FACT SHEET No 330

The Ancestry of The Minster School

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1. Pattern of Schooling

The present Southwell Minster School came into being in September 1976 as an 11-18, co-educational comprehensive.

One of its "ancestors" was a grammar school established in the Middle Ages. No precise date can be given to the grammar school's foundation. It was always a small school - on several occasions in danger of ceasing to exist. It did not develop a reputation for producing pupils who became household names, nor did it set any trends in education.

Yet, through descent from the Grammar School, the Minster School is part of a line of development which may go back further than that represented by any other English school now outside the private sector. And, precisely because the Grammar School, and the other ancestors of the modern comprehensive, were not too much out of the ordinary, their story is the more important.

2. Origins of the Grammar School

The earliest English schools were linked to a monastery, cathedral or other large church, such as the Minster at Southwell. Such "grammar" schools were at first very small made up of perhaps less than twenty boys who were the sons of local landowners or merchants. Pupils started to attend between the ages of nine and twelve.

Southwell's grammar school may have been created at the same time as its Minster to provide education for Minster choristers. The Minster is thought to have been founded soon after the Saxon King Edwy gave lands in Southwell to Oscetel, Archbishop of York, in a charter dating from between 955 and 959:

> " … I Edwy, King of the English, for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ concede to my beloved Bishop Oscetel, in inheritance, part of my land at a place called Southwell …"

The earliest documentary proof of at least the Minster's existence is in the "Liber Vitae" of Hyde Abbey in about 1014, in a reference to Eadburh, who was Abbess of Repton in the seventh century. She was made a saint of the Saxon Church and her shrine was probably in Southwell:

> "Then rested Saint Eadburh in the Minster of Southwell near the water called the Trent …"

Minster records for 1238 mention the existence of grammar schools in the archdeaconry of Nottingham and state that they were under the authority of "the prebendary of Normanton in the collegiate church of Southwell. The schools are again referred to, in 1248, in an order that they should not be held in the houses of prebendaries unless properly qualified teachers were being employed. (The prebendaries were the "canons" or group of clergy, who formed the "chapter" which ran the Minster).

The earliest documentary confirmation that there was a grammar school in Southwell is in a fourteenth century "register" of the Archbishop of York. Medieval Southwell had one of thirteen "hospitals" founded to help the sick and poor of Nottinghamshire - the hospital of St Mary Magdalen, situated according to royal commissioners in Henry VIII's time, in "Essthorppefeldes". In 1313, a new "custos" or warden was appointed to take charge of it - Henry de Hykeling, "magister scholarum grammaticalium Suthwell" (master of the Southwell Grammar School).

There is then no evidence about the school until its first mention in the Southwell archives - in a copy of a charter witnessed "magistro de Metham, rectore scolarum graramaticalium Suthwell", (by Master Metham, Rector of Southwell Grammar School), on September 1st 1413.

The first record of the appointment of a new master comes in 1475, and relatively frequent references to the school then follow. The master was nominated by John Danvers, Prebendary of Normanton "ad scolas gramaticales …Suthwell ...":

> " …To the grammar school of the town of Southwell aforesaid now vacant … , I present to you my beloved in Christ, John Barre, … In witness whereof I have set my seal to these presents given at London, 26 November, 1475 … "

3. <u>Bequests</u>

Early grammar schools were fee-paying. Such fees are implied at Southwell in a complaint by the Minster authorities, in 1484, that Barre the master, "does not attend at the proper hours of teaching his scholars in school, and often gives, remedies (time off) to his scholars on whole school days, so… expending their parents' substance in vain".

In the late Middle Ages, however, a number of wealthy Laymen provided endowments for existing or new schools. (Winchester in 1382 and Eton in 1440 were among the latter). Such bequests provided

some free places. In Southwell, there appears to have been financial help for the Grammar School from a Robert Batemanson. In 1512, Batemanson willed “Christover Baynbryg, Archbishop of York … within 4 years next after my decesse, shall founde a free gramer scole in Suthwell …, paying yerly … to the said scole …40s.”

Then, in 1530, Dr John Keton, canon of Salisbury and a former Southwell chorister, provided funds to create two scholarships at St John' s College Cambridge for persons "that, bee or have been quiristers of the chapiter of Southwell,” and, therefore, in practice, pupils of the, grammar school. A small number of pupils took advantage of this. For example, Henry Moore, "head scholemaster" is recorded in St John’s College archives as confirming that:

> "Mathew Silvester, son of Robert Silvester, of Southwell in the County of Nottinghamshire Mercer, was borne in the sayd town and hath beene one of my scholers in the free school here, whereby he is capable of profit, privilege and preferment, thereunto belonging … 22 April 1654."

In later years it seems St John's became concerned that the Minster was abusing the Keton bequest and trying to send it students who were not academically suitable and not even bonafide choristers:

> “the inquiries which we have recently made have led us to believe that the Chapter of Southwell are desirous of attaching the Keton foundation as a benefit to their grammar school, for which as we have shewn it was never designed, and for that purpose it is their custom to elect in a merely formal manner as choristers having only nominal duties, such scholars of the said school as propose to themselves to come to our university …” (Cambridge, July 1852)

4. <u>The Reformation</u>

Several English schools were driven out of existence by the Reformation.

Some were affected in the 1530s as Henry VIII broke up monastic communities and seized their property. In 1540, the Minster chapter voluntarily surrendered its property to the King. Henry, however, spared the Chapter, and an Act of Parliament, in 1543, formally re-established it and, therefore, secured the school.

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the King's closest advisers, was a Nottinghamshire man and may have helped the school survive. In 1533, he had written to his sister, Dorothy, at Radcliffe on Trent, advising her to set her son “forth to school at Southwell.”

There was a still more serious threat to the school, however, in 1547.

Until the Reformation, many English churches had chantry chapels, where clergy were employed to say prayers for the wellbeing of the souls of the dead. As in many other grammar schools, some of the teachers in Southwell were chantry or "chauntry” priests. These were drawn from a total of thirteen such priests at the Minster and derived much of their income from chantry endowments. For example, in the late fifteenth century John Barre's assistant, or “usher” was William Barthorp, priest at St Cuthbert's altar.

