The History of

SIR THOMAS RICH'S SCHOOL

Gloucester

By

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PREFACE

The following pages, an extended essay on the three hundred years of the life of Sir Thomas Rich's School, attempt to give an account of its development and growth, through periods of dearth and prosperity, to its present flourishing state. Time and the necessities of a school master's life have prevented the author from doing much he would like to have done to set the story more clearly in the City which the School has served for so long. The proportion of prominent citizens who received their education at Rich's must be considerable and it would be interesting to trace the careers of some of these. Perhaps another author and a later centenary will see this done!

However, I believe this account gives a faithful picture of the main stages in the School's history, and, while I accept full responsibility for all matters of interpretation or errors of fact, I gladly acknowledge the help of a number of people without whom this volume would never have been produced.

Pride of place must go to Mr. A. Parrott and the staff of the City Library, the custodians of the School's records, for their unfailing help, courtesy and interest. Mr. Parrott, the father of an Old Richian, gave me much personal help and himself did research into the Council's minute books.

Mr. Stanley Jones, an Old Richian, generously put at my disposal a considerable amount of material he had obtained from the Council minute books and elsewhere, and also did research in London into the life of Sir Thomas Rich.

Mr. H. H. Jones, of the Town Clerk's Department, produced the Council minute books on numerous occasions and found me a room in which to work.

Mr. E. A. Croper, the deputy Education Officer, provided useful information about the controversies of the nineteen-thirties.

Mr. W. J. Veale wrote notes on the period when he was Head Master.

Mr. D. G. Price gave information about his father, formerly Head Master in the School.

Various Old Boys have provided reminiscences.

My wife spent countless hours copying extracts from documents, many of which were subsequently not incorporated in this volume or were greatly condensed.

The staff of Gloster Design Services are responsible for the lay-out and production of this volume and the fine photography that is such a marked feature of it.

To all concerned my warmest thanks.

This Volume contains no lists of 'Distinguished Old Boys' or 'Honours Won'. Such distinctions seem to me to be invidious and, in any case, can never be complete. The School must stand or fall by the totality of its output.

D.J.W.

FORWARD BY THE HEAD MASTER

In this, its Tercentenary year, Sir Thomas Rich's School looks back with great pride and satisfaction on a long and interesting past. The generosity of its Founder and of other benefactors has enabled this community to establish itself through many generations in the academic, cultural and social life of the City of Gloucester. In more recent times, successive Education Acts, implemented generously by the Local Education Authority, have given the school the opportunity to extend its influence over an ever-increasing section of the population.

In Its two homes on the site of the Guildhall, in the scattered and ill-equipped premises off Barton Street and, since May 1964, in its new situation on the playing fields at Elmbridge, the school has occupied a warm place in the affections of the city. This has been reflected clearly in the raising of £20,000 by parents, masters, boys, Old Boys and friends of the school so that the three-hundredth anniversary might be fittingly celebrated.

This book tells the fascinating story of the school's changes of fortune, typical of so many of the sixty Blue Coat Schools which played their part in an education system in which everything once depended upon the private resources and personal initiative of men like Rich.

We are greatly indebted to its author, Mr. David J. Watkins, the present Senior History Master, for the love and devotion which have gone into its pages. Assisted in its compilation and production by Mr. A. J. I. Parrott, the City Librarian, and Mr. E. J. Pritchard, the Secretary of the Tercentenary Appeal, he has produced a memento worth of this great anniversary. May all who read its pages share our respect for all the great and generous men and women of our city and county who have given of their time and talents so that the boys passing through "Tommy's" might there be trained, enriched and inspired for life.

May those of us who remember and honour them in 1966, in the words of our motto, "keep faith" with them!

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CHAPTER I

ORIGINS

In the middle of the Seventeenth Century Gloucester was a busy market town, easily the most important in the county after Bristol, being the natural centre for the trade of the fertile lands around. This trade in turn gave rise to many small manufacturing and processing concerns, amongst which was the rapidly growing pin-making industry, soon to over-shadow the others. The days of Gloucester's greatness were past, but it still retained many privileges granted by Royal Charters in form times, such as those which put its freemen and its markets on the same footing as those in London and Winchester. The main business of the city was carried on within the cramped limits of those walls which had played an important part in the successful defiance of Charles I's attempts to capture this vital point in 1643, and thus open the way for a decisive thrust on London by the Royalist forces of the west country. The narrow coterie of 'city fathers' ruled affairs by decisions taken at the Tolsey, situated at the Cross in the very centre of the city, where a tailor's shop now stands. Amongst these was one Thomas Rich, a mercer, in comfortable circumstances, who was a country gentleman with an estate in Worcestershire as well as a burgess of the city, owning a large house in the busy thoroughfare of Eastgate Street, opposite the barley market. He served the city as Sheriff for four years and as Mayor for one term, 1603-04. He was not, however, without his enemies, who accused him before Star Chamber of bribery in obtaining the Chief Magistracy, and of using the office for gain. He sold to the city a large number of shrouds for victims of the plague, but many of these shrouds proved to be too short and all were expensive! To this man and his wife was born a son, Thomas, whose name appears in the baptismal register of St. John the Baptist Church, Northgate[1], on the 9th August, 1601. This infant was the founder of the school.

[1] The gold communion plate still used on special occasions was given to the Church by Thomas and Ann Rich.

The young Thomas was educated in London, passed on to Wadham College, Oxford, where he matriculated at the age of seventeen, and then entered the world of commerce. Here he was most successful, becoming a Liveryman of the Vintners' Company and an Alderman of the City of London. His rapid increase in wealth was reflected in the purchase of a large estate at Sonning, in Berkshire, of which place he became Lord of the manor. Ancient tradition says that he made his fortune by trade with Turkey, but documentary evidence for this is lacking, and it might seem unlikely that a vintner would be trading in this area[2]. His shrewdness in business was probably matched by some political acumen, for he does not appear to have suffered during the Commonwealth period. Indeed, in spite of his strong Royalist sympathies, which showed themselves in the shelter he gave to the deprived Bishop of Exeter and other Anglican clergy and in financial aid to the exiled monarch, he was nevertheless appointed Sheriff of Berkshire while Cromwell was still in power. Then on the restoration of Charles II he was elected Member of Parliament for Reading, and shortly afterwards his support for the monarch was rewarded by a baronetcy, which must have been a great satisfaction to his Royalist soul.

That he disapproved of the Puritan point of view is obvious, being shown by his insistence that the boys to be apprenticed under his benefactions should go to masters 'not adhering to the novelties of the times'. He also bequeathed money for the support of an orthodox minister at St. Andrew Undershaft to say Morning Prayer according to the Prayer Book – another anti-Puritan measure. But he cannot have been completely unaffected by the religious, social and intellectual ferment of the period and the consequent influence of this upon education. Perhaps, too, he was worried by his experiences with his own apprentices, for he seems to have had a particular care for the children of the poor, whom he wished to see apprenticed to suitable masters in London. For this purpose he made bequests in Sonning and Reading as well as Gloucester in his will, dated 16th May, 1666, less than eighteen months before his death. But it was for his native city, which had hastily made peace with the restored monarch, that he had his chief concern. Here was to be

[2] He might possibly have been a member of the Levant Company, which traded in malmsey wine with the Turks.

Sir Thomas Rich

erected the lasting monument to his name. The terms of the will make his intentions clear.

> 'I give and bequeath unto the Mayor and Burgesses of the County and of the City of Gloucester where I was born ……
> and unto their successors forever. All that my capital messuage of tenement with the appurtenances in the Eastgate street near the Barley Market in the said City of Gloucester to be an hospital and to be only employed by them as an hospital for ever for the entertainment and harbouring of so many blue coats poor boys therein as hereafter in and by this my will are expressed.'

The school or 'hospital', to use the regular Seventeenth Century name for an establishment of this nature, was thus to be settled in the Rich family house, then occupied on lease by a Mr. Robert Elmes, whose interest in the property was subsequently bought in by the Gloucester Corporation for one hundred pounds.

The will then proceeded to endow the new hospital in a most liberal way.

> 'I also give unto the said Mayor and Burgesses ……
> the sum of six thousand pounds of lawful monies of England to be laid out and disbursed by them with all convenient speed in and for the purchasing of the inheritance of certain lands to them and their successors for evermore that shall be of the yearly value of three hundred pounds or upwards and which shall not be distant from the said City of Gloucester above fifty miles upon trust only and unto and upon the uses following ……

The 'uses following' on which the three hundred pounds per annum were to be spent were then put down in detail. One hundred and eighty pounds were to be spent on

> 'the yearly maintenance forever of twenty poor boys with diet lodging washing clothing and other necessaries in blue coats and caps according to the laudable usage of Christ Church Hospital in London.'

The uniform of Christ's Hospital was prescribed as a blue drugget gown, with ample skirts to it; a yellow vest underneath in winter time; small-clothes of Russian duck; worsted yellow stockings and a leathern girdle. This, with modifications, was to be the uniform of the Gloucester Blue Coat boys for over two hundred years.

Twenty pounds was to be the annual payment to 'an honest, able schoolmaster' who was to reside in the Hospital and teach the poor boys, who were to be between the ages of ten and sixteen, to write and read. His appointment and dismissal were to be in the hands of the Mayor, Aldermen and Council of the City of Gloucester.

When the boys had passed through the school their future was not to be neglected, for sixty pounds was to be spent

> 'for the yearly placing out and clothing of six poor boys apprentices wherein my desire is that three or four of the said boys …… may be placed apprentices at London to some honest handycraft trades there and with honest masters not adhering in their opinions to the novelties of the times.'

These premiums would enable the boys to be taken on to be taught a trade by masters who would otherwise reuse an apprentice whose parents could not pay this kind of premium. In the days of large families and low wages such an opportunity must have been a valuable one in the eyes of many poor Gloucester parents.

The remaining income from the property was to be devoted to providing an annual issue of clothing to ten poor men and ten poor women – who became known as 'Blue Gowns' – and to helping poor people, young beginners in trade or faithful maid servants who were being married or housekeepers who had become poor by reason of age or illness, by grants of money. The only other regular charge was to be one of six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence to be spent by the Mayor, Aldermen and Council

'for a dinner for themselves to be had yearly on the feast day of St. Thomas the Apostle',

on which day the annual accounts of the charity were to be presented.

And to ensure that the Council were not dilatory in performing his directions in all these matters, Sir Thomas decreed that a failure to act according to the terms of the will for any one year would result in the forfeiture of all his bequests to the governors of Christ Church Hospital in London for the benefit of poor children there! It is little wonder then that the Council acted with speed to make sure that such a valuable charity should remain under their direction.

Sir Thomas died on 15th October, 16667 and by the beginning of the following January the Common Council of the City had appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the Mayor 'for the furthering of the performance of the contents of the said will'. Negotiations were begun for the purchase of property in the parish of Churchdown for our thousand five hundred pounds and 'the Box' in the parish of Awre for fifteen hundred pounds, but trouble soon developed. The Churchdown deal fell through and negotiations over the Box estate were complicated by the activities of a certain Nicholas Webb. In April 1668 the following minute was recorded by the Council:-

> 'Forasmuch as it doth evidently appear unto this House that Nicholas Webb of this city, apothecary, hath subtilly and craftily endeavoured to know the proceedings of this House relating to the purchasing of a certain messuage called the Box and the lands thereto belonging and after knowledge thereof by sinister and indirect practices endeavoured to supplant and undermine this House in the purchase thereof by which means the price of the said messuage and tenements was enhanced at least one hundred and fifty pounds to the great damage of the poor of this city and in diminution of the pious and charitable gifts of Sir Thomas Rich ……and contrary to all common civility and against his burgess oath and the duty incumbent on him as a burgess of this city; wherefore, upon consideration had of the aforesaid offence and of the several circumstances which highly aggravated the same, this House doth thereupon agree and order that for the future no steward of this city shall employ the said Nicholas Webb in drawing up or stating their accounts, nor shall any common council man of this city, upon pain of twenty shillings, discourse

> with him concerning the government and concerns of this city; and this House doth further order that no mayor or sheriff of this city shall at any time invite or entertain him at their public and common feasts in this city, and further, in case the said Nicholas Webb shall intrude himself into any of their houses without invitation, that then such intrusion shall be deemed …… a common nuisance'.

However, the Box was bought from John Gower Esq. For fifteen hundred pounds, and the memory of the House seems to have been reasonably short, for sixteen years later a Mr. Nicholas Webb[1] was appointed rent collector of the Hospital estates! These estates were situation almost entirely in the parishes of Awre and Lydney, and the Council, as trustees for the charity of Sir Thomas Rich, became lords of the manor of the former parish.

Meanwhile preparations were being made for the establishment of the school in the house in Eastgate. It was decreed that the twenty poor boys to be elected should be sons of Freemen of the city 'and no others until the further order of this House to the contrary'. The boys would thus be, in the main, the sons of tradesmen working on their own account, whose ambitions would be in a similar direction to those of their fathers and form whom the simple education offered and the prospect of a generous apprentice premium were more attractive than the instruction in the classics given in the grammar school maintained under Dame Joan Cooke's charity. In August 1668 John Beard, clerk in holy orders, was appointed Master of the Hospital with Mrs. Anne Smallman as Matron, or 'mother-woman', and in the following month the first twenty boys were elected. The school was certainly functioning in the next month, just within the limit of twelve months laid down in the will, much to the relief of Gloucester and the disappointment of Christ Church Hospital.

The kind of difficulties inseparable from the running of this type of boarding school were at once in evidence. Three of the first intake of boys were found to be under the minimum age of ten, and two of them were discharged, though the third, who rejoiced in the unusual name of Little

[1] It cannot be certainly established that this was the same Nicholas Webb, for there were more than one of this name in Seventeenth Century Gloucester.

Wintle[1], was allowed to remain, as he was only a week under age at the time of his election and had reached his tenth birthday before the error was discovered. The kind of factor that influenced election may be seen in the fact that two of the first twenty boys are described as 'John Lugg the Porter's son', and 'John Elliott's son (the Porter)' in the Council minutes. It is obvious that the two porter, who acted as messengers for the Council and as doormen at the meetings in the Tolsey, would be in a position to put in a special plea for their sons. However, John Elliott spoke out of turn, for his son was one of those removed for being too young.

Another problem was that of the contact to be allowed between boys boarding in a school in their own city and their relatives living locally. This nearness created an unrest amongst some of the boys and their parents, which made discipline difficult. The Council's anxiety may be noted in this entry in their minutes of December 1670:-

> 'Agreed that the stewards of this City …… do speak to Mr. John Beard …… that he take better care to keep in the Blue Coat boys, and that if any parent of either of the said boys do hereafter taunt reproach or vex the school master or mother woman there …… that then upon complaint the said Blue Coat boy shall be removed from there.'

The Council also laid down that the Master should accompany the civic party with the boys to service in the Cathedral every Sunday and festival day, and one hundred years later we find the Dean and Chapter making an act to state precisely where both the mayor's officers and servants and the Blue men and Blue boys should sit. This was to be on the benches on the left hand of the North door of the Choir, and they were to have the sole occupancy of these. In future there was to be no doubt about who was entitled to a seat and where.

Then, in order to ensure that the council knew what was going on in the School, the Mayor and the gentlemen appointed as governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, an almshouse in the City's care, were desired and appointed to visit the School at least quarterly in order 'to hear and examine all complaints, disorders and abuses there'. That such disorders were likely to arise is not surprising when it is considered that most boys

[1] This appears to have been a Wintle family name, as it occurs later in the School records.

of an age similar to those in the School would be at work and the restraints of school must have seemed irksome to some of the boys. In fact the Council soon felt that a more regular inspection was necessary, for in November 1685 they ordered that the Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs, or any four of them, should visit the School on the first Monday in every month to enquire into the general conditions.

The question of placing out of the boys as apprentices according to the terms of Sir Thomas's will also produced its difficulties. For a number of years successful attempts were made to find suitable masters in London, as for example in 1677, when four of the seven leavers went to the capital, but gradually this practice died down though occasionally boys went outside Gloucester to places like Worcester, Birmingham and Bristol. Then there was the question of whether boys should be apprenticed to their parents. This aroused considerable feeling, and in a long minute of September 1682 the Councillors recorded their absolute opposition to the demand of the mother of Anthony George that he should be bound to her. They then went on to declare that generally such parents were more interested in the money than in teaching their children all the skills of their trades, and, therefore, in future no apprentice premiums would be paid except where boys were bound apprentices to person other than their parents. This rule was applied not

Box Farm

only to the charity of Sir Thomas Rich but also to premiums paid under the bequests of Alderman Halliday and Mrs. Punter, to whom reference will be made later.

In spite of Sir Thomas's generous endowment there were financial difficulties in these early years. The boys cost a good deal more to maintain than the sum allocated, so perhaps Mrs. Smallman was too generous in her treatment of the boys, a fault not to be repeated in the School's later history! We find her petitioning for higher allowances in 1674, because 'the price of bread and cheese and meat is increased double' and in 1677 and in 1685, when she was fifty pounds in arrears. In each case the Council allowed her request. Very speedily, too, the cost of the annual dinner on St. Thomas's Day exceeded the sum allowed in the will, though it was not until the Eighteenth Century that the dinner became a feast of excessive cost. Later on more serious trouble arose, and in 1700 the Council were glad to accept loans of one hundred pounds free of interest from Brigadier Selwyn and Sir William Rich, who had earlier been made a burgess and freeman of the city gratis, for the support of the School, which was described as 'now in a sinking condition'. However the rescue operation was successful, the income improved and the loans were repaid after three years. Keeping the school accounts was in fact to cause considerable trouble. The first rent-collector, Nathaniel Hedges, fell out with the city fathers over the accounts; they demanded from him 'a true and perfect account of all Singular rents, profits and dues,' to which he replied by bringing a suit in Chancery against them. The trouble seems to have arisen over a lack of certainty concerning the exact rents due to the School and how the rent-collector should be rewarded for the time and effort required to look after the estates of the charity.

Thus the School settled down into its regular routine of providing basic education for future trade apprentices. Boys were elected annually by the City Council, remained in the School for three, or sometimes four, years, and passed out to masters, approved by the Council, with their generous premiums, which made a Blue Boy welcome to many a tradesman. Not surprisingly, then, there was always competition for the

Red Hart Inn

School's later history! We find her petitioning for higher allowances in

places available in the School, and year by year there entered boys for whom this was the only chance of any education. Some of them, however, seem to have regretted their election, and over the years a considerable number of them took the desperate decision to run away. Some returned in a chastened mood and were re-admitted, but others suffered the penalty of expulsion, especially when they showed few signs of repentance. Otherwise life went on through the usual routine with, no doubt, the occasional untoward events which have always enlivened the school scene. One wonders, for example, what lay behind the following somewhat cryptic entry in the account book: 'Mr. William Crump for curing Smith a Blue Boy blown up with gunpowder'. The 'cure' cost six shillings. Boys have not changed very much over the years.

CHAPTER II

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The 'reigns' of John Abbott and Luke Hook

The Eighteenth Century may best be described as the unexceptional century in the life of the School. Much of the time the boys were ruled by two Masters who enjoyed a remarkable longevity in office. John Abbott became Master in place of the Rev. John Beard as early as 1677 and he was still Master at the time of his death in 1733 – a record breaking period of fifty six years! Eight years later, after three other Masters had come and gone, an old Blue Coat boy was appointed to the post. This was Luke Hook, then about thirty one or two year of age (he had entered the School as a boy in 1720), and he was to remain in office until death removed him forty seven years later. He was in fact originally appointed for five years only, but the Council was pleased with his efforts in the School and reappointed him on a permanent basis. There was no compulsory retiring age then, and the temptation to hold on to what must have been a comfortable, adequately remunerated (taking into consideration the accommodation and board offered gratis) and not over-exacting post, must have been very considerable. Moreover, it may only have been regarded as a part-time occupation by some Masters, who left most of the running of the School in the hands of equally long lived Matrons. Luke Hook, for example, carried on his trade of scrivener unabated and even occasionally took a Blue Coat boy as an apprentice to learn the art. No doubt the premium was a welcome addition to his salary. But the degree of breakdown in control of high-spirited youngsters and the lack of drive or initiative in teaching as these masters passed into old age can easily be imagined. Nor, of course, was there much incentive in a curriculum limited so severely to reading and writing. Idleness, at least mentally, must have been the general rule of the day.

In this, however, the School would be in keeping with the age, for education in England generally sank to almost unimaginable depths during the century. The Blue Coat School at least continued to have a regular supply of 'scholars', who were boarded and taught, however

poorly, in contrast to some foundations where masters continued to live on the income of endowments but might have few or no pupils to teach for years on end. When the great investigations into education took place in the next century some startling facts came to light. For example, one Master at Whitgift's Hospital, Croydon, where the annual income of the endowment was £500, taught not a single pupil for more than thirty years during which he held office. In Gloucester, too, the situation at the Crypt School was an unhappy one. It was described as being in a 'fatal state' in an advertisement in the 'Gloucester Journal' in 1765 and in the report on the Gloucester charities in 1837 it was stated that there were only twelve boys in the school, all fee-payers instead of 'free scholars' for whom the foundation was established. The Blue Coat School avoided this drop in numbers; otherwise it shared in the general educational drift. However, the pressure on the places available continued, even to the extent of forged certificates of birth to get boys into school under age.

Other Masters

Conditions in the School must have been daunting to any man attempting to take over the Mastership after either Abbott or Hook, and this perhaps accounts in part for the number of Masters in the other years of the century. One of these, however, only remained a very short time because he was a bad choice by the Corporation. This was John Price, who was elected to follow the Rev. Elliott in October 1741, his duties being laid down in the following terms:-

> …… 'he constantly attending and bringing the boys to St. Michael's Church and other churches as usual, and otherwise behaving himself towards the boys and teaching and instructing them and keeping them in decent order and government, observing the rules formerly made for the purposes aforesaid according to the will of Sir Thomas Rich the Donor.'

But Mr. John Price was apparently not at all a suitable person to have control of a school of boys, for within a month the Corporation minutes record that he was accused of

> 'several immoralities and scandalous misbehaviours to which being required he hath not given any satisfactory answer.'

Not surprisingly, then, he disappeared from the School, to be replaced by Luke Hook, but we should dearly like to know what those 'misbehaviours' were.

Three other Masters only lasted a total of sixteen months between them, and the worst year was 1796, when Charles King, appointed in the March of that year, resigned in the September, and his successor, William Luke, only lasted two months. He was followed by Thomas Bayley Villiers, who remained for fourteen years, but his career was not one of outstanding merit. In fact the reverse was the case, for under him the School sank into a state of insubordination and discontent, which called for the attention of the committee appointed by the Corporation for managing the affairs of the charity. The Master seems to have tried to assert his authority by occasional outbursts of terrorism, for early in 1809 one of the boys lodged a complaint against the Master for violently beating him, and the committee found that the boy had been improperly treated in that the punishment he had received exceeded 'moderate chastisement'. This incident was followed by a number of others reflecting on the relations between the Master and the boys and culminating in a mass walk-out in the September of the same year. Let the committee minute book speak for itself:-

18th September 1809

> 'The Master reported that all the boys except two left the School early in the morning of the 12th inst., that after an absence therefrom until late at night, two again deserted on Saturday last, namely Richards and Bourn, but the conduct of Richards in particular has in other respects been highly reprehensible in as much as the other boys have all stated that they were all induced to leave the School, by reason of his threats and inducements. It also appeared to the Committee that the boys had been suffered to drink cider and smoke tobacco and afterwards to have a supper provided for them in the schoolroom.'

Punishment had to be meted out, so Richards and Bourn and another principal offender, Best, were expelled and in the case of Richards the ultimate sanction was also applied – he was not to receive an apprentice premium. This did not, however, cure the trouble, so in the following March three more boys had to be expelled for absenting themselves

without leave. Meanwhile the committee had reached the conclusion that no lasting reform could be affected without a new Master. Hence:-

> 'This committee were therefore induced again to signify to the Master that they believed it would meet the approbation of the Corporation if he would find an early opportunity to retire from his situation; repeating to him as they have before done that the very improper conduct of the boys and the apparent general state of insubordination evidently existing amongst them arise from a relaxation in the duties attached to the office of Master.'

It certainly did meet with the approbation of the Corporation and so Mr. Villiers resigned, but it was fifteen months before he went. Incidentally, one of the 'escape' routes for defaulters was over the wall which separated the School from the Saracen's Head Inn. The Corporation had taken the precaution of having this raised in 1792, but it was still too low and was raised by another three feet in 1819.

Endowments

The school might pass through bad times educationally, but it was not without those who looked back with gratitude on the opportunities it provided. One of these was Amity Clutterbuck, who had been in the School for four years (1676-1680). He became purser of H.M.S. Princess and settled at Brompton in Kent. By his will, dated the 3rd November 1721, he directed that after the death of his wife, who was to enjoy the income while she lived, £1,000 stock in the South Sea Company was

> 'to be paid into the Corporation of the City of Gloucester to be disposed of by the Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of the aforesaid Corporation as they shall think fit for the use of the twenty poor boys of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital or those that shall receive them forever'.

The Corporation were naturally pleased to receive this extra endowment, which came into their hands in 1729, and in demonstration of their gratitude they made Mr. Clutterbuck's nephews freemen and burgesses of the City gratis. In due course a great nephew, Amity Clutterbuck Modway, followed him as a pupil at Sir Thomas Rich's.

A little later the School received another 'windfall', this time from the will of Alderman Thomas Browne, who may also have been an old Blue Coat Boy. He left £400 for the benefit of the School, and we find the Corporation in 1732 instructing the Town Clerk to take the directions of the High Court of Chancery concerning its investment. This money, too, appears to have been invested in South Sea Company stock, and in 1749 £1,000 was drawn out and used for the purchase of the Maiden Hall Farm, the rental of which was added to the income of the School.

One more major bequest was to come to the School during this century, Mr. Richard Elly left £1,000 to be divided equally between Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital and St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Luke Hook was one of the executors of this will, and he was asked by the Corporation to recommend how the School's moiety should be used, for such was the direction of the testator. Accordingly he recommended that the interest on £170 should be spent on a new pair of shoes and stockings for each of the twenty Blue Coat Boys every Easter, and the interest on the remaining £330 on repairs to the buildings housing the Master, the Matron and the boys. That the condition of the buildings was causing the Master concern is reflected in the further direction that when the School was taken down and rebuilt the principal sum of £330 should be used to aid the work. The Corporation accepted these recommendations.

The new buildings

The rebuilding of the School belongs strictly to the Nineteenth Century, but as far as 'period' is concerned it is more suitably treated with the events of the preceding century, as it belongs to the years before the great changes. A family house, even with the addition of a brew-house and other extras sanctioned at various times by the Corporation, can hardly have been a suitable building for what were virtually three separate establishments; those of the Master, the Matron and the Boys. After one hundred and forty years of wear and tear as a boarding School it must surely have been ready for removal when the Corporation finally decided on this course of action in 1805. They had hoped that repairs would be sufficient but they requested Mr. John Wheeler of Littleworth, the surveyor they employed, to prepare a plan for demolition and rebuilding as an alternative. His report convinced them that this latter plan was essential. The charity owned several houses in Eastgate Street and these, as well as the School itself, were cleared away to make room

for the new building. Mr. Wheeler's original plan was to build a School house to front the New Inn Lane, but the committee insisted on a new plan with the School facing Eastgate Street, in the way the original building had done. This was a wise decision.

The rebuilding was to be carried out with as little upheaval as possible, for we find Mr. Wheeler reporting in January 1806 that

> 'the present dwelling house of Mr. Villiers the Master may remain erect without material inconvenience during the progress of a considerable part of the intended building, and that until the new schoolroom be built …… the upper part of such dwelling house may be applied to the purpose of the schoolroom.'

