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The Grammar School. Campden

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THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, CAMPDEN.

By FRANCIS B. OSBORNE.

THE history of Campden Grammar School from its foundation until its revival in 1628 is meagre in the extreme; there being no document in existence, so far as we know, to throw any light whatever upon its foundation or history for the first 140 years of its existence. The facts which are known relate entirely to the misuse of the property and lands with which the School was endowed; and these facts seem to be taken from the story of the Chancery suit, *Hickes v. Davenport and Others*, the Decree in which was made in the High Court of Chancery 9th June, 1627. The Decree itself and several interrogatories connected with the suit are to be found in the Record Office, but the pleadings are not, so far as I have been able to discover, now in existence; and the particulars of the suit, from which the history of the endowment, as we know it, appears to be taken, are to be found in the British Museum, vol. 227 of the *Lausdowne Manuscripts*. There seems to be no further evidence of the accepted date (1487) of the foundation than the passage in this document "about 140 years before that date," *i.e.* 1627.

There is documentary evidence of the existence of the School in 1546 and 1548. In each of these years commissioners were appointed by Act of Parliament for the survey of all colleges, chantries, free chapels, &c., and the Report of the Commission of Henry VIII. (1546) on this School reads as follows:—

CHANTRY CERTIFICATES, ROLL 21.

Certificate of John Carrell, Esq., and Others the King's Commissioners in Gloucestershire for the survey of "all chaunteries, hospitalls, collegies, fre chapples, brotherhedes, guyldes, & salaries of stipendarie

priestes" within the said county, according to certain articles dated 14 February, 37 Henry VIII.

³¹
The p̄she of
Capden within
the Deanry
aforesaid
[i.e. Winchcombe]

} FEREBY S̄VIS, otherwise callyd the
Scolemaist^{rs} s̄vys—founded and lands put in
feoffment to fynde a preste for ēv to kepe a
Fre scole & to have for his salary by yere
viii *li*. To kepe an obyt & to geve in almes
yerey xl *s̄*.—FEREBY SERVIS ys within
the said church. FEREBY SERVIS [is worth]
xiii *li*. vj *s̄*. viij *d*.—WHEREOF. For the pretes
stipende viii *li*.; for the poore folke xl *s̄*. = x *li*. And
so remanyeth clere lxxvj *s̄*. viii *d*. [No goods, plate, &c.]

The second Commission, that of Edward VI. (1548), reads as follows:—

CHANTRY CERTIFICATES, ROLL 22.

County of Gloucester, Certificate of Anthony Hungerford and Others, Commissioners appointed by Commission of 14 February, 2 Edward VI., for the Survey of "all colledges, chauntries, free chappells & other like" within the said County.

⁵⁷
In the Deanry
of Campden. The
p̄she of Campden
where are of
houسلing people
vj^c

} The SCOLEMAISTER S̄vyce āl̄ diē
Ferbye S̄vyce.
This s̄vyce ys lefte out in thother
C̄t̄ificat.

Founded by one John Ferbye and M̄gery his wiff and the lands putt in feoffment to thentente to fynde a priste to maynteigne a frescole in the said p̄she of Campdē for ever.

S^r Robert Glaseman incubent there of thage of liii yeris havng no other lyving then in the seid s̄vyce which ys yerey _____

The landf & tentf thereuto belonging are of the yerey value of xiiij *li*. vj *s̄*. viij *d*. Whereof—In rep̄ses— and so remaneth clere by yere _____

Ornamentf plate & juellf to the same—Noone.

M^d that there hath byn tyme oute of mynde kepte wⁱⁿ the seid psche a gram^m schole freelie taught comenlie furnysshed w^t the nombre of iij or iiij^{xx}¹ scolders, for mayntenaunce & kepinge whereof oon John Ferbye & M^gery his wiffe gave & put in feoffment the moytie of a certeyne man^or w^t thapptences^{r a} amountinge to the yerelie value of xiiij^{li}. vj s. viij^d. w^t w^{ch} yerlie rent comynge of the p^misses the sed schole hath byn always and yet is kepte and mayntigned accordingle. The teacher having for his salayre sometymes x^{li}. sometymes xij^{li}. by-yere as his learnyng qualities & behavo^r byn. The residue therof hath byn distributed and converted to the relevyng of poore people and in payeng a steward's fee of xx s. by-yere.

From the cancelling of this report by crosslines and the added memorandum, I infer, that the inhabitants were able to save the foundation from appropriation, by proving that the endowment was not left mainly, if at all, for a religious service, but for a school; and this view is strengthened by the absence from the Patent or Close Rolls of any record of a License in Mortmain for its foundation, which would have been necessary for the foundation of a chantry for a religious service only; neither does the Bishop's Register at Worcester contain a record of the institution of a chaplain to the chantry.

