

THE HISTORY OF NEWCHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL (PART 11)

1701 - 1913

BY

M.B. ORMEROD

(REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION)

The Government of School

The old practice of appointing certain persons as trustees to be succeeded by their heirs led to many troubles in the administration of charities. The original trustees were the three most substantial landowners in the immediate vicinity of Boothfold. Within fifty years, the direct lines of at least two of those three were extinguished and their heirs were not resident in Rossendale. Consequently, in 1752 new statutes were drawn up, increasing the number of trustees to six, which had to include the incumbent of Newchurch, if resident. They were to meet annually and appoint one of themselves to be steward for the year. He had to collect the rents and pay the master's salary. In choosing a new master, they should find one well versed in English and the rudiments of the Latin tongue, expert in writing and accounts, of good conversation and firmly attached to the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the kingdom. He had to give a bond of £500 for his good behaviour and obedience to the statutes. If the master was unable to teach by reason of age or other infirmity, the trustees should allow him half the yearly salary and employ the other half to pay a teacher in his place. The master had also to attend his scholars in the church at all times of divine service and had to instruct them in the Christian religion as contained in the church catechism. Here we see the Established Church getting a grip on a foundation originally purely secular.

The scholars were to receive free tuition in English and the rudiments of Latin, having first learnt their letters at a dame's school. They had to present the master with not above half a crown, nor under sixpence on the first Mondays after Epiphany and Midsummer. They had to pay him a shilling on entry and twopence each year at Michaelmas for mending the school windows!

There seem to be three points worthy of note about these statutes. The trustees were now the self-perpetuating oligarchy so typical of the eighteenth century. When one died, the remained elected someone else in his place. The charging of fees is foreshadowed. This became the practice at some uncertain date between 1752 and the first report of the Charity Commissioners in 1826, since the income of the foundation - about £11 per annum at the time - was insufficient to support even a schoolmaster.

The introduction of a religious bias was particularly unfortunate in a place like Rossendale, where Dissent was strong and growing. Not only did it reduce the master's possible income in fees, but it put up a bar to the interest of a section of the community which was at the time intellectually and economically vigorous and which held education in great respect. Indeed it was the Dissenters who, during that very period, founded the academics at which it was possible to obtain the best education in England at that time.

Little else seems to be known about the curriculum of the School until the middle of the nineteenth century, when a vivid light is thrown on it by two handbills which are printed with this article.

As we shall see later, Mr. Matthias Stephenson was not the sort of man to hide his light under a bushel, but the main reason for the issue of these two documents seems to be the fact that the School was feeling the competition of private schools in the vicinity and there is the bitterness of financial rivalry in the denunciation of "unqualified and superficial pretenders".

The laconic footnote "No extra charge for Latin and Greek", so painful to the Classic Department, undoubtedly arose from the need to comply with the terms of the original foundation.

The state of affairs thus illuminated was not uncommon at the time. The traditional curriculum of grammar schools was designed to give pupils the linguistic equipment to cope with further education at the ancient universities when it was conducted in Latin. It was totally unsuited to a generation the majority of whom were destined to be occupied in running the new world brought about by the industrial revolution. The public appreciated this more quickly than the traditional educators and private academies grew up to cater for their demands. Some grammar schools were so well-endowed as to be able to ignore the pressure to modify the education they gave and to draw their emoluments for teaching classes which sometimes shrank to one pupil. The others had either to close their doors for lack of fees or to adapt their curriculum in order to meet the demands of the new age. The importance of these documents lies in their illustration of this last process at the Newchurch Grammar School. By 1892 it had gone a stage further and we find that the School possessed a Chemistry master of all things! O! *Quae mutatio rerum!*

In the early 1860's, girls were being educated alongside boys and the bias towards the doctrines of the Established Church was so much in abeyance that a Baptist minister sent one of his daughters there for the earlier part of her education, and lo ! religious principle and masculine superiority were both in flight, together with Latin and Greek, in face of the economic necessity of the master.

Obviously this sort of thing could not be allowed to continue and in 1867 a new scheme of government was drawn up by the charity Commissioners. This essentially continued the system established in 1752 except that now trustees were limited to those with property in the township of more than £100 per annum. It was laid down that the headmaster should be a member of the Church of England and a graduate of one English University or of Trinity College, Dublin. Religious instruction should be in accordance with the doctrines of the Established Church, but a conscience clause was introduced. Boys (only!) between the ages of seven and seventeen should be admitted and secular instruction should be in Latin and Greek, Mathematics and English subjects and, at special fees, in French, German, Drawing, Surveying and Natural Sciences. Three years before, the Schools Inquiry Commission had recorded that the education was commercial and to some extent classical, with twenty out of forty scholars taking Latin and four taking Greek, few were staying beyond the age of fourteen. The headmaster was drawing £48 *per annum*. from the foundation and £120 from fees. In 1854 there had been an assistant master, but in 1864 there were insufficient funds for any help but that of a pupil-teacher.