We have to remember that there were only twenty boys and no division into forms as there is today, so accommodation was not a great problem. The boys were to be allowed to sleep at home and the parents were to be paid at the rate of £12 per annum for the privilege of keeping them while the rebuilding was taking place. The Master and the Matron were to receive a special 'upheaval' allowance for the same period. It was to be just over two years before the boys were back to boarding in the School, though they had been using the new schoolroom for sixth months before the full return to normal routine.

A look at the costs of building a century and a half ago may be of interest. The committee accepted an estimate of £28 for taking down the old buildings and removing the rubbish. Estimates received for the rebuilding ranged from £4221 to £5,200, the one accepted, that of Mr. William Hicks, being for £4,300. This hardly seems excessive for the handsome building shown on plate 5, page 22, containing as it did not only the schoolroom and the boys' bedrooms and wash-house, but also a large committee room for the use of the Trustees, three kitchens, the Matron's rooms, a separate establishment for the Master of at least four rooms and a yard, a coal house and a whole range of cellars. It also cost the Corporation a further £150 in agreed compensation to Sir Thomas Crawley of Flaxley Abbey for inconvenience and damage caused to his town house in Eastgate Street when the old school was demolished. But taking all the costs together, including the architect's fees and a new privy added as a kind of after-thought, the grand total was still under

£5,000, and when the Charity Trustees finally sold the building to the Corporation in 1889 as a site for the present Guildhall they realised £4,500 for it.

Another minor point of interest: the two portraits of Sir Thomas Rich, which hand in their places of honour in the present School, date from the early days of the foundation. When the new buildings were erected in 1807 one of them was hung in the august committee room, but the other was relegated to the Matron's apartments. So it appears that the boys only saw the face of their patron on those occasions when they were ushered into the committee room, usually for examination and admonition by a worried or angry body of councillors enquiring into irregularities in the School.

This section may be concluded with a further minor point. The new School was to be refurnished, and new beds would be required for the boys. It was agreed that Mr. T. Verry should make the bedsteads of wrought iron, six feet by three, moving on castors and weighing one hundred and twelve pounds. His price was 5d a pound! This is the only instance known to the writer of beds being sold by weight.

Other developments

The estates belonging to the School were bound to involve the City in a considerable amount of business, and the Corporation was often uncomfortably aware that its control of that business was inadequate. The job of rent collector was generally undertaken by an alderman or councillor, but the amount of time required to administer estates mainly situated at Awre and Lydney was too much for a man who had his own business to run, and in consequence the estates were neglected, essential repairs were not done and the accounts got into a muddled state. It must have been a thankless task, for which the limited remuneration, frequently varied by the Corporation, was an insufficient return, and the temptation to make something 'on the side' must have been severe. In addition to the School property the rent collector was responsible for the very considerable estates of the other charities controlled by the City. It was not until 1738 that the Corporation took the common-sense step of appointing a full-time collector, with a right to 'all the salaries and profits which have been paid to and lawfully taken both by the Chamberlain and the Rentgatherer' in the past. However, eleven years

later this decision was reversed, as far as the rentgatherer not being a member of the Corporation was concerned, but the principle of more thorough control had been accepted, and under Gabriel Harris and then during the long period of control by the elder and the younger Henry Wilton in succession, the estates seem to have been efficiently managed. Expansion of the estates now became possible, and the Hall Farm was added to the properties in 1767.

During the same period certain school traditions developed. One of these was the dinner on St. Thomas's day, for which provision was made in the will of the founder. .Public feasting was a feature of Gloucester corporation life, the expense of which was sometimes felt to be excessive and unnecessary, as witness the following resolution of November 1719.

> 'Whereas the Hospitals of this City are at this time much in debt and whereas it has been the constant custom of this City for the Mayors and Sheriffs to have a great many public dinners every year …… to the great expense of the Mayor and Sheriffs as well as the Corporation, which would be better applied towards paying the debts of the Hospitals.
>
> Whether therefore every Mayor of this City shall for five years to come, instead of keeping such public dinners, pay to the Rent-gatherer of the Hospitals the sum of £30, and every Sheriff £30, for the use of the Hospitals and that no more be expended on the nomination day but only £3 by the nominated Mayor and £4 by the Chamberlain out of the City money, and that the remaining expenses which are to be at such nomination dinners to the value of £10 be yearly paid by the Chamberlain of the City to the Rentgatherer for the use of these Hospitals, and also that the 20 nobles fine which is constantly paid by every new common council man and all the fines for purchasing freedoms be for the future paid to the Rentgatherer for the use of the Hospitals during the time aforesaid.'

A rather novel way of aiding the Hospitals by enforced donations, but presumably £30 was less than the cost of the normal dinners to the Mayors and Sheriffs. But as the years went by and the School funds appeared to prosper the annual dinner became more and more of an

'occasion'. Very soon the sum originally set aside under the terms of the will was being regularly exceeded, as the menu, in marked contrast to the normal diet on which the boys existed, became more varied. Perhaps the Corporation felt that an annual feast would erase from the minds of the Blue Boys, especially those who left the School on this day, the memories of their normal fare. For many years in the middle of the century and, after a break, right down until 1792, a doe from the Forest of Dean was the centre piece of the meal. In addition there might be a couple of turkeys or a salmon or oysters as well as the more usual fare. Here, for example, is a typical entry in the account book for St. Thomas's day 1786:-

For oyster knives	1-6
A barrel of oysters	6-0
Plumbs from Messrs Martin & Bishop, grocers	2-8
For chesnutts	2-0
Bill for meat	£3- 5-9
Use of pewter and a spoon lost	10-3
Matron's bill of expenses for dinner	£3- 6-8
Use of knives & forks	5-0
Gammon of bacon	9-6
Mrs. Wintle for liquors	£2-19-1

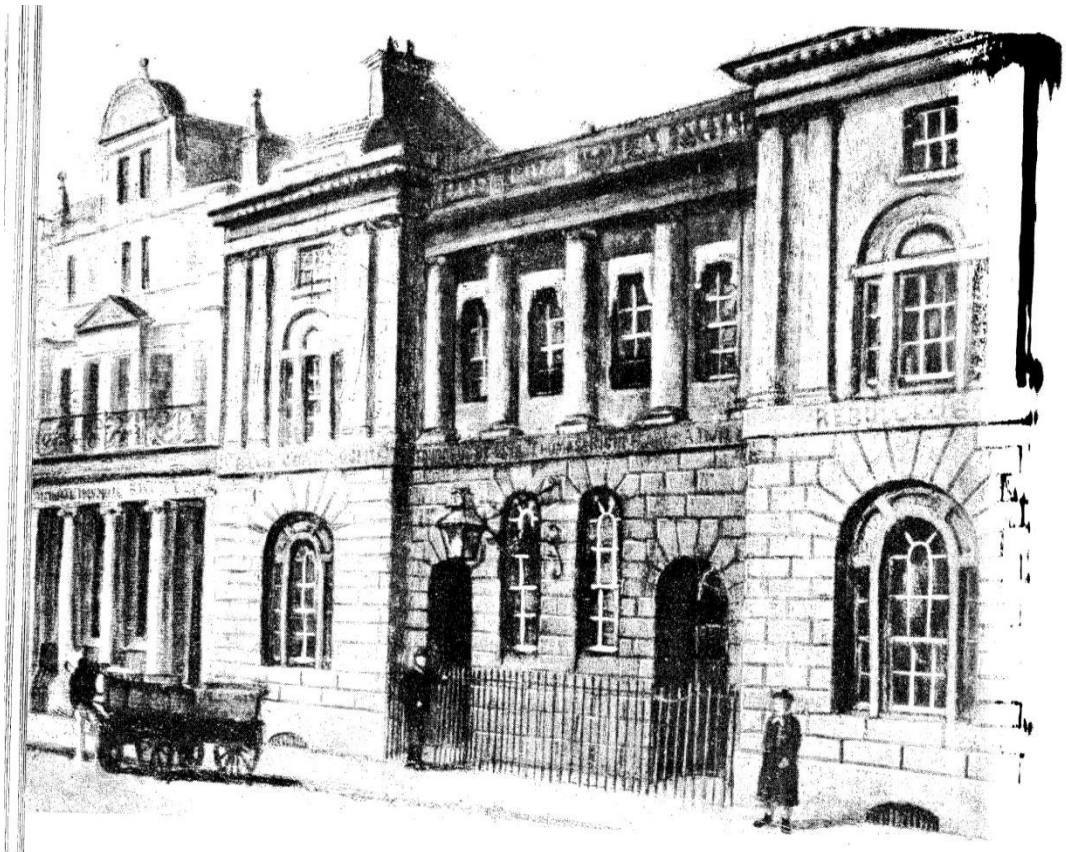
On another occasion the accountant paid 8d for 'herb tobacco' for the dinner. The cost of the drinks could be high, too, as witness this entry:

'Mrs. Wintle for wine and spirits last St. Thomas Day £4-12-0.'

For many years, then, there was no stint on the Charity's great day, the celebration of which was ushered in by the peals of St. Michael's bells, at a cost of 5s. 0d. Members of the Corporation, the Master and the boys and the twenty poor people who were 'Blue Gowns' sat down together and feasted with great jollity.

At some stage during these proceedings it seems probable that 'Tommy Psalm' was sung. Unfortunately there is no record of its author or of the date when it came into being, though it bears all the marks of composition during the Eighteenth Century. The oldest copy possessed by the School is on paper with a water-mark of 1811, and it is obvious

that by that date the custom of writing out copies to sell (to the visitors) for pocket-money was already established. It is perhaps worthy of notice that the original was more strictly accurate than the modern version: instead of 'sixteen thousand pounds of what God gave' it reads the actual figure of six thousand. There are other minor variations, but this remarkable school song, which amuses so many of our visitors, has survived, almost unscathed, the extreme vicissitudes which the School was to experience in the next century and a half.



The new School on the Guildhall site, erected in 1807

for pocket-money was already established. It is perhaps worthy of notice

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY: THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Financial Upheavals

The School was now to enter upon a period of considerable instability, caused partly by the decline in morale which lay behind the dismissal of Mr. Villiers and partly by the action of the Corporation over the funds of the Hospital. We may look at this second factor first because of its long term effects.

In spite of the ever mounting costs of running the School as prices rose during the long struggle with Napoleon, the funds in the Hospital account continued to grow. These increasing costs may be illustrated by the changes in the sums paid to the Matron for the maintenance of boys. In his will Sir Thomas Rich had provided £120 per annum for this purpose, and this sum was generally sufficient until 1786, when it was necessary to raise it to £150. In 1812, however, the allowance had to be raised to £440, and this was back-dated nearly two years in order to pay the house-keeping debts! But rents rose at the same time as prices, with agriculture flourishing in a non-competitive market, so that the annual income was now well over a £1,000 and this produced a considerable surplus for profitable investment. As early as 1799 the Hospital had been prosperous enough to make a loan of £3,000 to the City at an interest rate of 5%, and thus further increase its income. In fact the fund was too prosperous, for it attracted the attention of Councillors, who decided that it might be used for other, probably less worthy, purposed, if a suitable excuse could be found. A Committee of Inquiry was therefore appointed, and a report was made to the Corporation on the 17th February, 1815 of 'a minute investigation of (the) accounts from the foundation of the Hospital'.

The Report of 1815

The report is too lengthy to quote in full, but a case was made out that the Corporation had been over-generous in its support of the Foundation during its difficulties in earlier periods. It was further claimed that the purchase of the Maiden Hall Farm estate at Lydney in

1749 for £1,000 from the capital of the legacies of Clutterbuck and Brown, the rent of which was at once added to the revenues of the Hospital, resulted in an additional income which the Corporation need not have given. The basis of this reasoning was that the legacies had been bequeathed for the benefit of the Blue Boys to be applied at the discretion of the Corporation, which could have invested the capital and merely applied the income to the prescribed charitable purposes. The Committee reported

> 'instead of £40 or £50 a year which the Corporation were bound to apply at their discretion in aid of the Hospital as the interest of the legacies, that charity has been from time to time benefitted by the whole rent of this estate, the annual amount of which . . . . . is now £115!

How prodigiously generous of the Corporation, especially when it is remembered that when the estate was first purchased the rent was only £22-10 per annum! The Committee, of course, ignored this fact, and made no reference to the cost of repairs or improvements or taxes.

However, the Committee's chief strictures were reserved for the purchase of the Hall Farm estate for £2,700in 1766, the rent of which again had been used exclusively for the Hospital. £2,000 of this purchase price had come from money loaned by the Corporation, and had since been repaid by the Hospital Fund out of it general income. The Committee therefore concentrated on the remaining £700 raised by the sale of stock standing in the name of the Corporation and which had never been repaid. Thus

> 'The Committee was unable to trace from which particular source the stock which produced this £700 originally came – in no way connected with the funds of the estate purchased under Sir Thomas Rich's will. Sir Thomas Rich's Funds appear never to have been charged with the £700 or any interest upon it.'

This was true only in one sense: the money did not come from the funds of the estate originally purchased by Sir Thomas's bequest, but it did come from other money belonging to the Hospital account. Gabriel Harris, the rent-collector, was in no doubt about this when he made up

his accounts in 1766. In connection with the purchase of the Hall Farm estate he entered the sources of the purchase money as follows

Sale of capital stock and dividend belong to the Hospital	£700
By bond of Mr. Alderman Farmer @ 4%	£1000
By bond of Mr. Alderman Webb @ 4%	£1000

This stock could well have been the surplus left from the bequests of Clutterbuck and Brown and the accumulated interest, together with part of Gunter's legacy, but the Committee, which must have had access to this account book, was not really interested in enquiring into its true source. Rather, it had found the excuse it required for taking action against the funds. Hence it reported

> 'It is the opinion of the Committee that as the Funds of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital are now in a very prosperous state and the rental of the estates is much more than sufficient to defray any charge of the benevolent donor, it is perfectly proper that the City Fund which has so frequently and liberally contributed to the aid of Sir Thomas Rich's Charity should now be reimbursed from the funds of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital the amount of £700 so advanced towards the purchase of the estate before alluded to, together with simple interest from the time when such advance was made, which principal sum and interest will now amount in the whole to the sum of £2,380.'

Here indeed was appropriation with a vengeance, and the Corporation was quick to endorse the report of its Committee, though it was to pay dearly for its greed, as later events will show.

The report, however, did not stop at this. It then proceeded to burden the Hospital funds with an unfair proportion of the new salary of the Receiver of the Revenues of the Corporation, the official whom we have previously referred to as the rent-collector. Instead of receiving an allowance of poundage on the sums handled by him, which meant that each City Charity bore its due proportion of collection costs, he was in future to be paid a fixed annual salary of £160. Of this, £105 was to come from Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital, and only £40 from the considerable

estates of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the remaining £15 from the City Fund. Here again the Corporation agreed, but it was not able to get away with this unfair dealing for so long. National moves were on hand for a thorough investigation of public charities, many of which were badly administered and not fulfilling the purposes for which they had been founded. The investigating commissioners examined the Gloucester charities in 1825, with the aid of a Committee appointed by the Corporation, and their report was critical of the Corporation's action in over-charging the Rich's fund with the expenses of administering the various charities. The report laid down clearly the principle that each fund, whether rich or poor, should bear its own share of the expenses of administration, and ordered the Corporation to revert to the old system of allowing the rent-collector a poundage of 2½% upon all monies received. If this method of payment had been followed from 1815 to 1824 the Hospital funds would only have had to pay £398-19-0 instead of the £1050 actually taken as salary by the rent-collector. The Corporation was instructed to repay the difference of £651-1-0 to the Hospital fund out of the revenues of the City, and it did so immediately.

Increased Premiums

The 1815 Committee had one other recommendation to make which the Corporation accepted. This was that the estates purchased since the original bequest should be entered on a separate rent roll, as this income was not subject to the directions of Sir Thomas's will but could be used at the discretion of the Corporation. The Committee argued that the other objects of charity mentioned in the will, which had to be met whenever there was a distributive surplus, were not particularly beneficial, and to spend the surplus of the enlarged income for these purposes was not to be considered. The surplus would be much better employed, and could be safely so used under the new arrangement, in increasing the apprentice premiums given to deserving boys when they left the Hospital, an idea which had been carefully considered and regarded as desirable as long ago as 1803. This, from the point of view of the School, seems to have been the only worthwhile recommendation of the Committee. However, a more satisfactory source of income for this same purpose was recommended by the Charity Committee of 1825. There already existed a considerable charity for providing apprentice premiums for poor boys. This was Mrs. Punter's Legacy. But the number of boys applying for the £10 premiums, which could not be increased and were now too limited in

value to be acceptable to most Masters, was too small to exhaust the income available every year. What better course, then, than to appropriate a portion of the income in sums of £10 each towards augmenting the premiums given to 'meritorious and deserving boys on leaving Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital'? This course of action was followed and the boys could once more look forward to receiving a generous premium on completing their schooling, as the augmented sum countered the inflation which had negative the original generosity of the founder. Also it gave the Corporation greater control over the conduct of the boys, for the gift of a premium from Mrs. Punter's Legacy was not automatic and could be withheld more easily than one from the Rich foundation, though even here refusal was not impossible in extreme cases of misconduct.

Other beneficiaries

The provisions in the will relating to the use of surplus income for other charitable purposes, that is for donations to young men just beginning their life as tradesmen or faithful maid servants or poor decayed house-keepers, seem to have been totally neglected until this period. However, in 1796, in what must have been a kind of 'test' application, Mr. Nicholas Webb of Ebworth made application on behalf of his maid servant for a donation from the funds. The Corporation directed the Deputy Town Clerk to reply that there was an insufficient surplus to meet the cost of essential repairs to the buildings and estates, let alone make donations to poor maid servants, but when a surplus did arise Mr. Webb's application would be borne in mind. This incidentally was only three years before the £3,000 loan already mentioned, so the excuse hardly looks genuine. But the application seems to have stirred the Corporation into action, for in 1805 twenty-five young freemen were given £10 each and in the following year fifty donations of £5 were given to poor maid servants. Three years later forty-one poor housekeepers benefitted by the same amount, and the next year £300 was spent on sixty poor decayed freemen. Thus, over £1,000 was spent on these purposes in five years, and ten years later a further £460 was used in the same manner.

In the 'red'

In their enthusiasm to spend money the Councillors were not keeping a sufficient check on the state of the funds, which they suddenly

discovered to have run out. The period after the war was a difficult one as prices fell and rents had to be reduced. It also became necessary to spend large sums on repairs, which had been neglected for years. Life could be difficult for a farmer at this time, in spite of the protection afforded by the Corn Laws. Twice in six years the funds suffered losses caused by the insolvency of tenants, one of whom ran away rather than face his creditors, who were in arrears with rents which could not be recovered. The sums involved, about £165, were not large considering the substantial revenues of the Hospital, but they do reflect one of the problems facing those responsible for the management of the estates during this period. Another difficulty is shown by the following entry in the account book for April 1827, concerning the steward of the manor of Awre and Etloe, who looked after the legal rights of the Corporation as lords of the manor:-

> 'Allowed Wm. Awre towards the loss he sustained in consequence of the failure of the banks whose notes he had received for quit rents etc. £2-0-0.'

The extent of the difficulties into which the funds had run was not revealed until a report of the Committee for managing the affairs of the Blue Coat School was submitted to the Corporation in November 1831. This stated that owing to the large sums spent on repairs, amounting to about £2,000 in the past few years, and the substantial decline in rents, the account showed a deficit of over £2,000 and an annual excess of expenditure over income during the previous three years of £276-16-5. The Corporation considered the report and determined as a matter of urgency to form itself into a Committee of the whole House for a thorough investigation of the position. Mr. Alderman Price took the lead in the Committee's business and worked very hard to produce proposals for putting the foundation on a sound financial basis once more. Having examined the total income and expenditure the Committee's report declared

> 'it is not only practicable but easy to limit the expenditure within the income, and also to have a surplus which may be converted into a sinking fund to go to the liquidation of the debt (due to the rent-collector) with which the charity is t present encumbered,, and (the Committee) are happy to say that in their opinion all this may be

accomplished without trenching in the slightest degree on any one of the benevolent intentions of the pious founder'.

The report then set out in tabular form the expenditure for the last three years under a number of heads, the average expenditure per year under each head, the proposed reductions and the estimated future expenditure. A major reduction was to be made by cutting the salary of the Master and Matron from £525 to £420 per annum, and further stipulating that the Master should defray the incidental expenses of the School for such things as coals, candles, soap, brushes and stationery out of his salary. These had recently averaged an annual £77, which was borne by the funds and was considered to be far too large. It was perhaps fortunate that a new Master and Matron were about to be appointed, and it is not surprising that within two years this Master was asking for an increase, which was not granted either then or two years later when he applied again. Further savings were to be secured by halving the cost of repairs, restricting the expense of the St. Thomas's day dinner, which was averaging about £49, to the stipulated £6-13-4 of the will, with the difference made up by the Corporation from some other source, discontinuing the gift of a suit of clothes to each boy leaving the School and transferring the cost of stamps on the apprentice indentures from the funds to the masters taking the boys. By these means expenditure was to be cut to £755-1-4, a reduction of some £320. Little wonder, then, that the Corporation gave its warmest thanks to Alderman Price for his efforts and hastened to accept the recommendations.

For the next few years stringent control was exercised over all expenditure. For example in August 1832 it was ordered that no new petticoats for the boys should be bought, as the old ones would last another year, and in future new ones should be bought only every other year. This was a sensible move, as these yellow petticoats were only worn on Sundays, when the boys went to the Cathedral, and on other high days. The boys probably regarded them as nothing but a nuisance, as they must have been restricting when walking, since the gown itself, normally worn without the petticoat, opened to the waist to allow easy movement. In the following year economy was still the order of the day, for the Corporation directed

> 'That owing to the embarrassed state of the funds of this charity no expenses whatever be incurred for repairs at the Hospital during the coming year.'

Thereafter, with the aid of short-term loans from the Hospitals of St. Bartholomew and St. Margaret, the position slowly improved, though every opportunity was still taken to increase the funds, even to the extent of directing the Master to sell the boys' old clothes and pay the proceeds to the Treasurer for the benefit of the charity.

As a final gesture, before the Corporation handed over control of the foundation to the newly appointed Municipal Charity Trustees, the members of the Council, assembling at the Blue Coat Hospital, passed the following resolution:-

> 'That the wine and spirits now in the cellar of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital be forthwith disposed of by public auction and that the proceeds thereof be applied in liquidation of the debt of the said Hospital.'

The new Trustees would not inherit any refreshments from the Corporation, which had stocked the cellar quite liberally, for the sale raised £34-3-0! These had not been kept for the boys, of course, but for the members of the Corporation who formed the Committee to manage the charity, whose meetings may well have been convivial occasions. The drinks allowed to the boys had in fact been cut down previously, as witness this directive of the Committee in 1819:-

> 'That the beer usually allowed by the Mayor to the boys on certain given days be discontinued . . . . . but that cakes at 2d each be substituted and delivered by the Master after their Sunday dinner on such days, or at some other time of the day as in his judgement may be advisable.

If this seems strange to modern ears, it must be borne in mind that pure water was not readily available until later – the School did not have a piped water supply until 1838 – and a fermented drink was much safer. Thus the School had, in common with many other establishments, its own brew house to produce the ale which was the regular drink of all.

However, things could get out of hand, as shown by this entry in the Master's report for March 1833:-

> 'Thomas Allen was sent home in a state of intoxication on the night of the election.'

Incidentally, a different mayor at another time also got a 'rap over the knuckles' from the Committee. Let the minute book for 6th November 1817 tell its own story.

> 'It appears to the Committee that the boys have more play days than necessary, and that the cause thereof arises from the leave of absence given by the Mayor. Resolved that it appears to this Committee that it would tend to the advantage of the Institution if the Mayor would not at all interfere on this occasion, and therefore that he be requested not again to interpose his authority.'

This was at a time when conditions within the School called for immediate attention, and to these we must now come.

The Schoolboys' lot

Mr. Villiers left the School in 1810, and was succeeded as Master by Mr. James Stephens of Newent, who lasted for ten years, before he, too, was asked to resign! The general trouble probably stemmed from the view that as the Blue Boys were objects of charity, and control was vested with the Corporation, then it did not matter much how they were treated. This attitude was reflected in the shoddy clothes sometimes supplied to the boys. The Committees of management had frequently to apply pressure on the tradesmen who made the clothes and shoes to get a reasonable standard for the prices charged. In 1818, for example, complaints were made about the quality both of the shoes and the breeches supplied. The makers were ordered to produce samples of a better quality for examination by the Mayor, but the new shoes were still not of the required standard. Therefore

> 'Ordered . . . . . that the shoes now produced to us . . . . . be returned . . . . . and that Mr. Drinkwater the maker be informed that it is expected . . . . . that better materials and workmanship be given, and that the shoes to be made for delivery on St. Thomas Day be

> brought to the Hospital for inspection on or before 1st December next.'

Later the Committee took the sensible step of putting out the clothing and other material needs of the School to annual tender, and the result was an improvement in quality at a reduced price. This change followed the receipt of a full suit of clothes from Christ's Hospital together with a list of the prices paid by the Trustees of that institution, which convinced the Committee that they were being over-charged by the local suppliers. The tradesmen had previously been on to a good thing, as a report of October 1818 revealed.

> 'In the clothing of the boys some abuses have crept in by their being furnished with garments of inferior quality, and their being rendered of a better sort only in consideration of a *Douceur* paid by the parents to the tradesmen contracting to supply the same.'

As the basis for election to the School was the poor financial state of the parents this kind of commercial blackmail must have been particularly resented. It is little wonder, then that the report should describe it as a 'scandalous system'.

A number of other abuses were examined at the same time and steps taken to remedy them. The number of pairs of shoes allowed to a boy was to be increased from three to four a year, and washing was to be provided from the funds, as directed by the founder's will, instead of by the parents. This involved the building of a laundry over the back kitchen at the School and adding an extra servant to the Matron's establishment. Then for the first time, the boys were provided with 'such books as are requisite in the progress of their education', instead of making do with whatever their parents supplied. The limited nature of this provision may be seen by the books listed. These were a Bible, a Prayer Book, Walkingaine's Tutor's Assistant, Murray's English Grammar (abridged), Johnson's Dictionary and some copy books. A little later the master was directed to supply the boys with slates, pens and ink, and also spelling books and Dr. Watts's Hymns, as well as to 'procure such other books as may in his discretion be useful in exposition of the books to be read by the boys'. Nevertheless the educational

standards did not rise, and a report of October 1827 had the following shattering comment to make:-

> 'There is still one point which demands the serious attention of the Trustees, as it involves the main object of the Establishment, namely the system of education at present pursued in the School. That it is lamentably deficient is a glaring fact, and that the funds devoted to the charity are fully capable of insuring a more comprehensive and eligible plan is equally true. The simple elements of reading, writing and arithmetic are all that are even attempted in the School, and these, in several instances, are so imperfectly acquired, that it is absolutely the case at present that one or two boys, who will leave the School next St. Thomas's Day, cannot read so well now as they did when they entered the Institution three years ago.'

There could hardly be a more damning indictment of the educational side of the life of the School than this! Even then the report did not make very stringent recommendations. It merely added:-

> 'The Committee are of opinion . . . . . that English grammar at least should be included in the branches of education imparted to the boys, and that the course of reading ought to be a little extended beyond the mere recital of two or three verses in the Bible every day, especially when it is considered that it is an indispensible qualification for a candidate that he should be able to read fairly in the Scriptures to entitle him to election.'

'Aim high' was certainly not the motto of the School or the authorities in those days.

