

THE DAME ELIZABETH MARVYN CHARITY

(The Ufton Dole)

This year will be the 433rd anniversary of the Charity, when on **Thursday, 3rd April at 2.30 p.m.**, Sir William Benyon or a member of his family will maintain the tradition which has continued uninterrupted since 1581. We are very pleased that children from the SUN School will again attend this year and we hope also to welcome those attending the residential course at Ufton Court.

Everyone is invited to witness this interesting and historic event, so please make a note in your diary, and pray for good weather!

The Story of the Dole

Lady Marvyn, the wife of Sir John Marvyn, died in 1581, and in her will made provision for the annual distribution of wheat, canvas and cloth to the 'poore of Ufton'. A table of benefactions in Ufton Nerve Church states that she gave 10 bushels of wheat, to be made into household bread, 12½ ells of canvas at 1 shilling per ell for shirts and smocks, and 12½ yards of narrow blue cloth at 1 shilling and 8 pence per yard for coats and cassocks.

Before marrying Sir John Marvyn in 1566, Elizabeth Marvyn (born Elizabeth Mompesson) had been the wife of Richard Perkins, the owner of Ufton Court and the manors of Ufton Pole and Ufton Robert.

There are several versions of how the 'Dole' came into being, but all versions agree that Lady Marvyn's object in making provision for the poor in her will was to repay an act of kindness. This happened when she wandered from the grounds of her house and became lost in the surrounding woods where she was found by some local people who returned her safely home. She never forgot this good deed, and desired in her will that this distribution be made annually in perpetuity from Ufton Court.

Over the years the tradition has been somewhat altered, so that all Parishioners living in the (old) ecclesiastical parish of Ufton Nerve (which is different from the civil parish) now receive two large loaves of bread and in some eligible cases (on a five-year rota) towels.

The Ufton Dole, as it is colloquially known, is still distributed every year from the same window above the terrace at Ufton Court.

The trustees are Sir William Benyon, David Hannington, Geoffrey Godwin and Mary Riall, plus Rev. Anthony Peabody (replacing Rev. Peter Dewey).

For further information please contact Giles Dereham, Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, on 983 6811, or Mary Riall, on 983 2099.