In 1547, the government of Edward VI ordered the “dissolution” of the chantry chapels. Some schools certainly closed as a result. In Southwell, the Chapter was now abolished along with the chantry priests, and not legally re-established until 1557. Only a skeleton staff of three priests probably remained at the Minster.

This, however, evoked a local petition to the King:

> "We the poor Inhabitauntes and parishoners, the kinges majesties tennauntes … make our requeste that our Grammar scole. Maie … stande with such stipende as apperteyneth, wherein our poore youth maie be enstructed."

Thus, on July 20th 1548, "An Order made in the Court of Augmentations" (the government department responsible for property seized from the Church) insisted:

> "And that a grammar Scole hath been countynuallie kept in Southwell aforesaid with the revenues of the late college of Southwell, whiche Scole is very mete and necessarie to continue Wee therefore … have assigned and appointed that the said Scole … shall contynue and that the scholemaster there for the tyme being shall yerelie have for his wages £10".

Chantry chapels never did reappear but at least a source of income for a schoolmaster was provided.

5. Civil War

A century later, the victory of Parliament in the Civil War led to renewed attacks on the Church, in 1649, the chapter was again abolished - until the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In some parts of the country, the Republic, created in 1649, saw the removal of "malignant" Royalist schoolmasters. The Republic's leaders, however, were relatively sympathetic to the encouragement of education and Southwell's school conformed to the general pattern and survived. A memorandum, drawn up by Edward Cludd and other parliamentary commissioners in the area, may have helped:

> "Whereas time out of mind there hath been paid yearly by the said Chapter of Southwell to the Schoolmaster there twelve pounds, … We thought it our duty to inform you that if there be no care and provision made ... the schoolmaster will be unprovided for. "

In April 1652, the "Trustees for Plundered Minsters and Schoolmasters" responded:

> "It is ordered that … yearly stypend of £14 be continued and paid to Mr Henry Moore, Scholemaster, together with the arrears payable since the 16th of Oct. 1650."

6. The Early Grammar School Curriculum

Medieval grammar schools taught Latin, and latterly usually Greek, in an age which looked back to the Ancient World of Greece and Rome as producing the greatest cultural achievements of mankind. Indeed, until the mid-sixteenth century, Latin was still regularly used in worship, as well as in the law and official documents.

School hours were long and, especially before the development of printing in the late fifteenth century, teaching was largely oral, based on rote learning and the use of severe corporal punishment to maintain discipline.

The Chapter in Southwell, insisting on a practice common in such schools, criticised the master in 1484, because the boys "do not speak Latin in school, but English". Whilst, in 1585, Minster Statutes provide the earliest surviving description of the curriculum:

> "In order that respect and reverence for parents and benefactors and those in authority, and learning may flourish, we ordain that some man, learned in Latin and Greek, religious, honest, painstaking and apt at teaching, shall be appointed … whose duty it shall be to teach not only Latin and Greek grammar, Latin and Greek authors, poets and orators, but also the Christian Religion."

In 1579 the Chapter had regulated the school's timetable:

> "… our scholemaster … shalle hereafter from the feaste of the Annunciation … repayre together with his scholers to the schole, at the howre of sixe of the clocke in the morninge, his scholers continuinge there untyll a Leuen of the clocke, and to repayre agayne at one of the clocke, and remayne untille sixe of the clocke … untille the feast of St Michaelle, after which … thair shall keepe theire howre at Seuen of the clocke in the morninge and continewe as afforsaide untill a Leuen of the clocke, and comme again at one and continew untyll five … It shall not be lawfull for the scholemaster to geve his scholers leave to playe any daye in the weeke, onlye thursdaye in the afternoone, excepte thaie have leave of the residentiarie (prebendary) … Also the said scholemaster shall have his scholers to repayre to the schole everie saturdaie in the afternoone, there to exercise theire writinge and other exercises untill evyninge prayer."

In 1579, the Headmaster, Hugh Baskafeld, was "admonished" for not keeping to these hours and, in 1580, dismissed, "for that he had so notoriouslye slacked and neglected his dutie."

A curriculum based on the classics, and long hours, continued at Southwell, and generally elsewhere, into the nineteenth century. Rules of 1716 laid down that:

> "Even in the shortest days, the master and scholars be obliged to attend School, at (or about) 8 of ye clock in ye morn, or as soon as they can conveniently see to read; and to stay in ye afternoon till 4 of ye clock (or about 4) and as long as they can conveniently see to read."

At, other times of the year, a 7 am to 5 pm day was worked, except for Sundays, Thursdays (from 3.00 pm) and Saturday afternoons. There were holidays at Christmas, Easter and Whit.

Problems of discipline, however, did occur. In 1503, when Barre was headmaster, it was complained that the choristers "rave and swear and disturb the priest celebrating our Lady's mass, and want a good whipping". The contemporary writer, Shilton, recorded that, in 1792, Thomas Bucklow, a chorister and presumably a grammar school pupil, "in attempting to climb into the last window in the lower tier on the south side of the choir, next the altar … a very ponderous piece of oaken timber, which he had taken hold upon, gave way, and falling with him to the pavement, killed him on the spot." More mundanely, in 1794, the schoolmaster was "desired to order the Boys of his School not to trespass on the Church Yard but confine their play to Popleys piece (so) … preserving the Church yard and Church from their violence and mischief on pain of prosecution ".

A few years earlier, in 1731, It appears Mr Bugg, the then master, had problems that were partly of his own making:

> "Whereas Richard Lloyd and Talbot Leybourne were upon some misunderstanding between the school master and their parents taken from the free grammar school and Mr Bugg having refused to take them into the school it is hereby ordered that Mr Bugg shall receive the said children again into the school."

And following that incident, "Mr Bugg being charged with indecent behaviour" towards the resident prebendary "was called in … and upon his promise of future good behaviour he was excused without further censure".

7. Early Grammar School Buildings

Most grammar schools began life within church buildings and often, only in the nineteenth century, acquired separate premises.

Originally the school at Southwell was probably conducted in the Minster - at the west end of the south aisle of the nave, in the area where Cuthbert's altar stood or the later "Booth' s Chapel". Definite references to a "schoolchamber" appear from the late seventeenth century, including apparently frequent repairs to the school windows:

> 1699 Paid for the Schoole windows mending 7d
> 1700 To John Hawton for repairing the school windows 2s 2d
> 1702 To Francis Ingleman for mending ye School windows 1s 1d

In 1777 it was "decreed that a necessary house be built for the School boys by or near the Palace Wall in the Churchyard."