One other feature of School life deserves consideration. The food on which the boys lived would hardly commend itself to the modern generation of pupils, and even the Committee of 1818 did not regard it as satisfactory. The report already quoted recommended some alteration in the routine diet:-

> 'By the present rule the boys have bread and cheese for dinner two days in the week, and having the same for breakfast and supper

every day, three meals of bread and cheese on these two days are inevitable – a species of diet which the Committee strongly recommend to be changed for one they conceive more conducive to health; and this may easily be effected, by substituting bread and milk for breakfast every day.'

This may not appeal to us as a change either of striking originality or of great nutritional advance. And with such a monotonous diet it is hardly surprising that the minute books of the Trustees throughout the Nineteenth Century contain complaints about the food and that some of many disciplinary problems arose from discontent over the quality or the quantity of the meals. For example, in 1869 the Trustees were astonished to discover that on Mondays and Thursdays, when dinner consisted of soup, boiled beef and bread, virtually all the boys refusing to eat either the soup or the meat. An enquiry was made and the meat left uneaten on the boys' plates was collected and weighed on one occasion and the wastage at that meal alone was '5½ lb of solid meat'. A long and painful investigation followed, which revealed many faults in the management of the School. Meals, however, did not improve greatly. An old boy who was at the School during its last years as the Blue Coat foundation wrote fifty-five years later that the menu was so sparse that it was a wonder he was still alive to tell the tale. Thus, in 1882, bread and milk were still being served for breakfast and the dinners never varied from the standard pattern for each day of the week, while 'tea', the last meal of the day, was extremely meagre, including on Tuesdays and Thursdays one caraway seed cake and nothing else! Little wonder that a cake from home was highly prized.

Troubles within the School

It is against this background that we must see the troubles of the period. Discipline was a very real problem for the Masters in a school where morale had been undermined by lax control in the past and where there were few incentives for raising standards. One gains the impression from the frequent admonitions of the Trustees that the Masters often took the easy way out by seeking peace rather than control. It wasn't until 1817 that keys to the boys' bedrooms were provided for the Master to have free access 'for the purpose only of occasionally correcting their morals and conduct'. It would appear that the boys were often left for long periods with little to do and with no

supervision except that of the Matron. It is little wonder that they got into mischief and that the name of the School suffered in consequence. This was so in April 1819 when we find that the boys misbehaved themselves during the service at the Cathedral one Sunday. The Master had, apparently, not attended, so the Observator of the day was brought before the Committee and admonished. (The office of Observator in the school dates back to early times, though in those days there was only one.)

The atmosphere within the School would depend a great deal upon the relationship of the Master and the Matron, each 'ruling' from their separate establishments. It was a break-down in this field that brought Mr. Stephens's Mastership to an end, for the Committee had to take action' in October 1818.

> '(The Master and Matron) have been explicitly informed that the comforts and interests of the Institution will no longer be permitted to continue the sacrifice of their feuds; and a material improvement in this respect appears to have been the consequence.'

The improvement, however, was only temporary and within two years the following entry had to be made in the minute book:-

> 'The Master and Matron attended the Committee in consequence of complaints made of the repeated disorderly conduct of the boys under their care and their evident want of control and management, and . . . . . it was resolved that if hereafter any cause shall arise for complaint of their want of proper attention and management towards the boys, that it will be the duty of this Committee to represent the same to the House, in order to the dismissal of both.'

This dismissal was to follow on St. Thomas's Day unless there was a better report of the situation. There wasn't, so the management was changed, and the Corporation hoped to overcome the difficulties by appointing a married man whose wife would take the situation of Matron, thus ending the dualism that had been an unfortunate feature of the past. Remarkable, the Corporation, having given Mr. Stephens the push, passed the following resolution:-

> 'That it appears due to him to express the perfect satisfaction which the Corporation as Trustees of that Hospital have invariably felt at the care and attention he has always shown to the education of the boys committed to his charge.'

Perhaps the Councillors felt they had been a little harsh in their treatment of the Master and did not wish to prevent him from getting another post.

The new regime of Mr. And Mrs. Wood promised well at first, but soon ran into serious trouble with the boys. A series of unpleasant incidents culminated in Mr. Wood declaring that all the boys were bad characters, whereupon another long report was presented by the Committee in 1827. They declared that great laxity existed in every department of School life and a decided alteration in the general system was imperative. Then came a statement of facts which had occurred within the preceding twelve months in the following terms:-

> 'In the month of February last a communication was made to the President that more than one boy . . . . . had been guilty of theft, under circumstances of a very painful and aggravated nature . . . . A system of terror and intimidation on the part of the senior boys had long existed in the School. It appeared that for a considerable time previous to the enquiry, the boys of one and two years standing had been kept in subjection by acts of the most lawless violence by the senior boys. For months the juniors had been compelled each to secrete a portion of his dinner, which was afterwards collected and given up to the seniors for their sole and separate use. But the evil did not stop here . . . . . when any of the juniors were permitted to leave the School for the purpose of seeing their friends they were ordered to "bring something back" for their petty tyrants, and if they did not comply, they were shamefully beaten and ill-treated by their seniors, and it was an act of violence of this nature, of a most disgusting and atrocious character, which first led to the exposure of this abominable system. It is painful to reflect upon the extent to which this dreadful abuse was carried. In one instance a boy robbed his friends of a considerable sum of money, and another stole a watch out of his father's house, all of which property was given up to the senior boys.'

Unfortunately the chief culprits had so far concealed their activities that they had been given excellent characters by the Master and voted the highest premiums on leaving the School. This was a failure on the part of the Master that did not appeal to the Corporation! The enquiry may have influenced him in his sweeping denunciation of the boys already recorded, and acting on this censure the Corporation did not award any of the boys the extra premiums they normally received. The Committee, however, decided that the Master's strictures were unjustified, and that in consequence there had been a miscarriage of justice which the Corporation should try to remedy.

In their final summing up the Committee touched on the basic problem with which we began, the attitude to the boys themselves.

> 'It certainly appears to the Committee that it would be very desirable if the system of government in the School included a little more of personal attention and kindness to the boys, for, although as regards the Trustees, they are undoubtedly objects of charity, yet the Master should bear in mind that the remuneration he receives with them is more than equal to the terms paid in many schools for pupils of a much higher grade; and an increased degree of respect shown to the boys would have the natural consequence, in those of well disposed minds, to excite an additional degree of respect for themselves, the probable good effect of which must be sufficiently obvious.'

The Woods seem to have taken the strictures to heart and conditions thereafter improved to the benefit of all, though much remained to be done. Traditions, however, die slowly, and sixteen years later the Trustees were dealing with another serious outbreak of the same kind of thieving caused by the demands of senior boys, and this time they expelled five boys and once again commented unfavourably on the laxity of discipline and low educational standards within the School.

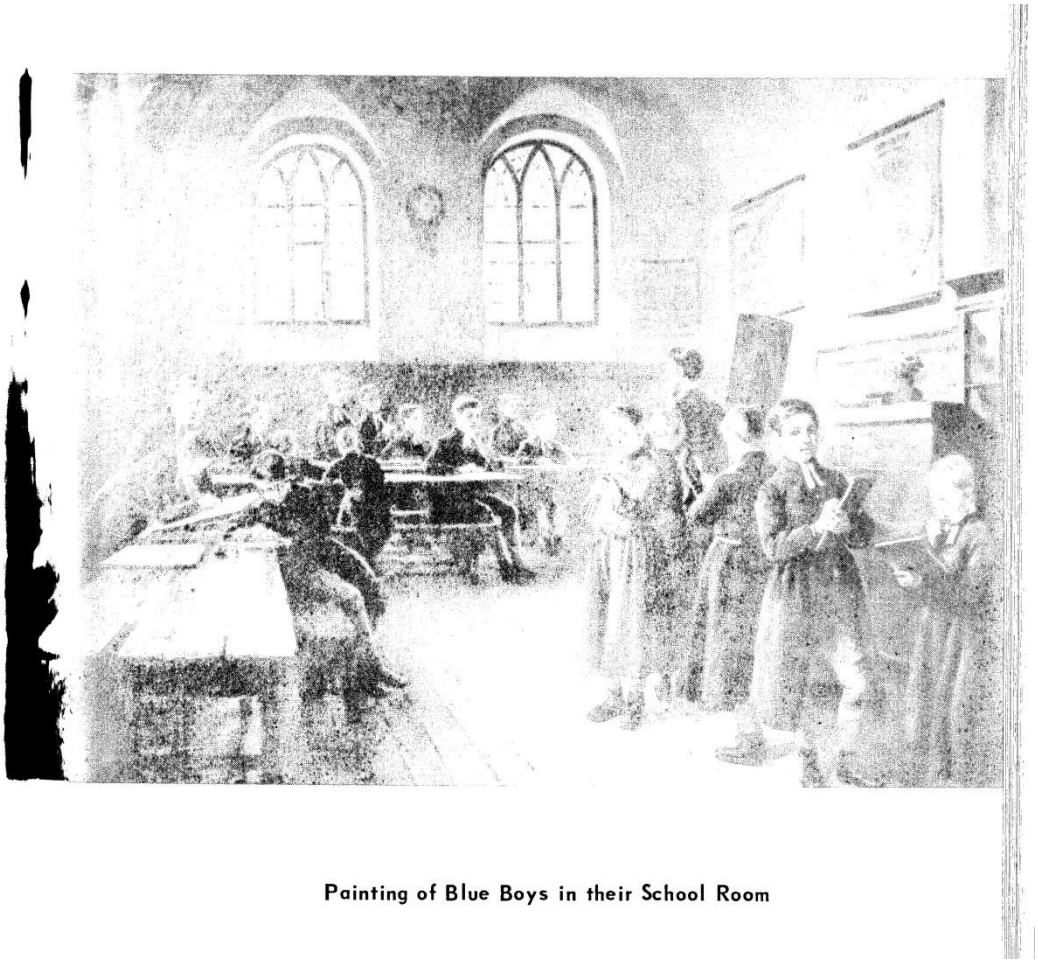
CHAPTER IV

THE SEARCH FOR HIGHER STANDARDS

Following the Reform Act of 1832 the middle-classes were coming into political power for the first time, and many of these people were acutely aware of the advantages of education. Thus the period was marked by strong pleas for the reform of existing schools and the creation of wider opportunities for learning. In spite, however of a series of Royal Commissions on the various types of schools, and the Acts of Parliament which followed in the third quarter of the century, the opportunity to set up a national system of education, financed by taxation, was not taken, largely because public opinion, and the Parliament which reflected it, was not yet prepared for the drastic measure necessary to produce such a system. We shall see in the next chapter how the position of the School was ultimately affected by the Endowed Schools Act, but long before this the 'wind of change' – rather a breeze than a wind – which blew on mid-Victorian England had been felt in the School.

The Municipal Charity Trustees

The first change of importance followed an Act of 1836 entitled 'An Act to provide for the regulation of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales', under which, at the end of that year, control of the Gloucester charities passed from the Corporation to a body of Trustees of local men, appointed by the Lord Chancellor. The Charity Trustees would have large funds to administer, so it is not surprising that there was a contest between the interested parties to obtain places, leading to a petition and counter-petition to the Lord Chancellor and a subsequent case in the Court of Chancery before the list of twenty-one Trustees, instead of the ten originally proposed by the Borough Council, was finally settled. Some of the new Trustees were also members of the Corporation, but these were in a minority, and the Trustees soon developed a sense of unity and a determination to defend the interests of the charities that sometimes ran counter to the views of the Council. They were quite prepared to defend their legal rights to the utmost and take a strong line with the City authorities when they considered it necessary. This is



Painting of Blue Boys in their School Room

shown most clearly in their attitude towards the financial difficulties of the Foundation, which still existed when the Trustees took over. At first they tried to confine the expenses within the limits imposed by Sir Thomas's will, and in this connection hit upon the idea, thereafter followed for the rest of the Charity's history of giving 2/6d. to each of the twenty poor Blue Gowns men and women in lieu of their share in the St. Thomas's Day dinner. This was cheaper than entertaining them! The order was first made in 1836 in the following terms:-

> To the Master and Matron of the School for providing a good and substantial dinner of roast beef and plum pudding for themselves, for twenty scholars and the eight boys going out, and for the servants in the school £4-3-4
>
> To the ten poor Gowns men and the ten poor Gowns women 2/6d. each £2-10-0

Thus the allotted £6-13-4 would be spent, and for the future the annual dinner was to be a strictly School occasion, whatever the scheme of management might require.

However, the general expenses could not be so easily confined, and attempts to cut the costs of running the School were not permanently successful. Matters were not helped by changes in the flow of the Severn, which severely damaged some of the estate lands, especially at the new Warth at Awre. This necessitated the building, at considerable cost, of protective breakwaters and cribs to prevent the land disappearing into the river. A fresh complication followed when a vessel, the 'Forest Queen', ran into one of the new works and was wrecked, but investigation proved that the skipper was at fault, so the Trustees did not have to pay damages. Careful management by an annually appointed sub-committee of the Trustees and increasing rents, in part consequent upon widespread drainage works which improved the quality of the low-lying farms, together with the greater income from new estates bought with money paid by the Gloucester and Dean Forest Railway Company for land taken in 1847 for railway building, in time produced an income which put the Foundation on a sound financial footing. But before this had happened the Trustees had turned their attention to the question of the money taken by the Corporation in 1815, details of which were given in the preceding chapter.

Claim to repayment of money

It was in 1844 that the Trustees decided to take action to recover the £2,380 from the Corporation 'for an alleged debt . . . . . which does not appear to have been due, with interest thereon to the present time,' and this claim was transmitted to the Council, which naturally resisted it An opinion was obtained from a barrister, who advised the Trustees to file an Information and Bill in which the Attorney General should be the informant, the Trustees the plaintiffs and the Corporation and the Town Clerk the defendants, and it was agreed to do this. Proceedings in the Court of Chancery, however, took time, and it was not until June 1847 that the Court eventually found in favour of the Trustees. The Corporation had not only to repay the original £2,380, but also interest at the rate of 3% from the 17th February 1815 until the date of the Court's decision, altogether making a total of £4777-16-7d. In addition 3½% interest on this sum was to be charged annually until such time as the

debt was settled. The Corporation's greed had been amply revenged! But they were as slow in paying the debt as they had been quick to take the money in the first place. Three requests for repayment having been ignored, the Trustees instructed their solicitor in February 1854 'to take such proceedings to recover the amount as may be advised'. The Court of Chancery brought its authority to bear on the Corporation, which ultimately paid the debt twelve months later, having managed to procrastinate for nearly eight years from the date of the original order.

The new scheme, 1852

Meanwhile the Trustees, immediately they had been relieved of their financial worries by the decision of the Court in this case, proceeded to draw up a new scheme for the better application of the Charity's income in an enlarged School. But no changes in a trust of this nature could be made without the sanction of the Court of Chancery, so once again a petition was presented to the Court, asking for a plain statement of what lands and income belonged to the School and for directions as to their use. The Trustees' proposals were considered and commissioners were appointed to enquire into the past history of the Charity and its present management. These commissioners examined all the available documents, and took sworn affidavits from the officers of the Trustees and the Corporation before submitting a report to the Court. The new scheme as confirmed by the Master of the Court was presented to the Trustees for the first time on the 12th August 1852 and was accepted by them at a full meeting early in the next month.

The first schedule of the scheme detailed all the property and other sources of income of the Charity, and concluded that the regular annual income was £1276-17-10d. (See Appendix II). Interest on the debt mentioned above and not yet paid added £162-6-8d. to the income, so an enlarged establishment could be easily supported and the details for the management of this were set out in the second schedule.

We need not spend time on all the details of this schedule, but the new features introduced are worth some consideration. The number of boys, to be known officially as Blue Coat Boys, was to be raised to thirty, an increase of ten. They were no longer required to be the sons of Freemen, but must be sons, or in loco filiorum, of persons resident within the City of Gloucester or living within three miles of the Town Hall. No

boy was to be admitted to the School until he had reached the age of ten, nor remain after he had attained sixteen years, which meant that generally the boys continued to be in School for either three or four years. The procedure to be adopted when a new Master was to be appointed by the Trustees was laid down; he was to be elected after the vacancy had been advertised and he had to be a member of the Church of England. His salary was to be within the scale of £70 to £120 per annum, the actual amount being within the jurisdiction of the Trustees. In addition he was to have the apartments in the Hospital, free from rent, taxes and repairs, together with full board, heating and lighting. Thus, we can see that the remuneration was a generous one and likely to attract good candidates, especially when we consider the general level of salary in the teaching profession then. Provision was also made for the appointment of a Matron at £40 per annum and such domestic servants as the Trustees thought fit. For the first time it was clearly stated that both the Master and the Matron were entitled to a pension after fifteen years' service, though such pension was to be at the discretion of the Trustees. A minimum of six apprenticeships were to be awarded annually, one to the value of £30, two at £25 and the others of £20. The twenty poor men and women were to continue as an annual charge of about £30 on the income of the Foundation, and they were supposed to receive an invitation to the annual dinner on St. Thomas's Day, the cost of which was not to exceed £10. The other charitable purposes of Sir Thomas's original bequest were not forgotten, for every fifth year, if funds permitted, gifts were to be made to seven poor young men, poor maid servants and decayed housekeepers.

Perhaps the most interesting section of the schedule, however, is that which dealt with the education and control of the boys. The scheme required the Master to teach the boys

> 'the principles of the Christian Religion, the English Language, Reading and Writing, History, Geography and Arithmetic and such other branches of learning as the Trustees shall from time to time require and prescribe'.

The syllabus merely confirmed the expanded course already being worked in the School, but the phrase 'such other branches of learning' was to prove before long a bone of contention between the Trustees and

the Master and between the Trustees themselves as individuals with differing views of the purpose of the education provided in the School.

The Master was responsible for the spiritual welfare of the boys, for the following requirements were stated:-

> 'Prayers selected by the Master with the approbation of the Trustees shall be offered up daily in the School by the Master, and someone amongst the more advanced and competent boys shall read daily in the School some suitable lessons from the Holy Scriptures.'

The boys were also to be instructed in the Church of England catechism and be taken regularly, as was the School's custom, to the Cathedral, but, as the intake of boys was not restricted on religious grounds, non-Anglicans were to be allowed to attend their own churches. The purpose of the Master's control was thus summed up in this sentence from the schedule:-

> 'It shall be (the Master's) duty to bring them up as religious and moral boys and of good deportment and manners.'

The challenge of higher academic standards had not yet been accepted, at least by the Trustees and the Court of Chancery, and so the purpose of the School remained unchanged; it was to go on producing reliable and honest apprentices.

Standards within the School

Though the Trustees did not desire a radical change in the type of education to be given in the School, they could hardly ignore the consistent failure to reach even reasonable standards at the level they accepted, and as early as September 1842 they were appointing a committee to enquire into the system of education within the School, and giving it power to suggest improvements. One of the first things that came to light was the need for a supply of new books, since

> 'many of the books now in use by the boys have been sadly defaced by obscene writing and are generally in a ragged and dirty condition',

according to a report made to the Trustees in the following month. Books, however, remained a problem, for the boys would read anything they could lay hands on during the long evenings, and it was not until 1852 that the obvious steps were taken to remedy this lack. In the January of that year the boys were forbidden to bring books into the School unless they had first been approved by the Master. The Trustees then recorded the following minute:-

> 'That it would be desirable to form a library of useful and entertaining works, for the use of the boys out of school hours under proper regulations, and that to commence such library the President be authorized to purchase not exceeding £5 worth of books on the supplementary list of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.'

If a Blue Boy could return now, not least of the wonders that would impress him would be the wealth of books in the School library and the way such riches are taken for granted by his successors!

But books were not the only cause of worry to the Trustees. Following yet another serious breach of discipline in 1843, they held another investigation of the life of the School. They commented unfavourably upon 'the incompetency of the boys in answering simple grammatical questions and the laxity of discipline in the School'. They also considered that the boys had too many holidays, so the following were prescribed as the only holidays in future:-

> '14 days at Christmas
> 14 days at Midsummer
> Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week
> Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun week
> The Queen's Birthday, 29th May
> 5th November
> One day (the second) at Barton Fair
> One day at the Mayor's Bounds'.*

*This followed the participation of the boys in 'beating the bounds' – always an occasion for merriment and sometimes of things more serious, as on Sept. 16th, 1841, when W. H. Cooke, a Blue Boy, rescued the son of Lieutenant Bradley of the Royal Navy from drowning, which conduct was described as 'heroic' by the Master.

The modern schoolboy will, no doubt, regard this with horror, but perhaps there are parents who will sigh 'for the good old times'!

The investigation and the strictures of the Trustees seemed to have an effect, and reports of examinations in the succeeding years were encouraging. Mr. Charleton, however, was getting old. So old in fact that when the Trustees ordered an increase in the amount of recreation to be allowed to the boys they suddenly realised that the Master was too elderly to accompany them. They, therefore, employed 'an active and steady person' to take care of the boys on these excursions, and the boys were to 'be allowed bats and balls to play with in the Town Ham'. The result was this entry in the account book of 1849:-

> 'Paid Meadows for Cricket Bats, Ball and Wickets for the boys' recreation 9s. 4d.'

This is the first record of any connection with cricket.

Unfavourable Reports

But to get back to Mr. Charleton's increasing age. It obviously affected his teaching, for there were two critical reports of examinations in 1849, and again in 1852, just after his sudden resignation on grounds of ill health. The first of these was conducted by Mr. George Adam, the Master of the Crypt School, and his report contained the following censure:-

> 'I am sorry to inform you that their knowledge in English Grammar and Geography was most defective and their answers such as could hardly have been expected from boys of their age place under the most disadvantageous circumstances. With regard to Arithmetic some of them have made considerable advance and a few showed quickness and correctness in execution, but their general acquirements, even in this most useful branch of education, were far from creditable to them'.

Not all was bad, however, for Mr. Adam commented favourably on the reading and spelling, the repetition of the Church catechism, and, in the case of the top form, their knowledge of English History. There could be no disguising the fact that the standard was poor, and Mr. Adam

suggested that frequent oral examinations should be carried out by the Master and the Trustees should provide some maps to assist the boys 'in learning the localities and contiguities of County Towns etc.' – the main substance of countless dreary Geography lessons in those days.

The examination of 1852 was carried out by the Rev. J. J. Barlow, who was to be the regular examiner for many years to come. He prepared a long report, which gives a clear picture of the failings of the School, and deserves to be quoted at some length. Having praised the changes made under Mr. Woodward, who had charge of the School temporarily after the resignation of Mr. Charleton, he suggested that the boys were willing to learn and the chief fault was in the system of education followed in the School. He then made a list of the principal evils:-

> 'The first is that hitherto the classes have been composed, not according to merit or proficiency, but according to standing on the Foundation: the boys of the 1st Year have not been allowed, however advanced, to use any of the books used by those of the 2nd and 3rd Years. For instance, no boy has been allowed to learn any grammar until his second year. The same remark applies to their arithmetic. In the first year, whatever may have been learnt before a boy has entered the School, he has been confined to an elementary book. In the second year merely another arithmetic book has been placed in his hands. In the third year another.

Mr. Barlow proceeded to point out, very properly, that a system such as this provided no incentive for able boys. He then went on:-

> 'Another evil has been the want of occupation in the evening – no work being done out of school hours – no exercises being set – in short, nothing being done beyond the bare routine of learning a few uninteresting lessons.'

Oh those evenings! What a bore they must have been and what a constant invitation to mischief-making! Mr. Barlow added:-

> 'Another consequence of this system has been the unlimited introduction of books (many of them of an immoral tendency) by the boys – an evil since happily checked by the supply of

interesting books by the Trustees, and the prohibition of any books not approved by the Master. Many of the irregularities are owing . . . . . to the want of proper lights for the School, an evil aggravated by the boys being allowed the use of the playground even in the winter evenings until their bed time.'

So much for the evils. What suggestions could he make to remedy them? He had a number to offer, and we must now turn to these, which he set out in numerical form in his report as follows:-

1. I would suggest an alteration with respect to books – for instance – that there be only *one* grammar and *one* arithmetic used throughout the School. This will afford much help towards securing a better classification of the boys.

2. That the division into *years* be at once done away with – some of the boys in the 2nd Year being even now much more advanced than most in the 3rd Year.

3. That a black board be provided for class lessons, ruled on one side for music. The board enables the master to give instructions and explanations to many boys at any one time. And some slight instruction in music will be an amusement as well as a reward for exertion.'

The complete lack of a black board in the School must seem strange to generations brought up on 'chalk and talk', but it does reflect on the unimaginative intellectual fare doled out to the boys. It is doubtful whether the fine present-day choir will feel like tracing its ancestry to this recommendation of Mr. Barlow; music for amusement, indeed!

Then came the other recommendations:-

4. That there be a supply of maps such as those published by the Christian Knowledge Society, some information on Geography being a very important part of Education to all classes.

5. That gas be introduced into the School before the winter that the boys may employ their evenings profitably.

6. A general examination of the scholars at least once a year in the presence of some of the Trustees.

7. Some slight rewards be given for general good conduct and for passing the examinations successfully.

Lastly . . . . . that some general order be made by the Trustees about the visits made by the boys to their homes. At present 4 or 5 are allowed to spend their Sunday evenings at home in succession. This plan has a tendency to unsettle the boys. An effectual substitute would be a monthly half-holiday on such day as the Trustees shall appoint.'

Mr. Barlow finished with a glowing tribute to the boys in the following terms:-

'I have never met with a more orderly and respectful set of boys in any school. That they have not made more progress in learning has been rather owing to a want of system than any disinclination on the part of the scholars to avail themselves of the opportunities of improvement offered to them.

One thing has especially struck me as the result of close observation. It is the general truthfulness of the boys. Especially of late I have found myself able to trust implicitly to their word.'

So much, then, for the boys. Would they now get the kind of leadership Mr. Barlow considered they deserved?

Mr. Jeffery as Master

Upon the resignation of Mr. Charlton the Trustees received applications from fifty-seven candidates for the vacancy. They interviewed three and chose Mr. Walter Jeffery of the Diocesan School, Norwich. The minute recording this appointment said that all three candidates were of the highest quality, but as the other two were not yet twenty-three years of age the situation went to Mr. Jeffery 'who is some years their senior'. The School was thus put in the hands of a capable young man, whose influence began to be felt as soon as he took up his duties in the summer of 1852. He was a great believer in getting the boys

out of the School in order to take them to places or events of interest. The first major venture of this sort had, in fact, been undertaken just before Mr. Jeffery became Master, when in 1851 all the boys had been taken to London by rail and had spent a week there at the end of August, visiting the Great Exhibition. This must have been a wonderful adventure for the boys, made possible by the new means of cheap rail transport and the generosity of the Trustees, who paid the bill for board, lodging and expenses and the railway fare, amounting in all to £31-2-4. Mr. Jeffery followed this up vigorously, and the minute books bear testimony to his determination to widen the interests of the boys. He may truly be said to be the originator of the school journey, which is now a recognised part of education at Rich's, and many other schools. Generally speaking, given the circumstances of the mid-nineteenth century, these journeys could not be very far afield, and places such as Sharpness, Chepstow and Tintern were the usual limits of the excursions. On one occasion, when he ventured further afield, Mr. Jeffery incurred a mild rebuke from the Trustees, as is evident from this entry in the minute book for the 6th February 1854:-

> 'Ordered that Jr. Jeffery be paid a bill of £2-15-0 for expences incurred by him in taking the boys to Cardiff instead of giving them two days holiday during Barton Fair – but, that he be requested not to incur any similar expences for the future without the concurrence of the President.'

Did the boys regard a trip to Cardiff as the equivalent of two days holiday at home?

