FOSTER'S

The Story of a Dorset School

by S. G. McKay, M.A. (Oxon)

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The illustration on the front cover is taken from the deed of 20 July 1640 by which Foster's Charity was founded. It is reproduced by permission of the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist in Sherborne.

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Sources

For the history of the School before 1872 a number of deeds, account books, regulations and agreements are to be found in the County Record Office; the depositions in the Chancery cases in 1683 are in the Record Office, London. After 1872 minutes of Governors' meetings were kept but the earliest surviving of the minute books dates from 1898. Fortunately a considerable number of Headmasters' Reports, applications for posts and general correspondence remain; these and reports in the *Sherborne, Dorchester and Taunton Journal* (referred to, for brevity's sake, as the *Sherborne Journal*) and the *Western Gazette* form the main authority for the period 1872–1898. For the early twentieth century the *Fosterian* and a book of notes made by the late R. J. Gibling, Esq., have been of great value.

1640–1687

Among the prominent Sherborne families in the seventeenth century was that of the Fosters. John Foster who died in 1629 had in 1606 contributed £17 towards the building of a School House for the Grammar School (now School House Dining Hall at Sherborne School) of which he had been a pupil and was, from 1600, a governor, holding the office of Warden (equivalent to Chairman of the Governors, a post normally held for one year) in 1603 and 1626. By his will dated 21st December, 1628, he gave to the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse £200 to be used for the benefit of the poor of Sherborne; this sum, together with a further £200 was used to purchase land at Hermitage.

John Foster's sister, Agnes Boughton, also founded a charity; by an indenture dated 5th June, 1629, she assigned to five trustees a close of land called Abraham Field, or Fudge's Leaze and a "little grove of wood lying in the same close, containing in the whole 20 acres in the parish of Thornford". From the rents of this land the vicar of Hermitage was to receive a yearly payment of £6 and the remainder was to be used by the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse to bind poor children born and dwelling in the town of Sherborne "apprentices to some good trades". This charity, as will be seen later, eventually came to the support of Foster's School. By her will dated 1632 Agnes Boughton left money to the Church and poor of Hermitage.

Richard Foster was probably born in 1576; an entry in the Sherborne Parish Register for 23rd July shows a Richard Foster baptised on that date. About 1590 he was a pupil at the Grammar School and was a governor from 1612. On 17th May, 1632, he married Margaret Fisher in the Abbey Church. He was Warden of the Grammar School in 1618 and 1639 but before his second year of office was completed he died and was buried in the Churchyard, now the Abbey Close, on 24th August, 1640. An entry in the Minute Book of the Governors of the Grammar School dated in September 1640, reads:

> At this day in the presence of William Lyford, Clark, Richard Cooth, Rbt Saunders, Josias Cooth, Henry Durnford, John Martin, Richard Speed, Richard Avoke, Nicholas Romaine, Hugh Hodges, James Wallis, Wlm Sansom, Thomas Samsom and Wlm Eares.
>
> Richard Cooth is chosen Warden of the School upon the death of Richard Foster who died Warden and hath undertaken to passe an accompt for the whole year ending at Christmas next.

Although described as a yeoman, Richard Foster was obviously a man of substance (Trevelyan in his *Social History* says "The word 'yeoman' meant any sort of countryman of the middling classes, usually a farmer . . . the idea that a yeoman must be a freeholder owning his own land is very late indeed"). The exact difference between 'husbandman', 'yeoman', and 'gent' is difficult for us to determine – John Foster is described as 'gent' – but people had no doubt at the time of the class to which they belonged. In 1635 Richard Foster purchased fifty-seven acres of meadow and pasture known as 'Cannons' at Boys Hill in the parish of Haydon. On this he erected the house which still stands there today, the property now being known as 'Foster's Farm'. It was sold in October 1919 by the Governors of Foster's School to the tenant P. A. Ridout for £2,402 16s. Like his brother, John, and his sister, Agnes, Richard also made provision for a charity and it was the land at Boys Hill which was assigned to this purpose. In July 1640, when he was in all probability on his deathbed, he conveyed the property to three trustees. In accordance with the normal practice of 'lease and release' he made a lease for one year for a nominal rent and on the following day made a release which completed the transaction and gave complete right of possession. The second of these indentures is dated 20th

July, 1640, the day on which Richard Foster also made his will, and is the origin of Foster's School. It starts as follows: "THIS INDENTURE made the twentieth day of July in the sixteenth yeare of the raigne of our Soveraigne Lord Charles by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith between Richard ffoster of Sherborne in the County of Dorset yeoman of the one parte and William Lyford of Sherborne aforesaid Clarke John ffyler of Sherborne aforesaid Clarke and Richard Cooth of Sherborne aforesaid gent of the other parte" and it goes on to deal with "All those six Closes of Meadow and Pasture commonly called Cannons conteyning by estimation ffifty Seaven acres (be they more or less) with their appurtenances lyinge and beinge at Boys Hill in the Parishe of Haydon in the said County of Dorset upon one of which Closes there is a Messuage or Dwellinge House lately erected nowe or lately in the tenure or occupation of the said Richard ffoster".