However, in 1784, Dr Peckhard, prebendary of Rampton, was instructed to "hire a proper room … for the purposes of a School. Also that Mr Peckhard, immediately take down the present school and library." The school may briefly have moved into the "Red Prebend" a brick building now also demolished, which stood behind the Saracen's Head Hotel. In January 1785, negotiations began to use the former chantry priests' house at the west end of Church Street as both the school and house for the schoolmaster.

Although that soon came into use and, for some years, continued to provide living accommodation for the master, "in 1791 a very large and commodious room was erected on a piece of ground belonging to the Churchyard, at the southwest corner … in the front thereof is placed, over the centre window a square stone, inscribed "This school erected by the Rev. Magnus Jackson, Master." (P S Shilton 1818).

Perhaps because of an "accidental fire" in 1817, it was decided in 1819 to redevelop the whole area around the Chantry Priests' house and transfer the school to a new building erected on the site of the house. Designed by the local architect, Ingleman, whose other commissions included the town's prison, a brick building was created which housed the school until 1964. Although the Chapter paid much of the cost, the Rev Foottit, the master, had to provide £600.

8. Nineteenth Century Decline

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw growth for some grammar schools and their success gained them recognition as the "great" or “public" schools. Some, however, declined in the face of competition from private “academies” with more practical curriculums until secondary education, for a much larger proportion of the population than ever before, began to be seriously considered near the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of this.

Southwell’s new building did not signal a period of prosperity. The school had had financial worries even in the previous century. These had included problems over the government's payment towards the schoolmaster's income. In 1728 a petition was sent to the Exchequer about arrears in the schoolmaster’s pay since 1724: “since which time the schoolmaster tho he hath often applyed to the proper officers hath not been able to get it paid.” Sir Robert Walpole ordered the payment to begin again … but did not pay the arrears.

The school did increase its income through charging fees. Foottit, in the early century, advertised fees (which included boarding) as "under the age of twelve - 30 guineas, above twelve - 40 and entrance”

A crisis, however, arose in the mid-nineteenth century. Following much criticism of the Church of England's use of its considerable wealth and the way in which some clergy did little more than pocket the income from their church appointments, the recently elected Whig government created the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1836. Their task was to supervise the church's finances. Other legislation specifically abolished clerical sinecures. An Act of 1840 provided for posts in the Chapter of Southwell to be left vacant as they became available and for control of Minster finances and property to pass to the Commissioners.

Latterly, the schoolmaster's income from the government (even when paid) had been worth so little that it had had to be supplemented by his holding a variety of posts. Masters had been "vicars choral” (priests conducting services in the Minster for the often-absentee prebendaries) and held a number of local livings. Now this would not be possible and the commissioners did not at first see it as their job to finance a school. A petition from the remaining members of the Chapter, in 1850, to increase the master’ s income seems to have gone unanswered.

Perhaps anticipating the threat to the grammar school, in 1837 the choristers had been taken away from it and sent to the Easthorpe Endowed School - opened ten years earlier and supported by income from charitable bequests of property. In 1840, the grammar school master was merely asked to "examine" the choristers quarterly.

In 1854 Rev Richard Bethell Earle, appointed master of the Grammar School the previous year, was unable to get possession of the school building as the Commissioners were demanding he pay rent for it and the previous master was claiming payment for fixtures left there. His "school" was by then a mere seven day boys.

In 1858 the schools were closed down. In 1862 the Commissioners gave up any claims to the school building and Rev Charles Peter Incledon was appointed master - but quit before re-opening the school. It did re-open in 1864, with a salary of £10 for the master provided by the Commissioners, but still with only eleven boys. Numbers failed to rise much during the next few years.

In 1857 another, if minor, blow was struck. A Statute of Cambridge University, that year, abolished “preference … to any person in respect of such person's place of birth or of his having been a chorister in any capitular or collegiate church”. Thus the Keton scholarships disappeared.

9. Private Academies

Most of the local boys, who would otherwise have gone to the grammar school, were being sent instead to private schools run partly as business ventures.

By the early nineteenth century, there were many private schools in England - but they were mainly small and rarely provided more than a basic education. According to White’s Nottinghamshire Directory, in 1832, the number of these schools in Southwell had reached a peak of sixteen.

One school, which did compete with the Grammar School, was the Rev C Fletcher’s “Southwell School”, based at North Muskham Prebend, in Church Street, almost opposite the Grammar School building. Particularly successful, however, was the “Southwell Academy". This was first run by a Mr Thornhill, in the house which later became the Methodist Manse, in Moor Lane (now Nottingham Road). In 1854 he had an arithmetic textbook published in London “The Practical Calculator", "compiled … for his own use among his … pupils".

In 1856, Thornhill handed the school over to Mr John Wright, who had come from Lincolnshire, where his uncle had been head of Folkingham Grammar School. Under him the Moor Lane School grew in numbers and moved to a new building on the present market place site in King Street. He taught a wide range of subjects and not only always to boys. "Miss Maltby’s" report in the summer of 1860, "not the result of a casual or half-yearly examination but of each day's observations" lists "Reading (Scripture, Histories, Poetry, etc.) Writing (plain and ornamental), Arithmetic (slate and mental), dictation, composition, situation of places land surveying, Latin, French, Music, Drawing”, and (as evening classes) "spelling, grammar, geography, tables, Blair's Catechism, Scripture Questions, English History" and a “Class Book".

In 1877, urged on by a Canon R F Smith of the Minster, Dr Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, within whose diocese Southwell then lay, invited Mr Wright to transfer the fifty boys he was then educating to the Grammar School and became its headmaster. He was to begin a transformation in the school's fortunes.

10. Foundations of a Modern Grammar School

Under Mr Wright, the number of grammar school children grew. In 1894, when the first school magazine, “The Southwellian” appeared, there were sixty-nine. These included twelve choristers, whose return from Eastthorpe he had negotiated. By then, there was a staff of seven.

Even a link with Cambridge reappeared. Under the will of Rev James Barrow, who died in 1881, a trust was established to pay for the "Barrow" Exhibition for a pupil “native of Southwell or to one whose parents are now residing, or within ten years past have resided at Southwell, or them failing to the children of a present or late incumbent of” various local parishes.

