

Kibworth Beauchamp Grammar School

A report on the School prepared for Trustees in 1865

Introduction to the Report

by Kibworth History Society:

This article is a transcription of an 1865 report entitled 'Kibworth Free Grammar School'.

The report was prepared for private distribution to trustees of the School Charity and focuses on the quality of education and arrangements for the proper running of the School. Years prior to 1865 are covered and the account lays bare neglect and failures as well as achievements. Thus the report is an insight on the state of the School in the first two-thirds of the 19th century.

A short history of the School from the early 1600s is provided. There is an emphasis on the duties of trustees and trustees' names are often listed.

Authorship of the report is not clear. In his important and acclaimed book 'A History of Kibworth Grammar School', published in 1957, Bernard Elliott refers to the 1865 report as a major source of information. He ascribes the 19th century report to the then headmaster, Rev J B Hildebrand, and that may be correct (however, Mr Elliott records Rev Hildebrand's tenure of office as 1836-1870 whereas it is now known that Mr Hildebrand died in 1868). The end of the 1865 report is marked with the initials 'H.H.' which equate to one of the trustees, Sir Henry Halford. Those initials may or

may not indicate that Sir Henry was the report's author (it could be that the actual author was merely recording that the trustees' statement which concludes the report was signed by H.H). Nevertheless the original copy of the report, from which this transcription is derived, was hand marked 'Rev Rob Isham, from Sir Henry Halford'. So, clearly Sir Henry distributed the report even if he was not the author.

Robert Isham was a School trustee from 1843 and was Rector of Lamport from 1845. One of his earlier appointments was as Rector of Shangton; his nephew Rev Henry Packe followed him in that position at Shangton in 1857. In his diaries, Henry Packe records his being invited to inspect and report on Kibworth School in 1869 and to meet School Commissioners in 1872.

The name of the transcriber of the original 1865 report is not known for certain; however, there are strong indications that the transcription was done by the Society's founder, Dr Christine Vials. Footnotes to the report are set out, in this presentation, in boxes on relevant pages.

This layout and presentation December 2011

KIBWORTH
FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Leicester
Printed by Crossley and Clarke 1865

[For private circulation only]

¹ Hand-written note on title page:-

Rev. Rob Isham
from Sir Henry Halford, Bart. 1865

There is not much distinctly known regarding the original foundation of this School. Nichols informs us of a Bill in Chancery, in the reign of Henry VII., which sets forth that "certain lands and tenements in Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth Beauchamp, Smeeton Westerby, and Carlton Curlieu, were heretofore given for the maintenance of a Free Grammar School and Schoolmaster in Kibworth."

In 1601 the Statute of Charitable Uses (43 Eliz. cap. 4) was passed, "To redress the

misemployment of lands, goods, and stocks of money given" (among other purposes) "for maintenance of Schools of learning, Free Schools, and scholars in Universities, such property not having been employed according to the charitable intent of the givers and founders thereof, by reason of frauds, breaches of trust, and negligence in those that should pay, deliver, and employ the same." This statute empowers the Lord Chancellor, or persons exercising the like authority, "to appoint any four or more Commissioners by oaths of twelve

lawful men of the county, to set down orders, judgments and decrees, which are to stand firm until complaint made to the Lord Chancellor by any party aggrieved - these provisions not to extend to Colleges in Oxford or Cambridge, or Westminster, Eton, or Winchester, or any Cathedral or Collegiate Church; nor to any College, Hospital, or Free School which has special visitors, or governors, or overseers appointed them by their founders."

In 1614 a commission under this statute was taken out regarding Kibworth School. It would appear, therefore, that no trustees had been appointed by the founder. The inquisition was not made until October, 1625. The lands appropriated to the School are set forth and the names of the tenants, and it was decreed that these lands should be applied for ever to the maintenance of a Free Grammar School and the Schoolmaster thereof, to the erecting of a schoolhouse, and that the tenants should pay rent to the full worth of the land to the Schoolmaster.

Of what further regulation might have been made under this inquisition, how the Schoolmaster was to be appointed, or what the education to be given, there appears no account. There is evidence of a Mr. Sheffield, a celebrated divine during the civil war, and holding the living of Ibstock, coming to reside at Kibworth, where he had a small property, for the benefit of education at the Free School for his children. The School must have been in an effective condition at that time, for the character given to Mr. Sheffield is not that of a man who would have been contented with a mere nominal or neglected education for his sons.

But in 1709 another commission, under the same act, was taken out on behalf of the School by Mr. Lamplugh, an attorney resident at Kibworth. This commission was directed to the Earls of Stamford and Denbigh, Sir Richard Halford, Sir George Beaumont, Sir Gilbert Pickering, and others.