The School seems to have been in rather a low state for the next thirteen years, from the remarks made in the first extant register which was started in 1880 by a new master, Rev. Hubert Edwards Chapman, who claimed that he completely reorganised the School. Certainly, the new register started at that date only contained the names of ten pupils.

A new constitution of government was drawn up by the Charity Commissioners in 1890. This augmented the previous trustees, now known as Co-operative Governors, by addition of six other people, distinguished from them by the title of Representative Governors - two from the Town Council of Rawtenstall, two from the Town Council of Bacup, a representative of the School Board of Rawtenstall and a representative for the Council of the University of Manchester.

In a prospectus issued in the later 1890's, care is taken to make clear that "Religious Instruction is confined to a careful study of the Bible. This prospectus states that:

The course of instruction given is intended to provide a liberal education adapted to the needs of a commercial district. It includes:-

The Bible	History
Latin	Geography
Greek (if desired)	English Language & Literature
French	English Composition
German	Chemistry (Theoretical & Practical)
Mathematics	Drawing, Book-keeping etc.

Under the last headmaster, Mr. T.E. Jackson, the School grew and flourished and, by the time of its closure, was becoming overcrowded. At the time of the issue of the prospectus there were four full time staff including the headmaster and Mrs. Martin, who ran the preparatory department, with part time teachers of Chemistry and Music, together with the inevitable Sergeant Major in charge of "drill and gymnastics." By 1913 there were six full time members of staff besides the headmaster. The growth of the school during this period can be ascribed to the ability and character of Mr. Jackson and his staff, the increasing recognition of the importance of education by parents and the avoidance of anything in the curriculum which would give offence to non-conformists, so that the school was freely supported by them.

(Part III of this history of Newchurch Grammar School will appear in the next edition of the BRGS Associate)

Following on from our article on Newchurch Grammar School we have three personal recollections on life at Newchurch Grammar School around the time when Newchurch Grammar School transferred to Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School.

My recollections of the one year 1913 to 14 which I spent at Bacup and Rawtenstall Secondary School, as it was then known, are naturally somewhat hazy but a few items stand out which may possibly be of interest.

One innovation was the singing of a hymn each morning at the opening of school. The headmaster, T.E. Jackson or 'Jacky', as he was known to us boys, was a staunch member of the Church of England and introduced a hymn book which was unfamiliar to a large number of pupils, the majority of whom probably came from nonconformist families in the valley, whilst the tunes were evens stranger. In consequence the first effort at singing a hymn produced a sadly cacophonous result!

I don't know how many pupils attended during that first year; as far as I can remember we had about one hundred boys at the old Grammar School, who with the usual additions and minus some 'leavers' transferred to the new school.

I have no idea how many girls came from the Pupil Teachers' centre at Waterfoot but I have the impression that there were far fewer girls than boys at the start.

The teacher who impressed me most was E.H. Holden; I often regretted that I hadn't been taught by him for a year or two more. He had the ability to impress essential facts on his pupils and was skilful in presenting lecture theatre experiments which were easily remembered even if not always exactly as planned. He was very fond of demonstrating gas explosions for which he normally used a pear shaped gas explosion bottle. I well remember his preparing a mixture of methane and air (or oxygen) in the bottle, standing it on the bench with its stopper in, and then saying to the class, 'Riley will now apply a light'. When he removed the stopper I applied the lighted taper and - nothing happened. I must have smiled because he said 'Come now, Riley, let us all share the joke'. When I assured him that there was no joke he sent me back to my seat and told me to stay and see him after the lesson was over, 'and', he added, 'you will discover in time that even great chemists sometimes make mistakes'. When I saw him later I explained to him about my fear of explosions and that if I smiled when the methane failed to explode it was probably the result of my relief. He never asked me to take part in another one!

T.E. Jackson was quite a character, a bachelor who lived, with his sister in the school house adjacent to the school at Newchurch. When new paying pupils were expected he would interview the parents and took care to advise them about arrangements for lunch which he and Miss Jackson provided as Jacky explained 'in a Christian manner', that is to say, inclusive of the saying of grace. He would add that the less well to do boys brought sandwiches which they could eat at the homes of local residents, washed down with tea, provided for a modest sum. There were also one or two pastry cooks in the vicinity who provided hot lunches for a small number of pupils. I frequented one at the bottom of the Turnpike where I paid sevenpence a day. At the new school I seem to recall that we could bring sandwiches and have tea prepared or even meat and potato pies for warming in the oven. I think the dining room and kitchen (upstairs) were in charge of a Mrs Tricett, presumably the caretaker's wife, a motherly soul who was obviously fond of children.