The local outings, too, embraced an interesting variety of items. The Master took the boys to the Royal Agricultural Exhibition, when it was held in Gloucester in 1853. This seems to have been a great occasion in the City, and the School played its part by agreeing to the Mayor's request for the use of the large room at the School for 'public purposes' during the Exhibition and by decorating the exterior of the School, at a cost of £3-9-3. Other items included visits to a 'school feast' at St. John's, Cheltenham, in which the Master was taking part, to a model of Sebastopol during the fighting in the Crimean War, to a concert at the Working Mans Institute, to a lecture on light and astronomy, and to what the account book describes in general terms as 'instructive

exhibitions'. On another occasion he obtained the services of a lecturer to talk to the boys about Egypt and Palestine. All these were new departures and indicate a much livelier approach to the general education of the boys than had existed in the School previously. No doubt the boys welcomed the change, and approved of the Master who introduced these interesting items. In fact, when Mr. Jeffery was in trouble with the Trustees at a later date, fifty-seven old boys signed a memorial declaring their support for him and his methods of teaching and this is a fair indication of the esteem in which he was held.

Ultimately, however, a master will be judged by his effectiveness in the classroom, and we must now consider Mr. Jeffery in this sphere. At first he concentrated on improving the general standard in the existing subjects, and this is made clear in the first full report he presented in December 1853. Having listed the subjects taught, he went on to explain that he was aiming at a sound basis in each subject rather than hurrying on, but that his method would, eventually, produce the best results. This view was supported by the reverent gentlemen who acted as external examiners, for they reported

> '. . . . . a general and decided improvement. It is our opinion that the present system if fairly carried out will be attended by the most beneficial results.'

The reports over the next few years continued to bear witness to the progress of the boys in almost all subjects, except English grammar, the failings in which produced unfavourable comments for some time before that, too, finally met with the approbation of the examiners.

Under Mr. Jeffery new subjects were added to the School's curriculum. As early as the beginning of his second year as Master he was persuading the Trustees to supply him with a pair of scales, a set of weights, a set of measures and a few carpenters' tools for the use of the boys, and a little later he was allowed to purchase a complete set of apparatus for model drawing for the school. Practical work was also done in the garden, which the Trustees rented for a number of years for the School. This was in Asylum Lane, Wotton – in the area of the present Horton Road, where the School was to play cricket in later years. In their application to the Charity Commissioners for permission to become

tenants of this land, the Trustees described its proposed use as 'for the recreation and instruction of the Blue Coat boys, the produce being consumed in the Hospital'. Mr. Jeffery was obviously pleased with the scheme, which probably owed much to his initiative, for he referred to it in the following terms in a report after a few months' working:-

> 'I must advert to the experiment of gardening which I can safely say has been perfectly satisfactory. To keep the boys in health daily exercise abroad is necessary; the formal walk none of them like, but all are pleased to go to work in the garden. I look upon it as an additional means of practical training. I believe it will not only clear expences, but yield a balance.'

The Trustees bought a truck to carry equipment and produce to and fro between the School and the garden, and the inhabitants in the neighbourhood must have grown used to the sight of a group of boys in their ancient style uniforms trundling along with their garden cart. But the enthusiasm did not last very long, for the tenancy was allowed to lapse after nine years.

However, the most important addition is signalled in the following apparently innocuous entry in the accounts for 1855:-

> 'Paid John Lovis for Chemicals for experiments in the School
> 1s. 2d.'

This little beginning was to grow into a storm that greatly disturbed the management of the School. 'Science', like 'comprehensive education' in our own day, was to become a key word in the current educational controversy. The Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace revealed the dangers of increasing foreign competition in the industrial field where Great Britain had led for so long, and the demand for the provision of scientific and technical instruction for workpeople was intensified in consequence. A Science and Art Department was created, which in 1856 was put under the control of the Education Department of the Committee of Council, with head quarters at South Kensington. In order to encourage the teaching of science and art the Department instituted examinations and made grants to schools which presented successful pupils. It also instituted a special examination for teachers of

science, and one of those who gained a certificate in the first year of its inception in 1859 was Mr. Jeffery. Shortly afterwards the Court of Chancery permitted the number of boys to be increased to thirty-four and the newly qualified Master had his salary increased to the maximum permitted by the scheme, namely £120 per annum. But the general policy of the Science and Art Department was a bad one. Grants were paid according to the number of pupils who passed the special examinations instituted by the Department, and it was possible to pass the examinations without doing any practical work, and many candidates obtained certificates who had not seen or handled any scientific apparatus, having been instructed by teachers whose knowledge was also entirely theoretical. The School was later to become one of many which presented pupils for these examinations and was to be recognised by the Science and Art Department as an organised school of science, receiving grants for its successful candidates.

Mr. Jeffery was obviously a man of great enthusiasm, as well as a determined character, and his love of science as a school subject led him into conflict with the Trustees, some of whom were apparently not in sympathy with these 'new' ideas. As early as December 1860 they passed the following resolution

> 'That the Trustees are of opinion that the time of the boys should not be devoted to chemistry that may interfere with their progress in the more elementary and generally useful branches of education.'

Mr. Jeffery apparently ignored these directions and as the years passed by, he became increasingly a law unto himself, and the Trustees found themselves having to take him to task over actions they could not approve, including the quantity of stationery used for model drawing, the consumption of gas in the School, and, more important, the general management of the boys. In 1861, for example, the following minute was recorded:-

> 'Mr. Jeffery . . . . . was informed that it was the opinion of the Trustees that he should accompany the boys when they go to the Cathedral and sit with them or so near as to exercise a sufficient supervision over them.'

It seems likely that Mr. Jeffery became increasingly impatient of the low standard of many of the boys elected to the School, whom the examiners referred to in one report as 'a clog on the School' and whom he regarded as 'a serious drawback to the rest of the School'. In consequence his restless energy found outlets elsewhere, to the detriment of the general discipline of the School,, which now suffered a serious decline. It was trouble with the boys, whom the Trustees insisted should have their meals in the schoolroom where they were taught instead of providing a decent dining room as requested by the Master, that led to an investigation in 1868 and a consequent upheaval.

The investigations of 1868 and 1869

The minutes of the investigating Trustees make interesting reading, revealing as they do the unhappy atmosphere existing in the School.

> 'The Trustees . . . . . examined the Master at considerable length in reference to alleged neglect of duty and absence from the School consequent upon his being interested in a photographic business; being a member of a company of Rifle Volunteers; acting as Secretary to the Free Library, and the devotion of some of the school hours to the instruction of a few of the boys in chemistry and other scientific subjects, not part of the ordinary School course.'

They also tried to ascertain

> '. . . . . the causes of the existing disaffection and disorder in the School, the angry feelings entertained by the parents of some of the boys towards the Master, and the various complaints against him of neglect of duty, punishing the boys with undue severity, and of obtaining from each boy by improper means a written confession of his own faults and information respecting those of his school-fellows.'

It rather looks as though a good deal of 'muck' was raked up, and two of the Trustees moved a resolution for the removal of Mr. Jeffery, but this found no support. Instead, it was decided to appoint a committee to consider the running of the School and

'. . . . . to see how far it is practicable to adapt the teaching to the requirements of the age,'

though at the same time the Master was instructed to give up his other activities and give is whole time to the School.

The committee drew up a scheme in which they tried to balance the claims of the older and the newer subjects and fit both into the working of the School. They insisted on the teaching of the subjects laid down in the scheme of 1852 and stressed the need for writing from dictation, which Mr. Jeffery had apparently abandoned. But they also decided that drawing was essential for boys who were going to be apprentices, and they suggested official approval for a science class in connection with the Science and Art Department, provided it was limited to Second and Third Year boys and the parents were given permission to withdraw their sons if they objected to them receiving such instruction. In order to give them a chance in the examination, and, no doubts, to limit Mr. Jeffery's enthusiasm, the science class was to be allowed to spend only the afternoon school hours between February and May on scientific subjects, together with extra hours in the evening for a period of not more than ten weeks before the examination. In future the School hours were from 9 until 12 a.m., and from 2 until 4 p.m. and in the evening from 6.30 until 8. This widening of the syllabus would throw an added burden on the Master and the committee decided that an Assistant Master should be engaged. These recommendations were accepted by the Trustees, but the School continued to be in a troubled state, and disciplinary problems continued. Mr. Jeffery then asked the Trustees to confirm a new set of rules for School routine and discipline and this was done. A copy of these rules, agreed to on the 7th December 1868, now hangs in the corridor of the new building.

Some of the Trustees, led by Dr. Washbourn, continued to be worried by what they felt to be the low standard of education in the School and it was decided to hold a further enquiry, which resulted in another report in April 1869. The Trustees were astonished to learn that the resolutions of the previous year respecting drawing throughout the School, the exclusion of First Year boys from the Science class and the School hours had been completely ignored by the Master. Not unnaturally the committee felt strongly about this:-

> 'They cannot but feel that in thus omitting to carry out the instructions of the Trustees, the Master has been guilty of a most serious dereliction of duty . . . . .
>
> The committee fully recognise the great qualifications for teaching which the Master possesses, and the high state of proficiency attained by the scholars . . . . . but . . . . . they also recognise a matter of as great, if not greater, importance, namely the necessity of the Master obeying in every particular the wishes and directions of the Trustees; without which obedience no School can be properly governed, and no proper discipline maintained among the boys.'

The Trustees were nearing the end of their patience, but they still did not wish to get rid of a competent and enthusiastic teacher, so they decided to 'clip his wings' instead. Thus:-

> 'The committee are convinced that the Master's too great zeal in scientific pursuits has led to the infractions of the resolutions before mentioned, and they have arrived, though most reluctantly, at the opinion that it is desirable at present that no scientific subjects in connection with the Science and Art Department . . . . . be taught in the Blue Coat School; that the previous resolutions of the Trustees permitting such subjects to be taught and setting apart certain hours for the teaching be rescinded, but that the resolutions with reference to the drawing lessons and the School hours be reiterated, and that the Master be ordered forthwith to carry them into effect.'

The Trustees so far relented, on representation from the secretary of the local Committee for conducting Science Classes, as to allow the boys already entered for the following month's examinations to sit them. On all other counts the resolutions of the committee were accepted by the Trustees.

A month later Mr. Jeffery was granted sick leave, and the school was left in the hands of Mr. Edwin Roberts of Magdalen College, Oxford, an old Blue Coat boy, whom at one time the Master had hoped to have as a pupil teacher, but the arrangement had broken down. He may well have been the first university student the School produced. On Mr.

Jeffery's return the matter of the boys' refusal to eat the soup and beef provided, referred to in the previous chapter, came to light, and this proved to be too much for the Trustees' patience. The visiting committee reported:-

> 'We have made minute enquiries into the condition of the School and we find it to be most unsatisfactory. The School is evidently in a demoralised state . . . . . We have deliberated long and anxiously with respect to the Master . . . . . , and, having regard to the frequency with which of late years the Trustees have been compelled to find fault with his management, his apparent unwillingness to carry out their reiterated directions in relation to the system of education in the School, these considerations, taken in connection with . . . . . the evident antagonism of the boys towards their Master . . . . . lead us to the conclusion that a better state of things in the Hospital cannot be expected under the present regime, and we therefore recommend that Mr. Jeffery be called upon to resign the Mastership of the Institution without delay.'

Mr. Jeffery, confident in his abilities and his standing with the Trustees, was shocked by this unexpected demand, but there was no way out, so he did his best to salve his wounded pride by offering his resignation on the grounds of his continuing ill-health, which prevented him from carrying out the very onerous duties of the School as efficiently as he wished. He asked for and was granted a retiring pension, which the Trustees fixed at £50 per annum. He could not yet have been fifty years of age.

Extension of Apprenticeships

One other change during this period deserves a brief mention. If the syllabus was widened, the possible spheres of employment were enlarged, but the will and the scheme of 1852 directed that boys should be apprenticed to come 'handicraft or trade'. Could this be widened? The Charity Commissioners saw no difficulty and sanctioned the apprenticeship of two boys as pupil teachers before they made a general pronouncement on the matter in September 1859 in the following terms:-

> ‘Blue Coat boys may be properly placed out as apprentices with school-masters or persons engaged in trade or business but not following any handicraft occupation.’

This decision was of great benefit to the boys and thereafter there was a steady flow of apprentices into teaching and commerce. The School was having influence in a wider field.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST YEARS OF THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL

The resignation of Mr. Jeffery, however necessary for the general good of the School, represented a check on its academic advance and was an unfortunate success for those who stressed the charity function of the Foundation at the expense of its educational purpose. The new Master, however keen he might be to improve the standard of learning and widen the scope of the teaching within the School, would have to tread warily until the suspicion of the 'new' subjects had died down. The Trustees appointed Mr. James Crofts of Widcombe Boys' School, Bath to the vacancy and he took up his duties at the end of the Christmas holiday of 1869. He was a young man of great determination and energy, though sometimes frail in health, anxious to improve the reputation of the Blue Coat School and its Master, and ready to proclaim his convictions at considerable length in rather pompous prose in a stream of letters and reports to the Trustees.

Problems for Mr. Crofts

Mr. Crofts's constant complaint in the early years of his mastership was the poor quality of many of the boys he had to teach. He frequently urged that more consideration should be given to the intellectual qualities of the candidates for admission, but very often his pleas went unheeded, as the Trustees felt that it was their duty to consider the charitable claims of the applicants before other considerations. The 'classic' example of this occurred in 1870. Mr. Crofts reported to the Trustees on the 4th April that John Brown, one of the Blue Coat boys, had wounded one of the other boys in the back with a knife. The Master did not know whether the action was intentional or accidental, but he was so weak intellectually that he was not fit to be in the School. The Trustees requested the Medical Officer to examine Brown and then they did so themselves, as this minute of April 9th records:-

> '. . . . . They had a long conversation with the boy himself and made enquiry of the Master respecting him. They are of opinion

that although the boy is in many respects mentally deficient there is no sufficient reason why he should be dismissed from the School.'

Poor Mr. Crofts! It is no wonder that he felt that his task was being made unnecessarily difficult. Education was becoming increasingly important and the John Browns of the School were a definite hindrance to progress. In every annual report on the examination of candidates Mr. Crofts suggested that a proportion of the boys should be elected by scholarship and not just the first boy on the list, whose election by this time had become automatic. The Trustees only acceded to this constant plea to the extent of electing the first two boys in most years, though later they increased the election on scholastic grounds to the first four boys. They also agreed not to elect boys who obtained only five marks or less out of the possible sixty awarded for the simple entrance examination. In consequence the Master found himself constantly facing the problem of teaching boys of a very wide range of ability and aptitude. We have space to quote at length but one sample of Mr. Crofts's thinking and mode of expression. This is taken from his report of 1874 when eighty boys from twelve elementary schools competed for the eleven places to be awarded. Mr. Crofts wrote

'. . . . . There never was a time when education was so cheap as at the present day . . . . . and cases of early neglect should be rare, as there is really little room for excuse on this score.

It has been the rule of the Board to admit the first boy on the list solely on his merits. I should be thankful if this rule were extended so as to embrace a few of the best boys; and I am sure such an arrangement would be welcomed by the National School teachers whose pupils compete. The knowledge that the top boy only is sure of election is not sufficient to inspire all scholars with the hope of being successful. Last year four boys were chosen who stood within the first six on the list and as a natural consequence I have got hope of the present first year boys.

After all, it is the hard working boy who gives a name to a School, holds up a standard to which the plodding ones may shape their course and eventually attain and, like the band to a

regiment, awakens the mass to united effort and saves the School from oblivion. It is a waste of machinery and motive power to have to instruct boys in what they can obtain for 2d a week at any National School.

I trust, gentlemen, you will see by the Christmas reports that I have made good use of the material placed in my hands. The better the quality of the raw material the better the manufactured article. Suppose five scholarships be awarded when there are eleven vacancies and six scholarships when twelve – and let it be known to the teachers of Gloucester and you will find the Blue Coat School not only doing good within its walls, but in every school within the prescribed district . . . . .'

There was to be little progress in this direction, however, until the complete reorganisation of Gloucester's secondary education in 1882. Mr. Crofts did manage to make progress with the brighter boys and he widened the scope of his teaching with these, about a dozen of them, by introducing them to French, aiming to give them a thorough grounding in the elements of the language so that they could follow up the study when they left school, if they so desired. He could not hope to do more than this as the subject was only taken up in the last year. That he had time to do this was made possible by the introduction of a pupil teacher into the School. In November 1875 the Master had penned the following 'cri de coeur' to the Trustees:-

'. . . . . You are aware that this is a Day, Night and Sunday School – in itself no light work – but, add to this the continuous responsibility of the Master, and it will not be difficult to realise the calls on his time and energy . . . . .

In our School we have every grade of scholarship, and consequently a great deal of individual teaching is required. This state of things cannot exist without a clog being put on the progress of the quicker boys; as the Master, anxious to do justice to all, is compelled of necessity to devote a large portion of time to the dull boys. However, I have spared no time and pains to work the whole School, and we have passed good examinations, but I cannot help feeling that much more might be done at a small expenditure

of money. My energies have been taxed to the utmost and you have seen what I can do single-handed. With no suspension of the strain of duty it is impossible for the Master to do justice to himself or to the boys . . . . .

Suppose you gave me, say, a youth of 15, as an apprentice to the profession of school-master, to board and lodge in the Hospital, at a salary almost nominal, and the want would be supplied . . . . .

I am quite prepared to go on as before; but I am convinced that a little help would benefit the School to a great degree and tend to work it up to the requirements of the times.'

The Trustees accepted the argument and William Thomas Boone an ex-Blue Coat boy, who had been top of the entrance examination in his year and had left with the highest premium of £30 to be apprenticed to Mr. Roper, the Master of St. Luke's School, agreed to become a pupil teacher in his old School. This was a sensible arrangement as he would be familiar with Mr. Crofts's methods and the general running of the School. He was to be paid £10 per year plus board and lodging. He served his five years as pupil teacher to the satisfaction of the Trustees, who voted him a gratuity of £5 when he left the School*. The division of work, with Boone doing a good deal of the routine instruction of the slower boys, enabled the Master to widen the syllabus with the brighter ones, and this was vital for the future well-being of the School.

Mr. Crofts no doubt felt the need for this raising of standards, for he was subject to oblique criticism from the keen supporters of science teaching, who were not reconciled to the resignation of the previous Master and the restrictions on the teaching of science imposed by the Trustees. Mr. Jeffery actually wrote to the Trustees suggesting that he be allowed to start a science class in the School, but not unnaturally they refused to entertain the idea. But the protagonists of science had not had their final say, and before long Mr. Crofts was taking offence at a speech by the Rev. Hugh Fowler, the secretary of the local classes in science, made at a distribution of prizes to science pupils. A typical self-justifying letter from Mr. Crofts resulted.

*Boone won a Queen's Scholarship to Cheltenham Training College, passing 46th out of over 1500 candidates.

The Blue School
16th October 1873

Gentlemen,

I beg respectfully to call your attention to some remarks that were made by the Rev. Hugh Fowler . . . . . That (these) implied mistrust in the present government of the Blue School it is not my place to point out; but in so far as they were intended as a slight on the standard of education imparted to the boys, I contend they are unmerited.

. . . . . The Blue School . . . . . has a certain amount of prestige to sustain, and careless and slighting remarks going forth to the public cannot but have some prejudicial effect; and it is but fair that any misapprehension on the point in question should be set right.

It was said the 'curriculum' was limited to 'the 3 Rs', thus rating us on a level with National Schools, to say nothing of the insinuation couched in those remarks.

Science is perhaps becoming a 'sine qua non' in all schools, and I am not insensible to its value when judiciously taught; nor, on the other hand, do I think it criminal to give preference to the primary subjects of education . . . . .

If science has been 'eliminated', as the reverend gentleman said, two years ago, I say art has been planted and fostered, and the results of the last March examination will bear favourable comparison with any school in the Kingdom of whatever class.

Art, which includes geometrical drawing and reasoning, is as useful to a mechanical trade as science, and this is the chief channel into which the Blue Boys are drafted.

If you, gentlemen, desire science to be taught, I shall be most willing to carry out your wishes, since I hold 1st Class Advanced Certificates from the Department, which qualify me as a teacher of science.

. . . . . Since I received the honour of your appointment here I have conscientiously worked so as to do justice to each boy of whatever ability and have devoted the whole of my time to the welfare of the School (a telling thrust at his predecessor, this!) and I strongly feel that the remarks of the reverend gentleman are undeserved and uncalled for.

I am etc.,

James Crofts.

The Trustees considered the letter, but decided that they had no need to defend their decisions before the public nor to take any notice of Mr. Fowler's remarks. However, to salve Mr. Crofts's wounded self-esteem, they decided to send the results of the drawing examination to the local papers for publication, and continued the practice in the following years as the results continued to be highly satisfactory.

Other troubles, too, beset Mr. Crofts in the early years of his Mastership. The boys evidently resented his attempts to impose a firm discipline after the laxity of the preceding period. Within eight months of his appointment he was making a serious complaint to the Trustees about eight of the ten third year boys 'for bullying . . . . . and for insubordination and general disregard for the rules of the Hospital'. They were 'very bad and some of them seem alike insensible to persuasion or coercion'. Investigation proved that a system of terrorism, as bad as that at the beginning of the century, was still exercised by the Seniors over the Juniors, whose life must often have been sheer misery. The Committee of Visitors stated that they

> 'have no doubt that the bad conduct of the Senior boys towards their younger School-fellows is to some extent traditional, but it appears to have become of late so systematic and to have been carried to such lengths that the Committee consider the time has arrived when a serious and determined effort must be made to protect the younger boys and, at the same time, the character of the School.'

Stern measures were therefore taken: three boys were expelled immediately and five others were severely flogged 'with a birch rod' by

the Master in the presence of the Medical Officer and the Surgeon and warned that unless they mended their ways they, too, would be expelled and lose their premiums. The remaining two Seniors were cautioned that their premiums would depend upon their future conduct. A couple of months later four of the boys ran away from the School, and since this was the second offence by one of them he was expelled, while the other three were flogged. Thereafter the boys recognised that the Master meant to be in control and the School settled down to its work and play in a happier and healthier spirit. On one occasion only after this is there a reference in the minutes to a matter of discipline directly affecting the Master. It arose from a complaint made by two parents that their sons and other boys had been flogged with undue severity by Mr. Crofts. He explained to the Trustees that he had taken the boys to Chosen Hill and given them permission to amuse themselves for an hour, but some of the older boys had disobeyed his instructions and slipped off to a nearby public house.

> 'and had there partaken so freely of beer, porter, cider and ginger beer (it reads like an inn-keeper's licence!) that some of them were incapable of obeying his directions, and . . . . . much insubordination and disorder resulted therefrom.'

The next day the eight offenders had been birched, 'but by no means severely'. The two boys whose parents had complained were questioned and confirmed what the Master had said and also contradicted several statements made by their parents about the flogging and the conduct of the Master, who was, therefore, completely vindicated.

One further trouble arose for Mr. Crofts in these early years; his relations with the Matron were not of the best. She had been in office before he came and regarded herself as his superior since she was also his senior in years. The servants, whom he considered to be too young to be employed in a boys' boarding school, took their cue from the Matron and did not give him the attention or the respect to which he felt himself entitled. Their flirtation with young men at the front door of the Hospital night after night, and at other times when off duty, could hardly be said to enhance the reputation of the School. The supervision of the Matron had become slack in this and other respects and she was sometimes missing from the School when she should have been on duty. The

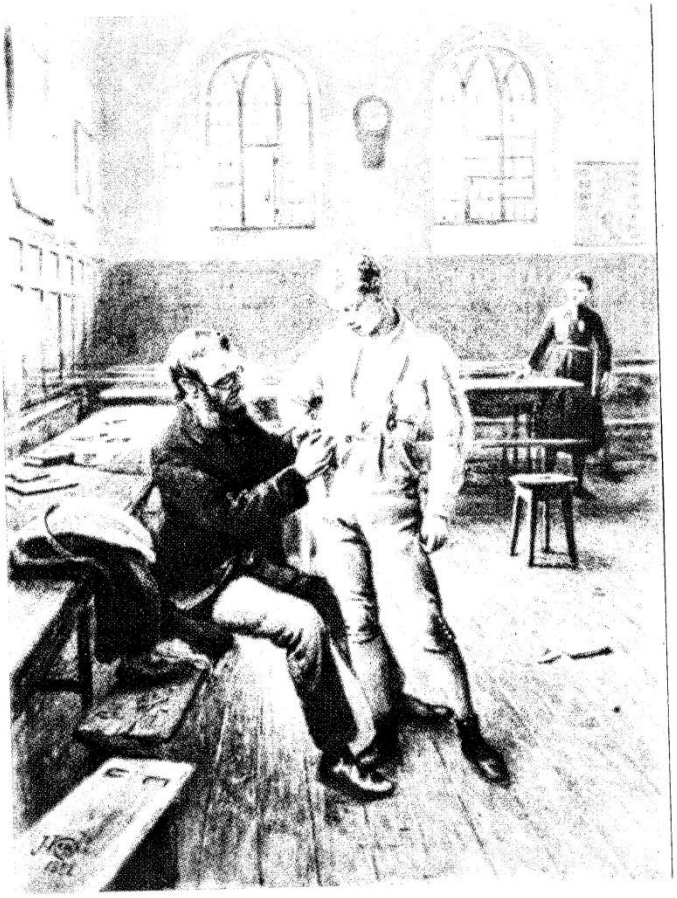
Trustees appointed a Committee to enquire into the situation, and the result was a very severe reprimand for the Matron, who was also told in no uncertain terms that she was in no sense upon an equality with the Master and that she must do everything in her power to promote his comfort and show respect to him. A number of practical reforms were authorised, but perhaps the sharpest rebuke was kept until the last paragraph of the report. This read

> 'The Committee wish to express strongly their opinion that the gross derelictions of duty and other irregularities on the part of the Matron would not have been possible if the House Visitors had discharged their duties by attending the Hospital more frequently, and a hope that in future those Gentlemen who consent to act as Visitors will bear in mind that the well-being of the Institution will in great measure be proportionate to the interest they take in all that concerns its internal management.

No doubt there were some red faces amongst the Trustees when this report was received and adopted in September 1875.

Proposal to change the School

The internal problems diminished in the years that followed with Mr. Crofts in sure control, but by now doubt and dispute had arisen over the very existence of the School. The Endowed Schools Act of 1869, though it failed to implement many of the far-sighted recommendations on secondary education of the Taunton Commission Report which preceded it, did provide the machinery for the reorganisation of endowed schools and the redeployment of charity funds, including the use of parts of these to finance secondary education for girls. The proposals of the Commissioners responsible under the Act for drawing up new schemes aroused fierce controversy; they were welcomed in some quarters, but strenuously resisted in others, where their interference was resented as an attack on local rights by the central government. Many felt that the principles of action enunciated by the Commissioners were detrimental to the poor, for whose education the endowed schools had largely been created, and this view found expression in the formation of the Schools' Trusts Defence Committee, which organised petitions to Parliament and enlisted wide support whenever a particular endowment seemed to be threatened. It will throw some light on the feeling on this particular



Buttons

A painting by J. Kemp, Principal of the Art School, just before the closure of the Blue Coat School.

issue if we quote from one of the petitions signed by the Gloucester Trustees and presented to Parliament in 1871. After the usual preamble and statement of the origin of the Rich's Foundation, it went on to state the objections to the schemes being prepared, in this case for Emmanuel Hospital and the Grey Coat Hospital at Westminster, in the following terms:-

'That the Endowed Schools Act 1869 was passed through Parliament and became law on the distinct assurance of the Minister in charge of the Bill that it was intended only to apply to obsolete or misappropriated foundations.

That the Commissioners appointed under such Act have proceeded to enunciate certain principles which were never discussed in Parliament: those principles being that there is to be no gratuitous education except as the reward of merit, and that all endowments providing for primary instruction are to be taken away from the localities enjoying the benefit of them, and be applied to purposes of higher education on the ground that primary education is now provided for out of the rates. (The Education Act of 1870 had introduced a system of rate-supported primary schools where there were insufficient church schools).