These Commissioners, however, could not agree among themselves, nor were they all of them consistent in the course they pursued. One of their orders, dated at Leicester, October 5, 1709, granting a new feoffment, the old one being reduced to four persons, to Geoffrey Parker, of Kibworth Harcourt, and others; but another order, made at Kibworth Harcourt, June 14, 1710, states that the old feoffees had made a new feoffment of the School to a dissenting teacher and to several dissenters and others in manifest breach of their trust, and directs that no person dissenting from the Church of England should at any time thereafter be nominated a feoffee. Appeal hereupon being made anew to the Court of Chancery, the proceedings were referred to Francis Edwards, Esq., of London, and Richard Buckby, gentleman, of Kibworth Beauchamp, who made an award, dated December 24, 1718.

Upon this award it was decreed that a new feoffment should be made to fifteen persons, viz. Sir Richard Halford, Francis Edwards, Esq., Sir Euseby Buswell Pelsent, of Cadeby, the Rev. W. Vincent, rector of Kibworth, Thomas Ray Dand, Thomas Parsons and William Carter, of Kibworth Harcourt, John Buckby, of Kibworth Beauchamp, Thomas Iliffe, of Kibworth Beauchamp, Joseph Hill, of Rothwell, Northamptonshire, Robert Haymes, of Kibworth Beauchamp, John Hall, of Arnesby, Moses Allsop, of Smeeton Westerby, Robert Chapman, of Smeeton Westerby, and William Clark, of Husbands Bosworth. These Trustees being directed to make orders and bye laws relating to the School, Schoolmaster, and Charity, it was added by the Court of Chancery, "that they should from time to time present the same for the approbation of the Court." The directions contained in this award form the basis of those at present in force. In 1724, on the death of the Schoolmaster, William John Dand, probably a relative of Thomas Ray Dand, named above as one of the Trustees, new disputes arose on the choice of a successor, "five of the old Trustees clandestinely electing John Cromer, a relative of some of them, and twelve others, at a regular meeting, electing William Cox, clerk, who was duly licensed by the Bishop."

The choice from this account might seem sufficiently clear in favour of William Cox. However, another appeal was made to Chancery, and a new order made in 1725, and Mr. Cox continued in the office. He was vicar of Foxton as well as master of the School, but resided at Kibworth.

Certain other matters appear to have been included in this order, as the assigning of five Trustees for each township, &c., since annulled.

In what proportions respectively family connection, doctrinal or party differences, desire for a lucrative office, or personal vanity, or ambition, or turbulent zeal, were combined in these disputes, it is useless to speculate.

Dissent, however, has certainly exhibited itself at Kibworth during the lapse of time under different associations, and with energies of a very distinct character.

In 1647, or thereabouts, a Captain Yaxley, one of Cromwell's military divines, violently obtruded himself in the pastoral character, climbing "in at the window or o'er the tiles" into the Parish Church, taking possession of the Rectory house, and continuing preaching and praying in conformity with his own political views for thirteen years, until in 1660 he was ejected with not less violence than he had entered, by the patron of the living.

Possibly the contentions regarding the School in the first years of the succeeding century may have been occasioned by an overflowing of the same spirit by which this intruder into the Rectory was animated, but nonconformist influences of a very different character were then beginning to be felt. An academy had been established for education of dissenting ministers by a Mr. John Jennings.² In 1719 Philip Doddridge became a pupil here, paying particular attention to the *literae humaniores* as well as to religious studies. In 1722 he became himself a preacher at Kibworth, "which he preferred because it was an obscure village and the congregation small, so that he could pursue

his studies with little interruption, but during his residence here he excelled as a preacher."³ In 1725 he removed to Market Harborough, but continued to preach at Kibworth alternately with that place, where he opened an academy for dissenting ministers until he removed to Northampton in 1729; and it is only just to observe that the same forbearances, and the same unobtrusive spirit of Christianity, which characterized Dr. Doddridge, are still maintained at Kibworth by his successor, in the same place of worship and the same dwelling.

In 1725 the liberality and public spirit of an individual gave an extraordinary impulse to the School.