The trust (originally in the shape of preference stock in the L & N W Railway Company) eventually provided exhibitions for grammar school pupils on twenty-three occasions.

Before Mr Wright’s time, the school's curriculum had already extended beyond the classics as part of a national trend. The Rev Foottit had advertised teaching of "Classical, mathematical and commercial learning". In 1837 the school rules were altered, for the first time since 1716, so that the Minster be required to instruct the English Language and Literature, and in Writing and Arithmetic … for the sum of one pound per Quarter (per boy) and a further sum of one pound per quarter for Mathematics”.

Latin, technically still free, was always taught (hours were redefined as “7 to 9 … and … 10 to 12 in the morning and from 2 to 5 in the afternoon”, or “Sun Rise (to) … Sunset” from November to February with Wednesday and Saturday as half days. Five week holidays at Midsummer and Christmas and optional holidays, of the day, on Saints’ days). A similar set of rules was issued in 1850.

By the end of the century, the school offered Divinity, Greek, Latin, French, English Grammar and Literature, English, History, Geography, Geometry, Algebra, Arithmetic, Bookkeeping, Shorthand, Drawing, Music and Singing, Natural Science, Agriculture (via a County Council Lecturer), “Designing, Machine Drawing and Construction” and, under Sergeant Instructor Craggs, “Drill and Gymnastics”. In later years shorthand, bookkeeping, drill, machine drawing and agriculture disappeared, woodwork briefly came and went, and German and "General Studies" were introduced, but Mr Wright, had established a range of subjects similar to that being taught in the 1970s.

Like many grammar schools, and in part imitating the public schools, Southwell added several new features to school life in the late nineteenth century or early part of this.

Team games were established - originally cricket and soccer. In 1894 J Cooke was praised as “a brilliant forward, runs up well and counters well with left-leg screw; should be well fed by halves.” In the early part of this century, athletic sports started to be held on the open ground at Lowes Wong.

Items of uniform started to appear, the first compulsory article being a school cap. An “Old Southwellians Society" was established in 1905 and a house system, for competitive purposes, was created in 1907, with houses named after Thomas, Gray, Booth and Aldred, former archbishops of York who were thought to have had connections with the school. 1909 saw the formation of a cadet corps. It included most, boys in years 3 to 5 and the small sixth form, until the corps was disbanded in 1922, and, in some respects, replaced by a school scout troop.

An annual prize-giving appeared. Visiting speakers, about the turn of the century, felt drawn to comment on the affairs of our expanding empire. In 1901, pupils were reminded that holidays had been given to celebrate victories in the Boer War, a Mr Tingley had presented some relics of the war to form the basis of a school museum, and the war was "promoting the study of geography”. Boys were also urged to persevere in their studies of History "to be citizens and patriots”. In 1906, Mr J Starkey MP praised “the kind of education which made such a hero as General Gordon”. "There is; no man whom boys ought to regard more than he”.

Besides the speeches and presentation of prizes on such occasions, entertainment was offered - music and a performance of part of Henry V, for example, in 1901. Between the wars, the school play, involving staff and pupils, also became an important local social event.

Extensions (now the Midland Bank), which included the school's first science laboratory, were added to the buildings in 1908. The Rev J S Wright, the previous Headmaster’s son and the last clergyman to be Southwell 's Head, had by then taken over control.

The most important development, however, during his headship, had occurred in 1906. In 1902 the Balfour government’s Education Act had, for the first time, authorised the use of money from the rates to help provide secondary Education in England - at a time when most people still did not attend a separate secondary school. In some cases, new schools were built by the County Councils, which had been created "Local Education Authorities" - in others, they helped finance existing grammar schools. "The Southwellian" recorded that the Grammar School began to receive such assistance on September 16th 1906 when "we began work as a secondary school under the Board of Education. In a Secondary School boys are expected to stay until at least 16 years of age, and a four years’ course of work for the years 12 to 16 is planned out and receives the approval of the Board". And, in 1909, the Board of Education approved a "Scheme" for the "regulation" of the school under a Board of Governors chosen by the Minster, County, Rural District and Parish Councils, Nottingham University College and St. John's

College Cambridge. Most pupils would pay fees of between “£12 and … £6 a year”, “or not more than £50 a year" for a boarder. Provision was made, however for scholarships providing a minority of free places. Admission was to be through an entrance examination.

11. The Grammar and the World Wars

Like all schools, Southwell’s pattern of life was disrupted by the World Wars, although less than some urban ones. In 1919, the headmaster reported at speech day, "Last year (we) were unable to find sufficient candidates for examinations because the boys were induced by conditions of employment to leave school earlier than they would otherwise have done. One hundred and fifty old scholars had also joined the colours … Twenty two (out of a total of ninety in the town) had laid down their lives”.

Looking back on World War Two, in late 1945 Mr Matthews, the retiring headmaster, wrote, "At first we never travelled more than a mile … Games suffered from a stoppage of match play Men (teachers) began to go Mr Eccles died in action as a bomber pilot in the Spring of 1941 , we were suddenly asked to accept a hundred boys and staff of Worthing High school (as evacuees). On March 24 we welcomed them and gave then the whole of the ground floor … So it continued … until the end of the year … During all this time teams were being drafted to the fields to hoe sugar beet or lift potatoes …”.

12. An Insecure Future

Despite all the developments at the turn of the century, the school’s long term future was not entirely secure. The school’s numbers did not grow significantly between the wars. In March 1945 it had 125 boys. Mr Rushby Smith was only offered a temporary contract of employment when appointed as the new headmaster that year. There were fears that the school might eventually have to become an L E A school, and that the County Council would subsequently decide that Southwell was not then big enough to merit the cost of its own grammar school. The school did, however, grow and survive.

13. The Growth of Boarding

One post-war development was in provision for boarders. Some pupils had been boarders at least since the time when the master had moved into the chantry priests’ house, and there was provision for them in the building erected in 1819. The Rev Foottit, for example, advertised for pupils and reminded parents that boarders required “one pair of sheets and towels”. Late in life, one of those pupils, George Denison, who came to the school in 1814, recalled how he once threw a brass candlestick at the usher’s head, and was sent to bed for it, but was hauled out of it in his nightshirt, and taken to by the usher with an ash plant, in the presence of the boys had witnessed the assault". He also remembered a boarder’s feast called “Potation” where boys ate “Plum bun and negus” (a hot mixture of sweetened wine and water).

