



POCKLINGTON 500

Celebrating the school's 500th birthday

DISCOVERED!

A very exciting discovery has been made in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge. It is a document described as 'a contemporary copy of Dowman's foundation charter of the Fraternity or Guild of the name of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of St. Nicholas in the parish church of Pocklington, Yorks, and of a grammar school for poor scholars next to Le West Grene (sic) Pocklington'. It was unknown to nineteenth century scholars, one of whom wrote 'no old deeds or writings concerning Pocklington School are extant, and no one knows what has become of them'. Those who compiled the school history last century also reported that Dolman's statutes for the school had been lost.

The document was spotted almost at the same time by two OP scholars. Phil Gilbank (1967-74) and Christopher Dent (1961-65) alerted the school to their discovery, and the College Librarian, Dr Mark Nicholls, sent us a photocopy of the original. It is 23 pages long, about 7,000 words with some 450 in English and the rest in Latin.

The Director of the Borthwick Institute at the University of York is preparing a translation for us. Some of the contents is known from other documents, but already new facts are emerging. For instance, we now know the first Master was

called Walter Carr. Dowman details the statutes for the school, covering daily prayers, the election of the Master, the form of words for his admission (in English), the participation of the Master and scholars in church services, the common chest, the illness or absence of the Master and his oath.

The section in English reads beautifully. After Dowman lays down the conditions for the appointment of Master, it is almost as if he turns to the successful candidate as he says: "Syr this lodgyng ye shall have fre withoute any payment and ten powndis yerely to your wagis acording to the fundation, and in this chambre & parlour you shall take your reste and habytation to your comfort".

There is also a very interesting sketch of the Founder's coat of arms. This differs from the one with which we are all familiar. In the next issue of the newsletter we will publish the drawing, along with some comments from heraldic experts.

Much more research needs to be done on all aspects of the document, but it is an inspiring and timely discovery as we begin to gather material for the new illustrated history of the school to be published in time for the Quincentenary.