Francis Edwards had been one of the referees appointed by the Court of Chancery on the occasion of the disputes in 1718. He is described as of London, but was connected by family with Kibworth, and possessed of considerable property there. He had purchased also a large property at Welham, where he had built much and projected much. He is said to "have possessed a most liberal spirit, and his views were perhaps as much extended as any man's ever were."⁴

In 1725 Mr. Edwards took down the old schoolroom Kibworth - an indifferent building, and very much out of repair - and rebuilt it, together with the master's house adjoining, at

² Hand written note: Was Tutor to Dr Doddridge. He wrote a discourse on Reaching Christ, and on Preaching of Christ, and on [Past] and Experimental Preaching, published in 1723 with a preface by Dr Watts. Dr Franck of Halle University, had them translated into German by Herman Augustus Frank Professor of Divinity at Halle. "Most useful way of Preaching" translated into English by David Jennings, Brother of the above.

³ Nichol's Leicestershire.

⁴ Nichol's Leicestershire.

his own expense, about fifty yards distant from the site on which the old one stood, before which there was no house appropriated to the use of the master. "This schoolroom is a noble, majestic edifice, and does credit to the taste of the architect and the founder. The length within the walls is 58 feet, breadth 24 feet, height 18 feet."⁵

Mr. Edwards died in 1728, aged 61. Had his life been prolonged he would probably have raised the School to a condition of usefulness and importance.

Mr. Cox continued master until his death, holding also the vicarage of Foxton. He was succeeded by Mr. Wilson, who died 1805, aged 90. The Rev. Jeremiah Goodman, the late master, was elected in that year and continued master until his death in 1836. Thus from 1724 to 1836 - a hundred and twelve years - there were only three masters, giving an average of rather more than thirty-seven years to each. I can find no other record relating to the School for a long period subsequently. At Mr. Edwards' death it seems to have relapsed into a neglected state, its emoluments assigned to the Schoolmaster having been bestowed rather with a view to the advantage of the clergyman filling that office than to the educational benefit of the community for whom they were designed, and to be held as a sort of vested sinecure, while its duties were left to be discharged as well as might be by an inferior teacher.

Even renewal of the trust as vacancies occurred appears to have been neglected. In 1822 the survivors were only four: Sir Gerard Noel, who had succeeded to the property formerly held by Francis Edwards in Kibworth, inheriting it from the last Earl of Gainsborough, of the first creation upon whom it had devolved by marriage of his predecessor with Mr. Edwards' daughter and heiress, Mr. Cradock residing at an advanced age at Gumley, Mr. Marriott of Kibworth, and Mr. John Morpott who lived at East Langton. It appears to have been chiefly at the instigation of Mr. Cradock that the attempt was made to restore the Charity to its original

purposes. In order to do this a petition was addressed in the above year to the Court of Chancery and referred to Mr. Alexander, a Master in Chancery, new Trustees were appointed, and the scheme for the government of the School extended.

As sanctioned more than a hundred years before the above date, this scheme had precluded any dissenter from being a feoffee thereafter, or from acting or being anywise concerned in the government of the School. It directs that "for ever thereafter, upon letting a new lease or leases of the Charity lands, and premises, the Schoolmaster should have notice thereof, that he might be then and there present if he thought fit, to the intent that the best improvement might be made by fine and rent which could be got. All the tenants to pay their rents to the Schoolmaster, and also £4 per annum per acre for every acre of greensward ploughed or broken up without leave or consent of the Trustees in writing. Every Schoolmaster thereafter to be nominated and chosen, to be an orthodox Church of England man. When the Trustees are reduced by death to seven, a new conveyance to be made by those seven to themselves and eight others. Trustees to meet twice in the year, on the first Monday in March and first Monday in October, or oftener if occasion, at the schoolhouse, to inspect repairs of schoolhouse and examine into the proficiency of the scholars, and to make such orders relating to the School, Schoolmaster, and Charity, as should be agreed upon amongst them. The Trustees to receive and Schoolmaster to allow out of the fines, rents, and profits of the Charity lands, and premises, such reasonable charges as the Trustees should be put to in the execution of their trust as allowed by the major part. All orders and bye laws made by the Trustees to be presented from time to time to the Court of Chancery for their sanction."

In addition to these rules retained from the old foundation, it was provided in 1822, "That the

⁵ Nichols' Leicestershire.

Trustees should reside within fifteen miles of Kibworth Church. The master to teach reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic to the children residing in the parish of Kibworth, and also Latin to such children whose parents should desire or request the same. That the new Trustees, or a majority of them for the time being, should have the power to dismiss any Schoolmaster for the time being hereafter to be appointed, or any of the scholars of the said Charity for neglect of the said School or other improper conduct. Ten days' notice to be given by the Schoolmaster of any half-yearly meeting. Any one or more of the Trustees may call a special meeting, with ten days' notice of time and object. All orders and regulations at, such or any other general meeting, signed by a majority, to be valid and effectual. Expenses attending the management to be paid out of the yearly produce by direction of a majority of the Trustees for the time being. Trustees to regulate hours of attendance, number of holidays, and ages of admission."