After a necessarily detailed and lengthy conveyance of the property to the three trustees the deed goes on to say that it is "upon trust to this intent and purpose that from and after the death of the said Richard ffoster and Margaret his wife and default of issue of the body of the said Richard ffoster to be begotten the said William Lyford, John ffyler and Richard Cooth their heires and assignes shall permitt and suffer the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in Sherborne aforesaid to Have and take the Rents Issues and Proffitts of the said Messuage or Dwellinge House Closes and Premisses and that they the said Master and Brethren shall out of the same in the ffirst Place satisfie and pay all the Debts of the said Richard ffoster then unpaid and afterwards shall pay unto the children of my brother John ffoster and of my three sisters Margaret Avokes, Alice Gudge and Phillis Bearde the some of ffive Pounds apeece So Soon as the same may conveniently be raized and after those monyes raized and paid shall give and pay the some of Thirteen Pounds Six Shillinges and Eightpence per Annum for and towards the better education and breeding upp of Ten Poore Boyes of the towne of Sherborne aforesaid to be instructed to reade the English Tongue and Such as the said Master and Brethren or greater number of them shall elect and choose and shall also give and pay the some of Six Pounds Thirteen Shillinges and ffowerpence unto such person as shall be chosen by the said Master and Brethren for the tyme beinge to instructe and traine upp the said Ten Boyes. And shall give and pay the some of Ten Pounds per Annum more towards the education of Ten such poore Maids of the said town of Sherborne as the said Master and Brethren or greater number of them for the tyme beinge shall electe and choose. The Said Poore Maids to be educated and brought upp in such sorte as the said Master and Brethren shall directe. In such election of Boyes and Maides it is the Desire and Pleasure of the said Richard ffoster that such as are of his blood and kindred shall be preferred before any others. And out of the overplus of the rents and proffitts of the said Messuage or Dwellinge House Closes and Premisses (if any be) the said Master and Brethren or greater number of them for the tyme beinge shall employ so much for the buyinge of Plate for the Communion Table and other Necessaryes to be imployed in the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Sherborne aforesaid As by them and the Vicar of Sherborne aforesaid for the tyme beinge shall be thought convenient. And all the Residue of the said Rents and Proffitts shall be disposed and imployed in manner following (viz) ffive poundes thereof yearly in the ffirst place for and towards the maintenance of one Poore Boy of the said Towne of Sherborne in the University untill he shall attain and be a Bachelour in Arts. The same to be one of the said Ten Boyes if any one of them shall be fitt to be so brought upp. And the rest for the Reliefe of Some Poore People of the said Towne in the said Almshouse." The Indenture next declares that when any one of the trustees dies, the survivors "shall convey the said Messuage, Dwelling House Closes and Premisses unto the use of the persons so surviving and ffower other Honest and Discreete Persons . . . and the like conveyance shall be made from tyme to tyme for ever when any ffower of the Said Six Persons

shall be dead" and rules that the expenses of the conveyance should be met out of the estate. Finally the indenture requires that the trustees "every yeare make a particular account of their Receipts and Disbursements for the precedent yeare at the Almshouse aforesaid and at the making of every the Said Accounts there shall be provided a Breakfast of the value of Thirty Shillinges."

Of the three trustees named in this Indenture, William Lyford was Vicar of Sherborne from 1631 until his death in 1653. Richard Cooth like William Lyford was a governor of The Grammar School and obviously a close associate of the Fosters since he was also a trustee of Agnes Boughton's Charity; he had been one of those sharing in the expenses of the School House in 1606. He died in 1651. John Fyler was Usher, or Undermaster, of the Grammar School from 1638. He was a graduate of Oxford, having matriculated at Balliol College in 1628, and was no doubt a much younger man than the others, being probably still under 30 in 1640; he died in 1679, when he was Rector of Litton Cheney. He became Rector in 1644 but since he remained Usher until 1647 he presumably at first held the two posts at the same time and, according to common practice, paid a curate to carry out his statutory duties at Litton Cheney. In 1642 he married Richard Foster's widow who was also presumably much younger than her first husband; she lived until 1682 and bore her second husband at least three children including a son, John, who succeeded his father as Rector. She had been given a life interest in the Boys Hill estate (and also by his will a life interest in his lands in Sherborne – "three meadows which I now enjoy lying below my dwelling house in Sherborne" and "my meadow called The Ham" – but furnishings, including "the Bedstead in the Chamber over the Parlor" were left to her only "so long as she shall continue my widow").