From the manuscript in the *Lausdowne Documents*, we learn that, in the Easter Term of 1626, Sir Baptist Hickes; Revd. Robt. Lilley, the vicar; Richd. Coleman and Jno. Higgins, Bailiffs; with Robt. Hiron and Thomas Harris; on behalf of themselves and 300 of the inhabitants of the parish "did exhibit their bill of complaint" in the High Court of Chancery, against Thos. Bason, *alias* Butcher the Elder; Thos. Bason, *alias* Butcher the Younger; Wm. Davenport, Jno. Gilby, Anthony Jarrett, and Anthony Bonner, Defendants; whereby they showed that, about 140 years before that date, John Varby, Gentleman, who

¹ NOTE.—*i.e.* 60 or 80, three or four score.

was born near the town of Campden, left lands in the parish of Lyneham, Oxfordshire, in one great close, called by the name of Fynnes Court, or some such name, for the building and founding of a free school, for the benefit of the town of Campden.

About fifty years before the date of the action the deeds of the property at Lyneham were, by trickery and deceit, got possession of by Thos. Bason or Butcher, and Christopher Jarrett, and under promise to restore them, from one Noble who held them on behalf of the feoffees, and who was both aged and blind. On gaining possession they immediately took them to Sir Jas. Mervin, Knight, lord and owner of the moiety of the Manor of Lyneham; and, "in consideration of some great sum in hand," contracted with him for a lease of the lands, for 101 years, at the yearly rent of £20; and in the end of this lease, a power was given to Sir Jas., his executors or assigns, that "in the very last year of the lease he might grant new estates in the premises." The plaintiffs go on to say that "within a few years Sir Jas. cut down and sold more than £500 worth of timber," that even the £20 rent was not wholly spent to the advantage of the school, for the two defaulting trustees after paying the master a salary of £13 6s. 8d. a year, appropriated to themselves the remainder.

This Sir Jas. Mervin, after a few years, parted with his Manor of Lyneham, and his rights in the school property, to Sir Jno. Walter, Knight, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer; and the plaintiffs say that "to this Sir Jno. Walter the defendants Bason and Jarrett used means that he would purchase the reversion of the premises, and of the rents from them"; to the end, as they said, that they might with the purchase money procure some other land of greater value than £20 per annum for the benefit of the school and poor of Campden.

Sir Jno., desiring the good of the school, directed these feoffees to find out some land suitable, and to purchase the

same, with the money he was to give, for the reversion of the moiety of the Lyneham Manor. They fixed upon a piece of land of the value of £60 per annum at Barton on the Heath, or Barton Henmarsh, Warwickshire, the inheritance of one Wm. Bury: this was purchased by Sir Jno. Walter for £700, and then conveyed to the feoffees; but before a bargain so advantageous to the school was concluded, two of the defendants, Anthony Bonner and Anthony Jarrett, "being willing as others had been before them to enrich themselves" refused to assent, without some recompense for their goodwill and assent; and so they received the one £44 and the other £40 to relinquish their trust. Jarrett went further still, and would not consent to the perfecting of the said conveyance unless Bason and Davenport would engage themselves never to assent to make the Lord Nowell, Sir Chas. Morrison, Sir Baptist Hickes, Revd. Robt. Lillye, and Thos. Bonner of Bd. Campden feoffees of the lands; "they being men likely to be strict and to enquire into the bestowing of the profits" as well in the past as in the future.

Jarrett, not yet thinking himself safe, bound Bason the Younger, and Davenport, in a bond of £200 to enfeoff of the land purchased at Barton, "divers persons of his affinity and kindred, some of them young children who were not fit or capable to manage the estate or to control the others in misemploying the profits." This systematic plundering of the school lasted for nearly another thirty years, during all which time the income, now increased to £60, seems to have afforded no more than the £13 6s. 8d. for the master; and the school was "in great decay and disgrace by reason of the neglect of the feoffees." Davenport's defence was that he had spent the money in procuring a corporation for the town, for New Year's gifts given and other money to procure the same, and for loss of time spent about the town business, for building a bridge, and such like employment.

Such is the story of the fraud and deceit alluded to in the Latin inscription underneath the effigy of the founder, on

the old fireplace in the schoolroom, which effigy and inscription is said to have been placed there by Sir Baptist Hickes. The plaintiffs were able to prove their case, and gained a complete victory over the defendants, who were deprived of their position of feoffees; and a new indenture was ordered to be made, reconveying the land at Barton to a new list of feoffees. Their names were:—

Jno. Croker of Batsford	} and six others.
Wm. Child of Northwick	
Hy. Jones of Chastleton	
Jno. Keyte of Ebrington	
Robert Lillye of Campden, Clerk.	
Rd. Frewen, Chandler, Campden.	
Trustram Warne, Yeoman.	
Humphry Tainton, Hatter.	
Thos. Harris of Bd. Campden.	
Robt. Hiron, Yeoman of Westington.	