The new Trustees appointed in 1822, in addition to the four above mentioned, were Sir John Henry Palmer, Bart., Sir Henry Halford, George Anthony Legh Keck, Esq., Robert Haymes, Esq., the Rev. James Ord, James Beresford, Frederick Apthorp, John Buckley, Thomas Thomas, John Benjamin Humfrey, Richard Goodman, James Morpott the younger, and John Marriott the younger.

They held their first meeting on July 31, 1822, when a vote of thanks to Mr. Cradock, for his zeal and attention in promoting the objects of the Charity, was unanimously agreed to. On August 6 it was resolved that five should be a quorum, the Chairman to have a casting vote. Mr. Breedon was appointed agent. £300 to be borrowed for payment of expenses in Chancery; £61. 3s. to be reserved annually from the estate for payment of interest and discharge of payment in five years.⁶

After this the meetings were at long intervals and the attendance scanty. On September 12, 1828, appears the first entry relating to the educational purposes of the School, when it was

resolved that the earliest age for admission of scholars should be seven years. Report was made by the under master of great laxity of attendance of the scholars. The upper master was instructed to warn parents that those who did not attend regularly would be dismissed from the School.

In 1836 Mr. Goodman, the master, died. Elected in 1805, at a period when the trust was at the lowest point of neglect, he had not been active in the discharge of his duty, nor does the new trust appear to have contemplated any interference with him, the authority given of dismissal for neglect applying only to masters *thereafter*. A new era was now to commence.

On April 4, 1836, it was resolved that the master be allowed to take private pupils, boarders, or otherwise. Those desirous of the office were requested to send in their testimonials, and with these, their several schemes of tuition, to the Rev. J. Beresford, the rector of Kibworth, on or before the 24th of the month.

On the 11th of May ten Trustees met in order to the election, the Rev. J. Beresford in the chair, Sir Gerard Noel, the Rev. T. Bateman, Sir John Palmer, J. Marriott, Esq., Rev. James Ord, Mr. Goodman, R. Haymes, Esq., Rev. F. Apthorp, J. B. Humfrey, Esq., when the Rev. J. B. Hildebrand (the present master) was elected.

His scheme of tuition sent in, in accordance with the request of the previous meeting, was as follows:

1. A competent assistant to be engaged.
2. The School to be divided into two departments - upper and lower - the former for classical instruction and general education; the latter for general education alone.

⁶ The present rents amount to a little more than £300 annually, gross amount.

3. Instruction in the Upper School: Greek, Latin, French, Italian, mathematics, English composition, arithmetic, writing, geography, and history.
4. Instruction in the Lower School: Reading, writing, arithmetic, mensuration, land surveying, and English grammar.
5. The Lower School to be free to all boys of the three townships, and if any parents should prefer for their children the course of education pursued in the Upper School, such wish to be complied with.
6. Day scholars and boarders to be received from the neighbourhood on payment.
7. As the assistant will be chosen and paid by the master, the latter undertakes the whole of the superintendency and responsibility of both departments.

The Trustees and the new master evidently designed on this occasion to extend the School, as well with regard to the number of scholars as to the instruction to be afforded, far beyond the circumscription of the trust deed; but, the above scheme is defective in not defining any relation between the privileged boys and the other contemplated scholars. The distinction between Upper and Lower School seems to relate to these two classes respectively without any reference to proficiency. It will be seen in the sequel that considerable difficulty arose from the want of a right understanding on these points.

At the next succeeding meetings (August 22 and 29, and October 6)⁷ measures were taken to put the house and premises in repair, which upon survey were found in a state of great dilapidation and almost ruin. £500 were borrowed for the purpose, and £50 per annum withheld to pay principal and interest. The estates to be examined, in order to their being let to the best advantage. £200 having been received from the Union Canal Company for land taken from the estate for their purposes, it was resolved that this sum should be laid out,

with the addition of £50 from Mr. Hildebrand, in erection of a farm-house close to the canal.

1838 passed without any meeting of Trustees for want of sufficient attendance. In October 1839 the new master asked permission and was allowed to divide the School in two, "one part for the Free School boys, and the other for his private pupils. The space reserved for the Free School boys being capable of receiving more than double the number of boys then attending the School. The five Trustees present expressing their full approbation of the able plan of education laid before them by the present master, and the excellent specimens produced of the progress of the scholars."