In 1658 John Fyler, now of Litton and the only survivor of the trustees, in accordance with the requirements of the original deed conveyed the land "now in the occupation of the said John ffyler in right of his now wife, late wife of the said Richard ffoster" to four others; John Eastment, John ffisher (no doubt a member of Margaret Fyler's family) both 'gents', John Saunders, yeoman, and Richard Avoke the younger (a relation of Richard Foster), Tanner.

This 1658 indenture is the last concerning the land and the neglect of the later trustees to reconvey might well have led to the disappearance of the charity for after the death of Margaret Fyler the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse had difficulty in obtaining possession of the land and in 1683 spent the very considerable sum of £83 8s. 5d. on two suits in the Court of Chancery before they could do so. This sum is recorded on the first page of the first account book of the charity, as allowed to William Fisher who was responsible for the account as "his bill of costs which hee expended in Recovering of the Estate both at Law and in Chancery against Richard ffoster and for his fees thereabout".

A further reference to this case is made in a note written on the lease of 19th July, 1640. This reads: "Memorandum: att a Commission then held at Sherborne in the County of Dorset for the examination of witnesses in a cause depending in the High Court of Chancery between the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in Sherborne aforesaid Complainants and Richard ffoster and others Defendants this deed was produced to the view of Roger Downe and William Sansom Gents at the time of their respective examinations by us". Three signatures follow.

Who was this Richard Foster? It is impossible to say for, unfortunately, the depositions in the case are decayed and illegible. He was not a descendant of the Richard Foster who founded the Charity because there are frequent references, again at this time, to the fact that he died without issue. It has been suggested that the reference is to the original Richard Foster and that it was a convenient legal device to prove ownership of the land but this is not borne out by a second case which was brought by the Almshouse against the children of Margaret and John Fyler, John Fyler and Elizabeth his wife, Margaret Mitchell, Mary Samways and Abigail Peale. The complaint this time is that they have gained possession of the deed of grant and

refuse to surrender it. This they indignantly deny in their 'answere' signed by all five. They say they do not know, but have heard their mother and father talk about it and believe that Richard Foster left the land as claimed by the Almshouse. They "utterly deny that they or any or either of them now have or hath or ever had the said deede . . . or that ever they or any of them ever saw the said deede". They are sorry they cannot help "as they would readily do so". They disclaim all right and title to the land themselves and say that their mother often said that after her death the lands were to go to the Almshouse and that she "a little before her death did declare that when the Sherborne men came there were the writeinges in such a bagg but after her death upon a very strict and careful search in the said bagg and all other likely places there were not such deeds." but only a copy of Richard Foster's will. They "deny all combination charged against them by the said bill either amongst themselves or with Richard ffoster or that any of them delivered such deed to the said Richard ffoster as by the said bill is wrongfully charged, they themselves being very well satisfied that the Lande in question does not in honesty and conscience belong to him but to the said Almshouse". Finally they ask to be dismissed from the case "with their reasonable costs and charges in this behalf sustained".

It seems clear from this that someone named Richard Foster was wrongfully claiming the land but the details of who he was must remain a mystery. The Almshouse was however successful in recovering the lands and Foster's School came into existence.

1687–1872

In the Michaelmas quarter of 1687 the charity began to fulfill its purpose. From then onwards regular accounts exist showing payments made to tradesmen for clothing and to a master for teaching the boys, the first one being a John Foster!

The accounts for 1689–90 include the following items:

		£	s	d
Paid	George Gregory for 26 yards ½ of Blew Cloth	04	10	00
„	George Bishop for 24 pairs of shoes	02	16	04
	for 24 pairs of stockings	01	04	00
„	Mr. Whetcombe for cloth for 10 shirts, 24 cravats and material for the Coates	02	15	09
	for 22 doz. ½ of buttons	00	05	07
„	Mr. Darbie for 42 yards of Dowlas at 12d. ½ per yard for 14 shirts	02	03	09
	for making 24 shirts and cravats	00	08	06

