done to the premises since, apart from ordinary maintenance items. It should be recorded, however, that in 1949, prior to the redecoration of Big School, the plaster covering up the half-timbered walls was removed and the half-timbered partition at the north end reconstructed. As a result not only were a number of important clues to the early history, and subsequent alterations, of the fabric discovered, but the upper hall was re-invested with its medieval character.

EPILOGUE

Since this paper was presented to the Society, further restoration work has been undertaken. During 1952-3 the half-timbered framework of the end wall of the old Council Chamber wing was almost completely renewed and the timber-work of the Pedagogue's House extensively restored. In the Council Chamber on the first floor the removal of old wall colouring has subsequently revealed the existence of a row of painted decorative shields of an heraldic nature which, though much worn, appear to be of late medieval date.