Sir Baptist Hickes did not, unfortunately, live to take an active part in the management of the school he had done so much to save, dying in 1629, two years after the date of the Decree, whereas the first recorded meeting was held in 1631.

From this date we have a detailed account of all moneys received and expended. The memoranda or minutes of the meetings, on the other hand, are very few and meagre for the next 150 years, nothing scarcely being noted excepting the appointment of new trustees in the place of those deceased; even the appointment of a new master was not considered of sufficient importance to be always noted.

Immediately on the change of management, the master received what must have been a welcome addition of 50 per cent. to his salary, it being raised to £5 quarterly, and a year or two later to £6. The funds were also sufficient to spend a considerable amount in charity—apprentice fees, doles, allowances, and the purchase of garments for the poor and sick,—not omitting a handsome sum to the landlord of “The George” for refreshment for the feoffees

after the performance of their annual duty. This last item, in the course of years, grew beyond the consciences of some; for in 1793 a memorandum is made "that 20/- and no more be expended for refreshment in future." The account for the previous year was £3 10s. 6d.

Up to quite recent years—I think even in my recollection—it was the custom for the trustees present at the meeting to sign the book, and there are many quaint signatures or alternative marks. Some of the more interesting names up to 1700 are Nicholas and Thomas Overbury, Endymion Porter ("one of the groomes of H.M. bedchamber," Charles I.), Say and Sele, Gilbert Coventry, John Tracy, Jas. Thynne, Rd. Graves, Wm. Keyte, and Thos. Childe.

In addition to a master, the revived charity was able to support an usher, a charge of £2 10s. a quarter being paid as his salary. There must have been two classes of pupils; for in later years we learn that the usher's duties were strictly confined to the care of the charity children, who were to be taught grammar by him, and to be taken to church twice on Sunday. On one occasion he is ordered to appear before the trustees, and admonished "not to presume to instruct any others than the charity children."

For this reproof the master himself was no doubt to blame. The number of classical pupils was, probably, generally none—sometimes one, or maybe occasionally more; and the master holding in addition some neighbouring curacy or vicarage, he certainly did not encourage, if he did not actually discourage, the attendance of any scholar requiring his assistance. In this case, no doubt, the usher had been guilty of an act of good nature, prearranged between themselves for the relief of the master. The master's office seems to have been for many years more or less a sinecure; for inducements are constantly held out by the trustees, during the later part of the 18th century and the earlier part of the 19th, for the attendance of more of the better class of scholars.

One such memorandum says: "A proposition is to be

made at the next meeting that the master's salary shall be in future £30 if no boys are in attendance (£40 was being paid at the time), and that a sum of £10 additional be given when the first boy presents himself; and a further sum of £10 for the two next." This proposition was never carried; whether it was beaten by the diplomacy of the master, who at the same meeting made application for an increase of salary, I cannot say. Another memorandum says that "in order to encourage the placing of boys in the school" it was ordered that "6 Latin Grammars, 6 Vocabularies, and 1 Latin Dictionary be provided at the cost of the Trust."

The first minute of any business connected with the school itself appears in 1702, when it is ordered that "if any of the scholars be instrumental in penning the master out of the school, they shall from thenceforth be incapable of having any benefit by the said school."

In 1709 the financial position allowed of the purchase of the property at Gretton and Greet, another small farm of about sixty acres.

In 1811 the policy of the master to reduce his work to nothing, mentioned above, which had brought a reproof on the usher, seems to have stirred up the inhabitants; for a long case was stated for Counsel's opinion as to the interpretation of the terms parish, town, parishioners, etc., in the Decree of 1627. The master maintained that the benefits of the charity were strictly for the town proper, and did not include Berrington, Bd. Campden, Westington, etc., the adjacent hamlets, and he accordingly disqualified applicants from these districts.

The chief point in the Counsel's opinion (his name was Thos. Plumer) was that whereas by the deed the local feoffees were to be chosen from the *town and parish of Campden*, the benefits of the school were to be for the poor of the said *town of Chipping Campden*. On the whole Counsel favoured the master's view, but he thought it was a point of considerable doubt; the loss of the original

deed involving the question in much obscurity. The point was settled, two years later, by the feoffees passing a resolution that boys from the *parish at large* should be admitted under the same regulations as the free boys then in the school; since then nobody seems to have ventured to dispute the correctness of this view.