That your petitioners submit that such principles are wholly unwarranted and untenable; and that to deprive the poor of endowments expressly given for them, or the locality of an endowment expressly given to it, is alike a violation of the foundation unwarranted by any change of circumstances, and an act of injustice to the class enjoying the benefit of existing charities.

That where charitable foundations are fulfilling the functions that their founder desired, it is an act of confiscation to take them away, even in the name of the law.'

Later, the Trustees were represented at a meeting in London, called by the Board of the Bedford Schools, to see whether it was possible to co-ordinate resistance to the plans of the Endowed Schools Commissioners. Such opposition found ready support in certain quarters in Gloucester, especially perhaps among the Freemen, who had already been aggrieved at the loss in 1852 of their exclusive right to places for their sons in the Blue School, and among those who feared the loss of an opportunity for free education beyond the elementary level. However, there were others who felt that the existing situation was anomalous and welcomed the opportunity provided by the Endowed Schools Act for the reorganisation of secondary education. Amongst the Trustees the lead in this direction

was taken by Mr. W. C. Lucy, a corn merchant, who was firmly convinced that the school situation in Gloucester was intolerable, and the time had come for radical reform.

Soon after the Endowed Schools Act was passed the Trustees adopted the following resolution:-

> 'That a Committee . . . . . be appointed to enquire into the circumstances of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital with a view to enlarging the field of its operations, having regard to the Reports of the Schools Enquiry Commission and the provisions of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869.'

It might be asked why it was that the Trustees, who were later to petition Parliament against the working of the Act, should propose to take action themselves under the provisions of the Act. Three reasons are apparent. In the first place there was considerable enthusiasm for educational change in some quarters, which was stimulated by the Act, and it was only later that the actions of the Commissioners appeared to some to infringe local rights. Secondly, the Trustees probably thought that if they prepared their own scheme and submitted it to the Commissioners they were more likely to get their views accepted than if they awaited a formal enquiry. In this decision they were probably influenced by a third factor; interested parties in the City other than the Trustees had formed their own Committee to prepare a scheme with which the Trustees might not be in sympathy, so they had to produce their own alternative.

The Ideas of 1870

The proposals put forward by the Committee created by the above-mentioned resolution indicate clearly the thinking of Mr. Lucy and the other reformers. It was proposed to amalgamate the endowments of the Cathedral School, the Crypt Grammar School and the Blue Coat School and add to these the funds set up by Punter and Halliday to provide apprenticeships. The income from these was roughly computed as

Cathedral School	about £400 a year
Crypt Grammar School	about £600 a year

Blue Coat School (including apprentice premiums)	about £1400 a year
Punter's and Halliday's Charity	about £127 a year

These funds were to be administered by one Governing Body, consisting of the Dean and the four Canons, the Mayor and the senior Aldermen and the existing Trustees of the Blue Coat and Crypt Schools. In place of the Blue Coat School it was proposed to establish two 'English Schools', one for about two hundred and sixty boys and the other for about one hundred girls, using the whole of the funds of the Blue Coat School for the purpose and the other sources as far as possible, except for those of Dame Joan Cooke, which were to continue to support a reorganised Crypt School. In keeping with the ideas expressed by the Schools Enquiry Commission it was proposed that fees should be charged at these schools. This view was challenged by one of the Trustees, Mr. Castree, who wanted the Blue Coat School to remain as a charity separate from the others. When this view, which received support from three other Trustees was rejected, he moved unsuccessfully that education in the 'English Schools' should be free. This proposal did not even raise a seconder.

However, the whole scheme was premature. When it was sent for consideration to the Endowed Schools Commission the Secretary replied that the Commissioners were already engaged in reorganising the educational endowments of several other districts and they could not fix a date for considering the situation in Gloucester. He also pointed out that the Cathedral School, as a denominational school, was in a different category from the other schools and could only be amalgamated with the others under the Act on terms which the Dean and Chapter were unlikely to accept. This proved to be the case and the Cathedral school went its own way separate from the other endowed schools, though not before there had been some idea of uniting with the Crypt and leaving the Blue Coat School out of the grouping. Shortly after this the income of the Blue Coat School received a further augmentation from another benefaction. This was from William Bond who had died in 1824 and had left £1,000 in trust to the Corporation, the interest on which was to be used for the benefit of ex-Blue Coat boys, once the daughters of a friend, who were to receive the income in the meantime, had died. The Corporation transferred the money to the account of the official Trustees of Charitable Funds in December 1876.

The new scheme for the Gloucester United Endowed Schools

At about the same time the Gloucester Trustees decided once again to consider the position of the Foundation relative to the Endowed Schools Act, and appointed a Committee to investigate the situation. This reported in March 1877 that the amount spent on educational purposes was completely overshadowed by the expenditure on maintenance and clothing, and only a

complete re-modelling of the School would bring it into line with modern educational needs. A careful survey of the financial position was made, from which we may extract the following relevant information: the annual income of the Rich's Foundation was £1,963-4-2, while the amount spent on directly educational matters, such as the Masters' salaries, books, prizes and apprentice premiums was only £351-19-4. Since the annual surplus of income over expenditure was no more than £30 it is small wonder that the Committee regarded the cost of maintaining thirty-four boys at a not very advanced level of education somewhat excessive. Mr. Lucy again took the lead in pressing for a complete reorganisation, and the Trustees asked him, with the aid of their Clerks, to prepare another scheme. He produced a modified version of the suggestions of 1870 for the amalgamation of the Blue Coat School and the Crypt endowments, and the replacement of the former by a day school for boys and two girls' schools. The Trustees accepted these suggestions as a basis for correspondence with the Endowed Schools Commissioners, though there was greater opposition amongst them than there had been seven years earlier. Two resolutions hostile to parts of the recommended scheme were introduced at a meeting of Trustees in November 1877. The first, moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Lovegrove, aimed at ensuring that twenty poor boys should continue to be freely educated in the new School at the expense of the Rich's foundation. The second resolution, in the names of Mr. Jones, the Mayor and Mr. Robinson, was more radical in its opposition; it proposed the retention of the Blue Coat School and the Rich charity intact and only the surplus income to be used for the new educational scheme. This really would have spelt the end of the proposals because the surplus income, as previously mentioned, was minimal. Both resolutions were discussed, but no vote was taken, since it was felt best to wait until a meeting had taken place with Mr. C. H. Stanton, an Assistant Charity Commissioner appointed to consider the situation in Gloucester.

The views of Mr. Lucy and the majority of the Trustees were favoured by Mr. Stanton, who was mainly concerned with changing details to bring them into line with the desires of the Charity Commissioners who had taken over the duties of the Endowed Schools Commission. It was stressed that though the two Charities were to be consolidated the Schools themselves were to retain their distinctive names, with that of the Blue Coat School being changed to Sir Thomas Rich's School, and Mr. Crofts's position as Head Master was to be safeguarded. The creation of an upper girls' school was left in abeyance, as this would be for the benefit of a class socially above those who were primarily the objects of the Rich's Foundation, but the Commissioners favoured the establishment of a lower girls' school and this began its life in the Mynd House, just beyond the Barton Street railway crossing. In order to meet the claims of the Freemen under the Rich's and Halliday Charities it was proposed that six of

the scholarships at the new Sir Thomas Rich's School provided for in the amended scheme should be exclusively for the sons of Freemen.

The way now appeared clear for the introduction of the scheme, but the opposition had not yet given up the fight. That it had friends amongst the Trustees may be gathered from the following resolution of July 1878:-

> 'The draft of the Scheme for the reorganisation of the Crypt and Blue Coat Schools having been sent by the Charity Commissions for the confidential consideration of the Trustees and the same having not withstanding been communicated to one of the local papers without the knowledge or consent of this Board
> Resolved That for the future none of the proceedings of the Trustees, nor any of the documents relating to any of the Charities, be communicated to any newspaper except by the Clerks in pursuance of a resolution of the Board; and that the Trustees deeply regret the breach of confidence which has been committed.'

This resolution was carried unanimously, but some Trustee must have voted with his tongue in his cheek, unless he happened to have been absent on this occasion. Nevertheless the opposition could now work on public opinion and a public meeting was called, where, with the support of the Mayor and the City Sheriff, it was decided to press the Charity Commissioners to hold a public local Inquiry into the subject matter of the proposed Scheme. The Committee appointed at this public meeting requested the co-operation of the Trustees in the matter, and, not unnaturally, got a decidedly negative response, Mr. Alderman Jones being alone in his support of it. However, the City Council and other influential citizens were in favour, and the Charity Commissioners were bound to accede to their request, so once again the scheme was delayed while a public enquiry was held. It was conducted by Mr. C. H. Stanton, who was hardly likely to find in favour of the destruction of the scheme with which he had already shown himself so strongly in agreement, and the scheme as finally approved by the Commissioners showed only slight changes in detail from the original.

The final draft was sent to the Trustees for approval by the Charity Commissioners in July 1880. Mr. Jones maintained his opposition to the last, by handing the following protest to the President:-

> Mr. A. G. Jones's Protest against the scheme now presented to the Gloucester Municipal Charity Trustees for their consideration and approval, upon the ground that it is similar in principle to the Draft Scheme of 1878 viz:- that of disestablishing the Blue Coat School

> munificently endowed by Sir Thomas Rich, to which I, in common with a large section of my fellow citizens have the strongest objection, and which School is admitted on all hands to be in most efficient and beneficial working.'

The Trustees resolved to include a copy of this protest with the letter they wrote to the Charity Commissioners signifying their acceptance of the Scheme. It now looked as though the changes would be speedily implemented as further opposition was not anticipated, but this was not to be. The Scheme was duly approved by the Charity Commissioners and passed for final confirmation to the Lords of the Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council on Education, but here a serious delay occurred. No information on the progress of the Scheme having been received for five months, the Trustees wrote to Mr. Stanton to enquire the cause of the delay, and in his reply he stated that most of the objections raised by the City Council and the Committee of citizens at the public enquiry had been repeated before the Committee of Council on Education. The opposition was certainly tenacious, but it was fighting for a lost cause and its efforts could only delay the inevitable, and more beneficial, re-direction of the endowments. The unaltered Scheme was approved at the end of May 1881, but there were still legal formalities to be observed. The papers had to lie on the table of both Houses of Parliament for two months before they could be signed by Her Majesty in Council, so the final dating did not come until another twelve months had elapsed – on May 3rd 1882.

So the Blue School came to its end, perhaps rather ironically when it was in a state of greater efficiency than it had ever been. Mr. Crofts had got it firmly under control, its academic standards were rising with an improved quality in the in-take of boys, some of its old traditions, like the wearing of the numbered medals, which had fallen into disuse for some time, had been revived, and its standing in the City had never been higher. However, attached though people might be to the Blue School and its picturesque, but not very practicable, uniform, the whole principle of free education unrelated to ability was contrary to the 'progressive' educational thought of the day. The very success of the Foundation in keeping so close to the intentions of the original bequest told against its continuation. If it had managed to widen the social background from which it drew its pupils and abandon the emphasis on preparing pupils for trade apprenticeships it might have survived as an independent Blue Coat School*.

But speculation is an unprofitable thing. In fact the School was to fulfil a different role, but in the main, for the next twenty-five years, it was still to provide education for the sons of people of the lower middle and working classes. The Scheme was designed for this purpose and the numerous

scholarships, known as Sir Thomas Rich's scholarships and Foundation scholarships, were to ensure that poor but able children were not excluded from the benefits of education in the new School, and to its development we must now turn.

**When two boys were apprenticed in 1874 the wages to be paid were inserted in the Indenture as follows:- 1st Year 4/- per week, 2nd Year 5/- per week, rising annually at this rate until they reached 9/- in the 6th Year. Mr. Frederick Sessions, one of the employers, pledged himself to pay his apprentice a further sum of 2/- a week 'so long as he should continue to conduct himself in an honest and faithful manner and carry out the terms of his Indenture'.*

CHAPTER VI

NEW BEGINNINGS

Growth of the School

'The Blue Coat School is dead; long live Sir Thomas Rich's' could well have been said of the events of 1882, for the change-over took place without any unusual intermission in the life of the School. There was no startling difference in the membership of the governing body, no new Head Master with revolutionary ideas and not even a change of building; merely different furniture, with the dormitories becoming additional class-rooms. These were needed to house, inadequately, an ever increasing flow of boys, thus proving conclusively the contentions of the defenders of the Scheme that such a school was needed in Gloucester. By the end of 1882 Mr. Crofts and two assistant masters were teaching just over a hundred boys and the number had doubled twelve months later. The maximum numbers mentioned in the original proposals for the Scheme (250) were soon reached and constantly surpassed until a disastrous small-pox epidemic in the City in 1896 brought the attendance down temporarily. At the height of the attack there were only 107 boys present out of a list total of 261, and it took some time to recover the ground lost, but the three hundred mark was ultimately regained in 1904. It is an instructive commentary on Gloucester society in this period, that Sir Thomas Rich's, which provided a fairly simple secondary education to the age of fifteen only, the maximum age permitted by the Scheme and rigidly adhered to by the Governors, despite strong requests from the Head Master for its modification, should grow so vigorously at a time when the Crypt School, with its classical education, found it hard to attract enough pupils to pay its way, even when various changes had been made to improve its efficiency. In an age when grammar school education was still a mark of social distinction, the Crypt was bound to suffer from Gloucester's lack of a strong professional class. By contrast, Sir Thomas Rich's provided an opportunity for educational progress, and consequent improvement in social status, that appealed strongly to many parents in a lower income range who had ambitions for their sons. Moreover, the generous system of scholarships maintained by the Foundation opened the way to secondary education for able children from the poorest sections of the community, especially after 1891, when elementary education became free and school attendance improved.

The growth in numbers was no doubt highly gratifying to Mr. Crofts, who received a capitation fee as part of his salary, but it presented him with

endless headaches of staffing and accommodation in the early years of the School's new history. The minute books of the Governors are full of arrangements for the employment of fresh staff and the attempt to find room for the extra boys. The ratio of staff to boys and the method of payment of masters as contrasted with the present day reflect clearly the changes that have taken place in the approach to secondary education. For example, in November 1884 the Governors, considering that there were thirty-eight boys to each assistant master, decided to increase slightly the salaries of the lower paid masters, in order to obtain teachers able to cope with large numbers. This was in keeping with the views of Mr. Crofts who had on an earlier occasion suggested that the appointment of a man at £80 per annum was more economical than one at £50, on the grounds that the latter salary would only attract a teacher able to manage about twenty-five boys, while with the former he could appoint a man capable of handling a class of forty. His reasoning may well have been correct, but modern teachers would hardly approve of this kind of arrangement nor of the insecurity inherent in the system whereby masters were employed on a termly basis. A number of them did, in fact, stay for years, especially the better qualified ones, some of whom were taking university degrees externally, but there was a considerable turn-over amongst the junior staff. This was especially true, of course, of old boys who came straight from the top form to be pupil teachers until they were old enough to pass on to a training college. There were also some part-time staff, of whom the most noteworthy was Mr. George Embrey, the County Analyst, and Head Master of the Science and Art Schools in Brunswick Road, who conducted experiments in chemistry and in magnetism and electricity. Apart from some specialised instruction in science and model drawing, teaching was done in all subjects by the form masters and there seems to have been little official fostering of the corporate life of the School at first.

The problem of accommodation was acute. The old building was designed with only one school-room, and even with alterations the other rooms cannot have been ideal for teaching purposes. In any case these soon proved inadequate to contain the boys seeking admission to the School, so in 1885 the Governors vacated the fine board room for a hired room at the Corn Exchange in order to make more space for teaching. However, this was only easing temporarily a problem for which there could be only one real solution – entirely different buildings.

A change of residence

One of the clauses written into the Scheme of 1882 had stated that the Governors were to select a suitable site for the erection of such additional school buildings as might be necessary and submit the same for the approval of the Charity Commissioners. The time had obviously come to do this; but there were

problems. By this time Great Britain was in the throes of what historians call 'The great Depression', when, largely as the result of foreign competition, the country's economy appeared to be in an unhealthy condition. The worst affected industry was farming, where profits fell alarmingly, the amount of land in use contracted sharply and many farmers became bankrupt. The Gloucester United Schools drew their income very largely from farm property, and this fell steadily as rents had to be reduced substantially in order to keep tenants on the estates. Thus, at a time when very considerable expenditure on school building became a necessity, the capital value of the Foundation's assets was seriously reduced. An entirely new building for three hundred boys would be expensive, so the Governors decided to rehouse the Crypt School on a moderately sized central site at Friars Orchard, and move Sir Thomas Rich's into the former Crypt buildings in Barton Street which were to be enlarged to accommodate the greater numbers. The Barton Street site had been purchased from a Mr. J. P. Heane for £3,700 in 1856 and a further £2,900 spent thereafter in erecting the school-room and class rooms and altering the house to receive boarders. The buildings when vacated by the Crypt consisted only of what later generations knew as School House, the hall and the art room, together with the class-room at the western end of the hall and those on the north side that later became the library. The Governors now proceeded to spend a further large sum on establishing the Crypt in its new premises, which were purchased for £3120 in 1888, and where the new building works cost another £4,400.

Meanwhile the Governors had sold the old Blue Coat Hospital to the City Council as a site for a new guildhall and municipal offices at the moderate price of £4,500. The contract had to be entered into before the move to Barton Street could be made, so for the first two terms of 1889 the School remained in the old buildings as tenants of the Corporation at an annual rent of £186. Four new class rooms – the 'bottom corridor' – were built at Barton Street and there were other minor alterations at a total cost of £850 before Sir Thomas Rich's moved to its new home in September 1889. Without wishing to be partisan, it must be observed that the balance of expenditure over this twin move is hard to justify: the numbers in the Crypt continued to fall in spite of the costly new buildings, while the accommodation at Rich's was decidedly inadequate from the beginning. No laboratory provision was made in a School where science was an important subject and which was regularly receiving substantial grants from the Science and Art Department for candidates entered for the Department's examinations. Does this indicate a continued suspicion of science teaching, such as had caused the controversies under Mr. Jeffery? It may be so, for in 1886 the Governors specifically enquired of the external examiner whether there were any weaknesses in other subjects caused by the amount of instruction given in science and art, which suggests disquiet in some quarters. Whatever the reason it was nine years before alterations were made to 'the Head Master's room' to

convert it into a miserably small laboratory, equipped at a cost of £65. Lavatory accommodation was also insufficient and the School had to wait for three years before this deficiency was corrected. A little more thought and expenditure before the move took place might well have cost the Governors less in the long run and would certainly have improved the efficiency and comfort of the School.

The 'new' buildings

Let us now look at the buildings as they appeared in 1889 and note the differences from the site as many readers will remember it when it was finally vacated by the School in 1964. School House was name 'Richleigh' and was the home of the Head Master and his family, rarely, if ever, visited by boys, as it was in no sense a part of the School. This applied also to the garden, where, after the second World War, a hut was erected to relieve some of the pressure on accommodation. In front of 'Richleigh' stood an old cottage, and the drainage arrangements of these buildings aroused the wrath of the Sanitary Committee. So new drains were put in and the cottage pulled down, to be replaced at a later date by the hut which served first as a workshop and then as a biology laboratory. The major group of buildings was as it had been left by the Crypt, plus the four new class rooms. The corridor alongside the hall and the laboratories to the south of it did not then exist, the playground coming as far as the hall. This was a longer building than many Richians will remember, since there was no stage to shorten it, while entrance was gained through a door at the east end, later blocked by the stage and incorporated within the building when the art room was extended. The laboratory created in 1898 was beyond this at the north end of the bottom corridor by the new class rooms. Outside was the large playground, but in those days neither 'the lawn site' nor 'the junior school', which was then occupied by a school run by 'the British Schools Society', belonged to Rich's, so there were no exits to either of these. The Five's Courts already existed and were at once as popular as they have since remained, and in addition there was a giant's stride in the middle of the yard and horizontal ladders near one of the walls. As there were no bicycle sheds until the early years of the twentieth century the area for recreation was considerable, though the presence of the 'play' apparatus already mentioned and a large tree which for many years stood some distance from the eastern boundary wall added considerably to the hazards when games were being played. The ex-Blue Coat boys probably missed the covered play shed that had been built for them in the yard of the old School in 1867, and it is interesting that a similar feature, on a larger scale, should now be part of the new buildings at Elmbridge. The School did not possess its own field for games, but cricket and football matches, including, almost certainly for the first time, games against other schools, were played on a variety of grounds about the City rented on an annual basis. For example, in 1887 the School shared a cricket field on the Lower Barton House Estate with a club run by the vicar of All Saints'

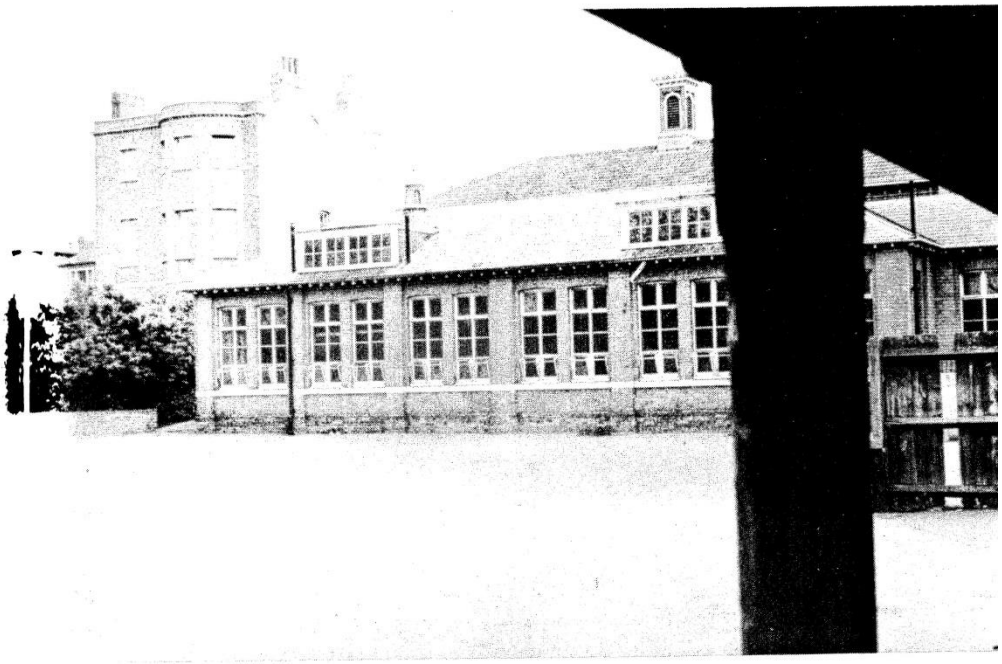
Church, while three years later part of the Gloucester Cricket Club's ground in the Park was being used. These are just two random samples, and, unfortunately this experience was to be repeated again in the School's history after the Second World War. Not until the purchase of the Elmbridge site by the Education Authority in 1947 did the School possess a field which it could properly regard as its own.

The School at work

So much for the physical surroundings; now let us turn to the activity within the buildings. Under the Scheme of 1882 boys could enter the School from the age of eight, but those who competed for the scholarships offered by the Foundation were two or three years older than this, since the Governors decreed that competitors had to be of 5th Standard grade according to the Education Department classification. Clause 74 of the Scheme stated clearly the duty of the Governors concerning scholarships:-

> 'The Governors shall maintain 30 scholarships to be called Sir Thomas Rich's Scholarships, tenable for not less than 3 nor more than 5 years . . . . . Each of these scholarships shall entitle the holder to exemption from the payment of tuition fees and to a payment at a rate of not less than £10 nor more than £15 yearly, to be applied at the discretion of the Governors in clothing or maintenance, the purchase of books, in making a deposit at a savings bank, or otherwise for the benefit of the holder . . . . . No Sir Thomas Rich's Scholarship shall be awarded to any candidate who does not produce a certificate of industry, regularity of attendance and good conduct from the proper authorities of the school from which he comes.'

Provision was also made for 5 Punter's Scholarships on the same terms and 3 Holliday Scholarships of a yearly value of £10 for three years, with special preference for the sons of Freemen. Additionally there could be Foundation Scholarships, provided they were not granted to more than ten per cent of the boys actually attending the School. This was a very generous provision of free places open to boys in the public elementary schools of the neighbourhood, but the Scheme's purposes proved unavailing from the start. There were two reasons for this. In the first place the decline of the Foundation's income consequent upon diminished rents and capital expenditure, made it impossible to maintain scholarships, either within the School or for leavers passing on to higher education, with the generosity envisaged by the framers of the Scheme. Following an enquiry into the financial situation the Education Department allowed an alteration in the Scheme, reducing the number of scholarships offered, but this did no more than recognise what was actually taking place already, the original intention having never been fulfilled. A second reason for



Barton Street buildings from the playground

the failure of the system was the lack of suitably qualified entrants for the competition. The chief reason for this was the excessive entry fee of £1 charged to all competitors, which must be seen against annual School fees of only £3. This deterred many parents who could ill afford to lose what amounted to a week's wages for some of them if their sons failed to win a scholarship. Circulars were sent to the heads of the local elementary schools giving details of the awards, and Mr. Crofts suggested a reduction of the examination fee to 7/6d, but it was a long time before keen competition for the scholarships developed and they began to attract the quality of entrants they deserved.

Meanwhile the School was working at the subjects laid down in the Scheme in the following terms:-

> 'The subjects of instruction to be given in Sir Thomas Rich's School, besides religious instruction . . . . . shall be:-
>
> Reading, Writing, Arithmetic; English Language; Geography; Elementary Latin; Art; at least one Foreign European Language; Elementary Mathematics; Experimental Physics; The elements of Chemistry; Drawing (with special reference to Mechanics and Engineering); Drill; Vocal Music; and such other branches of practical and experimental science as the Governors may direct with a view to making the school a place of efficient technical training.'

The range of subjects was wider than in the Blue Coat School, especially with the introduction to Latin and the teaching of French to a greater number of boys, but, in the main, Mr. Crofts could continue with the pattern he had previously marked out. Today's schoolboys, brought up in a freer atmosphere, with the emphasis on enquiry, imagination and analysis, would find the routine of these days intolerably restricted, narrowly factual and generally uninspiring, but at first it met with the approval of the examiners of the Cambridge Syndicate employed by the Governors to report on the working of the three schools under their care. In 1884, for example, the report of the Rev. T. J. Sanderson, late Fellow of Clare College, concluded:-

> 'The School appears to me in excellent working order; the drill, discipline and instruction being alike good.'

The Governors were so satisfied with the report of an examination of December 1889 that they asked the Chairman to congratulate Mr. Crofts and his staff on their behalf. However, the same examiner reported critically on another occasion on the teaching of French and the Head Master agreed to try to improve it. But if the memories of an old Richian who entered the School shortly after may be taken as evidence the progress was not very marked! The teaching consisted largely of an endless grind at grammatical rules and French seems never to have been thought of as a language to be spoken. The 'direct method' had certainly not arrived, though, of course, Rich's was in this in keeping with virtually every other school in the land.

There can be no doubt, however, that science and mechanical drawing were subjects of prime importance in the School, and the emphasis on them in the Scheme gave Mr. Crofts a freer hand than he had enjoyed prior to the reorganisation. Much of the teaching remained theoretical, even after the

provision of the laboratory facilities already mentioned, but experiments were conducted on a limited scale, though they had little practical application, as far as can be gathered. However, the School benefitted financially from the grants of the Science and Art Department, consequent upon the successes of the boys in the examinations. The division of this income, which frequently amounted to between £200 and £300 in a year, needed some thought, so a sub-committee of the Governors was appointed in 1889 to confer with Mr. Crofts on the subject. They drew up detailed recommendations, which were accepted by the Board, and these give us a further insight into the situation within the School. In consequence it may be quoted at some length.

1. The object of the grant . . . . . is to aid in the maintenance of the School as a school for instruction in Science and Art.

