

# Extract from 1911 Wycombiensian

Scanned by Tony Barr from the 1911 edition of the Wycombiensian owned by the family of D.W. Davis & R.A Davis

Of particular interest because of references to the building of the new school, the notes from the Speech Day

Also note at the end of the extract The Debating Society's answer to the pre-1914 strikes.

We deeply regret to record the death of William Keen, who entered the School in January, 1907, and left in July, 1910. Our deepest sympathies are with his relatives in their bereavement

The new Building Scheme is slowly moving forward. On October 18th a Conference was held between representatives of the Governing Body, the Wycombe Town Council and the Bucks Education Committee. The Venerable Archdeacon Shaw was elected Chairman, and the following points were considered by the Conference and resolutions adopted:

(1) Future scheme of governance. —Attention was drawn to the constitution of the present Governing Body, appointed as follows; —Three by the Buckingham County Council; four by the Chepping Wycombe Borough Council; two by the Justices of the Peace for the Borough of Chopping Wycombe, and two by the Justices of the Peace for the County of Buckingham, acting in and for the Second Desborough or Wycombe Petty Sessional Division; six Co-optative Governors, to be appointed by resolution of the Governors. Objection was raised to the proposal to increase the number of County Council representatives from three to six, chiefly on the ground that the Governing Body was already large enough. It was resolved, " That, in the event of the Building Scheme being adopted, this Conference is of opinion that the Governing Body should be constituted as follows:—Six appointed by the Bucks County Council, six appointed by the Chepping Wycombe Borough Council, and six Co-optative Governors."

Area served by the School.—Consideration having been given to the principle adopted by the County Council to levy special rates for Secondary School purposes, on those parishes only from which not less than ten pupils attend the Secondary School, it was resolved, "That the County Council be recommended to include in the area served by the School any parish from which not less than eight pupils attend the School."

3) Appointment of Architect.—Objection was raised to the condition that the Governors should be permitted to- appoint an Architect only in the event of the commission and expenses of such Architect being borne by the Governors from voluntary 'sources. Other members of the Conference were of opinion that as the Local Education Authority had their own Architect, who was paid an inclusive salary, it was only reasonable that he should be employed for the work. No resolution was submitted.

(4) Estimated cost of new buildings.—A representative considered that the estimated cost of £45 per head for provision of building and equipment was excessive. Statements as to the actual cost of the erection and equipment of Secondary Schools having been submitted, it was resolved, " That, in the opinion of this Conference, the cost of the erection of the proposed new Grammar School, and equipment thereof, should not exceed £40 per pupil."

At their meeting on Nov. 8th, the Governors approved of resolutions 1, 2 and 4. With regard to Clause 3, the following resolution was adopted: " That, considering that the Governors and the Town Council find more than half the money, they do not approve-of the condition imposed by the Bucks County Council—that the Education Committee's Architect should be employed."

At a meeting of the Town Council, held on Nov. 21st, the Council approved of resolutions 2 and 4; with regard to Clause 1, the following resolution was carried: " That six Governors should be appointed by the County Council, eight by the Town Council, and that the number of Co-optative Governors should be four." In reference to Clause 3, it was resolved, " That, in the opinion of the Council, the Education Authority's Architect should be appointed." We hope to print in our next number the final result of the various meetings.

#### SPEECH DAY.

Speech Day was held in the School grounds on Tuesday, July 25th. The weather was perfect, and we had the pleasure of welcoming quite a record assembly of parents and friends. The Chairman of the Governors, the Ven. E. D. Shaw, presided, and he was accompanied on the platform by the Mayor and Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Arnison, the following members of the Governing Body: Mr. D. Clarke (Vice-Chairman), Sir John Thomas, Mr. J. G. Peace, Mr. G. E. Stephen-son, and Mr. T. Thurlow, with Mr. J. C. Parker, Clerk to the Governors, and the Head Master.