In October, 1840, five Trustees again expressed their approbation of specimens of writing and arithmetic, "trusting that their favourable opinion was confirmed by the increased and increasing number of scholars; a strong argument of the utility of this establishment in this neighbourhood." In October, 1841, approbation was again expressed of proficiency of Scholars. In 1842 there was no meeting of Trustees.

August 26, 1843. The number of Trustees having been reduced by death to seven, a special meeting was called for election of eight others to fill up the vacancies; six of the seven survivors were present, viz.: Sir J. Palmer, Sir H. Halford, J. B. Humfrey, Rev. F. Apthorp, Robert Haymes, and T. Marriott Esquires.⁸ The eight new ones elected were Sir E. C. Hartopp, Sir Arthur Hesilrigge, H. Halford, M.P., Hon. Henry Wilson, Henry Greene, Esq., Rev. R. Isham, Rev. Thos. C. Ord, Rev. W. Ricketts. The next meeting was in October, 1843, when nine Trustees being present the deed of conveyance was executed.

⁷ The date 1836 has been hand written note in the margin.

⁸ The initial T before the surname Marriott has been crossed out in the original and the name John written in the margin.

There was no meeting during 1844, nor in 1845, until October 22, when at a special meeting attended by six Trustees, the following letter was read, addressed to the Trustees.

Kibworth, 6th October, 1845.

Gentlemen,

As an inhabitant of the parish of Kibworth, I beg to apply to you for your opinion whether I am entitled to send my boys to the upper department of the Free School at Kibworth, free of expense. The school room having been divided into two departments at the election of the present Master. The Master having required of me £12 per annum for each boy I may send, if he is allowed to go into the upper department with the Master's private pupils.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your very obedient Servant⁹

The Trustees present did not think themselves competent to give a direct and immediate answer to this appeal, but an Act of Parliament having passed four years before for improving the condition and extending the benefit of Grammar Schools (3 and 4 Vict. c.77), with the professed object of affording means for these purposes at a diminished expense, they deemed it expedient to avail themselves of this Act.

Having examined the children educated in the *lower* school, they declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the education afforded them. They adjourned the meeting to November 3, for the purpose of taking into consideration the terms of reference as above, and the copy of resolutions relating to it were forwarded to each absent Trustee.

1845, November 3. There was a special meeting, five Trustees present. They were of opinion "that the sons of inhabitants of the three townships were entitled to instruction in

either department of the School free from expense - but having regard to the provisions of 3 and 4 Vic. c. 77, they propose to require that no boy shall be admitted to the upper department under ten years of age, unless he shall prove upon examination in the Latin Grammar, Delectus, Caesar, and Ovid, before the Trustees if required, and to their satisfaction, to be of such proficiency as to show his capacity to profit by the studies of that department."

The existing scheme was referred to the Court of Chancery, and instruction given to Mr. Wartnaby, solicitor to the Trust, with consent of the Master, to take the necessary steps for the proper sanction in order to the carrying into effect of the above resolution.

1847, April 9. There was no meeting, till one specially called, at this date, eight Trustees present, Hon. H. Wilson in the chair. Alarm was felt at the expense likely to be incurred by the attempted reference to the authorities, with regard to the object proposed as above, enquiry to be made whether the business could be carried further without serious expense.

1848, May 1. There having been no meeting at the regular periods, during this interval a special meeting was called for this date, at which seven Trustees attended. It was proposed that a petition embodying the principal facts relating to the School, with the amendments agreed on this day, be submitted to the Court of Chancery.

On October 2 there were only three Trustees present, and no regular meeting therefore, but a note is entered that a bill amounting to £55. 18s., on account of proceedings taken by Mr. Wartnaby, having been sent to Mr. Hildebrand, it seemed to the Trustees present that such bill should be examined prior to its discharge. Mr. Apthorpe and Mr. Marriott undertook to make such examination.

⁹ There is no name printed at the end of this letter but 'W Haymes, Surgeon' has been added in ink.

1849, October 1. There were only four present, but the business of the trust requiring attention, a special meeting was called for October 12, when six Trustees attended. They took into consideration two bills sent in by Mr. Wartnaby, amounting together to £62.15s.4d on account of proceedings in consequence of the resolution of November 3, 1845. The six Trustees directed that the same be defrayed from the produce of the Charity estates, but that Mr. Wartnaby be instructed to take no further steps in behalf of the Charity without communicating with the Trustees. Inconvenience having been felt from the difficulty of procuring attendance of five Trustees as required, August 6, 1822, three to be sufficient for the future.

1850, October 7. Five present. Number of scholars this day twenty-two. The attendance improved, the acquirements of the scholars satisfactory as far as the education required on their behalf admits.