2. Up to the present time the apparatus necessary for such teaching has been provided partly by the Governors and partly by the Head Master.

3. To secure due uniformity we advise that all apparatus belonging to Mr. Crofts which is suitable for science purposes, be purchased by the Governors from him at a valuation . . . . .

4. We recommend a vote of £15 towards necessary laboratory fittings which it is estimated will cost £25.

5. For the future all apparatus used in the teaching of Science and Art, including laboratory fittings etc., should be ordered and paid for by the Governors in the same way as other science materials and the amount expended should be considered a first charge upon the grant.

6. The next charge on the grant should be for prizes to be awarded as heretofore to boys passing successful examinations: viz, to each boy obtaining a 1st class a prize of books or instruments value 7/6d. or if the same boy obtain more than one 1st class then 7/6d. for the first and 2/6d. for every additional 1st class.

7. One part of the maintenance of a school is the payment of its teachers and we recommend that the remainder of the grant, after paying for apparatus and prizes, be considered as a bonus and that it be awarded as follows:- 5/6 to Mr. Crofts and 1/6 to be divided amongst his assistant masters in accordance with Mr. Crofts's recommendations . . . . .

8. The grant for 1889 of £249 we think should be awarded as follows:-

Prizes	£19-10-0	Apparatus	£2-18-6
Mr. Crofts	£191-6-6	Mr. Beal	£15-15-0
Mr. Price	£6-10-0	Mr. Farmer	£5-0-0
Mr. Wentour	£3-0-0	Mr. Pope	£5-0-0

It is little wonder, then, that Mr. Crofts was delighted with the successes of his Pupils, for year after year they were earning him a very substantial bonus. He was already receiving a considerable income from his basic salary of £120 per annum and a capitation fee of £1 per year for each boy, so with the additional sum for science teaching, his earnings gave him a financial standing and a consequent status within the City that few school masters could hope to attain. Always a strong character, his influence outside the School grew as the years passed, and it is, perhaps, not surprising that when he retired in 1906 he quickly got himself elected to the City Council.

In another sphere also the teaching proved to be effective. This was in connection with scholarships offered by Christ's Hospital, London, from 1892 onwards. In that year the Governors were allotted the right to nominate two boys from Rich's and two from the Crypt to compete for the twenty places being offered. In the years that followed the entrants from Rich's did very well, as this report of a Governors' meeting for 7th July 1903 records:-

> 'At the recent competitive examination open to boys from all the Endowed Schools in the Kingdom Sir Thomas Rich's School had secured four out of the thirty-five Scholarships, and the School had won nineteen of these Scholarships in eleven years.
>
> It was unanimously resolved that a letter should be written to the Head Master congratulating him and his assistants upon the successes attained.'

Thus, the association with Christ's Hospital, which had influenced the original bequest of the Founder, was re-established, although on a very different basis, at this later period in the School's history.

The Blue Coat School with the distinctive uniform of its boys had occupied an obvious place in the City, which it was in danger of losing when it no longer had the uniform and the School moved out to Barton Street. The prospectus issued in 1882 stated that it was intended to adopt a distinctive cap, but this does not seem to have been done officially for a number of years. By 1893 badges were available and most boys had these sewn on their caps,

though, as photographs of the period show, there was no standard pattern of cap, and the distribution between the peaked and the pill-box varieties was fairly even. On Sundays many boys wore a mortarboard, nick-named a 'dabber', with a tassel of bright blue and gold to distinguish it from the crimson and gold of the Crypt and the blue and black of the King's School. There were no blazers as yet to make the boys instantly discernible in the streets. The Governors however, decided to give the School something more than just a name, for the following entry appears in the minute book for the 29th October 1890:-

> 'The Chairman inform the (Schools') Committee that the crest, arms and motto of Sir Thomas Rich had been painted on cardboard and placed temporarily above the School sign. The Committee agreed that the Visitors should inspect the proposed addition and if they approved of it, give directions for its reproduction and its attachment to the sign.'

The Visitors did approve, the new sign was made permanent, and the Founder's arms became the official sign of the School, appearing on stationery and book-plates and cap badges, and ultimately on the blazers, until it was modified in the grant of arms made to the School by the King of Arms on the 23rd October 1962. The magnificent Grant of Arms (Plate 11 page 117) is now on permanent display in the entrance hall of the new buildings, while one aspect of the celebrations of the School's Tercentenary in 1966 was the official introduction of the new arms as the insignia of the School. Thus, from 1890 onwards the School has enjoyed the distinction of a coat of arms linking it directly with the Founder, as a permanent reminder of one who, in the words of 'Tommy Psalm',

> 'Though having issue of his blood,
> Did not poor heirs disdain.'

Thus, under Mr. Crofts's direction, the School had successfully surmounted the difficulties inherent in a change as major as that of 1882. In the years that followed much had been done to educate boys for careers in industry and commerce, the success of which may be gauged by the fact that at the beginning of the new century the pressure for places was greater than ever. In 1902, for example, another member of staff had to be appointed as the number of boys had risen to an average of forty-three to each teacher, but the only place to put the extra class was in the hall, where two other classes were already operating. Another screen was therefore erected and a small store put in to produce another class-room, of sorts! But fresh upheavals were in prospect as the country's education system was once again, and very needfully, reorganised by the Government, and, in consequence, the whole future of the School had to be considered afresh. To this we turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

CHANGE OF DIRECTION

A national system of Secondary Education

At the beginning of the twentieth century educational administration, both nation and local, was in need of a drastic overhaul to create a genuine system in place of the uncoordinated patchwork of authorities that had grown up in the preceding years. In particular there was still no national system of secondary education; opportunities in this field depending on the unequal distribution of the endowed schools and the schools of science and art which received government grants from the newly established Board of Education, created to take over the responsibilities of the central government in the field of education. Some school boards set up under the Elementary Education Act of 1870 had developed higher grade schools for pupils who wanted more than the basic elements of education, but the use of the rates for this purpose had been successfully challenged in the courts in a test case brought against the London School Board by Mr. T. B. Cockerton, the official auditor of its accounts, in 1900. The time was therefore ripe for reform and Balfour's ministry produced an Education Act in 1902 which is of major importance in the history of English education. Amongst its provisions it made the County and County Borough Councils responsible for providing secondary education in their districts or aiding it where the necessary schools already existed. More money would thus be available for building new secondary schools, which ultimately catered for the needs of a wider range of children.

The Act was bound to have repercussions in Gloucester, where, in addition to the endowed schools, there existed under Corporation control the Municipal Schools, which provided 'more or less unified congeries of classes in science and art' according to the description in an official report in 1904. What would the position now be! There was already considerable feeling in certain quarters in the City that all was not as well as it might be with the endowed schools, and this was in part confirmed by the reports of an inspection of the Schools by the Board of Education in July 1902. Neither the Crypt nor Rich's came out of the inspection with great credit, and the Governors were also criticised for spending insufficient money on the Girls' School. As far as Rich's was concerned the chief trouble lay in the fact that the teaching and administration was 'all in the same groove', probably resulting from the long experience of Mr. Crofts, whose efficiency was praised but who had become set in his ways. The material provided in lessons was dull and the teachers, with

one exception, seemed incapable of providing sufficient intellectual stimulus to their pupils to raise the standards of scholarship, though, as we have already seen, the routine teaching had been quite successful for examination purposes. Rather surprisingly the buildings and equipment were regarded as adequate, except in the matter of a physical laboratory, which was essential if the School was to be recognised under the existing regulations for Division A Secondary Day Schools, and a workshop, neither of which had been provided. Changes to improve the situation were an urgent necessity for, said the inspectors' report 'the School supplies a distinct want . . . . . It is precisely the sort of School for which the regulations of a Division A School are designed'. National policy and local needs were thus combining to bring about yet another reorganization of schooling in Gloucester, only this time on a more extensive scale.

The new Scheme of 1906

Reorganization would involve the drawing up of a new Scheme by the Governors and the Education Committee of the Corporation with the agreement of the Board of Education, whose approval was essential before new regulations could be introduced. The Higher Education Sub-Committee of the Corporation prepared a series of proposals for the future of education in Gloucester which they submitted to the Governors of the Endowed Schools at a joint meeting in November 1903. The suggested arrangements were:-

1. That in the opinion of the Committee it is inexpedient to provide a Higher Elementary School.

2. That a Secondary School for Girls be provided on the lines of Division B in the Regulations for Secondary Schools, 1903.

3. That a Division A School be provided for Boys.

4. That a Division B School be provided for Boys.

5. That a new building for the Girls' School be erected.

6. That the Rich School be adopted for Division A and the Crypt for Division B for Boys.

7. That the School fees of the Division B School for Boys be higher than those of the Division A School.

The Governors unanimously agreed to accept these proposals as the basis for discussion and planning and appointed their own Sub-Committee of four members (Mr. F. Treasure, the Chairman, Dr. R. W. Batten, Mr. J. E. Turner

and Mr. A. Woodward) to confer with the Education Committee on the details and the financial implications of the recommendations.

The problems of paying the costs involved if the proposals were accepted produced disagreement. Mr. H. E. Waddy, on behalf of the Education Committee, prepared a detailed statement of estimated income and expenditure under the proposed rearrangement, based on the assumption of a clear annual profit from the income of the United Schools Foundation of £1,000, which together with fees and Government grants, could be assumed to show a regular favourable balance for the new system. This balance, together with the sum of about £6,000 in Consols and the accumulated interest on them which was the property of the Foundation, was to be spent on the new buildings for the Girls School, additional laboratory facilities at Rich's and classrooms at the Crypt. Mr. A. Woodward challenged these figures and suggested in vain that the Education Authority of the City should guarantee any deficit arising out of the working of the new Scheme, and he abstained from the vote in favour of it. At later meetings his attitude hardened and he led the opposition to the views of the majority of his fellow Governors, who responded by failing to elect him to the list of temporary Governors when the Scheme was finally implemented.

That the difference of view over the financial implications of the Scheme were considerable came out clearly at a rather acrimonious meeting at the Guildhall on May 11th 1904, when the Governors, the City Education Committee, the Municipal Schools Committee and representatives of the County Education Committee consulted with five officials of the Board of Education concerning the proposed changes. Strong views were expressed by Councillors Evans and Sisson, who objected to spending money on the necessary laboratory at Rich's on the grounds that under the amalgamation proposals the boys from Rich's could use the facilities in the Municipal Schools in Brunswick Road. The problems of administration and time-tabling and the wastage of time involved in moving classes to and from widely separated buildings were not to be compared with the possibility of saving a little money! However, the officials spoke most strongly of the necessity of the extra laboratory if the School was to qualify for the larger grant paid to Division A schools and in this they were supported by the Governors. Alderman E. S. Hartland, Chairman of the City Education Committee, appalled at the idea of having to spend money on the Schools, suggested 'we must revolutionize the Scheme and amalgamate the two boys' Schools', but this idea was dropped, though at a later meeting it was strongly supported by Dr. Batten, who considered that there was no necessity for two boys' Secondary Schools in the City. In spite of the efforts of the officials the company at the Guildhall remained divided, and we may perhaps leave the last word with Mr. Woodward, who, during the course of the sharp exchanges declared with considerable truth: 'The Corporation are getting these Schools for

nothing, and, having got them for nothing, it does seem parsimonious not to spend £200 or £300 in improvements!'*

Much of the dispute proved in the end to have been unnecessary, for by the time decision had been reached on the future the Board of Education had changed its regulations and abolished the distinction between 'A' and 'B' schools! This meant that the draft of the Scheme had to be amended so that Rich's could be worked 'under a curriculum to be submitted to the Board of Education from time to time on the lines of a third grade school.' (Clause 7, new Scheme) This was in September 1904, and two months later the report of His Majesty's Inspector on the working of the science courses in the School, which earned a grant of £234-18-0 that year, once again stressed the need for improved facilities if the School was to work efficiently under the Secondary School regulations. He declared:-

> 'As was pointed out verbally at the recent conference with the Local Education Authority and the Endowed Schools Governors, and as has been reported now for several years, a physical laboratory is essential at this School, and the earliest possible steps should be taken to provide it . . . . . It will also probably be found necessary to add at the same time an Art Room and an additional good-sized class-room in order that the present rather crowded conditions may be alleviated and the working of the course be rendered efficient.'

This pressure from the officials of the Board of Education could not be ignored and in due course the necessary steps were taken to comply with these recommendations. This will be referred to later in the chapter.

There were a number of other financial matters to be settled before the new Scheme could be introduced, and these included the pensions of the retiring Head Masters of both Schools and the question of the 'Blue Gowns' charity of Sir Thomas Rich. The Governors wished to be more generous with pensions than the Board of Education were prepared to sanction, but in the end they had to settle for a reduced sum. As far as the charity was concerned, its needs were met by the transfer of £1600 Consols to a separate account to be entitled 'Sir Thomas Rich's Clothing Charity', and to be held by the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds. This would provide the necessary annual income of £40 for clothing for poor people and the fund still exists today under this name.

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*If the Foundation had not already existed the Corporation would have had to establish and maintain sufficient secondary schools to meet the City's needs, or pay for these out of the rates, under the terms of the 1902 Act.

The various difficulties having ultimately been resolved the new Scheme was finally sealed on the 13th February 1906. It provided for the management of the Foundation, still called the Gloucester United Schools, by twenty-seven Governors, of whom four were to be women and fifteen were to be sitting members of the Gloucester City Council, thus giving the Corporation a decisive voice in the control of the Schools. The total number included six Co-optative Governors, one of whom was to have University experience, though this latter proviso had been opposed by the original Governors and was finally inserted at the insistence of the Board of Education. The Schools were to be open to children of 'good character and sufficient health', with preference for the children of inhabitants or ratepayers of the City of Gloucester in any case of over-application for places available, after they had passed an entrance examination graduated according to the age of the scholar. The age of entry to Rich's remained at eight, but boys could now stay until they were seventeen, or, with the permission of the Governors, upon the written recommendation of the Head Master, until the end of the school year in which they reached the age of eighteen. The way was thus opened for work to a much higher secondary level than had been possible when the leaving age was fifteen.

Only one other clause of the Scheme needs to be mentioned here. The inadequate provision for the Girls' High School was to be remedied, and the original suggestion for new buildings was written into the Scheme in the following terms:-

> 'As soon as conveniently may be the Governors shall provide for the Girls' High School proper buildings suitable for not less than 350 scholars including boarders, and planned with a view to convenient extension, and may apply for the purpose a sufficient sum of money to be raised, if needful, out of the capital endowment of the Foundation by sale or otherwise, but for all the purposes of this clause they shall act subject to the approval in writing of the Board of Education.' (Clause 23)

The gross yearly income of the Foundation as set out in a schedule attached to the Scheme amounted to more than £2,700, excluding the income accumulating on Consols, but there was little actual surplus, so the cost of the new school for girls would have to be met by the sale of property originally belonging to Rich's and the Crypt. In due course the site in Denmark Road was acquired and the new buildings to house the High School were opened in 1907.

A new Head Master and a new outlook

Mr. Crofts was to retire as soon as the Scheme came into operation and the Governors committed the future of the School, with its new opportunities for education progress, to Mr. E. F. Price, who had trained as a teacher at

Cheltenham Training College and had later taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts of the University of London. He had been on the staff at Rich's as chief assistant before leaving in 1893 to become Head Master of a large school in Jarrow, so he was well acquainted with the existing situation. Now, at the age of forty-four, with this valuable experience behind him, he returned to guide the School along new paths. A less austere character than his predecessor – in due course he was nicknamed 'Father' Price by the boys – with an entirely different range of interests which included archaeology, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and Latin, he was nevertheless equally determined that the School should flourish and develop higher qualities of scholarship. The over-emphasis on an unduly restricted science course declined and a more balanced syllabus and wider interests were developed with the aid of a loyal and better qualified staff. Mr. Price refused to live on the premises, preferring to reside close by at the corner of Cromwell Street and Park Road, and thus for the first time rooms in School House became available for classes, so easing the pressures on other parts of the building.

One of the last things Mr. Crofts had requested of the Governors before his retirement was an honours board for the School similar to those in use at the Crypt and this had been granted. Under the new direction it soon became possible to add names to the board, as a Sixth Form developed almost at once and candidates won successes in the Cambridge Senior and Junior local Examinations before some of them passed on to higher education. Year by year Mr. Price was able to report the progress of the School, not only as gauged in terms of the external exams, but also in numbers, in a sense of purpose and in that indefinable quality of 'School spirit'. Reviewing the academic year 1913/14 shortly after the outbreak of the First World War he could say:-

> '. . . . . the steady increase in numbers of the five previous years has been still maintained . . . . . This year's results of the several external examinations are the best that have yet been secured . . . . . The distinctions in English History deserve special mention. In the Junior list containing a total of 70 for the Kingdom, both 1st and 2nd places in order of merit were secured. In the Seniors the 5th place in a total of 82 was gained.'

These reports were given on Speech Day, which was the annual public occasion for the School. In Mr. Crofts's time Speech Day had normally been held in the Corn Exchange and musical items by the choir were a feature of the proceedings, but now the venue was moved to the greater comfort of the Guildhall and the programme was, if anything, extended. In 1909, for example, in addition to the normal speeches, musical items and distribution of prizes and certificates, five scenes from Shakespeare were performed, while four years

later there were recitations by some of the boys. Our predecessors were certainly keen to make a whole evening of the occasion!

Other features of a 'grammar school' type of education were rapidly introduced by Mr. Price, including the division of the VIth Form into 'classical' and 'modern' sides and the creation of the 'House' system to stimulate competition amongst the boys in a variety of activities. A School magazine, with the improbable title of 'The Plutonian', the origin of which name was explained in a rather ponderous article in the first edition, was introduced to record these activities and give scope to boys with literary pretensions. Some of the early contributions make interesting reading and reveal a considerable ability and breadth of interest amongst the boys. The name 'Plutonian' was soon derided by a later editor and dropped, though it has since been resurrected on at least two occasions and for a time after the Great War 'the Old Plutonians' appeared regularly in local football and cricket competitions. This was the official name of the sports section of the Old Boys' Association, which had come into being at this stage of the School's development, thus reflecting a growing pride in its achievements and a desire to be associated with the name of the School. At one of their earliest meetings the members of the Association listened to an interesting paper on the life of Sir Thomas Rich read by Mr. C. H. Dancey, while, for the less academically minded, no doubt, there was on another later occasion great interest in a lively account of his experiences while on tour with the British Isles Rugby Touring Team by that famous Gloucester player Mr. Tommy Voyce. The School already had an interest in rugby, for, though it played the association brand of football, an Old Richian, W. Johns, had won international caps for rugby against Wales, Ireland and Scotland, having picked up the elements of the game while still at School. Wherever we turn during this pre-War period there is evidence of new vigour and wider horizons, and the School was obviously developing habits and attitudes that enhanced its reputation in the City and the County, even though it still had a long way to go to win widespread recognition of an equal academic repute with the other City secondary schools. It took time for old attitudes to break down.

Improvements to the buildings

The financial difficulties of the Foundation and the responsibility to build the High School made the Governors reluctant to authorize capital expenditure and it was some time before the decision was taken to proceed with the necessary additions to the buildings in Barton Street. Plans were drawn for the erection of Chemistry and Physics laboratories, with a balance room and store room, and a new classroom, later known as 'the demonstration room', on the south side of the hall, and divided from it by a corridor, and for alterations to enlarge the existing Art room, but it was not until late in 1910 that tenders were accepted for the job. At the same time the Governors decided to take the

opportunity to modernize the heating of the whole building, except School House, by putting in a low pressure hot water system of central heating. The total cost of new buildings, heating and equipment for the laboratories amounted to around £3,000, and some two-thirds of this had to be raised by a mortgage at 4%, ultimately to be repaid by the sale of property belonging to the Foundation. The agreement of the Board of Education having been secured, building was commenced in April 1911 and the long-awaited facilities were at last available in the following year, providing the School with the conditions essential to progress in those scientific studies which were an integral part of a genuine secondary school course. The upheaval in School routine caused by the new building works was further increased by the reconstruction of the hall floor, which had been discovered to be in a dangerous condition from decaying of the joists, being carried out simultaneously by the contractors. The whole of the old floor was taken out and replaced by laying a raft of maple boards over a concrete base, which stood the strain of the years remarkably well. Thus, for some considerable time, the School laboured under the serious handicaps of limited space, noise, dirt and discomfort, but the ultimate benefits out-weighed the temporary difficulties and both staff and boys were pleased with the new buildings, which created a new sense of spaciousness. However, the Governors now felt that they had spent enough on the School, for, when in 1914 consideration was given to the provision of a metal workshop, it was decided to postpone the idea indefinitely when it was discovered that the cost would be £246. It is interesting that this should again be a casualty of economy exactly fifty years later in the new buildings at Elmbridge.

War and its aftermath

Meanwhile the line-up of forces in Europe was leading inexorably to the horrors of the First World War, which finally broke out in August 1914. There was much enthusiastic patriotism in Britain in the early days of the conflict and thousands of young men flocked to the Colours. Rich's, which had a high proportion of newly-qualified men on the staff, was particularly affected by this emotion, and within seven months of the declaration of War Mr. Price found himself without eleven (including the Second Master) of his fifteen staff, who had enlisted. This created enormous problems for him, especially as the number of boys in the School continued to grow. Replacements were difficult to obtain, so he tried the expedient of appointing temporary mistresses, which the Governors did not like, but in most cases it was impossible to do otherwise, particularly after attempts to arrange for assistance from staff at the Crypt broke down over the practical difficulties of time-tabling and the number of periods involved. Mr. Price himself worked at the highest possible pressure to maintain the efficiency of the School, a fact which the Governors noted in a minute of March 1915:-

> 'The Governors desire to express to Mr. Price their warm sympathy with regard to the serious difficulties in carrying on the work of the School owing to so many of the Assistant Masters having enlisted, together with their appreciation of the loyal way in which he has faced the crisis.'

In addition to this problem there were other difficulties arising out of war-time conditions: money only available for absolutely essential repairs meant making do with increasingly inadequate apparatus and materials; health affected by food shortages; continuing problems of administration and teaching resulting from a shortage of capable staff and so on. There could be no easing of this pressure while the War lasted and it took an increasing toll of Mr. Price's health and energy. The steady progress which had been a feature of his leadership could only be sustained at considerable personal cost. Other School activities resulting from the abnormal situation must also have claimed his time and thought, including the formation of a Cadet Corps affiliated to the 5th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, the first to be formed in the City, whose activities stretched to mounting guard at the munitions factory at Quedgeley during the summer holidays of 1917. In the period immediately after the War the Corps was active on a number of civic occasions, and thus helped to keep the School in the public eye.

Mr. Price must have felt keenly, too, the passing of Old Richians killed in the fighting. The first victim was R. J. Guest, an Assistant Engineer on H.M.S. Hawke, which was sunk early in the War. He had been the first boy from the School to enter the Royal Navy as a Boy Artificer and his career had been most promising before his posting to his ship but a short time before she was sunk. He was soon to be followed by others as the casualty figures resulting from four years of desperate warfare mounted to catastrophic proportions. Seventy-six of these, both Old Richians and members of staff, were later to be commemorated on a war memorial erected in the School hall. The oak tablet was designed by one Old Richian H. A. Barnes, and another, the Reverend George H. Dix, Principal of St. John's College, Battersea, performed the dedication at a simple service on November 12th, 1920, attended by an impressive array of civic dignitaries. The original idea was that a library in the School should be furnished in memory of the Old Richians who gave their lives, but this did not materialise. In due course, however, the oak tablet was replaced by a bronze plaque in the hall, and this now adorns the east wall under 'the arch' in the new building, where with the added names of those who did not return from the Second World War, it provides a permanent reminder to later generations that much that they take for granted was only preserved at the cost of men's lives.

The end of the War brought little relief to Mr. Price, for he was now faced with the problems of re-integrating the staff as they returned from the Services and regaining the ground inevitably lost as the result of the uncertain conditions of the previous four years. Before long, however, the School was once again in a flourishing state, with examination results giving cause for pleasure* and the societies and clubs which had been in temporary eclipse during the War attracting their devotees afresh. The Corps continued to win high praise at the annual inspections, the Rifle Club won matches and prizes, budding orators displayed their prowess on a variety of weighty subjects in the Debating Society, and swimming, rambling, cricket, football and athletics developed vigorously. Before the War the School had at last obtained permanent possession of a playing field in Denmark Road, on which it spent a considerable amount of money, raised by concerts and other social activities, for drainage, seeding and other work. It had thus become possible to do much more with School games, though the modern rather pampered schoolboy might note that all games were played out of school hours, and one enthusiast cycled happily to his home nine miles away after every match. The possession of this field made possible the introduction of a Sports Day in 1921, which was so successful that thereafter it became an increasingly important annual event, with a strong social as well as a competitive atmosphere. By 1925 it had become something of a City occasion, attended by the civic dignitaries with the Mayoress presenting the prizes and the Wagon Works silver band to play background music.

In spite of these outward signs of academic and social health all was not well with the School. In 1920 it reached a peak as far as numbers were concerned, but for the next five years the entry fell steadily, reflecting various under-currents of opinion that told against the School in this period.** It may well be that the force of Mr. Price's personality had been over-taxed by his War-time exertions, but, in any case, he felt the time had come for him to day down his responsibilities and in the summer of 1925, at the age of sixty-three, he retired. The nineteen years of his mastership had been the vital years in transforming the School into a genuine secondary school and his personal example of devotion to the School and its interests had been an inspiration to all who served or had been boys under his direction. The tributes paid at his retirement contained much more than the conventional sentiments; they reflected the genuine warmth of personal appreciation that his personality and service had engendered. The new Head Master was to take over an enriched heritage, as well as many problems.

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*Outstanding successes were after 1921 recorded on an honours board made from wood from a mulberry tree which stood for many years in the School Garden.

**The building of new County Secondary Schools probably affected the in-take of county boys, who had always been an important element in Rich's.

CHAPTER VIII

CONSOLIDATION

New developments

The Governors committed the future of the School to Mr. H. F. Rogers-Tillstone, who had graduated from Trinity Hall, Cambridge, after a period at Edinburgh University, and who, prior to his appointment, held the post of head of the modern language department at Nuneaton Grammar School. He was a man of wide interests, which were coloured by his knowledge of Law, for he was a member of the Inner Temple, and by his experiences of travel on the Continent, while he was described in an article in the Nuneaton Chronicle as a 'vivid personality'. A much more intense character than his predecessor, with a streak of eccentric egotism which became more marked with the passage of the years, he was determined to make a name for the School, which he insisted on referring to as 'my Foundation' or 'the Old House', as a Public School, with all the characteristics and organisation of such an institution, even if this interpretation of the history and traditions of the School to support his contentions must be admitted to be of doubtful validity! There can be no doubt at all, however, that his drive and determination and confidence were vitally important in rescuing the School from its downward drift, and he imparted a new spirit of self esteem and a fresh vision of success that raised the academic standards in the School far beyond their previous best. He may not have inspired personal devotion, but he constantly challenged the School to achieve greater results, which he published abroad on Speech Days, moved to December as a commemoration of 'Tommy's Day', in Reports which were a curious mixture of fact, unimportant comparison and imagination couched in flowery prose. Under his urging a sustained development took place.

The School's standing and future history obviously depended upon the quality of the work it could do in the upper part of the School, and the new Head Master set about remedying the weakness here immediately he arrived. There must be provision made for any boy of ability to take courses which would lead him right through to university entrance, otherwise Rich's could not be a genuine competitor for pupils of above average capabilities and ambition. In consequence advanced courses in Modern Studies and Mathematics and Science were introduced in 1925, and the boys could now sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations of the Cambridge Syndicate and be prepared for scholarship examinations at the universities. At his first Speech Day in December 1925 Mr. Rogers-Tillstone put the situation thus:-

> From 1906 Mr. Price led up to every boy finishing his course by taking the School Certificate as a hall mark of knowledge and culture. So now this term . . . . . we are putting the coping stone on his labours by instituting our Advanced Course.'

