

BAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Robert Vesey of Chimney left by will, dated July 5th 1635, £300 for the founding of a school at Bampton. £100 was to be spent on the building with 'ashleane', and £200 was to be used at the discretion of the trustees. He died the same month, but in 1637 the £300 had not been paid out to the use of the school, and an enquiry was ordered (2). As a result it was decreed that Wm. Vesey, an executor, should pay the sum plus the interest to John Palmer that he might erect and endow a school, that the three vicars of the parish and the heir of the testator should choose a schoolmaster, preferring those of the name of Vesey; that they should also be the visitors with power to elect, choose, visit and upon just cause remove the master.

The expenses of the building no doubt decided John Palmer to add in 1650 £100 to the original endowment. Henry Coxeter of Weald (3) also made a bequest, and later on, between 1680 and 1718, Richard Dew gave £50 for the use of the school (4). It was finally opened in 1653 with William Jackson, M.A. as its first headmaster. The choice was a good one for he had already had experience of teaching at Charlbury, and had the reputation of being 'a noted grammarian' (5).

The original statutes have been lost, but Rawlinson (6) refers to them in commenting on the schoolmaster Leonard Fell, 'a poor child of Queen's College in Oxford, who, according to the statutes, ought not to have been a benificed person', a not uncommon provision in the statutes of the Oxfordshire schools. Some orders made by the visitors in 1731/2 have been recorded. (7) They show that the visitors still intended the school to provide a classical education.

An indication that the school was not without life at the end of the 18th Century comes from an indenture of 1783 (8) recording that £20 had been raised by voluntary subscription to purchase a garden and cottage contiguous to the school for the master's use. The latter's salary had been increased before this by two bequests which also rather altered the character of the school. In 1717 Mary Croft had left him the interest on £100 if he would teach twelve poor boys and girls of Bampton to read the bible, and in 1792 Mary Frederick and her sisters (10) had left £400. This produced an income of £16 a year on condition that the master instructed ten poor boys in elementary English subjects.

By the beginning of the 19th Century the school had ceased to provide a classical education. The Rev. Griffith Davis who received the emoluments up to his death in 1817 paid little attention to it. An attempt was made to revive classical instruction in 1819 by charging one guinea a quarter, but in spite of this departure from the founders wishes it was found impossible to make the school sufficiently profitable to attract a graduate as

master. By 1849 there were no pupils (11). Today the endowments are devoted to the provision of scholarships for Bampton, Aston and Lew in accordance with a scheme of the Board of Education.

References:

1. P.C.C. 100. Sadler
2. P.R.O. Proc of Com for Charitable Uses, bdle 16, no. 11.
3. P.C.C. 187. Pembroke
4. BOD. Lib. Miss Rawlinson. B.400 b, fol. 7-7b.
5. Forester's Alumni.
6. Oxford Rec. Soc.ii 17.
7. Giles. App xxii.
8. Char. Com. Rep. 1824.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

Giles: HISTORY OF BAMPTON:

The trustees of the Grammar School in 1848 were F. Whitaker, Rev.C.L. Kirby, vicar of Bampton, Rev.W.J.Walker of Southrop, The Green, James Ward, W.Andrews, Wm. Pryor of Aston Rd, Townsend of Coate, and J.Bateman. Their duty according to Giles was to take charge of, and maintain the freehold property which belongs to the foundation, consisting of the Schoolhouse, a picturesque building situated near the church, a small cottage adjoining, and three fields situated near Fisher's Bridge.

The income derived from the rents amounts to about £28, not including the Schoolhouse. Other monies will probably be attached to the school, when certain arrangements in the Court of Chancery shall be brought to completion. The master is appointed by the three vicars of Bampton and the heir of the founder, with the heir having the casting vote.

The present master is the Rev.H.S.Templar but there are no pupils, and it is a subject of regret to the inhabitants that this foundation is without any benefit to the town. It appears, however, that this evil is not irremediable for the foundation is unfettered by any conditions which might perpetuate a course of study not adapted to the wants of the people. The original statutes now seem to be lost.

Mrs Elizabeth Snell, and Mrs Susannah Frederick in conjunction with Mrs Mary Frederick, in the year 1784, purchased £400 Stock in the 4% Bank Annuities,

and vested it in the names of Wm. Hawkins, John Mander, Wm. Roberts and Edward Whitaker, for the use of the Master of the Grammar School on the condition that he should teach Reading, Writing, English and Arithmetic to all such boys, not exceeding the number 10 as should for that purpose be nominated and appointed after the decease of the said donors, by the said trustees and their successors. In 1829 the amount of Stock was £418-17-6d.

Mrs Mary Crofts by will dated on or about March 4th, 1717, left £100 to be laid out in land, and the interest to be applied to the use of the Master of the Free School, for the instructing of 12 poor boys and girls of the town of Bampton in the English tongue, until they shall be able to read the Bible; but if the Schoolmaster refuses or neglects to do so then the profits shall be applied to the use of such Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress as by the appointment of her executor John Frederick and his heirs, should yearly teach the said children in the manner aforesaid. The value of this stock in 1829 was £135-7-3d.

Appointment of the first schoolmaster to the Free School of Bampton, Oct: 10, 1653.

To all true Christian people, to whom this present writing shall come, William Hodges of Ripple, in the county of Wigorne, Clerk, William Vesey of Taynton, in the county of Oxfordshire, clothier, Thomas Willear of Bampton, in the said county of Oxon, and William Hancks of Bampton, aforesaid, send greetings in our Lord God everlasting.

Whereas Robert Vesey, late of Chimney, in the parish of Bampton in the county of Oxon, deceased, gent, in and by his last will and testament, bearing date the first day of July in the 11th year of the reign of the late King Charles, did give and bequeath to and for a free-school to be founded and erected in Bampton the sum of one hundred pounds for and towards the building thereof with ashleane work and did also give £200 more to be disposed of as his executors Mr. Wm. Hodges, Mr. John Palmer and three others the sufficient men in Bampton aforesaid should think fit concerning the same school, and the said Robert Vesey by the same will did make nominate and appoint his nephew William Veysey of Burford in the said county of Oxon, clothier, his sole executor.