In 1939, W Player purchased Sacrista Prebend for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, to house boarding choristers. (Built largely in the eighteenth century, this had once been the residence of the Sacrist, the prebendary whose title indicated responsibility for the books, vestments and ornaments of the Church).

Briefly in the early fifties, West Lodge, at the edge of the Minster Yard, became another boarding house; then in 1954 Hill House replaced it, and the rooms in the Church St premises, as the main boarding accommodation. (It had been built in the early nineteenth century for the Prebendary of South Muskham, Rev J T Becher). “The Southwellian" commented, “the seniors took some time to get used to their quite luxurious common room; no longer could they push their billiard cues through the ceiling after a bad shot or fry their chips on a primus stove for supper".

14. Voluntary-Aided Status

By 1957, the headmaster could report that the school catered for 235 boys (79 of them boarders), most of whom, unlike before the war, stayed on for two years in the sixth form. (The total was only slightly larger in 1976).

A vital factor in the school's revival had been an ultimately successful application, submitted in 1946, to become a "Voluntary Aided" school. The 1944 Education Act had laid down the principle that there should be free, separate secondary schools for all children in England for the first time. In practice, in most areas, schools of two types developed - grammar schools, selecting their pupils through an "11+" examination, from about the top 20% of the ability range, and "secondary modern" schools taking the remainder.

In most cases the grammar schools were run by the county councils, but it was made possible for existing schools, connected with the churches, to join the scheme and become "voluntary aided", they would retain some independence but receive financial assistance from the L E A. The headmaster and governors at Southwell, whilst fearing a County takeover, believed such aid from the L E A was essential.

At the same time as they sought to secure voluntary-aided status, the governors began seriously considering the possibility of acquiring new buildings. The move was made in 1964 to a site once occupied by Beckingham Prebend and, as an archaeological dig in 1959 demonstrated, one of the largest Roman villas outside southern England.

> "The Bishop of Southwell opened and dedicated (the) new buildings … As the bishop … entered the school hall, a fanfare was sounded and boys … shouted a welcome in Latin … It had been hoped to build the school of stone, but the extra money could not be allocated". ("Guardian Journal").

In the meantime, the school had celebrated its "millenary" in 1956.

15. Going Comprehensive

Hardly had the Grammar School moved into its new premises, than the newly elected Labour Government, in its "Circular 10/65" asked L E As for plans to reorganise secondary education on comprehensive lines.

A number of semi-independent grammar schools chose to become wholly independent rather than give up the right to select their intake. The possibility was considered, in Southwell, of opting out of comprehensive reorganisation and providing an academic education with special emphasis on musical tuition.

To erect the new buildings had required considerable fund raising, over a long period, by the school's governors. As part of the campaign to justify the school's existence and development, Mr Rushby Smith had tried to develop the image of the school as one which not only catered for the Minster Choristers but had a strong musical bias in its own right. In 1950, he wrote, in "The Nottinghamshire Countryside":

> "The glories of the ... Minster provide a setting of surpassing beauty for music … and inspiration to a sensitive boy … The Governors have clearly defined the aim that the school shall (develop) …'with its conception of education at all points related to music' ... Such a school will be unique in English education, (giving an) opportunity to musical boys throughout the country".

He envisaged the school evolving a “special curriculum". Moreover, a "Junior Department" had been established in 1946 to take in eight year-old boys who might enter the choir, and, when the new buildings were completed, they included a separate J D Unit and a large music block.

Speaking at the school’s prize giving in 1965, the chairman of the governors, the Very Rev H C C Heywood, said Nottinghamshire County Council was being hustled into comprehensive reorganisation and he was concerned that the heritage from the past must not be lightly thrown away. The headmaster wondered whether a comprehensive could maintain the Grammar School’s recent record of having one fifth of its pupils in the Sixth Form.

The L E A itself considered the possibility of creating a separate comprehensive in Southwell, based on the town’s secondary modern school.

In 1974, however, another Labour Government began efforts to speed up comprehensive reorganisation. In 1975 the governors agreed to fall in line - influenced by genuine hopes about what could be achieved in a non-selective school and by the financial problems of becoming independent.

It was decided the school should remain voluntary aided but amalgamate with the local secondary modern, as a split-site school, and admit a co-educational intake The timing of the amalgamation was fixed, early in 1976 for September the same year.

16. A Wider Inheritance

If the comprehensive was to a large degree the product of a tradition represented by the boys' Grammar School in Southwell, in a sense it was the heir of several local schools. It accepted pupils who, not long before, would have received their education, beyond the age of eleven, in various all-age village schools and in other grammar schools such as Thomas Magnus and Lilley and Stone's at Newark. Yet, because it was based in Southwell, because it was a Church of England school and because initially it provided most of the pupils and staff of the Minster School, the staff of Edward Cludd Secondary Modern was the new school’s other major forerunner.

Although not comparable with the Grammar Schools, it too lay at the end of a considerable line of development of education in the town - one that was in some respects quite different in character, but also reflected significant national trends. This was dominated by the Moor Lane National School.

17. Nineteenth Century Elementary School

The nineteenth century saw the first major attempt to provide at least some education for all children in England. Previously, only an inadequate number of small, private schools existed in most areas.

The initiative came chiefly from the churches - particularly from the Anglican "National Society for the Education of the Poor”, established in 1811. From 1833, the major church school societies were given a grant by the government. At first this was to help with the building costs of their new “elementary” schools. By 1870 about one million pupils attended such schools.

Southwell’ s private schools could not cater for all its child population and, in 1840, the Chapter of the Minster provided land in Moor Lane and £100 to establish a “National” school here. It was built that year, with a master’s house, and intended to take two hundred boys and girls.

The 1870 Education Act, passed by Gladstone's Liberal Government, ordered that there should be sufficient places for all children to attend at least an elementary school. Unless more "voluntary" schools were created within six months the government would order the election of local “School Boards” to fill the gaps, using money from the rates. In the long run, church schools were to become

less important than state ones, but, initially, most of the elementary education in England continued to come from the churches. 3,342 applications were made by the voluntary organisations for building grants, to meet the challenge of the new act, within the six months laid down.