FROM THE POCKLINGTON 500 OFFICE

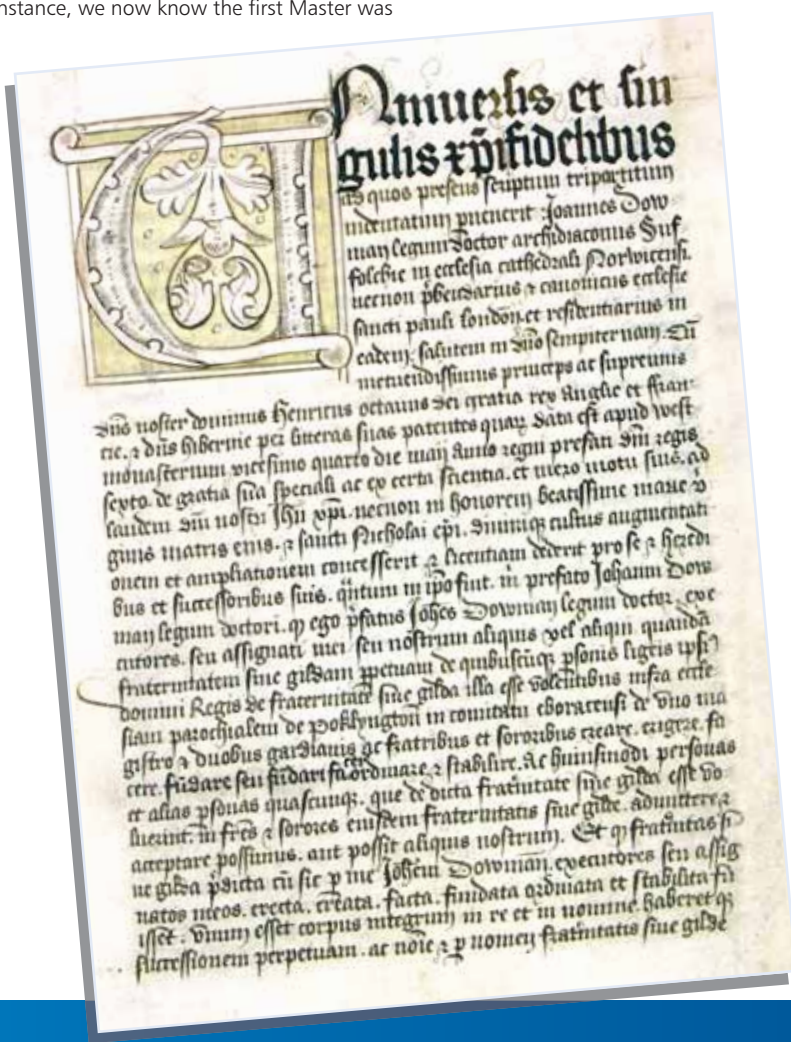


Friends of the school will be delighted to know that Rachel Dare has recently been appointed by the school as the Pocklington 500 Officer. Rachel will continue with her current work in support of the Old Pocklingtonian Association but will also take on the co-ordination and administration of the Pocklington 500 office.

Additionally five task teams have been established to begin planning and organising celebrations for the 500th birthday covering the period 2009-2014:

'Events' – this team is charged with bringing us together for festive events both on and off the school campus. The team is led by Jill Atkinson (Governor and Vice-Chair of the Pocklington 500 committee) and Mike Evans (Senior Master).

'History' – this team will lead the way in bringing together memories, photographs and mementos that will, amongst other things, allow the school to develop a comprehensive archive and publish a richly illustrated book to tell the story of the school, its journey and of course its pupils and staff. The team is led by Darrell Buttery (Governor and Editor of this newsletter) and Angie Edwards (Librarian).





YORK MINSTER SERVICE

Exactly 500 years to the day the school was founded it is hoped to hold a service of thanksgiving in York Minster. Plans for the service will be worked out nearer the time, but we expect music to be composed specially for the occasion and prayers written by some of the pupils.

The school's links with York Minster were strong in early times. Whilst oversight of the school was entrusted to the Master and Wardens of the Fraternity, the Dean and Chancellor of the Minster were the second line of defence, with the Archbishop taking an interest too.

If, for instance, there was a dispute between the Master of the School and the Master and Wardens of the Fraternity, the former could choose to 'submit and obey yourself to the correction and order of the Lord Dean of York, or Chancellor of the Cathedral Church.'

Hopefully there were not many times when there were problems to sort out like the one in 1581 when Archbishop Sandys wrote to the Master of St. John's College, Cambridge: 'I remember that you muche myslyked of the Scholemaster of

Pocklington, for that he sent you rude and unlearned Schollers oute of his Schole, and you prayed me to reforme hym or remove hym.'

The appeal to rebuild the school in the late seventeenth century was headed by the Archbishop's donation of £10, then a huge sum.

In the run-up to the anniversary links with York Minster will be strengthened, and it is hoped that the school choir will be invited to sing evensong there at least once a year.

"The splendid singing of the Pocklington choristers choir at our celebration of William Wilberforce in 2007 reminded us all of the old connection between the Minster and the school. The Dean has no wish to revive the role of disciplinarian in these days, but we at the Minster will be delighted if the Quinquecentenary marks a time of renewed friendship in which the Minster gives an inspiration to the learning and life of the school in the present century."

The Very Revd. Keith Jones - Dean of York Minster

Continued from the front page

'Monuments and Buildings' – this team will look at ways that we can develop and enhance the school campus for current and future generations. The team is led by Norma Jennings (Governor) and Paul Bennett (Bursar).

'Fundraising' – I guess this one says it on the outside of the tin! The team is led by Tony Farmer (Governor and Chair of the Pocklington 500 committee) and Andrew Dawes (Deputy Head).

'Extending the Family' - Pocklington is a 'family'. That's what Pocklingtonians of every generation often say. The OP Association and the Pocklington and Lyndhurst 'Friends' are wonderful points of contact but additionally we want to use the birthday to renew links with former parents, former staff and members of the wider community. The team is led by John Harrison (Governor) and Rachel Dare (Pocklington 500 Officer).