Jacky was quite a disciplinarian and perhaps it was just as well. On the rare occasions when he wielded the can at NGS it was quite a performance. The ceremony was normally carried out before the whole school immediately after morning prayers. The cane was a thin flexible one which he always tested, presumably for soundness by flexing it prior to using it, before administering four, (or six) of the best across the hand of the culprit. He stood in a military posture with his chin out. He would then fling the cane away in the direction of the door a signal for the head boy to collect it and return it to the Head's study.

R. RILEY

NEWCHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

I attended this school during the years 1903, 1904 and 1905. My information is restricted to those years.

During the first two of my years at the school, the number of boys attending was a few over 100. Towards the end of my time at the school the number of boys was reduced to less than 100 for reasons mentioned later in these notes. The most usual age for boys to begin at the school was 11 or 12, but the school was prepared to accept boys at 8 years of age. School fees were payable which I think were £10 a year plus the cost of books.

About 20 boys at the school were from Haslingden and the remainder from Rawtenstall and Bacup. The figures are misleading as at that time quite a number of boys and girls from Haslingden attended what was then known as Accrington Technical School and later became known as Accrington Grammar School. During the later part of my time at the Newchurch School the number of boys at that school was reduced to below 100, the reason being that about that time a new school known as Haslingden Municipal Secondary School (later Haslingden Grammar School) was opened and Haslingden boys who would otherwise have attended Newchurch Grammar School became scholars at the Haslingden School.

The Haslingden contingent to the Newchurch School had to travel about 4-5 miles to go to school. The only means of public transport was the steam tram which could take a boy to Waterfoot, not Newchurch, leaving a considerable walk to school at Newchurch. Some of the boys from Haslingden regularly walked all the way to school each morning except in very bad weathers. Others travelled by train to Rawtenstall and from there walked to Newchurch. Boys going to school had to pay their own travelling expenses, but were allowed to travel half-fare on the tram.

The school hours were 9.00 - 12.30 in the morning and 1.45 to 3.45 in the afternoon. At 9.00 and 1.45 the boys were summoned into school by the ringing of the large bell rung by a bellrope inside. Each form (except forms I & II the young boys) had to attend a physical training class in the school gymnasium once a week from 3.45 to 4.45.

The school building was not a large one. One got something of the atmosphere of earlier days from the names of the roads adjoining the building - one was Turnpike another Bridleway. The accommodation in the school consists of:

1. the main room in which all scholars and staff assembled for prayers and a scripture reading each morning and on other occasions which required all to assemble together;
2. a room known as the headmasters room, but it was not the sanctum which I expect headmasters have nowadays as it was also frequently used as a classroom for lessons;
3. a room occupied by forms I & II, the younger boys;
4. a laboratory for science lessons;
5. a very small room known as the porch room which was used for lessons but was really a porch forming the never-use main entrance to the school and
6. the school gymnasium, a separate building adjoining the school yard, single storey, but of considerable height. The main room (no 1) could be divided into two by drawing a partition which was drawn each morning after prayers to form two class rooms. There was a reasonable sized school yard.

In addition to the usual 3R's, the subjects taught at the school were English, history, geography, Latin, French, geometry, algebra, science and religious knowledge. Each boy was expected to do a reasonable amount of homework. It was normal that at the end of the first year of a boy who entered the school at 12 or 13 years of age, he was expected to sit for an examination known as Cambridge Preliminary Local Examination, at the end of the second year for the examination known as Cambridge Junior and at the end of his 3rd year for the examination known as Cambridge Senior examination.

Boys were encouraged to take part in sports. There was a football team which had engagements with other local junior teams in a field near St. Nicholas' school. Once a year during the summer term, there was a sports day when the boys competed in items of racing, jumping etc. also on a field near the Church.

School punishments consisted of detention after the usual school hours, writing 'lines' and on very rare occasions physical punishment.

It was usual during each term to allow two or perhaps three half-day holidays not on any particular dates, if something of local or national interest occurred that probably settled the date. if no such event occurred, the head boy of the school had to ask the headmaster for the holiday and explain why he thought the boys deserved one. I never knew an occasion when the request was refused.

GEORGE WALMSLEY



Leslie Stocks writes of the transition from Newchurch Grammar School to BRGS.