In Southwell a new elementary school was opened in January 1871. The speakers, at a ceremony to lay the foundation stone of a permanent building for it, reflected the arguments that were being used nationally to justify the expansion of elementary education but not necessarily in state schools.

The Rev J E Page believed England was "behind other countries (even some of the islands in the South Seas … The neglect of … education (led to) crime and pauperism. (Moreover) … they might learn several useful lessons from … the recent war which had been carried on in France. The success of the Prussians was owing to the high intellectual training they had received".

Mr McArthur declared, "That every man ought to be fitted to take any superior position to which it should please Providence to call him; (but) he was … in favour of instruction which went hand in hand with religion". ("Newark Advertiser". April 1871)

Indeed, no "Board School" was built in Southwell, and the Church of England remained dominant in local elementary education. The new school was "Wesleyan" operating at first in the Wesleyan Chapel and transferring soon afterwards to Kirklington Road. It was, however, to remain smaller than the National School and only came into being partly because the Church Party met the Non-conformists in a very liberal spirit, and offered substantial aid in their erection of a new school". (Newark Advertiser).

The National School also expanded, as legislation, beginning in 1876 made school attendance compulsory. Extensions, enabling the school to cope with 270 pupils were opened in 1891. Separate facilities for infants had already been developed in the Anglican Holy Trinity school in Westgate (1860) and the National Society's own Shepard's Row Infants (1885).

Despite the raising of the school leaving age (by 1947 to fifteen), the Moor Lane buildings continued in use, even for children over the age of eleven, until 1957. The National School catered for juniors until December 1966.

18. Elementary Problems

A major problem for the nineteenth century elementary teachers was irregular attendance by pupils. The Southwell National School's Log Book (a kind of official diary kept by the head teacher) makes clear that serious illness was a significant factor behind this:

> "Nov 1892: Alfred Cobb returned to school having been absent from diphtheria since August …
> Mar 1893: School closed there being cases of scarlet fever and measles in the town …
> Nov 1894: Attendance of both boys and girls below the average, many suffering from mumps."

The use of children as cheap labour also caused difficulties:

> "Sept 1892: Attendance this week below average, some of the boys being in the harvest fields …
> Oct: 2 boys returned who have been at work all summer …
> June 1893: Many boys away hay making and fruit picking"

Bad weather was a cause of absence when some children had to walk into school from outlying farms and villages, with not even a school lunch in prospect:

> “Oct 1882: Several children unable to attend on account of unfavourable weather …
> Dec 1883: A very shocking day and … children from the villages round all absent … “

Some children missed school because the fees - only a few pence per week were nevertheless too much for some parents to pay regularly:

> "May 1863: Found that nearly £1 was owing for school fees - caution - send every boy home after Whitsuntide who does not bring his pence on Monday morning”

> "Feb 1864: Falling off in number present. The labourers here have but little work about this season (and cannot afford the fees)”

The relatively poor circumstances of many families are emphasised for example in September 1882:

> "The Rector … gave a quantity of clothing to deserving scholars.”
> (No attempt was made to enforce a uniform although girls were expected to wear a pinafore over their dresses.)

Eventually, in 1891, legislation abolished elementary school fees and the Southwell Headmaster recorded:

> "Sept 1891: The schools have been free from the payment of weekly fees since the holiday and the parents relieved from payment for the greater part of their children's books.”

To make this possible, all schools had received new grants from the Exchequer. And, in 1902, concerned about voluntary schools finding themselves at a financial disadvantage, L E As were ordered to pay for all their running costs and salaries.

If there was some sympathy for absence due to parents' financial problems, the headmaster was less pleased to note:

> "May 1863: Waxwork exhibition in the town - thin school … in consequence.”
> “Sept 1897: Southwell Cattle Fair: numbers below average.”

Even so, the school sometimes bowed to the inevitable:

> "Sept 1863: Grand Wedding at the Minster allowed children to leave at 11 o'clock.”
> "Oct 1892: (afternoon off) it being the advertised date for the races and their (sic) being an afternoon performance at a circus.”

Apart from the holidays, there was also one regular, accepted break from routine - the Annual "Tea-Feast" or "Treat". This involved a parade through the town to a service in the Minster, sports and a tea party:

> "Sept 1863: This being the week of the Treat, there is a better (attended) school!”

> "We celebrated … with parades behind banners, and then you had sports … they had races … with little prizes at the end" (A recollection of school c1910).

For truancy, and many of the lesser offences, the cane was frequently used. Recalling how boys and girl were taught in separate classes, former girl pupils remember how early this century:

> "We had a cane … and a strap with two thongs on it."
> "I always remember the girls were on one side and the boys were on the other of a partition Mr Salt was the headmaster and every day, about ten minutes to twelve, he used to go round and we knew exactly what was going to happen, because he had a cane in his hand and he went round to each boy - 'Whack! Whack!' - if he hadn't done his work … that was part of the fun for the girls!"

The threat of such punishment, however, did not always prevent even fairly serious trouble:

> "June 1863: Found some half dozen boys during dinner hour playing on the walls and slates … Complaint made to me about children throwing stones in the street … Inspector of police down in the morning to make enquiries as to who broke a gate leading to the park."

19. Elementary Curriculum

As early as 1880, legislation forced many pupils to stay at elementary schools until the age of fourteen. Most of their pupils were, however, within the modern junior school age range, and, particularly at first, they attempted little more than tuition in the "3 Rs" and R E. They had few resources - most writing was on slates, with rote learning.

The National School's Logbook even in the 1860s mentions only reading, writing, arithmetic, catechism, "practising hymns for Sunday", dictation and History, but a minor crisis on November 18th 1863 when "Little Charlie Bosworth swallowed a piece of slate pencil". Local clergy visited the school from time to time to help with the religious education.

Classes were large. Teachers were in short supply and, until the early years of this century, many were trained very differently from today. In 1846 a national scheme was started of five-year apprenticeships beginning at thirteen years of age, enabling young people to stay at school to further their own education whilst also learning and practising some of the skills of teaching as a "pupil teacher" with a small salary. At eighteen, they would compete for Queen's Scholarships at the gradually increasing number of training colleges. The Southwell head noted, on September 3rd 1863, "gave the pupil teacher an extra lesson at 6 pm". He evidently found him less than promising and, on May 4th 1864, recorded, "Marriott (pupil teacher) made his exit from Southwell unknown to anyone. Good Riddance of Bad rubbish!"

