7 September 1641 was a day of national celebration at the peace treaty ending the so-called Bishops’ Wars between England and Scotland, decisively won by the Scots. The Puritans in Abingdon made it a day of continuous preaching in St Helen’s. John Richardson, Abingdon’s serjeant-at-mace, wrote up the occasion in naïve verse, which contains strong attacks on the currently dominant Puritan ideology and its dislike of music, church bells, and market crosses.

More information in Manfred Brod, *Abingdon in Context: small-town politics in early modern England 1547-1688* (2010), Chapter 6.

**John Richardson:**

**In honour of ABINGDON, or On the seventh day of September’s solemnization. 1641.**

Not farre from faire *Calena* placed is

A pleasant Towne, neere silver Thamisis;

Where you may view the ruin’d Battlements

Of old king cissas ancient Monuments

Where struts th’unparall’d, harmlesse, threat**e**n’d Crosse

(Yet lately blest from Babylonish drosse)

Where *Aarons* bels in *Helens* Church doe ring

Peales, that doe blesse us from the poyson'd sting

Of death eternall. Neere the Church-yard Wall

Stands the faire structure of Christs Hospitall,

Where *Royse* his fruitfull Nurceries supplie

Great *Pembrooks* Gardens insufficiencie.

Of things of late, that in this Towne befell,

Something my oblieg’d Muse is forc’d to tell;

(Though but in rustick phrase) yet Ile expresse

To A b i n g d o n my love and thankfulnesse:

Yet Ile not Barber-like hyperbolize

And sell my Customers a Chest of Lies:

No this Ile banish, thus I will not sin,

Il’e write no more but truth, and now begin.

Tuesday (the seventh day of this last September,)

(Which day I’me sure our Children will remember)

Was by the King, and Court of Parliament

Proclaim’d a Festivall, and to be spent

In sacred wise; because ‘twixt Scots and Vs,

A joyfull peace is now concluded thus.

So soone this welcom’d newes was heard off here,

Grief**e** shrunk aside, no sorrow did appeare;

Each Man by’s Cheerefull Visage you would think

Nought but *Nepenthes* liquour then did drink.

The day being come, (Ile barre to complement)

And tell you briefly how the time we spent.

Ith’dawne of day, before *Hyperions* son

Bridl’d his horses, or his Course begun,

Old *Helens* trowling Bells such peales did ring,

And to our drowsie eares such tunes did sing,

(When honest *Nick* began to sympathise,

Striking up’s Lowbells in melodious wise)

That we no longer in our beds could lie,

But each prepar**’**d for this daies **j**ubilie.

To *Helens* Courts (ith’ morne) at seven oth’ Clock,

Our Congregation in great numbers flock;

Where we till Twelve our Orizons did send

To him, that did our Kingdomes Quarrels end.

And there two Sermons two Divines did preach,

And most divinely gratitude did teach.

At twelve the Priests lips blest us; home we came,

And sung sweet Anthems to *Iehova’s* name,

At Two againe (in Clusters) we did pack,

And fill’d the Church as full as it could thwack**,**

Till foure we staid**,** **a**nd Sermon being ended,

Towards our triumphant Crosse our course was bended.

And thus we march’d. First with my golden Mace

(‘Tis fit I put my selfe ith’ formost place)

I pac’d along, and after follow’d mee

The Burgesses by senioritie.

Our Prætour first (let me not misse my Text)

I think the Clergie-men came marching next;

Then came our Iustice, with him a Burger sage,

Both march’d together in due equipage:

The rest oth’ Burgers, with a comely grace,

Walk’d two, and two along to th’ Market-place;

And after them, hundreds both young, and old

Crowding along, that time you might behold,

(Being come to th’ famous Crosse, our journies end),

Her mounting Stayres in state we did ascend;

The Clerk was call’d, and he a Bible took,

The hundred and sixt Psalme he out did look,

Two thousand Quoristers their notes did raise,

And warbled out the great Creatours praise,

Their thundering Eccho gave so great a shout,

*Nicklas* and *Helen* were quite baffl’d out.

Over my head, I saw King *David* stand,

Listning toth' Musick, with his Harp in hand,

Sure when the Psalmist liv'd, with's sacred Lire,

He seldome play'd, or sung to such a Quire.

If either King could speake, hee'd sweare by's Crown

No haire-braind Separatist would pull him downe:

For why, this heavenly joy, we had so late,

Did seeme, in part, the Crosse to consecrate.

The Psalme is ended; but the Folke begin

Lowder and lowder crie, God save the K i n g,

While Bonfires blaze, their caps are throwne away,

All to expresse the triumph of the day.

The *Helvian* liquor, and rich Maligo,

And English beere, our Senate did bestow:

No cost was spar’d, and yet I must confesse,

I saw no shew of brutish drunkennesse:

Sure some diviner hand, that day did guide

The Vulgar, that they should not slip aside,

And further to set forth a greater joy,

Out comes the skillfull Sergeant *Corderoy*,

With’s his ratling Drummes, and Fife, and Colours flying,

With’s Musketteeres (and yet ther’s none fear’d dying)

Bravely they march’d about; but made a stop,

When they drew neere the well knowne Antelop;

A fiery peale they rung ith’ Senats Eares;

(Gallantly done by warlike Musketteeres)

Anon they made a Guard, my noble Master,

March’t through them to the front, (but yet no faster

Then my Mace and I) safely did they guard

The King’s Lieutenant home, when in his yard,

Or Court, another peale they out did thunder,

Which made the thronging people shout and wounder;

Their Muskets having shot out all their powder

They made their Throats their Muskets, and shot lowder,

Such was their joy (a Barrell being spent)

In sober manner every man home went.

And them with speed followed my Muse and I,

To learne what further newes we could descrie.

And now ‘tis supper time. In every street

Neighbours with Neighbours at some house did meet.

Their monies joyn’d together for a Feast,

And each to other is a welcome Guest,

(Supper being done) anon they ‘gin to sing

Some joyfull Hymne (a joyfull revelling)

Travell my Muse, goe, wander up and downe,

Search into City, Village, Hamlet, Town,

Tell me at thy returne (if thou canst tell)

Where any Feast with ours could parallell.

And yet this was not all, for what was spent

On *Irus* Crue, made the full complement

Of this daies jubilie, this was the best

Of Sacrifice, this season’d all the rest.

Vpon this day the poore were not neglected,

Thirteene or Foureteene pounds were here collected

And some (no question) out of Charitie,

In private gave to their necessitie.

Thus have I shew’d you in a home-spun way,

(Yet true enough) how we this happy day

Did from the morning to the evening spend;

But I am weary, and I’le make an end.

*POSTSCRIPT*

*Thus to th’ generall view a Seriants quill,*

*Ventur’d at last to show her weaker skill.*

*Such friends, that at her Errours will connive,*

*Humbly to thank, and gratifie sheele strive,*

*But let detracting fooles about them look,*

*Her Master is a subtile Tenter-hook;*

*Hee’le quickly snap them, if such chance to be*

*Within the Verge of his authoritie*

*But if sh’ath written any blamefull act,*

*‘Twas her dull ignorance, and no wilfull fact.*

Sic ex officio allusit IOH: RICHARDSON Serviens ad Clavam Burgi de *Abingdon* in Come Berks.

Mock-learned references:

Calena: Oxford

King Cissa: Supposed founder of Abingdon Abbey.

Nepenthe: A potion to allay grief.

Hyperion: father of Helios, the sun-god.

Helvian: (in Roman times) wine from the present Ardèche region.

Irus’s crew: beggars.