

RICHARD HARWIN: FATHERLY FARMER

BY virtue of his kindness to the peasantry, he became known as the Father of Boughton. This extract from a Press report about his life, following his tragic death on October 11th, 1912, was a fitting eulogy of Mr. Richard Harwin.

He had spent his early years abroad and amassed much wealth in Natal, where he had interests in a large general store. Returning to England about 1870, he purchased a small estate at Boughton and in a nearby parish, six miles from Downham Market, in Norfolk. Moving to Boughton a year after Mr. Harwin's death, I heard much about his farming operations, generosity and—sometimes—his odd ways.

The chief items of the farm stock sale, held on October 1st,

Generosity and unusual ways

1913, were: 28 horses, 141 head of neat stock, 605 sheep, 300 barn door fowls, and an excellent assortment of agricultural implements for a farm of 850 acres.

Fat and store cattle and a ewe flock were the main features of the stock side of the farm. Two lots of bullocks were usually fattened in the same yards each winter. Chains with hooks at the end of the bins made it possible to raise them as the need arose. Plenty of linseed cake was used to fatten the cattle, which made more per live cwt. at King's Lynn cattle market than those from any other sender.

UNLUCKY SHEEP

The shepherd had a permanent hut near a ditch barn on one of the farm premises for use at lambing time. Once they were dipping sheep on a very hot day, and during the dinner hour some of the sheep got out and drank the poisonous dip. When the men came back from the dip, several sheep were dead, and more were dying. Mr. Harwin was old, and those responsible for the loss had to bury the dead sheep after leaving-off time.

Although over twenty horses were kept for farm work, some of the land was often ploughed or cultivated by steam power. Sometimes, the engine stood in another field, and anchors and windlasses (eleven were sold at the auction)

were used for this work. "What a muddle it was, ploughing after the steam cultivator," an old ploughman said. The loose, heavy land would not scour the mould-board. Occasionally, some of the land (especially if wet, after sheep folding) was ploughed with three horses in length in the furrow. The first self-binder ever worked at Boughton was on Mr. Harwin's farm, and wire was used to tie the sheaves.

It was said that Mr. Harwin would drive round the farm in an old pony and trap, as if he were "not worth sixpence;" also, that he had been known to see a toad hopping on the road, pick it up and put it into his pocket, to be taken home to eat the slugs in the garden.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

At Christmas, for presents, the men would receive two shirts and the wives some blankets. Though not superintendent, Mr. Harwin would go into the Sunday School every Sunday morning, and give an address to the scholars.

Mrs. Harwin died in April, 1890, and on the anniversary of her death, each year a memorial service was held in the chapel. Mr. Harwin built a new Methodist manse at Stoke Ferry in her memory, and there were few trust properties in the old Downham

Market Wesleyan Methodist Circuit that did not benefit by his generosity.

From a structural point of view, he left his mark on the village of Boughton. He built several pairs of new cottages, the chapel and Sunday School; the latter, dated 1872, was also used as a day school, until he built a new one near the village green, in 1888. All these were his private property until he died.

HIS LAST RIDE

On one occasion, Mr. Harwin thought a local preacher had not taken a proper subject to preach from, so he stopped him. The first time that preacher came to the chapel after Mr. Harwin's death, he nearly broke down during the service.

It was said that as Mr. Harwin grew old, he prayed that at the end of his life he would be no trouble to anyone. On October 11th, 1912, his men were muck carting down the farm lane, where during the afternoon he had a very surprising number of his boys

leading an empty muck cart, he told him he wanted to get in to ride home. He could not sit down, so he stood up in the cart. Presently, one of his men near by saw Mr. Harwin fall out head foremost on to the hard road. At first he was unconscious, then he rallied a little as they got him home, but he died a few hours later. The funeral procession from the Methodist Chapel was led by forty schoolchildren with their two teachers, followed by forty employees.

In Mr. Harwin's will (£70,000 net value), there were many charitable bequests. Every employee on the farm was the recipient of a legacy. The foreman and a few others received more, but the engine drivers, blacksmith, carpenter, teammen and yardmen got £100 each. Other adult farm workers received £50, young men £25, and lads £10. Some former maids got £100, and £50 was paid to those in his service at his death.

An epitaph to Mr. Harwin is inscribed on a tombstone in the churchyard, and includes the following passage of scripture: "Thou poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him." Psalm 34: 6.

Harold Hall

London dinner for 'Holy Boys'

The annual dinner of London Branch of the Royal Norfolk Regiment Association takes place on Friday, November 8th (6.45 for 7.30), at The Dragoons' Room, The Drill Hall, 1, Elverson Street, Westminster, S.W.1, preceded (at 6.30) by a short ceremony at the Field of Remembrance, St. Margaret's, Westminster. London members always are happy to welcome old comrades "from the country" to this event, and tickets (at 17s. 6d. each) may be obtained from Mr. G. Terry, 18, Devonshire Road, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex.

Council offices for 900 stat
to cost over £2½m.

THE total estimated cost of new that a belt of trees on the sky should be kept sidered strong they play but on