Unless a boy wished to be a Greek scholar he could now pursue his studies to the highest level possible in a school, and in consequence there was a steady increase in the

number of Old Richians, or 'Old Plues' as they then called themselves, who passed on to the universities.* Cambridge especially, Bristol, Birmingham, Durham and other institutions of advanced learning all received undergraduates from the School in surprising numbers in the early years of these advanced courses, thus building a reputation for academic achievement that raised the standing of Rich's to a fresh height within the district. In 1930, for example, eight boys went directly from the School to university; a remarkable achievement for a small School without a long history of success in this field, and in part made possible by the Foundation Scholarships instituted by the Governors a few years previously.

These achievements led to criticism suggesting that the Head Master was only interested in the able boy and claiming that the average pupil was neglected. Mr. Rogers-Tillstone countered this by stressing the importance of all boys obtaining the School Certificate and by introducing a Commercial course in the VIth Form for boys who did not wish to take the academic subjects, over and above the course in shorthand which boys took lower in the School. These measures certainly strengthened his claim that Rich's was fulfilling the dual function of providing incentives for both the average and the able boy, and the steady increase in the number of entrants to the School from all parts of the City and the surrounding areas showed that many parents accepted the truth of this contention. By 1932, when enlarged accommodation had been found by taking over the old 'British School' building in Wellington Street, inadequate for teaching purposes though it was, the numbers in the School had reached a new record of three hundred and forty. A healthy future seemed certain.

Within the School itself the changes were equally marked. With an enlarged VIth Form of a higher intellectual calibre drawn from an increasingly wide social background, affected as this was by having both fee-paying and 'special place' boys in the School, it became possible to engage in many more activities and to widen the responsibilities given to the seniors. One of the first actions of Mr. Rogers-Tillstone was to create the office of School Captain in 'conformity with the established custom at all Public Schools', and to enlarge the functions and dignity of the School prefects. In the following year the now familiar blue and yellow gowns were introduced, and some time later the title of observator was resurrected from the Blue School days and used for the prefects. It was in more recent years, when the increase in the size of the School demanded a larger prefectorial body, that the award of an observatorship with its distinguishing gown became reserved as the highest honour to be awarded to a limited number of senior boys who had proved their worth by service to the School. This is still the situation to-day and it is a far cry from the Blue School situation when each of the dozen or so third year boys took it in turn to be the observator to report on the conduct of the rest of the School to the Master.**

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*The age limit on attendance in the Scheme of 1906 had by now been removed.

**See Appendix III, Rules 3, 9, 11 and 13 for the duties of an observator in the nineteenth century.

Incidentally, it was in 1925 that the School came into the possession of one of the Old Blue Coat medallion badges, which was presented by Sir James Bruton, M.P. at the Speech Day in that year. A similar one mounted on a silver chain now forms the regalia of the School Captain on important school occasions.†

Other developments which reflected the general health of the School were taking place at the same time as those previously mentioned. The House system was made more genuinely competitive and even more societies of various sorts catered for a wide range of interests, both sporting and academic. The latter included the Head Master's particular interest, the 'Cercle Français', to encourage the study of French literature and spoken French, at which boys read their own papers in French. Little wonder, perhaps that a high proportion of the School's university successes at this period were in modern languages. Even dramatics was an off-shoot of languages being the responsibility of la societe dramatique Anglo-Francaise, which from time to time performed at Speech Day in French. Thoughtfully the visitors were provided with a synopsis of events in English! For the less academically minded there were many other opportunities of social contact, including, no doubt with the many country boys in mind, a School branch of the Farmers' Union, which used to put on a flower and vegetable show in the hall as well as arrange trips to the Three Counties Show and similar events. Vigorous interests, and increasing pride in the School, an active Old Richians Association under the watchful eye of the Head Master as President, all spoke of a buoyant situation and a bright future. But a hidden mine was about to be exploded, all the more shattering because of its unexpected nature.

Proposals to change the School

For some time there had been under-currents of opinion hostile to the development of two boys' grammar schools in the City, especially when so many boys ultimately joined engineering firms, having received an education which some people felt did not really fit them for the jobs they were later to do. A paragraph in a report of a special committee of the Governors of the Gloucester United Schools in February 1934 reflected clearly this attitude. Describing the course of discussions on the nature of the curriculum in the grammar schools it stated:-

> 'Opinions, based on the experiences of employers, were expressed indicating that boys who enter industry after an academic course at a Secondary School often show a disinclination to start at the bottom when they commence work; whereas boys who have followed a more practical course, such as that at the Junior Technical School, enter upon their industrial career in a happier frame of mind. At the same time it was thought that the latter type of boy, after reaching a certain position, was handicapped by a deficiency in his general education which seriously retarded his advance to higher positions or prevented him from reaching them.'

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†This was presented to the School by the Wixey family.

The answer seemed obvious to the committee: introduce practical courses into the secondary schools and have the best of both worlds. This kind of thinking was in line with much that was being expressed, both locally and nationally, often with considerable ignorance of the facts, about the weaknesses of the 'classical' tradition in Secondary Schools and the narrowness of the examinations for the School Leaving Certificates of the various University Boards. The pressures exercised by these views, which probably affected the thinking of the City Education Officer, together with increasing costs of maintaining the Secondary Schools led to a decision in 1932 to reconsider the whole position in Gloucester. The income of the Foundation had long since ceased to meet the increased costs of maintaining the Schools, and the annual deficit had to be met in part by the City and the County Council, which in 1932-33 had to find over £10,000 for this purpose from the rates. It was therefore decided to set up a special joint committee representing the City and County Councils and Governors of the United Schools to consider and make recommendations concerning both the questions of administration of the Foundation and the organisation of the Schools. The former question need not detain us for long. The committee recommended, and the Councils agreed, that the Governors should remain in being and control the funds of the Foundation, but that the administration of all forms of technical education should be the responsibility of the Local Education Authority. The position was not really satisfactory, and in June 1937 the Governors finally disappeared being replaced by the City Council directly as Trustees of the Gloucester United Schools. The wheel had gone full circle and once again the elected representatives of the citizens of Gloucester became responsible for the Schools which had been originally put in their care by their founders.

Of much more importance to the history of the School, however, were the recommendations of the committee concerning the future organisation of the various Schools of the Foundation. The Governors were faced at this period both with general problems of finance in a period of national economic crisis and with the nature of the curricula within the Schools, as already mentioned, and the joint committee discussed these at some length. The number of small groups doing Advanced Courses in the four Secondary Schools in their view encouraged extravagance in staffing, which could be reduced by cutting the traditional grammar schools to two. Consideration was then given to the question of providing a more practical type of education for those children who did not wish to take the academic subjects to an advanced standard. This was already being done in the Central Schools and the Junior Technical School, but the former had to be conducted under the Elementary regulations of the Board of Education, while the latter, whose numbers were only forty-eight at this point, did not attracting many pupils of a suitable academic standard, and in both cases it was difficult to keep pupils beyond the minimum school-leaving age. These Schools did not enjoy sufficient status to attract the kind of boys and girls with whom the committee were concerned. It was, therefore, necessary to introduce this kind of practical course in the Secondary Schools to achieve the desired result, so the committee recommended and the Governors accepted

> 'That on grounds of education efficiency and economy the existing Secondary, Junior Technical and Central Schools be reorganised on the following lines:

(a) A Grammar School with accommodation for at least 450 boys at the Crypt Grammar School;

(b) A High School with accommodation for at least 450 girls at Denmark Road;

(c) A Preparatory Department with accommodation for at least 250 pupils at Ribston Hall;

(d) A Secondary School with a Technical and a Commercial bias with accommodation for at least 400 boys at Sir Thomas Rich's School;

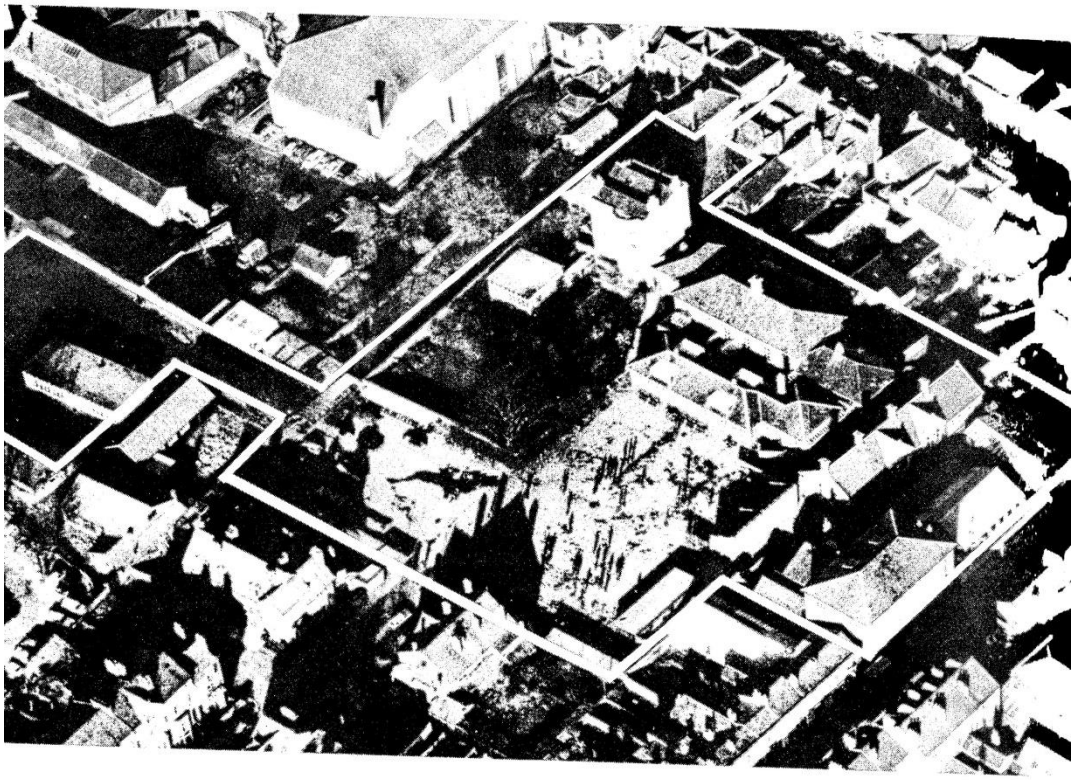
(e) For the time being a Modern School with a Technical and a Commercial bias for girls at Derby Road Central School . . . . . with the understanding that a Secondary School for girls with a Technical and Commercial bias shall be instituted if and when the need is proved and suitable premises are available;

(f) The merging of the Junior Technical School in Sir Thomas Rich's School;

(g) The closure of Derby Road Central School for boys.'

Thus the broad outlines of future policy were laid down, in terms that were bound to rouse controversy.

There can be little wonder that the reaction in the School, and amongst parents and Old Richians and others who thought highly of the School, was markedly hostile, for the proposals ran completely counter to all that the Head Master had been doing in recent years, and, indeed to the whole history of the School since 1906. To many people it appeared like putting the clock back by thirty years and 'down-grading' the School, with disastrous results on the likely intake of able boys. They could not understand the attitude of the Governors at a time when the School was more flourishing academically than it had ever been. Such views were dominant amongst the more than two hundred and fifty parents who attended an emergency meeting called by Mr. Rogers-Tillstone on December 22nd, 1932, three days after the public release of the Governors' proposals. Emotional responses rather than any reasoned appraisal of the situation were bound to hold sway at this stage, though the latter was to come with a memorandum dealing cogently with the clauses in the joint committees' report regarded as particularly dangerous to the future of the School. The emergency meeting decided to form a parents' defence organisation, known as the Guild of Sir Thomas Rich, to work against the proposed changes, and the influence of the Head Master in this matter can be clearly detected in the terms of the definitive proposal, namely 'to cement into one cordial family all the parents and guardians of boys in the School for the time being, by social intercourse and enjoyment of similar interests, to continue and preserve the bond between the Foundation and themselves after their sons have left the Foundation, to protect and support its interests and privileges, conserving the distinguished reputation,



Aerial view of School at Barton Street 1889–1964

work and position of the House unimpaired.' A committee was elected to conduct the fight, with the Head Master as Chairman, and Mr. Norman T. James, an Old Richian and a parent, as Secretary and Treasurer. These two subsequently put the case for the Guild to the Governors.

All the forces of propaganda were with the protagonists of change whose position received plenty of vocal support and the approval of the local press, so that the recommendations seemed assured of success. However, the members of the City Council seem to have appreciated the validity of the arguments against change put before them, for, on March 29th, 1933, much to the general surprise, the Council rejected by 19 votes to 9, the proposals for reorganisation, which had already been somewhat altered from those previously outlined. However, the idea of a secondary school with a commercial and technical bias was still strongly favoured by influential members of the Education Committee and the Governors, and they proceeded to go ahead with plans for achieving this in spite of the defeat of the former proposals in the Council. The Governors

appointed a special committee to consider the details of future policy in regard to the Crypt and Rich's Schools in January, 1934 and it issued its report within less than a month, after only two meetings, which suggests considerable unanimity of opinion amongst its members. They believed that there was much to be said for having both the academic and the practical courses in the same school, which was the line taken by the Guild of Sir Thomas Rich, but economic considerations brought them down in favour of the original proposals to split the courses, with such subjects as woodwork, metalwork, art and art crafts, machine drawing and the various aspects of commerce added to the external Examination list at Rich's. Whatever might be said in public, it was not educational reasons that dictated the proposed arrangements but what would be the cheapest.* To try to safeguard the status of Rich's, pupils were to be encouraged to proceed to advanced courses in mathematics and science provided in the School, and the scale of fees at both the Crypt and Rich's were to be the same. The new arrangements were to commence in September 1934. This time the proposals were accepted by the Council in spite of the continued opposition of the Head Master, who wanted advanced courses in modern studies retained in the School, which was contrary to the whole basis of the committee's thinking, and the Guild and the Old Richians, who passed a resolution condemning the recommendations.

But the changes were not to come. When the proposals were submitted to the Board of Education for approval they met with a negative response, as this paragraph from the Board's reply shows:-

> . . . . It appears to the Board to be open to serious question whether the Sir Thomas Rich's School, if reorganised on the lines suggested, would be able to maintain its character and prestige as a Secondary School, nor do they feel satisfied that such a school would be the most suitable or effective medium for satisfying those particular local needs which the Governors and the Authority have in mind.'

The Board refused to sanction either these changes or various alternative proposals put forward by the Governors and the Education Committees, such as that which would have created a co-educational junior technical school, where no academic courses would have been taken, with the Head Master responsible to the Principal of the Technical College, under the name of Sir Thomas Rich's Technical School. Under this scheme there would have been one boys' Secondary School, with the cumbersome title of Gloucester Grammar School (Crypt and Rich's Foundation), a suggestion which drew vigorous protests both from the Guild of Sir Thomas Rich and the Old Boys' Associations of both Schools. Such a response was not surprising, though the reasoning of the two

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*The Report of an Inspection by the Board of Education in December, 1934 stated that the buildings were decidedly poor. A traditional type Secondary School would shortly require new buildings, while a technical bias School could make use of the existing technical facilities in the Technical College.

Associations was hardly similar. However, the proposed changes were too far reaching for the Board to accept before the publication of the Report of its own Consultative Committee on 'Education above the Primary Stage', so the Local Authority was instructed to defer action until after this had taken place and been considered, though at the same time permission was given for building the new Technical College in Brunswick Road and the new Crypt at Podsmead. The Report, known after its Chairman as the Spens Report, found in favour of greater variety in types of secondary education, but it was not published until 1938, and, although in the mean time the Local Authority had been making plans for the transfer of staff and the avoidance if possible of redundancy on the assumption that the final set of proposals mentioned above would be implemented, the onset of the second World War meant the shelving of all such plans. Thus the School was given the opportunity to continue to prove its worth as a grammar school and to stake even more firmly its claim for the recognition of its true status, though it was some time before it could finally shake off the deliterious effects on the quality and quantity of the entry lists of this long period of uncertainty.*

The School in the second World War

By now the School was in different hands, for, in the midst of the crisis over the future, Mr. Rogers-Tillstone's brittle health was finally broken; he was granted urgent sick leave in September 1936, and was dead within nine months. Mr. W. J. Veale, the Second Master, was appointed to act temporarily as Assistant-in-Charge and then in due course, to the lasting benefit of the School, he was confirmed in the office of Head Master. He entered on a depleted heritage, but his outstanding qualities of humanity and devotion to the interests of the School, which inspired loyalty in both staff and boys, enabled him to guide the School through the difficulties that still had to be overcome. The School could be said to be in a state approaching normality† when War brought a new set of problems, which were tackled with vigour and spirit. The age of the staff this time precluded the wholesale exodus that had taken place twenty-five years earlier and this made it possible to continue unabated many of the School's activities, including the publication of an abridged version of the School Magazine and the maintenance of most of the clubs and societies. Considerable areas of the playing field were turned into allotments worked by the boys and the staff, and this cut the amount of playing area both for the year group games' afternoons which had been introduced into the time-table for the first time in 1937 and for those School matches which were still possible with local opponents on Saturday or Wednesday afternoons. Incidentally, there was no groundsman either before or during the War, the pitches being cut by a member of staff

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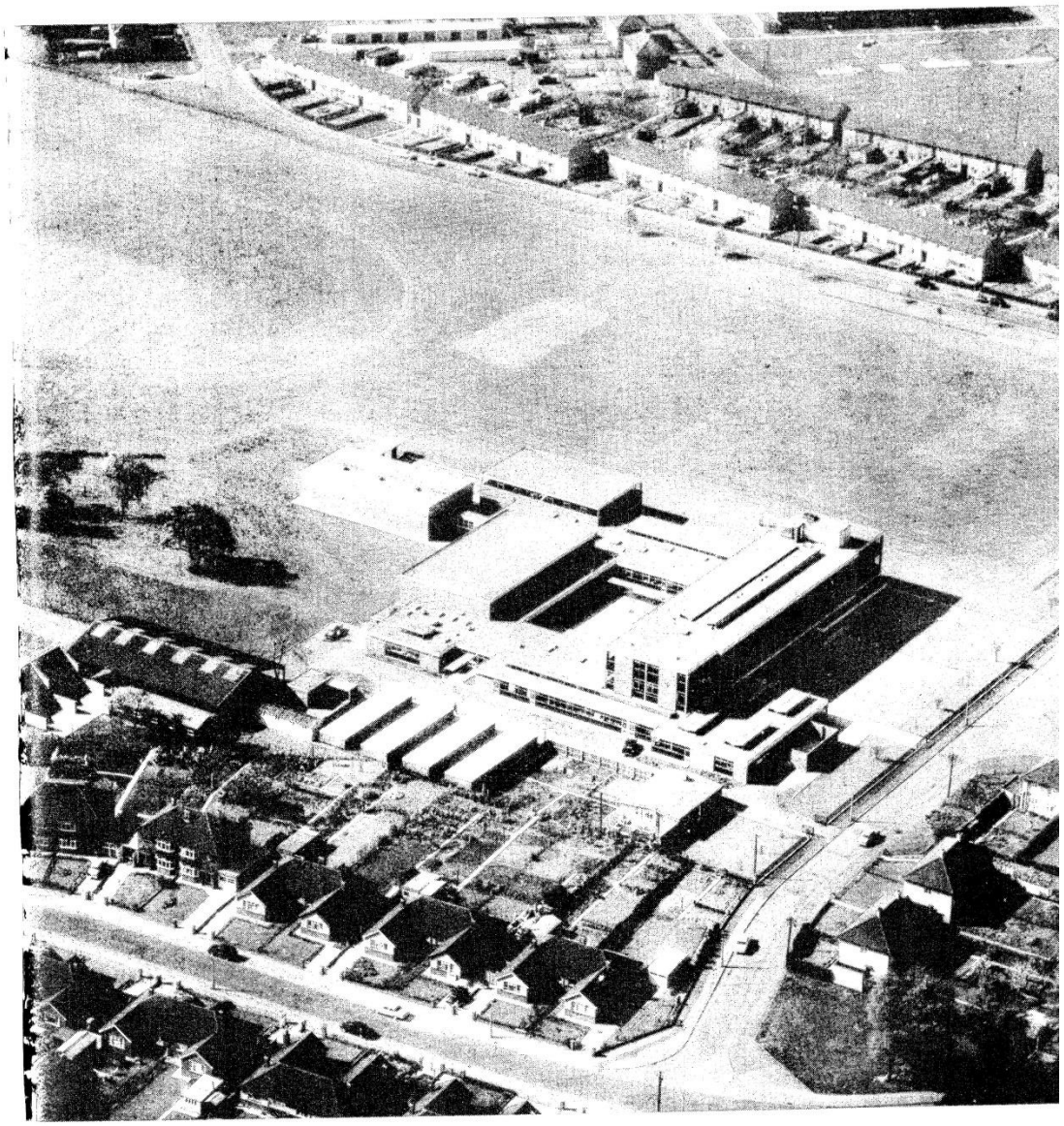
*Numbers which had reached 340 in 1934, fell to 253 in 1937, but increased steadily under Mr. Veale's leadership and reached 383 at the time of the Inspection in 1946, in spite of the 'phasing out' of the Preparatory Forms under the terms of the 1944 Education Act.

†The first overseas School journey took place in1938. This was to Paris for one week at Easter, when thirty-five boys and three staff went and the inclusive cost per head was £5!

and marked out in the evenings by members of the Eleven concerned. The School made its contribution to the War effort not only through the Old Richians called into the Services, but through National Savings and perhaps especially through the training given to boys who joined 181 Squadron of the Air Training Corps, commanded by the Head Master. The old Corps had been disbanded after twenty-five years of operation under Captain Frank Davies, and the new squadron of the Air Defence Cadet Corps was formed twelve months later. This seems to have had a wider appeal for the boys and prepared many of them for life in the R.A.F. when they left School. All these activities, plus the problems of 'blacking out' the various buildings, arranging fire-watching rotas of staff and senior boys, coping with dispersal when air-raid warnings sounded (they never did during the 'Cambridge' examinations!), organising various social events to raise money for War-time Charities and many others, kept the Head Master and the staff at full stretch, but the boys were in consequence able to enjoy a 'full' School life in spite of the austerity imposed by the struggle with the Axis Powers. At the beginning of the War the Government, fearful of mass air-raids, had arranged for the evacuation of school children from the major population centres, and on the 1st September 1939, 864 Secondary School pupils arrived in Gloucester from Birmingham, and were 'twinned' for the purpose of educational organisation with the four secondary schools, Rich's 'twin' being George Dixon Grammar School. This arrangement lasted for two terms, with the two Schools having alternate use of the premises; Rich's in the morning and George Dixon's in the afternoon. The latter showed their gratitude for the hospitality received by presenting Rich's with a silver challenge cup for physical training, the Head Master of George Dixon's returning from Birmingham to make the presentation in person on May 9th, 1940.

Post-War developments

And so the War years passed, and as victory became more and more an ultimate certainty the Government was able to give some of its attention to preparing for the necessary social reforms which the coming of total war had inevitably delayed. Of primary importance amongst these was the reorganisation of education, the need for which had been stressed by the Spens Report. In consequence the Education Act of 1944, forever associated with the name of the then President of the Board of Education, Mr. R. A. Butler, completely re-cast the educational system of England and Wales, dividing it simply into 'primary' and 'secondary' and 'further education', abolishing fees completely and making entry to any secondary school entirely dependent on age and aptitude. This Act obviously necessitated considerable local changes as the existing grammar schools ceased to be 'aided' and became fully maintained by the Local Education Authority, through the Education Committee and the Governing Body of the Gloucester Secondary Schools appointed in November 1945. A few days later Mrs. M. L. Edwards, who as long ago as 1935 had presented to the School the statuette of a Blue Coat Boy purchased by her husband at a sale some years before, which now stands on the Head Master's desk, was elected as Chairman of the Education Committee to which office she brought a wide



Aerial view of New School at Elmleaze 1964

knowledge of the educational situation in Gloucester and a great determination that Gloucester children should have the best possible opportunities in schooling. Two consequences of the Act affected Rich's particularly: the Preparatory Forms for boys aged from eight to eleven had to disappear, though the boys in them at the time the Act was implemented were allowed to finish their courses, and the School ceased to be able to have a large in-take from the County districts. This severed a long-standing connection, for, ever since 1882 the School had had a high reputation in the country districts, which was reflected in the fact that for a considerable number of years two of the five Houses were drawn exclusively from County boys. Now, however, the entry of County boys was seriously limited, but their places were taken by more and more City boys, divided between the two grammar schools as the result of the examinations taken at the close of the primary stage in education.

The Report of the General Inspection of the School in October 1946 spoke highly of the general tone and well-being of the School and the improvement in many ways since the previous Inspection twelve years before, but stressed the deplorable inadequacy of the buildings, especially glaring in days of new concepts of acceptable education standards. It made a number of recommendations for temporary improvements to ease the worst of the difficulties, which the Council shortly authorised, but there could be no real solution to the problems short of entirely new buildings. The Council had already recognised this fact for in March 1946 they had decided to amend the Development Plan they were required to submit to the Ministry of Education under the 1944 Act by moving the proposed erection of new buildings for Rich's from the year 1949/50 to the position of the first item for 1948/49. No one thought then that it would be another eighteen years before those buildings would be a reality, but the post-War uncertainties and the urgent need for new schools at other levels deterred the Ministry from granting permission to build. At the same time the School suffered another blow, when it lost its playing field in Denmark Road. The usefulness of the allotments having ended, money from the School fund was used to enable the field to be levelled and seemed to produce an excellent rugby pitch, which game the School took up in January, 1946. But the School had no absolute claim to the ground, which the owner now sold over its head to the Civil Service Sports Association. The Governors agreed to reimburse the School fund to the extent of the £59-19-9 spent on the field, but it could never repay the hours of voluntary labour put in by boys and staff and others to produce the fresh playing area. For the next few years the School had to use a variety of grounds both for cricket and rugby all over the City, often having games on fields in widely separated districts on the same afternoon. The difficulties of organisation, transport of equipment and coaching can easily be imagined. At various times games were played at Sutgrove, at Plock Court, on the Gloucester City Football ground, on Horton Road and Coney Hill Hospital grounds, on the Spa and at Tewkesbury Road, on pitches, some of which were excellent and some very moderate. Not until the purchase of the Elmbridge site, and the provision of a hut with minimal* facilities, did the School once again have its own home for games, first for rugby and ultimately for cricket, as good 'squares' were created out of the former rough fields.

The purchase of the Elmbridge site in 1947 was one step towards the fulfilment of the proposals of the Development Plan, the details of which aroused controversy and were subject to modification with the passage of the years. The original idea of creating bilateral 'Grammar/Modern' and 'Technical/Modern' schools, and the alternative suggestion of making 'Grammar/Technical' schools, which was favoured by the existing Heads and Assistants in the Grammar Schools, in the main, both ultimately failed of realisation, though the proposal to form the Crypt and Rich's into Grammar/Technical schools was only defeated in the Education Committee on the casting vote of the Chairman. Ultimately, however, the decision was taken to keep the various types of

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*It was not until 1951 that provision was made for water, lighting and drainage in the changing hut.

education in separate schools, and Rich's 'Grammar' status was not seriously threatened thereafter, though it had one more crisis still to survive. In 1952 the Governors and the Education Committee decided to recommend to the Council that the annual entry to both Rich's and Ribston Hall should be reduced from three 'streams', or about one hundred pupils, to two, or about sixty-five pupils. No knowledge of this came to the Heads of the Schools until four days before the Council meeting, at which confirmation was virtually certain. A meeting of parents, Old Richians and staff unanimously decided to oppose this move, which would have adversely affected public confidence in the status and well-being of the Schools, and a memorandum prepared by Mr. Veale was sent to all the City councillors. A heated debate took place at the Council meeting before a packed gallery of 'Richians', and the result was the acceptance of a motion requesting the Governors to meet representatives of the Schools to discuss the proposal. The arguments put forward at this meeting convinced the Governors of the need to maintain the existing level of entry to Rich's and Ribston Hall and the whole scheme was abandoned.