On the 10th January 1913, I was due to enter Newchurch Grammar School as a new boy. The very thought of it was frightening, but to make my entrance easier, my father has arranged for me to be taken by Ernest Pilling, who was well established there. On reaching the bottom of Turnpike, Ernest Pilling informed me "The school's up there on the right-hand side. I'm going to Burnley, there's a football match there this afternoon". So, wearing my new cap - as worn by all Newchurch Grammar School boys, and a new suit, and carrying a new ruler and a new pencil, I had to face the school on my own.

After morning prayers, I found myself in form one, sitting at the end of the front row with Alec Hoyle, the only other new boy to arrive that term. Immediately behind me sat a boy named Schofield, who once the lesson had started, leaned over and asked to borrow my ruler, which came back to me broken into three pieces. In the next lesson he asked to borrow my pencil, but I refused to hand this over, later in the morning he managed to get hold of it, and broke this also.

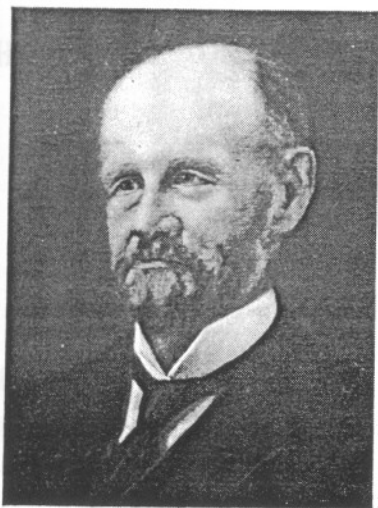
It had been arranged that I should take my lunch at the Headmaster's house, where I eventually arrived, along with twenty other boys who took lunch there at that time. The lunch was quite the best part of the day, and the boiled suet pudding was really excellent. It came as quite a surprise to me, as I had previously only known rice pudding, and was aware that there was such a thing as marmalade roll. After lunch we made our way back to school yard, where the new boys were seized upon, to be ducked in the cloakroom wash basins. The other new boy however, lived opposite to the school, and knew what the customs were, so he very wisely did not return until the bell rang for classes to begin. Unfortunately I had not this advantage, and was seized upon and ducked in the very deep washbasin, after which I sat all afternoon with a wet linen Eton collar clinging to my neck. All in all it was a miserable day, and when I reached home I announced that I was not going back there any more. This statement did not carry much weight, and I went back and eventually settled down, and on looking back on those days I believe I enjoyed myself very much indeed.

T.E. Jackson was the Head, and a good one into the bargain. He was always fair, and understood boys and the tricks they got up to. He was affectionately known to the boys as 'Johnnie'. Many a cold day would see him out in the playground during the break flourishing a cane, with which he could chase us round, and anyone coming within his reach would be hit with some considerable force, which we thought was great fun.

The form mistress for forms one and two was Mrs. Martin, an ideal person for the job, and very much liked by small boys. Her husband tried to teach us art, and had a habit of flicking the back of one's ear with his finger and thumb, a rather unpleasant punishment, the sting of which would last all afternoon. Whilst I was at school, I always understood that Mr. Martin's nickname was 'Old Screw', but on thinking about it since, I have come to the conclusion that it was probably 'Old Scrooge'. He was certainly rather a frightening character to a small boy.

We had a terrible football field, opposite Newchurch Church, which was used for both football and cricket. We used to practice cricket during the dinner-hour. On one such occasions, Rennie Swire hit a ball onto the bowling green of the Boars Head, where Jimmie Radge, a well known character in Newchurch, was leaning on the wall. We younger ones were sent round to collect the ball, but were told by Jimmie Radge that he had it, and that we were not going to get it back, whereupon all the boys trailed round and into the tap room of the Boars Head. I suppose there would be 30 or 40 of us, and the biggest boy in the sixth form, asked for the ball and was refused, so he took off his jacket and there was a first class fight. We afterwards returned to our game, but upon reaching the field we found the church clock showed 2.45, and afternoon school started at two, and as there were only ninety boys in the whole of the school, we could well imagine that our absence was readily noticeable. Obviously the sound of the school bell, which was pulled by a rope, had been drowned by the noise of the fight.

The prospect of leaving Newchurch, and being transferred to the new school at Waterfoot did not appeal to me very much, as I had come to enjoy the life at Newchurch very much indeed. Furthermore, we viewed with a certain amount of apprehension the thought of being in the same school as the girls.



MR. T.E. JACKSON

**HEADMASTER OF
NEWCHURCH GRAMMAR
SCHOOL 1892 - 1913**

**HEADMASTER OF BACUP &
RAWTENSTALL GRAMMAR
SCHOOL 1913 - 1921**

MR. E.H. HOLDEN

**HEADMASTER OF BACUP &
RAWTENSTALL GRAMMAR
SCHOOL 1921 - 1948**