The Chairman briefly opened the proceedings, and then called upon the Head Master to make his report upon the work of the School. The Head Master said:

I am glad to be able to give you once more a very satisfactory report on the general progress of the School. On Speech Day last year I referred to the question of additional accommodation—briefly and somewhat guardedly. This year I am able to give you a more optimistic report. Last September, on the invitation of the Governors, the School was visited by his Majesty's Secondary School Inspector for this district, and by Mr. Clay, the Architect to the Board of Education. They were invited to view the present School premises and grounds, and to give their opinion on the whole question. Their report was so strongly adverse to the expenditure of any more money in buildings on our present site that the Secretary to the Board of Education wrote to us in the following terms: "The Board are not prepared to approve the scheme proposed, and I am to suggest that the question of securing a new site may receive serious consideration." The question has received serious consideration. The offer of a suitable site has been obtained, the site has been approved by his Majesty's Inspector, and it now only remains for the various public bodies interested to come to an agreement upon the many details involved. Next year will be the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the School as a Grammar School by Royal Charter. It would be a very fitting commemoration of this—to us—historical event if we were able next year to lay the foundations of a new and greater School, worthy of our ancient traditions, and of our historic borough. The original Charter of the foundation is still in the possession of the Governors. It is of such interest to the School that I obtained the Governors' permission to have a reproduction made, and a copy, of the actual size of the Charter, has been framed and hung in the schoolroom. I hope many of you will be able to see it before you leave this afternoon. from what I have already said, you will judge that the position of Governor has been no easy one during the past year, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to our Governors for their unwearying efforts on behalf of the School. We all regret extremely that Colonel Gilbey, who has served for thirty years on the Governing Board, has left the neighbourhood, and has resigned his position as Governor. He has been a very true friend to the School, and the beautiful cup he presented to us four years ago will be a

constant reminder of his kindness, and of the interest he took in us. At the same time, we welcome very heartily his successor. Mr. Thomas Thurlow, whose family has been connected with the School for more than fifty years, and who has himself frequently shown his interest in the School. About a fortnight ago, Mr. Runciman, the President of the Board of Education, was making his annual report in the House of Commons, and I should like to quote two statements he made. The first was: " That children began attending secondary schools too late, and left too early." This is a point I emphasised last year, and I would again urge parents to send their boys to us 'as early as possible (Mr. Runciman says at the age of nine); then to leave them with us until they have reaped the full benefit of an education whose greatest value lies perhaps in that training in responsibility which is chiefly learnt when a boy reaches the dignity of the Sixth Form and a Prefectship. May I say at this point, how much I value the trust and support which I receive from the parents of the boys, and how glad I am that so many have been able to accept my invitation to be present to-day. I could only wish I saw them more frequently, for in ten minutes' conversation both parent and master can often learn from each other more new points in a boy's character than they would discover in a year working independently. I am at home to parents every Friday afternoon during term time, or at any other time if I am given short notice beforehand. The second quotation from Mr. Runciman's speech is this: "A most startling fact in regard to the staffs of the Secondary Schools is the extremely small salaries paid to the assistant masters."

You may think perhaps that this quotation scarcely befits an occasion such as this, and I have only made it because possibly some of you may be unaware of the fact stated, and may be as startled by its sudden discovery as the President of the Board of Education appears to have been. The need for paying secondary schoolmasters reasonable salaries was never greater than at the present moment, when so much is demanded of the masters, owing to the generally improved methods of teaching, and the greater efficiency that is required by the Board itself—and by parents. This salary question seems to me to be one which everyone ought to understand, so that strong pressure may be brought to bear on the Board to remedy a serious state of affairs which cannot but react unfavourably upon the higher education of the country, and for this reason only I have touched upon it to-day. To my staff I am unboundedly grateful for their most loyal support, for the work they do in school, for their interest in the games and other out-of-door pursuits of the boys. Without their help and guidance many of our most valuable out-of-school interests would soon languish and (lie away. And these interests are many. Apart from football and cricket, we play fives, we swim, we hold Athletic Sports, we have an Officers' Training Corps, a Chess Club, a Debating Society, a Dramatic Society, and a Meteorological Society. All these clubs and societies are very successful and flourishing, and this is greatly owing to the help of the masters, though I must not forget the good work which is done by the senior boys, especially by the Captains of Games and Prefects. Their help I value very highly. We have had successful seasons both at cricket and football. The Officers' Training Corps has enjoyed a most interesting year, including a Field Day at Whitley. and the Royal Review at Windsor; while in a few days they go into camp with the Public Schools on Salisbury Plain. To the Mayor we are very grateful for his kind offer of a silver cup to the most efficient member of the Corps. A few days ago we held our first swimming races in the first Town Swimming Baths. A large number of boys have learnt to swim, and the racing was very good. It was much enhanced by the keen competition for the House Cup, which was most kindly given us by Mr. Elsom in response to my appeal last Speech Day.