We need your help! The members of these teams will have their own ideas but they need your ideas, priorities, influence and steering in order to reflect the 'wishes' of the family.

Please drop Rachel Dare a line or email her at pock500@pocklingtonschool.com so that she can get your thoughts into the correct hands. Do also contact Rachel if you can help us or we can help you in making contact with some of your contemporaries or you just fancy dropping by for a cup of Yorkshire tea.

Can I also repeat Darrell's request from the last edition? Please keep contributing your own special memories, images and memorabilia.

With best wishes,

Andrew Dawes (Deputy Head and Chair of Pocklington 500 Executive Steering Group)

A PLEA FOR BOOKS

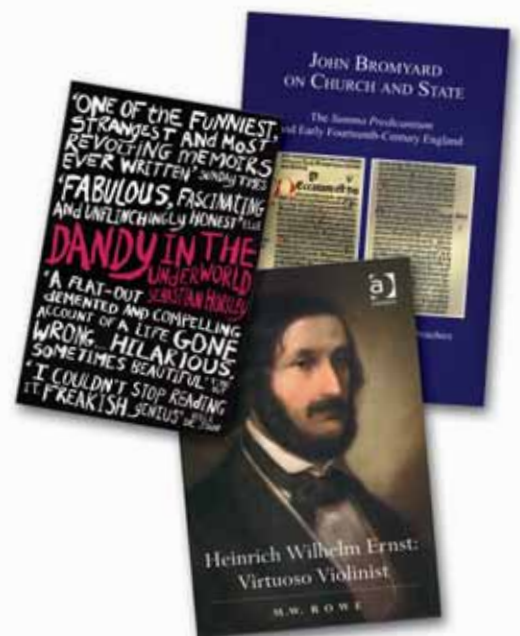
How much shelf space would be taken up if all the books written by OPs could be added to our library? We will never find out, but that doesn't stop us wanting to start a collection. There are obvious candidates, like Tom Stoppard, and we hope to secure whenever possible first editions of his plays. Another famous OP dramatist is Martin Crimp, and his works should also be there. He was described by The Guardian as 'one of the hottest properties in Europe'. Then there are shadowier figures, like the Victorian dramatist Eille Norwood, described in an 1896 school magazine as a "well-known actor and playwright".

Apart from famous names there are bound to be countless others who have written books on all topics under the sun. There must be distinguished academic authors as well as a host of amateur writers we could track down. To give just one example, the library has a copy of 'Yorkshire Reminiscences' by the Revd. M.C.F. Morris. He was Rector of Nunburnholme, as was his father before him. The Revd. F.O. Morris' literary output was prodigious. He published some of the most famous natural history books of the Victorian era, as well as a multi-volume set on country houses, which remains to this day one of the best ever written. His son's literary output was much smaller, but 'Yorkshire Reminiscences' is full of fascinating anecdotes, and six sides are devoted to describing the school. He had mixed feelings about Gruggen:

'The school increased in numbers under him, though it cannot be said that he was a good master. He would frequently come into the school shortly before the hour for closing, and rush through the work at racing speed, sometimes keeping us in beyond the appointed hour in order to make up for his absence'.

Another book which records the author's time at Pocklington hit the bookshops the year before last. Sebastian Horsley came into the sixth form at Pocklington from Abbotsholme School. 'Dandy in the Underworld' was widely reviewed, some critics loving, others loathing it.

Our idea is to house such a collection in special bookcases in the library. We believe the display will be of interest to visitors and an inspiration to pupils. A start has already been made, and gives some idea of the riches to be tapped. We need help tracking down the many volumes out there and would also welcome gifts of suitable material.



FOCUS ON PETER EDWARDS AND THE FILM FESTIVAL



For nearly 30 years Peter Edwards has been making films at school. In 2014 we plan to hold a Film Festival which will showcase his remarkable achievement. In the course of one week we hope to screen most of the films he has made, some of them involving hundreds of pupils and staff. A full programme of performances will be published nearer the time. Given Peter's talent for showmanship, expect all the glamour and glitz of the Oscars to come to Pocklington.

