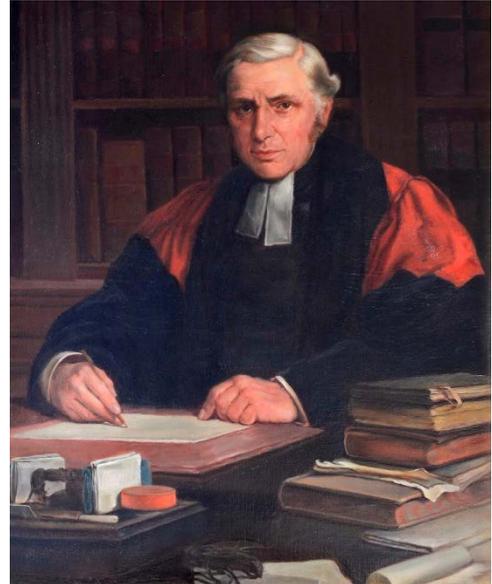


## Christmas at Sherborne School in the days of Headmaster H.D. Harper.

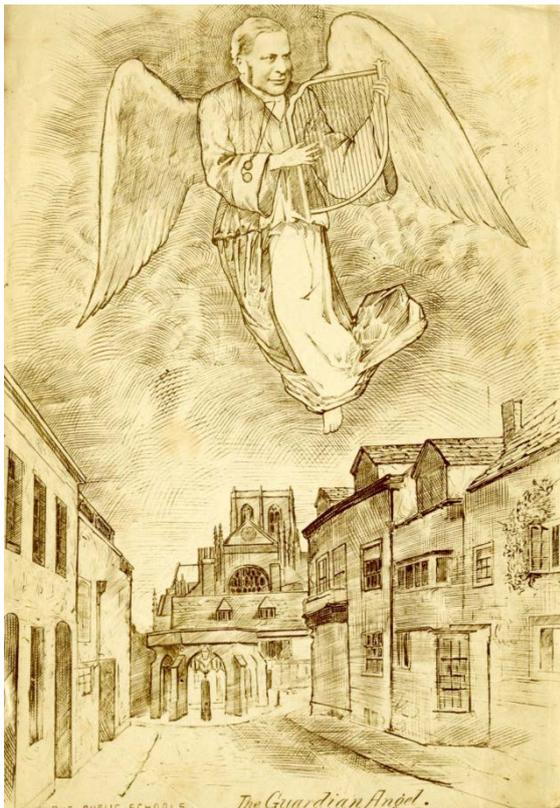
An account of Christmas celebrations at Sherborne School in the 1870s, written in 1934 by the Headmaster's daughter, Mary Stewart Roberts:

*'Always on the night before the School broke up for the Christmas holidays we had a great festivity, much looked forward to by all of us, as well as by the School.'*

*Every single boy in the School House was present and many 'old boys' too. The custom was that, after the feast, songs were called for. In each case the singer, before sitting down, called on someone else (chosen, I think, at random) for the next song. Some of the performers could not sing at all, but that didn't matter and they were all the more applauded. Songs with good and well-known choruses were chosen and the roof rang.*



Hugo Daniel Harper, Headmaster of Sherborne School 1850-1877.



A cartoon of Harper as 'The Guardian Angel', from a series 'Our Public Schools' published by Shrimpton, Oxford, c.1878.

*But the feature of the whole carnival was the Punch Bowl. This was an immense earthenware vessel which was covered by the gardeners with holly and evergreens.*

*The punch was brewed in our dining-room, and this was part of the fun, and we all helped by fine lemon-peeling, nutmeg grating, etc. At the appropriate time the Punch Bowl was carried into the Hall by two staggering men, and placed on the stove amidst tumultuous applause; and then many jugs of boiling water were poured in, to bring the punch to a prudent strength.*

*Then jugs were carried round and everyone's spirits grew cheerful, though never, I think, more than this.*

*The steaming Punch Bowl in our midst seemed the very spirit of Christmas and jollity, and last thing of all we sang 'Auld Lang Syne', with hands across all round the Hall, which went on and on indefinitely, and then came 'God Save the Queen' and 'Good-night'.'*

Taken from *Sherborne, Oxford & Cambridge: Recollections of Mrs Ernest Stewart Roberts* (London, Martin Hopkinson Ltd., 1934), pp.33-34.