The Debating Society and the Chess Club both provided plenty of amusement in the winter months, and some of you may still remember the play, " She Stoops to Conquer," which the boys presented in April last. Thereby a sum of £22 was added to the James' Fund. After last Speech Day, too, one of our old boys, Mr. Taplin, very kindly offered to interest himself in our Meteorological Society—with the happiest results to the Society. He and four other old boys gave us a donation enabling us to pay for the screen, the thermometers, and the rain gauge, which stand in the orchard, and we now take an even more personal interest in the weather than we did before. I have the following examination successes to report. Two boys have passed the London Matriculation Examination; one—F. Youens—in the 1st Division, a particularly good result. Five boys passed the Oxford Local Senior, and six the Junior Examination, and two were

placed on the Honours list. In the County Council Intermediate Scholarship Examination, held last year, F. H. Coles, who was a successful candidate, has since been reported on as 1st in Elementary French among 200 candidates, drawn from about a dozen different counties. Last

week we heard that our six years' previous record still remained unbroken. H. B. Stephenson having been awarded a County Council Intermediate Scholarship. He was placid second on the list. In the Major Scholarship Examination I have just heard this afternoon that J. W. Neighbour has been successful, and has been awarded a scholarship of the value of £100 a year. We are all proud of this success, and offer Neighbour our very hearty congratulations. During the past year it has given us gnat pleasure to record in the School Magazine many successes of old boys. Among others we noted that D. J. Watson had been awarded a College prize for mathematics on his result in the Mathematical Tripos, Part I. By means of the Old Boys' Club we are now keeping more in touch with our old boys, but we are still anxious to obtain a larger membership, and I hope that any old boys who are present to-day, and are not members of the Club, will at once give in their names to Mr. Threlfall, the Club Secretary. Last Speech Day, Sir John Thomas invited me to take a party of boys to visit his paper mills at Wooburn, and in November the three highest forms spent a most interesting afternoon at the mills, where every detail of paper manufacture was explained to them. We thank Sir John Thomas very heartily for his kindness, and may I express a hope that his example will be followed by other manufacturers in this district. For such visits are both a welcome change from the ordinary routine of school work, and are of great educational value. I have now given you a fairly comprehensive sketch of the School year we are just completing; perhaps I ought not to omit mention of one other point. This year we broke another record. We achieved the high distinction of figuring in the pages of "Punch." And now it remains for me to thank Mrs. Shaw on behalf of the boys and myself, for her great kindness in coming here to-day to distribute our prizes. She came at very short notice, for till a few days ago we were expecting Sir Alfred Cripps to be present with us to-day. Towards the end of last week, however, he wrote explaining that he would be unavoidably detained ill London by business in the House of Commons in connection with the National Insurance Bill. We are extremely sorry that we shall not enjoy the privilege of hearing an address from our Member, but we feel all the more grateful to Mrs. Shaw for her very great kindness in consenting to help us to-day.