Peter writes: The school has an extensive collection of video images which have been created over the years. In 1982 the school entered the new technology of video when it purchased the first video camera in the art department. Cameras were primitive compared to today's models and suffered in low light conditions. The earliest drama production on film is a production of 'Romeo and Juliet' from the 1980's.

In the art department I experimented with editing and entered small films in various competitions. To our surprise these were successful and over the years a stream of awards came our way. One film, 'Water Shortage', won the Walt Disney national schools' film award and the National Student award in the early 90's.

As part of the Pocklington Festival I would like to show films made over the past thirty years. These should include images of the changing face of the school, drama, house music productions and various student films.

A unique development which will be included is the "staff film". These have now become an annual event to celebrate long-service teacher leavers. They started when David Nuttall left school in 2001 and follow the theme of light entertainment / spoof

with an element of 'Carry on' filming. Over the years they have also documented the changing face of the school as buildings have gone up and others have been refurbished. They have given me an opportunity for a little light satire whilst reacting to the various "new initiatives" over recent years of change. This year it is hoped to embark on a new genre, the musical. This will be more difficult than a straight film but I'm sure the teachers will cope.

I would be interested in any OPs who have video images which could be added to the school archive. The earliest piece of film is a school skiing holiday from the 1960's. This was made with a 16mm camera and shows pupils travelling by boat, then on the slopes with very primitive equipment.

The school has links with the film industry through a silent screen actor called Ellie Norwood who was one of the first Sherlock Holmes in the 1920's appearing in over forty films. Recent students have appeared on film, television and advertisements and others have acted as directors. The success of the photography course over the last five years has given students the opportunity to apply for university courses in film-making and it is hoped that these will uphold Pocklington's interest in this area of study in the future.

THE NEW LIBRARY

In February 2006, facilities at Pocklington School took a great leap forward when we were able to move into our stunning new Library. History has a strange way of repeating itself. In 1960 the Library moved into the old gymnasium when the new one was built. Once again, intellectual exercise has followed physical exercise and we are now in the 1960 gym, and our lovely but small Library has been converted into the new Chapel.

Several years of planning and detailed research preceded the conversion, which enabled the school team to be very clear about our needs and priorities once the initial designs had been presented. Simon Mitchell, the designer, was receptive and understanding. Although he had not been involved with libraries before, he was able to listen to our concerns and requirements and make them work within his overall vision. The result, as the photographs will testify, is delightful. The interior of custom-built light oak fittings and brushed steel provides a large, uncluttered and very stylish space. The retention of the gymnasium windows means that the quality of light is outstanding. We also house paintings of former Headmasters and a small Wilberforce collection. Moving the 11,000 or so books was a daunting task, but forward planning

and a fantastic and willing task force comprising staff and students meant that what was scheduled to take a week only took three days. This was undertaken in the half term holiday, and everyone gave up their free time generously.

The response to the new space was immediate and obvious. We improved from 3 computers to 20, and from 34 study spaces to 56, plus comfortable seating for more informal reading. Climate control means that we are now warm in winter and cool in summer.

6th formers are able to use the facilities whenever they are not timetabled for lessons, and Lower 6th have two timetabled private study periods each week. The mezzanine floor is exclusively for the use of 6th form and staff. Throughout the week classes can be booked in with their teachers for research. This promotes good independent learning skills, and we try to ensure that the collection supports the curriculum. In this way books can provide the basis for research wherever possible, enhanced by guided internet research. As more classes use the resources, teaching staff see the advantages of such lessons and so become more confident about what can be gained.

Boarders also benefit from evening openings. The Library is fully staffed until 8.00 p.m. and senior boarders can elect to come and do their prep in the evenings. The junior boarding houses each come over once a week en masse, with their house staff, for supervised prep. Day pupils may stay late if parents request.

The collection of books is hovering around 11,000 volumes. Our collection policy includes reviewing and weeding as well as replacement and acquisitions. We also hold a small collection of older books which have been donated in the past, and are building up a collection of books written by OPs or people connected with the school. Anyone who would like to come and visit the Library is more than welcome. Please contact Rachel Dare (OP liaison) or Angie Edwards (Librarian).