Another great benefactor to the school was Geo. Townshend, who, in his will dated 1683, left a messuage and lands called Little Aston Farm, in the parish of Cold Aston, to Pembroke College, Oxford, to provide for eight scholars: one of the first four of these to be chosen by the mayor and aldermen and chief schoolmaster of the chief school of Gloucester; one from Cheltenham school; one from Campden school, and one from Northleach school; the three last-named scholars to be chosen by "the respective chief schoolmasters, ministers and bailiffs or other chief officers of the three towns for the time being and in equality of voices, the said schoolmaster to have the casting voice."

These scholarships have for many years been of the value of £80 with rooms; but now, owing to alterations in other clauses of the will by the Charity Commissioners in 1898, the value will be, or is, still further increased. This increase of £82 4s. 6d. gross arises from the abolition of the lectureships in the churches of Uxbridge and Colnbrook as separate lectureships; in future the lecturers will be the respective vicars, and one-third of the previous emoluments belonging thereto is to be diverted to the Pembroke Scholarships.

I should much like to be able to procure a full and authentic list of the Townshend Scholars from this school (but so far have been unable), in order that their names might be suitably inscribed and placed upon the school walls. Only two are mentioned in the old book, which comes down to 1857, and beyond which I have not had opportunity of searching for the purposes of this paper; their names are Rice and John Hebsworth Matthews. One

other at least should have been mentioned before this date, the late Dean of Canterbury, Robert Payne Smith; it is he who, as Master Robert Smith (the minutes record), at Easter, 1836, received a grant of £5 from the trustees for his services as usher since the previous Christmas. Other scholars, I believe, have been the Rev. J. H. Worgan, the Rev. W. Sollis, and, in later years, Canon Scobell.

The number of headmasters from 1630 to 1889 is 19, the first one we know of (he who was in receipt of the salary of £13 6s. 8d.) being the Rev. Ambrose Jenks; followed by the Rev. Samuel Edwards and the Rev. — Kirkham. These three are not given in the lists previously published.

In 1862 to 1865 the sum of £1,800 was raised, for the most part by subscription, for enlarging and improving the school, and erecting a new house for the master. The old house stood behind the school, in the school yard; this was pulled down, and the two houses adjoining being purchased, they were removed, and the present house built on the site: Mr. Buckler, of Oxford, was the architect, and the Revd. Jas. Hamilton, Curate of Campden, was the energetic secretary to the Building Committee. This must have been a very great undertaking for so small a community; and when giving up his office at the close of the work, Mr. Hamilton speaks of it as "the happiest but most laborious undertaking of his life." On his death, some three or more years ago, I received from his son a large parcel of documents containing every possible item of information connected with the rebuilding, in the form of letters, lists of subscriptions, minutes of the meetings, and the accounts from the beginning of the work to the end; amongst them is one from Dr. Hiron, the Headmaster at the time, saying that when removing the old property an old door of communication was discovered between the school and the acquired property, and suggesting that the property had, at some time or other, previously belonged to the school.

All the present buildings, with the exception of the old

schoolroom and the school passage, date from this time, and in the schoolroom itself a stone floor was removed and the present oak one substituted, while the ceiling was raised some two feet. But all the alterations in the old room were certainly not improvements; the present match-boarding and deal desks must have looked poor substitutes for the old 6 ft. or 7 ft. high wainscoting and oak desks, which they displaced: their life, however, as well as that of the floor, is now practically closed, and we are face to face with the necessity of renewing all the woodwork, the floor as well as the furniture, with something stronger, and, in the case of the furniture, more in character, I hope, than the last; these times of reduced rents will, however, make this, I am afraid, a serious undertaking.

No other change in the life of the school took place until 1891, when the new scheme of the Charity Commissioners came into force; and soon after, by the kind munificence of the late lamented Canon Bourne (who died on January 30th last, and who for nearly fifty years was trustee of, and a friend and benefactor to, the school), and by his influence with the County Council, some £600 or £700 was spent in purchasing the "King's Arms" Inn, and in replanning it into the present Technical School; thus providing us with laboratory, workshops, and lecture-room to keep abreast with the requirements of a well-equipped secondary school of the present day.

I must now close my paper on the Campden Grammar School, regretting for your sakes that its history does not seem to have provided many incidents which can be of very profound interest to the world beyond our own parish boundaries; but in spite of its perhaps very much limited sphere of usefulness, owing to the ravages and depredations on the estate during the 16th century, I hope that the inhabitants of the *town and parish at large* may ever have cause of thankfulness to the founder for the remnant that is left to them, and may always consider the names of Fereby and Hicks as honoured household words.