The Chairman said that in that very interesting periodical, whose name almost required a seven-leagued tongue to pronounce it, but might more shortly be called the School Magazine, and under the heading of that department which the Head Master called Meteorological, but which the Magazine itself spoke of as Climatological, it was observed that it was better to enjoy this weather than to write about it. He thought they would agree with him that it would be better to enjoy it outside than to listen to other people talking in the tent; but he would ask them to give him at least a few moments in order to offer his hearty congratulations to the Head Master upon the excellent results of the work of the last School year. He had reminded them that the School went back for nearly 350 years, i.e., that next year they would be able to celebrate its seventh Jubilee. He did not know how many of those past Jubilees had been celebrated in any particular way; but he ventured to endorse the wish expressed by the Head Master that the seventh Jubilee would be celebrated in some worthy way, and he could imagine no more worthy way than that of laying the foundation stone of the new building. As they knew, public bodies moved slowly—unless they were stirred to great emotion by some unexpected event, when they might perhaps move rather too rapidly—but when they had to deal with various Councils and Boards it always took a long time to get through business satisfactorily. They had been some time considering the question, but now, after long and careful consideration, he thought those who were interested in the School had come to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary that this step forward should be taken. The School had a tradition of 350 years behind it; it had also the living present before it. That perhaps sounded rather Irish, for, after all, it was the future that was before it : but what he meant was that they had to adapt themselves to the conditions of the present, and not live under the conditions of 350 years ago; and therefore it was necessary that a School like that should be able to hold its own with all those other Schools which, near and far, were endeavouring to meet the requirements of the present generation, and the generations that were

immediately to come. In his admirable report the Head Master showed how the Wycombe Royal Grammar School was holding its own with the Secondary Schools of the country—holding its own in public examinations where its pupils come into competition with others for County Council Scholarships, in the Oxford Local Examinations, and in the London Matriculation Examination. And not only in work was it able to compare with other great and rising schools, but also in those numerous activities which were essential to the education of boys and girls at the present day. In cricket, swimming, and athletics of various kinds which were borne testimony to by the cups before them, the School was able to hold its own. It had some wants still, and one of these was a few more books for the Library, and he hoped that the hint might be taken by some of the friends there, and that want supplied. In conclusion, he could only congratulate the Head Master and his most excellent staff of assistants, about whom he spoke so nicely, and who, as all the Governors knew, were such a real strength and support to him—he could only congratulate them, and the boys, on the most successful year they had had since the last Speech Day. He might be permitted also to add that all who had anything to do with the School—boys, parents, and Governors—knew how very great an interest was taken by Mrs. Arnison in the welfare of the boys and all that concerned the School, and how much they were all indebted to her.

Mrs. Shaw then distributed the prizes and cups, and after the distribution the boys showed their appreciation of her kindness by presenting her with a bouquet, which was handed to her by J. C. Harvey, on behalf of the School, amid great applause.

Mr. D. Clarke proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Shaw, and this was seconded by Sir John Thomas, and carried with loud cheers. The Mayor then moved a vote of thanks to the Archdeacon for presiding, and Mr. Peace seconded. Mr. Shaw briefly acknowledged the votes of thanks on behalf of Mrs. Shaw and himself, and the proceedings in the marquee were terminated by the usual vigorous cheers by the boys.

Our guests were then entertained to tea in the orchard, and afterwards took the opportunity of inspecting the School and the specimens of the boys' work displayed in the Big Schoolroom.

Oct. 1st. Debate.

A. C. Smith moved, " That strikers should be suppressed by force of arms." Opposed by: A. Richards.

The proposer began by detailing the immense loss to the nation caused by the recent strikes. Then he asked why they struck. Was it not through discontent fanned by windy demagogues ? Such disorder could only be quelled by vigorous measures, and he urged the House to support him in this motion.

A. Richards, speaking in opposition, appealed to the intelligence of the House. Let them not be led away by the illogical utterances of the proposer. Who was to do the shooting ? Perhaps a Capitalist Corps, with Mr. Smith in the ranks. Then by whom should we replace the dead workmen? He, for one, would not care to travel behind an amateur engine driver. Let the House then reject this monstrous proposition.

E. H. Rance continued the denunciation of strikers, and urged the House to support the motion. "Replace the dead workmen?" he asked; "Why, gentlemen, that is a solution of the unemployment difficulty."

F. H. Coles drew a harrowing, if inaccurate, picture of the distressed worker's family, whose bread-winner had perished, a martyr to the cause of Labour.

T. R. Yeoman spoke against the motion. J. R. Walton regretted that the good old days of Henry VIII had passed, when loafers and demagogues received the due reward of their deeds.

The president concluded the debate with some indignant remarks on "peaceful picketing," thereby establishing a precedent which unmuzzles the "Chair" in debate.

For the motion, 11. Against, 8. Carried by 3.”