By the end of the nineteenth century, the curricula of elementary schools were widening. In Southwell, geography, some science, poetry, British history, music, drawing and P E (at least in the form of "Musical and Military Drills") were taught.

The new century saw an increasingly less formal approach to teaching - including the teaching of boys and girls in the same class.

In the 1920s, the school introduced country dancing and organised games - ultimately hockey, cricket, soccer and swimming were available.

In 1932 the first edition of a school magazine "The Saracen" described inter-house sport between Sherwood, Newstead, Trent and Wolsey houses and some outside fixtures. “Football. Our best season ever … Individualism has given way to a well balanced side" in matches against Southwell Wesleyan, Gedling, Halam, Newark Wesleyan and Newark Barnby Road elementary schools.

The magazine at least set high goals for its pupils:

> “We have chosen for our School Motto: ‘To Strive, to seek, to find, and not to Yield’ … A national scholar (should be) one who knows how to play the game and who by his or her conduct … indicates … the attributes of an English Lady and an English Gentleman".

From 1949, domestic science classes, for older pupils, from the National and several other local elementary schools, were held on the site of the present Lowes Wong Junior School. The National School itself acquired woodwork facilities - also used by other local schools. And pupils could learn basketry and gain experience of gardening.

Change was partly encouraged by His Majesty’s Inspectors. They had been created in the nineteenth century and then produced an annual report on every elementary school. That on Southwell, for 1891, noted:

> ”The higher Arithmetic wanting in accuracy, and Reading of the first Standard should be of better style. Otherwise, the standard is satisfactory … Geography is good and some remarkably accurate and intelligent knowledge of Physiology and Natural History was shown … Recitation and Music were very good … “

From 1861 to 1897, however, such visits by inspectors had sometimes discouraged change. For a Royal Commission had led to the introduction of a system of "payment by result” - the amount of money granted to a school would depend “on the attainment of a certain degree of knowledge by the children … during the year preceding the payment”. Thus, for example, following the annual inspection, in May 1894, the Southwell head noted in his log book: "Grant - £82”.

Even in the 1950s the National School’s buildings did not provide the space to house much equipment and classes could number over forty. Certainly, recalling her work as a teacher at the National School in the 1920s, Mrs Metcalfe stressed the relatively Spartan surroundings:

> "We had long desks … (but) in the winter it was terribly cold … and I had Standard V, and I can always remember it was just like a scene out of Dickens … and the boys and girls used to love Friday afternoon … We were not allowed to mend the fires after lunchtime and we used to get the seats and draw them around the fire as near as we could to what was left of the fire … and I used to read them ‘Christmas Carol’. And it’s not often that boys and girls of that age like it but I think the surroundings were such that they loved ‘Christmas Carol’.”

20. <u>Secondary Modern Schooling</u>

The 1944 Education Act brought about the gradual disappearance of all-age elementary schools and, in 1957, the Edward Cludd Secondary Modern School was opened in Southwell to take

children who did not pass the 11+ examination. It was relatively unusual only in that the Church of England had taken up the option, under the Act, to build a "Voluntary Controlled" school - one heavily subsidised by the L E A but with some control, and financial responsibility, still in Church hands rather than follow the more common pattern of accepting the creation of a county school in the town.

The school was named after a businessman, "citizen and mercer of Lombard Street, London, but - whose father owned land in Arnold. Edward Cludd was also an M P Nottinghamshire in the 1650s under the Republic. Tradition has it that he saved the Minster from serious destruction by Parliamentarian or Scots troops. Actual evidence does credit him with showing concern about the survival of the grammar school but chiefly with acquiring a large proportion of the local land which had previously belonged to Minster and the Archbishop of York. He later lost this, except Norwood Park and a house he had built there, at the Restoration.

The Cludd School was opened in 1957 by the Bishop of Southwell, and the Grammar School head, Mr Rushby Smith, became chairman of the governing body. It was the first "modern" school building in Southwell. The Education Committee proudly noted, in the pamphlet drawn up for the opening ceremony, that “A steel framework provides the basis of the structure … on this are placed light matt fibre slabs … to form the roof, and concrete slabs … to form the walls”, and that “the colours used throughout in the decoration have been chosen with the intention of providing a varying and stimulating background to school activities.“

Its buildings were later expanded to cater for 750 pupils including, from 1974, children affected by the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen. It replaced the senior classes of both National and Wesleyan schools in Southwell and, for varying lengths of time, it received children from Averham, Bleasby, Caunton, Edingley, Epperstone, Farnsfield, Fiskerton, Gonalston, Halam, Halloughton, Hockerton, Hoveringham, Kelham, Kirklington, Lowdham, Morton, Normanton, Oxton, Rolleston, Staythorpe, Thurgarton, Upton and Winkburn. It ultimately had a staff of thirty-five.

The National School's tradition of fairly strict discipline was at first maintained by its first headmaster, Mr Wilson, who is recorded using the cane for "sliding down banister on staircase", "swinging on cloakroom hooks” and “sliding across a classroom floor”. Use of corporal punishment, however, soon declined.

Though less generously financed than the grammar school, the Edward Cludd also immediately sought to offer greater educational opportunities than its predecessors to its pupils.

Mr Wilson, at the school’s opening, regretted “that many (parents) … considered as a failure a child who had not gained a place in a grammar school … This was an attitude to be deplored for a school such as the Edward Cludd … offered great possibilities to the young people in it.”

Provision for craft subjects was much improved and there were science laboratories, a gym, library, hard tennis courts, school pitches for football, hockey and cricket, "an area being developed as an ornamental garden and a watercress bed" and “an outdoor teaching space on the roof” of its three-storey block.
Secondary Modern schools did not, at first, enter pupils for public examinations and were seen as aimed at the pupils interested in “concrete things … essentially practical" - the child whose “career is often in his mind.” (Norwood Report, 1943). Thus, in 1957, the Nottinghamshire County Education Committee emphasised that "the school (the Cludd) is in a rural area and … the curriculum will have a definite bias towards life and work in the countryside". Yet, latterly, pupils had the chance to take not only the relatively new C S E examination but O-Levels. French appeared - for some pupils. Several of the Cludd's staff, like their grammar school colleagues, were graduates. And a few pupils transferred to the Grammar School at Sixth Form level.