1851, October 6. Four present. Have examined the work of the scholars and find it satisfactory.

1853, October 3. Three present. Copy-books approved, the writing creditable. Attendance in proportion to the number of scholars satisfactory.

1854, October 2. Four present. Number of boys in the School during the last half-year from thirty-five to forty-two; average age nine years, viz. six under eight, thirteen under ten, thirteen under twelve, and nine under fourteen.

1855, October 1. Five present. The Master reports improved attendance at the School, and their progress satisfactory; the number, forty-six during the past year.

1857, August 17. Six present. £186. 12s. paid for land taken by railway.

1857, October 5. Attendance at the School and progress reported satisfactory; number of boys aged fourteen and upwards, five; eleven and upwards, sixteen; ten, thirteen; under ten,

sixteen; total number, fifty. During the last year one had gone as pupil teacher, two to Mr. Fry to be further prepared for the same purpose, two apprenticed to trades, one has left the parish, and three have gone to the factory.

1858, October 4. The Master reports the attendance satisfactory; increase on last year of six.

1859, October 3. Report of attendance of scholars appears very satisfactory; number of fourteen years and upwards, two; from eleven to fourteen, twenty-two; ten to eleven, seven; under ten, twenty-seven; including five left during the year, sixty-three; three left to work in the field, one in the frame, one for the Cape as Schoolmaster.

1860, October 1. Boys admitted during the year, eleven; left, sixteen; now in the School, fifty-eight; between eight and ten, twenty; ten and twelve, twenty-nine; twelve and fourteen, nine. Many of the boys' copy-books examined and considered worthy of commendation - clean and neat.

1860. Present, Lord Berners, Sir H. Halford, J. Marriott, Esq., Henry Greene, R. Isham. Special Meeting to fill up the Trust. Had died since the last election, - Sir H. Halford, Rev. F. Apthorp, Rev. T. C. Ord, Rev. W. Ricketts, R. Haymes, Esq., G. A. L. Keck, Esq., Sir Edmund Hartopp, J. B. Humfrey, Esq. New Trustees, - Hon. H Littleton Powys, Henry St. John Halford, Rev. M. F. Osborn, Geoffrey Palmer, Esq., R. B. Humfrey, Esq., Arthur Haymes, Esq., Rev. Thomas James, Rev. W. Morpott Piercy.¹⁰

1861, October 7. Three present. Twenty-two schoolboys admitted during the year, and twenty-two had left, making fifty-eight who now attend; between eight and ten, twenty-seven; eleven and twelve, twenty; twelve and fifteen,

¹⁰ Two names have been crossed out in ink in the original. They are the Hon. H. Littleton Powys, and the Rev. Thomas James.

eleven. "The Trustees from the evidence of the copy-books laid before them consider that the instruction afforded to the boys is of a satisfactory character, but they regret that the Master has occasion to complain of the irregular attendance of some of them."

1862, October 6. Seven present. Number of scholars for the year ending this day distinguishing those on the foundation from the boarders and day scholars not on the foundation. Foundation boys, thirty-five; average age, eleven years. Boarders and pay boys not on the foundation, twenty-four; average age, twelve. Total, fifty-nine. Report of attendance of scholars more favourable than at the last meeting. (This is the first occasion of a distinction made between the Free Scholars and those not on the Foundation.)

1863, October 5. Six present. Total attendance of scholars for the past year, sixty-nine (fifty-nine for 1862). Number of free boys, forty; strangers, twenty-nine. Average age of free boys, ten and a half years; strangers, twelve and a quarter. "The Trustees observe that the proportion of scholars not within the privileges of the School has increased considerably of late. They regard this circumstance with satisfaction as evidence of the value set upon the instruction given in the school, but they desire to remind Mr. Hildebrand that the free scholars are entitled in the first place to his attention."

1864, October 3. Seven present. Number of free boys, forty-nine; stranger, one;¹¹ land-owners' sons, none; farmers', four; tradesmen's, fourteen; labourers', thirty-two; total, 50. The Trustees are gratified to observe an increase of numbers, and desire to express their satisfaction with the general condition of the School. They think that in future at the Annual Meeting in October, a report should be prepared and laid before them of the attainments and progress of the scholars after an examination by some competent person to be selected annually by the Chairman of the preceding year. The period of such examination to be fixed after communicating with the Master.