6th formers at work on the mezzanine floor



A view of the new library

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Early material on the school can turn up in unexpected places. Recently a document from 1877 was discovered in a Welsh bookshop and was promptly bought to add to our archives. It deals with an exchange of land between the school and Sir Tatton Sykes of Sledmere.

Under terms of the Inclosure Acts of 1845-1876, owners could seek to exchange land if this was seen to be beneficial to both parties. The school used to own much more land than it does now, stretching from further to the east on one side and reaching as far as York on the west (land occupied now by the main London to Edinburgh railway line!)

The 'Orders of Exchange', as the document is called, gives details of the swap. The school was to release just over 28 acres of land at Wetwang, including a house and outbuildings, for 12 acres in Pocklington. This might not sound like a good deal, until you look at the plan and see that the two areas of land we were receiving – Crow Tree Field and Cooks Field – are so very close to school. Indeed, Crow Tree Field is the area on which Lyndhurst, the dining room, and the Stoppard Theatre are now built.

The agreement is between Sir Tatton and the Governors. They are all named, and the list is dominated by the local aristocracy, gentry and clergy:- Baron Wenlock, Admiral The Honourable Arthur Duncombe, Christopher Sykes M.P., The Venerable Archdeacon William Hey, Baron Muncaster, William Broadley M.P., Marmaduke D'Arcy Wyvill Esq....

During the negotiations one Governor had resigned, and it was interesting to see that at one time The Reverend John Hymers of Brandesburton had been on Pocklington's governing body. On his death in 1887 he would leave money and instructions for founding the school in Hull which bears his name.

HEADMASTER'S HOUSE

The Headmaster's house has recently undergone a thorough renovation. This gave us the chance to try to work out the complicated architectural history of the building, and several discoveries were made.

The present house appears to date from the rebuilding of 1818-19. However, architectural historians who were consulted thought that some parts might actually retain work from the late seventeenth century.

A report of 1819 reads: 'The schoolroom is new and extremely well suited ... the schoolhouse of which it forms part is wholly new in front ... The interior of the house is not yet completed.'

The phrase 'wholly new in front' would imply the retention of some earlier work, and the fact that the interior was 'not yet completed' might be because it could be a slower job incorporating old work rather than building anew. A massive chimney breast could have been reused, for instance, and the whole of the coach house / stable block could be seventeenth century brickwork.

When Gruggen came along he punched the building about to make it a more commodious structure, and more fitting for the larger school he anticipated creating. Headmaster Shields' modest late Georgian building was substantially altered. Only two of the original 16 pane windows at the front survive. They are to the left of the front door, and at one time would have lit a ground floor room and first floor bedroom. Gruggen did away with the floor between them and the windows now light the staircase hall he created. He built on

two quite grand rooms, the dining room with its four great oak doors (three of them dummies) and above this a fine bedroom reusing superb eighteenth century architectural fittings.

One interesting minor discovery was in the large back bedroom which had originally been the school san with its own separate staircase. When the carpets were lifted it was found that boys had used pokers heated in the fire to burn graffiti on the floorboards. The dates seem to cluster from about 1917 to the late 1940's. One reads 'SCARLET FEVER NOV 1945'.



Old Pocklingtonian graffiti

Gruggen was clearly a builder Headmaster, giving the school some of its most idiosyncratic architecture. As one of his former pupils wrote: 'He was himself quite a good practical architect, and in later years planned houses for himself, and largely used in their structure and adornment materials of all sorts and kinds which he had purchased in the neighbourhood at sales, which he greatly enjoyed attending.'

from 'Yorkshire Reminiscences' by the Rev. M.C.F. Morris.

An architectural history of the school buildings is being planned. Expect some surprises.



The Headmaster's residence

Contacting us:

If you'd like to be in touch with us about any aspect of the 500th, then please contact Rachel Dare at Pocklington School, West Green, York YO42 2NJ, tel: 01759 321307, e-mail: pock500@pocklingtongschool.com

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Coming up in the next issue:

- Dowman's coat of arms
- The King takes an interest
- Expanding the school's archives