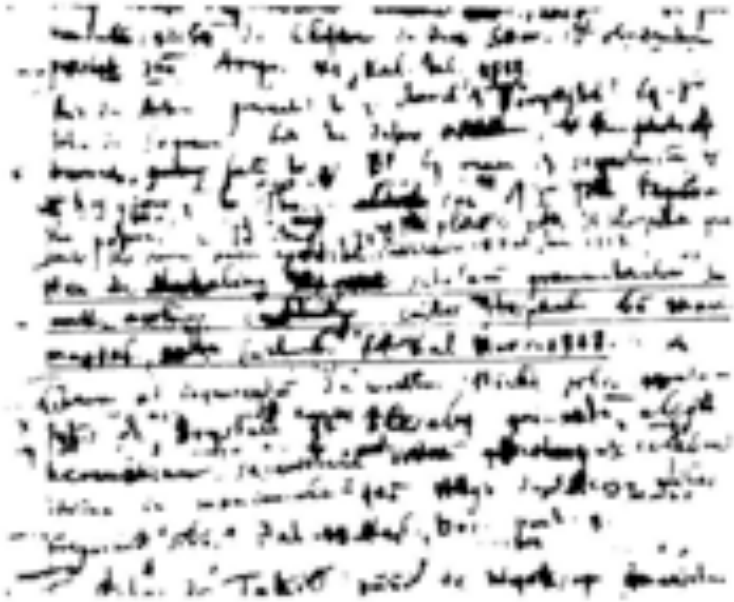
21. Amalgamation

As in most other parts of the country, "comprehensivisation" was greeted with mixed feelings from secondary modern and grammar school. Hopes of more equality of opportunity and a greater ability to meet the individual needs of children were joined by fears about the size of the new school and the career prospects of individual staff in a hurried amalgamation. Some of those with misgivings about the future were tempted to read too much into the fact that, whereas the Grammar School marked its final year with an expensive production of T S Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" in the Minster, the Cludd hired a special train and the entire school went off for the day, near the end of the summer term, to Skegness!

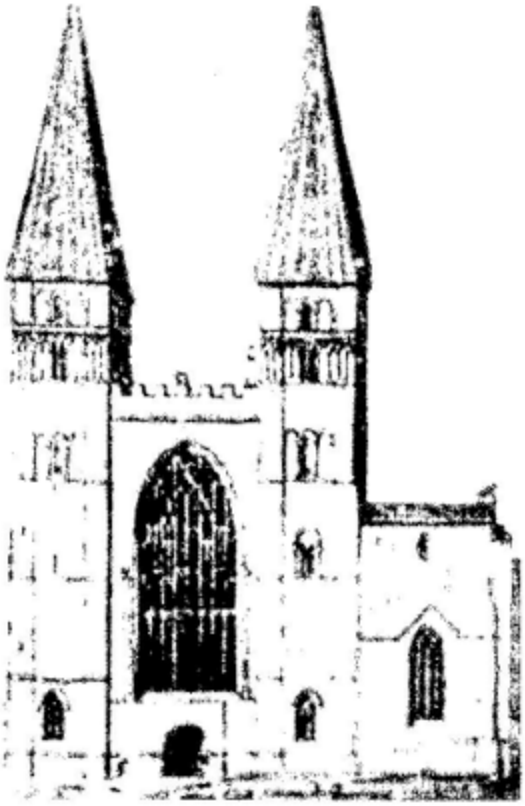
I acknowledge assistance in writing this account of the Minster School's "ancestors" from:

The British Library, Nottingham Local Studies Library, Nottinghamshire County Council Records Office, Mr R Beaumont and the Southwell Minster Library, St John's College archives Cambridge, James: "Southwell Schools", Leach: "English Schools at the Reformation", "The Schools of Medieval England" and an article in ''Victorian Country History", Shilton: "History of Southwell", "The Southwellian", local people including Mr Cope, Mrs D Doy, Mr Fox, Mr Glendinning, Mr Killick, Mrs Metcalfe, Mr Pulford, Mrs Walker, Mrs Warters, Mr Perry and Minster School secretaries.

(See following pages for illustrations)

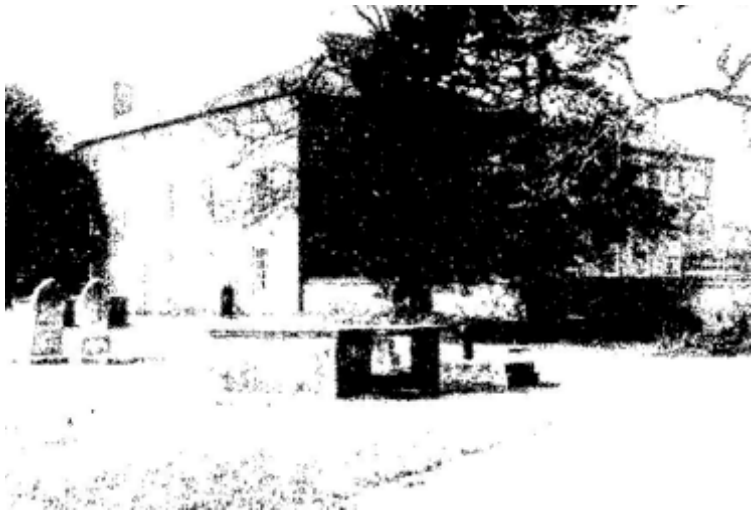


1. Earliest surviving reference to the Grammar School (underlined): “Henry de Hykeling master … 1313”



2. Booth’s Chapel (adjoining the nave of the Minster) The earliest proven home of the Grammar School

2. Earliest known picture of a Grammar School teacher. Magnus Jackson, Headmaster, 1788 - 1809



4. The Grammar School Building, erected 1819

5. Mr J Wright, Grammar School Staff and Pupils, Summer 1894

6. Grammar School Football Team (1898?)

7. National School Pupils on the day of their "Annual Treat", 1910

8. Edward Cludd School pupils (soon after its opening) on a visit to Betws-y-coed