



Vestry Meeting

Memorial Tablet For Parish Church

A vestry meeting, specially called by notice on the church door and from the pulpit, was held at the Church School on Friday afternoon.

The occasion was a reference from the Bishop of Salisbury to a vestry meeting for a report on the views of the parishioners on a petition to him from Lieut.-Col. Forster, of Holt Manor, to erect a brass memorial tablet in the church to the memory of his late sister, Mary Forster, and to her husband, Mr. S. H. S. Lofthouse, K.C., V.D., Recorder of Doncaster.

It appears that Mr. Lofthouse expressed a strong wish before his death on December 25th 1915, that such a tablet should be erected to his first wife, Mary Forster, at Holt, where he himself was later buried beside her. A site for the memorial, after conference with the Vicar, was selected on the church wall opposite to a tablet erected in 1915 to Judith Forster, wife of Admiral Raby, another member of the family, which the Vicar and churchwardens petitioned the Bishop to authorise. Although requested to do so by a majority of 30 votes to two at a vestry meeting held on September 8th 1915, the Vicar and his churchwarden (the Hon. F. S. O'Grady) declined to approach the Bishop in the latter case, and Col. Forster felt compelled to himself petition him respecting the matter. Hence the vestry, at which the Vicar presided, and before which the proposed tablet, a handsome engraved brass plate, 3 ft. by 2 ft., on a base of yellow sienna marble, was placed. The Vicar requested Col. Forster to move a resolution in favour of its erection, which he did, and which was seconded by Mr. Harry Hurn.

An amendment was moved by the Hon. F. S. O'Grady that the tablet be rejected, based on the view that memorial tablets of every kind are objectionable. Mr. O'Grady, however, failed to find a seconder, and his amendment therefore fell to the ground.

The original motion was then put, and carried the whole of those present, numbering about 24, voting in favour, the only dissentient being Mr. O'Grady. The parishioners can now therefore now feel that the erection of the tablet to a lady who was exceptionally well known and liked in her native village is assured, for the Bishop is unlikely to refuse the necessary faculty in view of such an expression of opinion.

Although held at an inconvenient hour for most of the parishioners, the meeting was a fairly representative one, the attendance including, beside the Vicar, the Hon. F. S. O'Grady, and Col. Forster, Miss Trim, Miss Barclay, Miss Gee, Messrs. J. Williams, H. Hurn, G. A. Cooper, T. King and other well-known residents.

©Wiltshire OPC Project/2015/Liz Corfield

Wiltshire Times, 20 January 1917

Memorial Tablet

It will be remembered that a vestry meeting was recently held to consider a communication from the Bishop of Salisbury with reference to a mural tablet which Colonel Forster desired to place in the Parish Church. The meeting favoured the project and now the work has been duly carried out. The tablet is of polished brass affixed to a marble slab, and is in memory of Emma Jane Mary Lofthouse, sister of Colonel Forster, the Manor, Holt.

The inscription describes the late Mr. and Mrs. Lofthouse as follows:-

“Emma Jane Mary Lofthouse, R.W.S., only daughter of T. B. W. Forster of Holt Manor, and wife of Samuel Hill Smith Lofthouse, barrister-at-law, born 6th December 1858, died 2nd May 1885. Buried at Holt.

Samuel Hill Smith Lofthouse, K.C., V.D., and Master of the Bench of Lincoln’s Inn, and Recorder of Doncaster. Born 25th March 1848, died 23rd December 1915. Buried at Holt”

The family of Forster has such long and intimate connections with the life of the village, that it is in every way fitting that this tablet in memory of the only sister of the present Lord of the Manor should find a place on the wall of the Parish Church.

Wiltshire Times, 24 February 1917