1865, May 18. A special meeting was held to furnish answers to the enquiries from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Enquiry into the condition of Schools of this description. The chairman of the preceding year took the opportunity of informing the Trustees present that a complaint and statement with regard to the instruction of two of the scholars had been sent to him a few weeks before. He had thereupon thought it incumbent on him in pursuance of the resolution of October 3, 1864, to procure without further delay an examination of the attainments and progress of the scholars. For this purpose he was glad to have obtained the good offices of the Rev. Mr. Romanis, of Great Wigston, than whom a more competent person, from his high character and experience in tuition, could not be selected.

The examination took place on April 27, 1865, and it was thought desirable to take the opportunity of this special meeting to lay the result before the Trustees present rather than defer it to the general meeting in October next, as well for their immediate information, as because having reason to expect shortly a visit from Her Majesty's Commissioners, it would be convenient to afford them the fullest assistance in our power with regard to the objects of their enquiry in connection with this School.

Mr. Romanis's Report:

To the Trustees of the Kibworth Grammar School

Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you a Report of an examination of the boys of the Kibworth Grammar School, held on Thursday, April 27, 1865.

¹¹ The Assistant Master, by means of whom many private pupils had become connected with the School, had, in consequence of the resolution of October, 1863, broken off all connection with it, hence the withdrawal of the strangers. The reason being, I believe, that the parents of his private pupils were repelled by that resolution.

The subjects of examination were as follows:-

First Class. Reading: Old and New Testament and History of England.

Spelling: Viva voce and by dictation.

Writing, Arithmetic, Elementary Rules (simple and compound), Simple Proportion, Practice, Elementary English Grammar, Geography, Apostles' Creed and Ten Commandments, and New Testament History.

Second Class. Reading, Old and New Testaments, Writing, Spelling, Arithmetic, Elementary Rules, Simple and Compound Tables.

Third Class. Reading, New Testament, Writing (on slates only). Spelling, Arithmetic, Elementary Rules (simple only). Multiplication Table.

The results of examination were as follows:-

First Class. Reading, good. All read well, some very well. The answers to questions as to the meaning of words occurring in the passages read were on the whole well given.

Spelling, good. Of thirty-five words proposed viva voce, all were correctly spelt, and the great majority at once, by the boys to whom they were proposed, without being passed on. A short piece of dictation was done very well by five out of eight boys, fairly well by two, badly only by one.

Writing, good, both in the copy books examined and when done before me, first on slates and afterwards on paper without lines.

Arithmetic: Of five sums proposed, one in Compound Division, two in Reduction, one in Proportion, one in Practice, one boy did all, six boys did four, one boy two.

English Grammar: A few simple questions were fairly answered.

Geography: A few simple questions were fairly answered. Some questions on common facts of England, on produce, manufactures, and government were very intelligently answered.

Creed, Ten Commandments, and New Testament: fairly good in most cases.

Second Class. Reading, good on the whole.

Spelling: The Lord's Prayer and Fifth Commandment were written down from memory without mistakes by half the class. (I unintentionally omitted to hear the second class spell viva voce. My impression is that several of the boys in it would have done very well.)

Writing, good, both in the copy-books examined and when done before me on slates.

Arithmetic: Of seven sums proposed, three boys did all, four boys did six, three did five, three did four, two did three, one only failed to do any.

Tables: Questions in Multiplication Table and Money¹² Tables were fairly answered.

Third Class. Reading, good in eleven cases. Spelling, viva voce, good on the whole. Writing on slates, good. Arithmetic: very simple sums in Addition, Subtraction, and Multiplication, eleven boys did all, two boys did two, one did one, four failed to do any. Tables: Questions in the Multiplication Table fairly answered.

From the above statements of the results of examination it will be seen that I regard the attainments of the boys as indicative of careful and efficient teaching of an elementary character. I may add that the behaviour of the boys during examination gave me a favourable impression of the order and discipline of the School.

The First Class does better relatively to the ages of the boys in it than the other two.

I beg to bring before the notice of the Trustees the want of suitable reading books. The Bible is the chief reading book in the School and the only one for the two lower classes, an arrangement open to obvious objections.

¹² The printed text gives this word as 'Memory' but this has been crossed out and the word 'Money' written above it in ink.

I think, too, that the assistance at least of a pupil teacher or monitor is necessary for the master to do justice to the number of boys in attendance.

I have the honour to be,
Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
William Romanis, M.A.
Wigston Magna Vicarage, Leicester.

The Trustees present observed:

"Mr. Romanis in this report bears testimony to the ability and efficiency of the teacher of the School as far as the instruction he professes to communicate extends. This instruction, however, is no more than might be expected from an ordinary parochial School, and is certainly very far below such as might be expected from a liberal educational endowment, managed by a special body of Trustees upon a scheme sanctioned by the Court of Chancery, with a clergyman of the Church of England having no other duty to perform for Master."