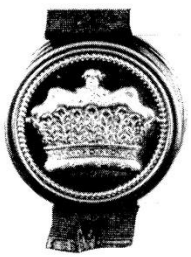
This doubt concerning the future having been removed, the School could devote its energies to its proper task of encouraging successive generations of boys to make the best of the abundant opportunities offered them. The physical surroundings might be uninspiring, but in spite of the difficulties, or perhaps in part because of them, there was a spirit of cheerful determination and willing co-operation within the School, and a pride in all things Rich's, which were marked features of the School's 'character'. Notwithstanding their inconvenience many a Richian, in retrospect at least, developed a feeling almost of affection for the old buildings in Barton Street, when time had dimmed the sharpness of the memory of freezing days in the Biology laboratory if the gas pressure was too low to make the heaters effective, of the discomfort of sweltering days in the 'glass house' in the garden, or of trying to avoid being soaked by rain during a dash from the main building to the lawn site or, in later years, to the furthest corner of the School's 'empire' in the old Christ Church school. He might at length forget the inconvenience of the variety of buildings in which he ate his lunch, whether it were the Technical College, the Good Templars' hall, Christ Church parish hall or Friar's Orchard, each of which in turn provided him and his fellows with temporary shelter. These inconveniences and the many other difficulties arising from them were made bearable by the warmth of the human relationships that existed amongst the boys and the staff. Most Old Richians remember the School as a happy and harmonious place, where boys were encouraged to give of their best, at whatever level of achievement, for the benefit of all and not just for self glory. This was an ideal for which the School strove, and it strove not unsuccessfully, as any perusal of the achievements of Old Richians will clearly show. Academic successes in many fields there certainly were as the honours boards bear out, but the true worth of any school must ultimately be judged on the attitudes and ideals of its 'average' product, and over the years the School has built up a reputation in this matter in which it feels a modest glow of pride.

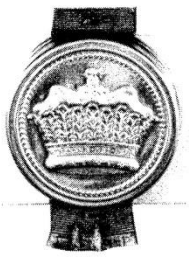
To All and Singular to whom these Presents shall come Sir Anthony Richard Wagner Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order Garter Principal King of Arms Sir John Gerard Heaton-Armstrong Knight Member of the Royal Victorian Order Clarenceux King of Arms and Aubrey John Toppin Esquire Commander of the Royal Victorian Order Lesser and Ulster Kings of Arms Send Greeting **Whereas** John Anthony Stocks Gentleman Master of Arts of the University of Oxford Headmaster of Sir Thomas Rich's School situate in the County of the City of Gloucester hath represented unto Their Most Noble Bernard Marmaduke Duke of Norfolk Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order Earl Marshal and Hereditary Marshal of England and One of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council that the School now known as Sir Thomas Rich's School was founded in the year 1666 by Sir Thomas Rich Baronet and that it is managed and controlled by a Board of Governors appointed by the City of Gloucester Education Committee which said Board is desirous that Armorial Ensigns should be duly established for the use School under lawful authority and he therefore on behalf of the said Board of Governors hath requested the favour of His Grace's Warrant for Our granting and assigning such Armorial Bearings and on the same Patent such Device or Badge as may be proper to be borne and used for Sir Thomas Rich's School on Seals or Otherwise the whole according to the Laws of Arms **And forasmuch** as the said Earl Marshal did by Warrant under his hand and Seal bearing date the Twentieth day of October instant authorize and direct Us to grant and assign such Armorial Bearings and such Device or Badge accordingly **Know ye therefore** that We the said Garter Clarenceux and Lesser and Ulster in pursuance of His Grace's Warrant and by virtue of the Letters Patent of Our several Offices to each of Us respectively granted do by these Presents grant and assign the Arms following for Sir Thomas Rich's School that is to say Or on a Saltire raguly per saltire Gules and Azure five Cross Crosslets fitchy Gold And for the Crest On a Wreath Or and Azure A dexter Arm embowed in Armour the Hand Gauntleted proper holding a Cross formy fitchy Or the elbow enfiled of a Mural Crown Gold as the same are in the margin hereof more fully depicted And by the Authority aforesaid We do further grant and assign the following Device or Badge that is to say A Saltire urdy raguly per saltire Gules and Azure charged with five Cross Crosslets fitchy Or as here depicted the whole to be borne and used for ever hereafter for Sir Thomas Rich's School on Seals or otherwise according to the Laws of Arms **In witness** whereof We the said Garter Clarenceux and Lesser and Ulster Kings of Arms have to these Presents subscribed Our names and affixed the Seals of Our several Offices this Twenty third day of October in the Eleventh year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen Head of the Commonwealth Defender of the Faith and in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and sixty-two.

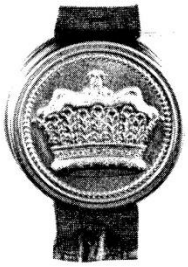
Anthony R. Wagner [redacted] Garter

J.J. Heaton-Armstrong [redacted] Clarenceux

Aubrey J. Toppin [redacted] Lesser and Ulster





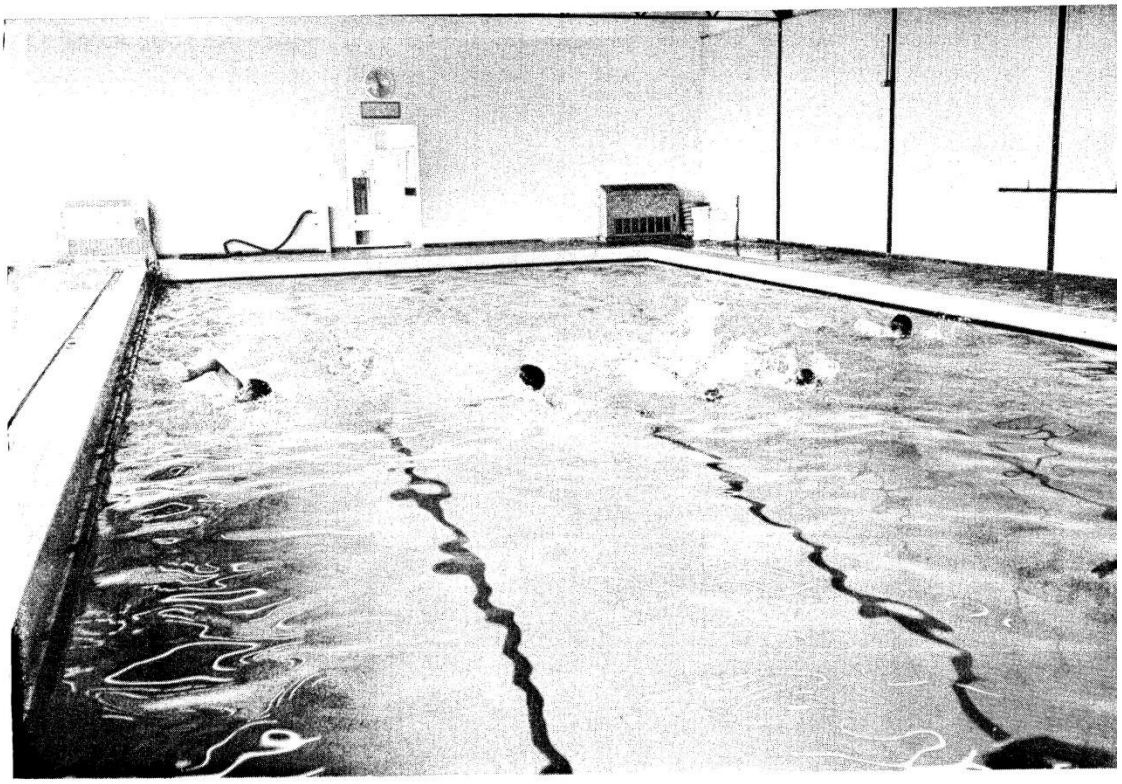


Grant of Arms

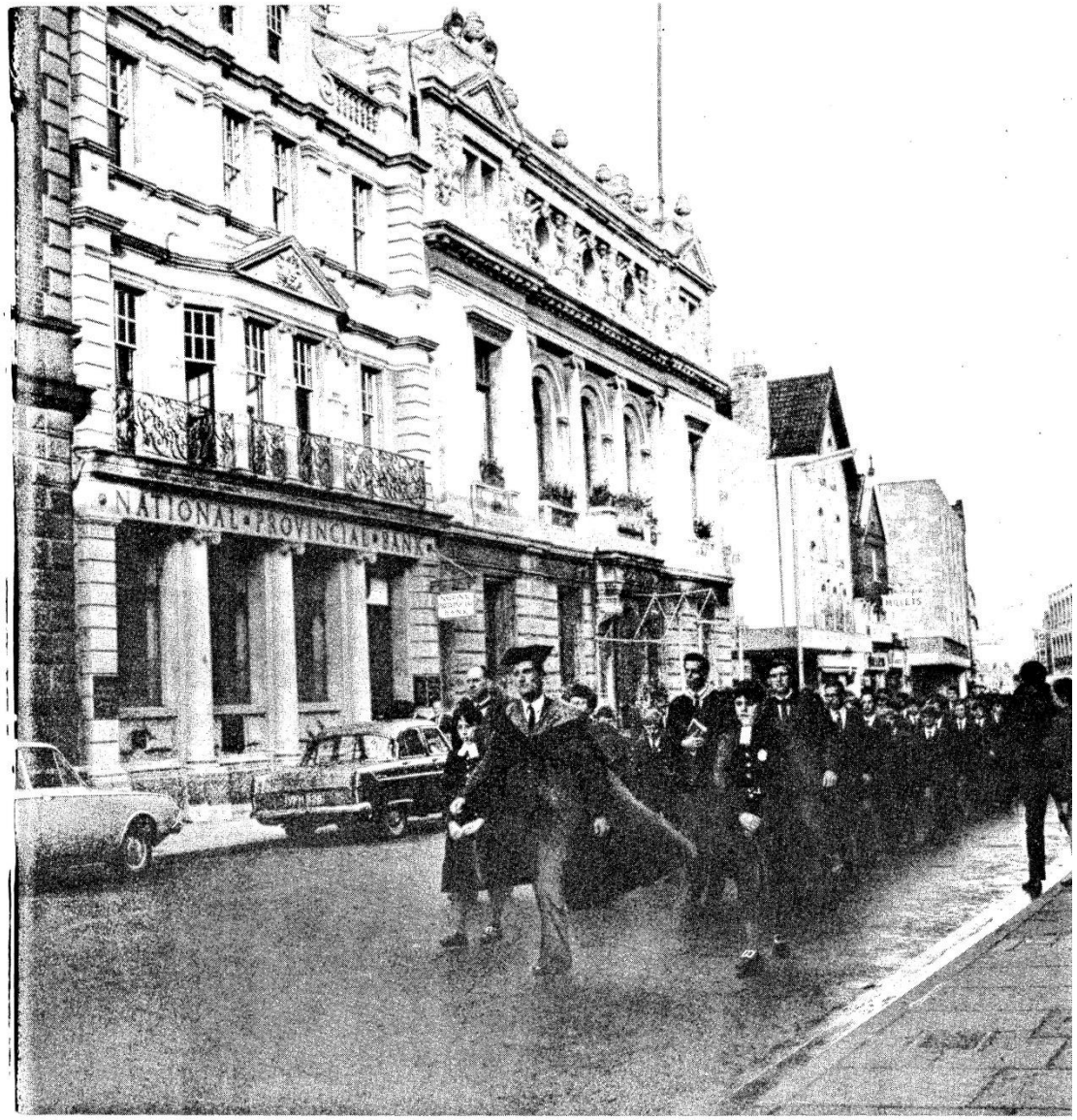
Elmbridge at last

'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' The delays in commencing the new buildings seemed endless, especially to those who had striven over the years to preserve the School's independent identity, and by the late nineteen fifties the hopes were no nearer fulfilment than they had been a decade earlier. Mr. Veale laid down the task in 1957, and it fell to his successor, Mr. A. S. Worrall, to undertake the exciting task of the preliminary planning of the future, once the Ministry of Education had given the Local Authority permission to go ahead with the building. Mr. Worrall had himself moved to another sphere before planning gave place to actuality and the designs prepared in the City Architect's Department began to take shape in steel girders and concrete and brick and other building materials. At the same time the success of the Tercentenary Appeal enabled the contractors to go ahead with the construction of the enclosed, heated swimming pool, which is the tribute of modern generations to the original generosity of the School's founder. Officially opened by Mr. Veale, it provides a most welcome and much used amenity in the life of the School, which the Local Authority was not in a position to offer. To the present Head Master, Mr. J. A. Stocks, came the pleasant, but onerous, duty of arranging the transfer to the new buildings and making all the final plans for the School's working within the new surroundings. The move took place remarkably smoothly, a tribute to the organisation and the willingness to work displayed by all, and on May 14th 1964 the School entered into possession and occupation of truly new buildings for the first time since 1807.

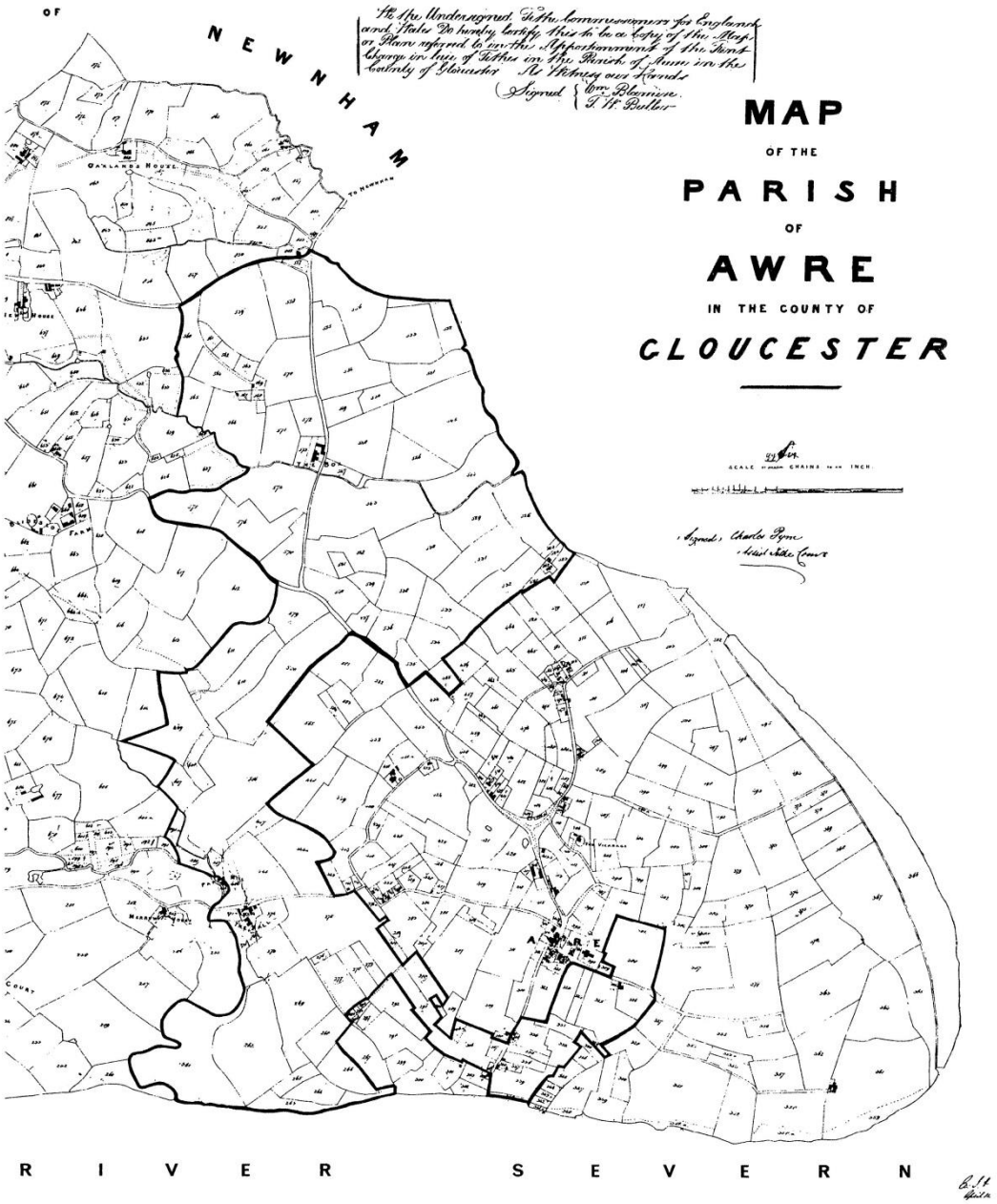
Thus, two years before its Tercentenary, the School at length found its hopes fulfilled. The vicissitudes of three hundred years, recorded in part in this book, have been crowned by Tercentenary celebrations which have demonstrated the vitality of the School and the place of honour it holds in the City, from whose centre it has now moved. The future may hold many more changes as governments grapple with the problems of education in a world of rapid developments, but the traditions of the Foundation of Sir Thomas Rich, which have grown over the years, should enable it to continue to serve the community faithfully in whatever mould of educational organisation it may ultimately be cast. May the achievements of the past be an encouragement for even greater successes in the future.



Result of Tercentenary Appeal



Tercentenary Procession



School Estates at Awre

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APPENDIX I

The Masters of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital and School

The Rev.	John Beard	1668-1677	Resigned
	John Abbott	1677-1733	Deceased
	Edward Stevens Estcourt	1733-1736	Deceased
The Rev.	Mr. Elliott	1736-1741	Resigned
	John Price	1741 (October)	Removed
	Luke Hook	1741-1788	Old Blue Coat boy, Deceased
	Thomas Mutlow	1788-1789 (November-July)	Resigned
	Henry Draper Lye	1789-1796	Resigned
	Charles King	1796 (March – September)	Resigned
	William Luke	1796 (September–November)	Resigned
	Thomas Bayley Villiers	1796-1810	Dismissed
	James Stephens	1810-1820	Asked to resign
	John Wood	1820-1831	Deceased
	Shadrach Charleton	1831-1852	Resigned
	Walter Jeffery	1852-1869	Asked to resign
	James Crofts	1870-1906	Resigned
	E. F. Price B.A.	1906-1924	Resigned
	H. F. Rogers-Tillstone M.A.	1924-1936	Deceased
	W. J. Veale M.B.E., M.A.	1936-1957	Resigned
	A. S. Worrall M.A., B.D.	1957-1961	Resigned
	J. A. Stocks M.A.	Appointed 1961	

APPENDIX II

A schedule of property owned by the School when the new Scheme was drawn up in 1852.

The building called Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital with the School Room, Play Ground, Garden and appurtenances situate in The Eastgate Street in the City of Gloucester.

Description of property	Tenant	Quantity a.-r.-p.	Annual Rent or Income
The Box Maidenhall and Hamstall Farms situate in the Parish of Awre in the County of Gloucester	Elizabeth Coucher and Thomas Coucher	274-0-30	£335-0-0
The Hall Lypyatt and White Court Farms in the Parish of Awre, Glos.	Richard Morse Junior	246-1-39	£495-0-0
Piece of land at Awre . . adjoining the River Severn called the New Warth	Richard Morse Junior	48-2-10	
Public House called the Red Hart Inn with garden & orchard . . Awre . . . including premises adjoining held under lease dated 9/5/1832 for 99 years at the rent of £3-3 granted by the Vicar & Churchworkers of Awre to the Mayor & Burgesses of Gloucester the former Trustees of Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital. Also a small	Henry Awre late Harriet Awre (Widow)	3-2-28	£49-0-0

Cottage purchased by the said Trustees of the Overseers of Awre & the Poor Law Commissioners in 1846, Fishery at Awre in the River Severn.			
Cottage and 2 Closes of land at Blakeney in the parish of Awre	Daniel White	3-1-4	£16-10-10
Two closes of pasture land at Blakeney	Thomas Holder	4-2-0	£13-0-0
Cottage & Garden at Nibley Green near Blakeney	Thomas Adams and Henry Davis		£7-0-0
Cottage & Garden at Nibley Green	John Trigg		£6-0-0
Driffield Farm & the Hulks including Farm House & 2 Cottages all situate in the parish of Lidney in the County of Glos.	Giles Oakley	159-0-35	£155-0-0
Allastone Court & Brown's Farm situate in the Parish of Lidney	Thomas Williams	104-1-13	£117-0-0
Three Cottages & land in the parish of Lidney . . . (on lease)	Charles Bathurst Esquire	6-1-14	£4-17-7

Increased rent of £5 per cent to be paid on the outlay on some of the estates in draining & improvements the amount whereof not yet ascertained & the works still being in progress. Manor of Awre copyhold rents			£18-8-7
Woods in the parish of Awre in hand			
Bushey Hill Grove	7-1-35		
Hall Grove	10-0-15		
Box Grove	6-1-20		
Phipps Grove	7-0-22		
Wood at Hagloe	3-20	31-3-2	
			£1216-16-2
The sum of £2063-0-9 3% Consols invested in the name of the Accountant General by the Gloucester and Dean Forest Railway Company for land taken by them belonging to this Charity, the annual dividends whereof amount to -			£60-1-8
Total present income of Charity			£1276-17-10
The sum of £4777-16-7 being a debt due to the charity from the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of Gloucester and directed to be paid into Court by order of the Court of 19/6/47 whereon interest of 3½% is paid by the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses until such sum is paid in; such annual interest amounting to -			£162-6-8
(N.B. The interest on this sum is paid into the credit of the Accountant General of the Court until the further order of the Court).			£1439-4-6

APPENDIX III

Rules and Orders for the Government of the Children in Sir Thomas Rich's Hospital. (These rules date from 1842, but illustrate how the School was run before as well as after this date.)

1. The Children shall be kept under a strict discipline in the school and have a just regard to the orders and commands of the Master relating thereto. If any boy proves idle, and will not mind his learning he shall be chastised, at the discretion of the Master, and if he continue so, the Master shall acquaint the President or some House Visitor thereof, in order to such boy being discharged, and another elected in his room.

2. If any boy is unruly and will not be in subjection to the Matron but disobedient to the rules of the Hospital the Matron shall acquaint the President or some House Visitor therewith that means might be taken to punish the offender. If the Matron refuse or neglect to make such report she will not answer the trust reposed to her, and consequently be deemed not fit for the place.

3. That the Master appoint a boy of sober character from time to time, to be Observator, and that if any boy be guilty of swearing, lying, or taking God's name in vain,, or of using any opprobrious language, the Observator shall note the same in his weekly observations that the offender may be smartly corrected for the same. If the Observator omit or refuse to note such offence he shall be severely punished.

4. No boy to quit the school without leave of the Master: and every boy who shall be seen from the School, without some mark or token from the Master shall be severely corrected and punished.

5. Every boy shall appear clean and washed, with a clean shirt and band; his coat clean and whole; his hair well combed; his stockings and shoes clean and whole; with a Prayer-book and Bible under his arm, and gloves on his hands, every Lord's Day and other Holy Days, when they go to Church; and if any boy be found to go out of Church during Divine Service or behave improperly there, the Master shall correct him; and no boy to be suffered to wear his best clothes but on these days.

6. That the Master call together the boys in the Summer Season every morning at 6 o'clock and again at 8 in the evening; and, in like manner, in winter at 8 in the morning, and 7 at night; and that at such times he devoutly read to the boys the Prayers prepared for such purpose, and cause them to sing a psalm as usual.

7. If any boy shall cut, or in any manner deface or injure the desks, books, or any part of the rooms or furniture, he shall, for the first offence, be punished at the discretion of the Master; and if he again offend, shall be subject to be expelled from the School.

8. Each boy, on quitting the School shall leave his last year's set of clothes (except his shoes and shirts) for the use of his successor.

9. No boy shall be received on this foundation that is either lousy or hath the itch or scurf; and if any boy after he be received shall be found to have either of the two latter complaints the Matron or Observator shall be obliged as soon as it be known to acquaint the President or some House Visitor thereof that such boy be immediately sent home to be cured, and no boy having scrofula or any other constitutional or permanent disease, shall be admitted into the School but in case of fever or other infectious complaint (except as above) the boys so infected be immediately separated from the School and kept in the House and there nursed and attended.

10. No boy shall go into any other bed than his own; and each bed shall be supplied with a pair of clean sheets once a month. Nor shall any boy chaffer, barter, or exchange or sell any part of his clothes, books or any other thing among themselves, or otherwise upon pain of being corrected.

11. If the observatory be threatened or beaten by any of the other boys for doing his duty the offender upon complaint to the Master, shall, for the first time, be very severely whipped; and for the second, be liable to be expelled from the Hospital at the discretion of the Trustees.

12. That for any misconduct or malpractice by any boy deserving of expulsion from the School in the estimation of the Trustees or a majority of them present at any meeting then every such boy may be expelled.

13. That the Matron shall be obliged to be at table whilst the boys are at dinner and take care that no disorders are committed by them; that the boys sit decently at table; and that the Matron take care that the observatory craves a blessing on the food before, and returns thanks after dinner.

14. That the Matron take great care to comb and keep clean the children's heads, or see it well and properly done by her servant, every other day, (except Sunday) and oftener, in any instances where necessary; and that the Matron see to the boys' 'feet being washed once a week; and that the boys themselves appear clean washed every day before prayers; and that their hair be always well combed.

15. That the Master and Matron be strictly prohibited on pain of expulsion from taking any lodger, or border into the House, or letting any part of the premises.

16. That these rules be read every Monday morning, immediately after breakfast, in the presence of the Master and of all the Boys by the first-class boys in succession.

APPENDIX IV

A list of some of the trades to which Blue Coat boys were apprenticed between 1670 and 1882.

Furrier	Silver wire drawer	Engineer
Carpenter	Joiner	Shipwright
Barber	Shoemaker	Tinman
Plumber and Glazier	Pinmaker	Painter
Staymaker	Clockmaker	Weaver
Farrier	Vintner	Brazier
Builder	Ironmonger	White Smith
Tailor	Mercer	Baker
Attorney	Engraver	Wheelwright
Shagmaker	Gold Smith	Brushmaker
Writing Master	Ropier	Sadler
Chairmaker	Toymaker	Black Smith
Grocer	Feltmaker	Plasterer
Cordwainer	Collarmaker	Carver
Upholsterer	Combmaker	Filemaker
Bricklayer	Glover	Bookseller
Draper	Cooper	Cheesefactor
Skinner	Plushweaver	Woolcomber
Accountant	Perukemaker	Butcher
Cork Cutter	Apothecary	Silk Mercer
Pattern Maker	Brass Cock and Founder	Tiler and Plasterer
Stone Mason	Currier	Silversmith
Cutler	Coach Wheel Maker	Banker
Winedrawer	School Master	Engine Turner

Unfortunately the details of the apprenticeships were dropped from the minute books for a considerable period from the early nineteenth century, so these do not give a complete picture of occupations entered. It also makes it difficult to trace the changes in emphasis that took place during the School's history, but the following points do emerge:-

In the early years the most 'popular' trades were those of joiner and barber, while there was a steady intake to the trade of tailoring throughout the

history of the School. In spite of its importance in the economy of Gloucester before the Industrial Revolution, pin-makers only took twenty-five boys in the period between 1738 and 1815 for which full details exist. The increasing importance of engineering in Gloucester is reflected in the number of boys apprenticed in this field in the later years of the Blue Coat School.