But upon a fair consideration, perhaps, no great degree of blame will be found to attach to any person connected with the School for its inadequate condition at present. Some mistakes of management there have undoubtedly been, for which the Trustees must share the responsibility with the Master; but there have been depressing circumstances which neither of these could anticipate nor control.

The School ought undoubtedly to be available to those residing within the district, for the benefit of which it was established, for carrying on the work of instruction to a higher degree than can be shared by those who look to no future but that of a life of bodily industry, and the rather, because for these a parochial School was founded some years ago and a schoolhouse built in the immediate neighbourhood of the Free School at Kibworth, and there is another parochial School also at Smeeton. These Schools might have been expected to prove

useful subsidiaries to the Grammar School by affording such preliminary instruction in the early stage of childhood as would enable the recipients to profit afterwards by their free admission to the Grammar School; but the result has been otherwise, the owners of property within the district appearing to have considered themselves exempted by possession of an endowed School from contribution for the purposes of parochial education, and thus the parochial Schools have become little other than Schools for girls, supported chiefly at the expense of the rector. The poorer inhabitants meanwhile, finding a certain small payment necessary for admission to the parochial Schools, while such is not the case with regard to the Grammar School, many of them send their boys in preference to the latter, where they can claim free admission at seven years of age, and without preliminary examination, so that the teaching power of this School is now absorbed in the communication of the first rudiments to young children.

Up to a recent period there was instruction of a higher character afforded in the Grammar School. Mr. Hildebrand's scheme on his first accession to the office of Schoolmaster in 1836, comprised a course of education equal to that of the first public Schools in the kingdom.

The School was to consist of two divisions, upper and lower, and at his request, and with the sanction of the Trustees, a partition was erected in the schoolroom admitting space enough for either in two apartments. A defect, however, which does not appear to have been noticed at the time, presents itself in the scheme then adopted. The term upper and lower applied to the Schools did not denote degrees of proficiency, but were applied to distinguish the private pupils of the master from the free boys; the upper School not being accessible to the latter, nor without payment.

In October, 1845, an appeal was made upon this subject to the Trustees by a Gentleman residing at Kibworth, who desired a free education for his sons in the upper School.

The Trustees having before them an Act of Parliament passed shortly before, with the proposed object of affording means of improving the condition and extending the benefit of Grammar Schools at a diminished expense, thought they might prudently avail themselves of such means on the point in question, and for some other modifications of the scheme under which they were acting, but upon taking some preliminary steps for purpose, they shortly found that however the expense of an application to the Court of Chancery might be comparatively diminished, it was likely still to prove much greater than they should be justified in incurring from the funds of the Charity; and they were glad to drop further proceedings.

The recent appointment of the Schools Enquiry Commission affords them new hope of assistance in effecting the objects of their trust, and of bringing the Kibworth School to its proper use and condition. In order to this, and with desire of ready co-operation with the Commission, they are prepared to offer such information with regard to facts, as their means of local information enable them to supply, and to add such suggestions for improvement as appear to them suitable to the circumstances of the case.

1. They think that the age for admission might be beneficially extended from seven years to an age somewhat more advanced.¹³
2. That the privilege of free education in the School should be extended to the district comprised within five miles of the schoolhouse.¹⁴
3. That none should be admitted who should prove on examination deficient in the first rudiments.
4. That the master should continue to be allowed to take scholars on his own account from a distance.

5. That there should be no exclusion from the upper School of free boys of sufficient proficiency to profit by the studies of that department.

6. That the instruction in the upper School should be such as to afford to those capable of availing themselves of it, the means of pursuing a mercantile or professional career.

7. That a pecuniary payment should be required from the free boys on admission either to the upper or lower School, to form a fund for the supply of books and stationery.

Signed by six Trustees.

H.H.



A hand-written section added below this:

14th Sept. 1868: 8 Trustees Present. To draw up an Advertisement for a Master vice Hildebrand deceased.

16th Oct. 1868: 6 Trustees Present. 108 Candidates - 5 of whom are selected to meet the Trustees on Wednesday 26th of October.



Note added by the transcriber:

Robert Isham was licensed to the Curacy of Fleckney, 1834. He became Rector of Shangton in 1833. Curate of Stonton Wyville, 1837. Rector of Lamport, 1845. He was a JP and Chairman of the Brixworth Board of Guardians. He died in 1890.

¹³ Hand-written note "8 years".

¹⁴ The word 'Yes' has been hand-written beside this entry.