Since, like many other charity schools, the scholars wore blue coats the school became known as the Blue School and some of the earliest details which exist are headed "Orders for ye better management of the Blew Boys". These are undated but their details are similar to those in the earliest extant copy of agreements signed by parents of pupils in 1696 and they are probably of similar date. According to these 'orders' there are to be not more than twelve boys in the school (Foster had provided for ten); all boys are to be inhabitants of Sherborne and between the ages of seven and eleven at the time of their entry, a certificate from the 'Register booke' of the town being required as proof. The boys who were admitted were to be "yearly . . . apparelled with a blew Coate, a bonnett, two shirts, two cravats, two pair of stockings and two paire of Shoes" – their parents had to provide "sufficient dyett, washing, lodging and other necessary apparell for them to wear under their blew Coates to keep them warme." and also they were to "keep them cleane from scurfe heads Scabs and lice or else they are to be turned out of the said School". If any boy was expelled "for any irregularities" or taken from the school or "shall happen to dye" within nine months "after his new apparrelling" then the parents of such boy were to return the clothing – "in case such boy has no infectious disease" is added as an amendment.

As to the details of their schooling: "Each boy shall constantly every day except Holly Days come to ye sd Schoole before eight of ye Clocke in ye morning and there to remaine and continue learning until Eleven of ye Clocke and then goe home to dinner and returne again to ye sd Schoole at one of ye Clocke and there to remaine learning until five of ye Clocke in ye Summer and four of ye Clocke in ye Winter (except Saturdays and Sundays) and the said Boys are to behave themselves orderly under moderate correction being diligently taught and instructed by their Master in Reading Writing and Casting of Account. Their Master shall yearly be paid for teaching and instructing of each boy Thirteen Shillings and fourpence by equal quarterly payments."

The last regulation laid down by these orders is that "each Boy shall every Sunday morning come into ye sd Schoole at Eight of ye Clocke and there read some Chapters and Psalms in the Bible and learne the Church Catechism until the Bell rings to Church and then to go orderly by two and two to Church following their Master thither and to be there before Prayers begin and in like manner at one of ye Clocke in ye afternoone observing ye like order and direction and none of ye said Boys shall be kept at home by their Parents or suffered to play about the Streets Sundays".

A picture of the Foster's boys at Church is given in an article in the *Shirburnian* by Canon W. H. Lyon, describing Sherborne in the years 1836 to 1845. He says, "At the west end (of the Abbey Church) there was an extra gallery with an organ in it. On either side of the organ there were seats sloping up, in which two endowed schools were seated. On the South side the boys of Foster's School in long blue coats and with hats having a little red tuft at the top . . . and on the North side girls of Foster's and Lord Digby's Schools".

The hours spent at school seem long by present day standards and apparently there were no holidays except for "Holly Days". They compare favourably however with those of the contemporary Grammar School. The statutes of 1592 for the "ffree Gramer Schole" fix the hours as from six in the morning until eight when the scholars went home to breakfast, after which they returned at nine and worked until eleven. After an hour and a half off for lunch they worked until three, had another break until four, and then worked until five "att which hower thaie all, having said the appointed Praier and songe a Psalme shall departe for all nighte, observing order in their going forth and passing the Streete". But at least the Grammar School boys had more to do; six or seven hours a day learning to read, write and cast accounts seems somewhat excessive.

The early school was not without its difficulties and the first of these concerned John Foster, the first Master of the School. His salary first appears in the accounts as "paid John ffoster Michaelmas quarter 1687 £1 13s. 4d.". Regular payments follow until the year 1691/2; the accounts for that year include the item: "paid John ffoster for his Lady Day Sallary 1692" followed by "paid him more at Midsummer 1692 and then turned him out for neglecting the schoole". Perhaps the "Orders for the better management of the Blue Boys" is a result of this. Of the succeeding Masters none lasted long until John Butt took over in 1708 and held the post until 1723. In the intervening years four died shortly after appointment and one, Charles King, was "removed". An interesting sidelight on the families of those employed as Master is that in January 1703 a receipt by Hannah Pride for £2 16s. 6d. "in full satisfaction of my late Husbands Sallery for instructing ye Blew Boyes" bears, not her signature, but her 'mark'. The early agreements also bear in most cases the marks, rather than the signatures, of parents. A few could however sign their names and in several cases the mark is not a cross but the initials of the parent done with obvious difficulty and no doubt with considerable pride.

It was not only among the Masters that the school had difficulties. The "Tenants Account for late ffoster's Estate belonging to the Blew Schoole" shows that their tenant, John Jacob, got badly behind with his rent and by 1715 owed £86 7s. 2d. The main account book, under the year 1715–16 has an entry, "This accountant craveth an allowance of ffifty Pounds eleven Shillinges and twopence being an arrear of Rent due for the said Estate at Lady Day 1716 from the said John Jacob". More light is thrown on the affair by an entry in the "Tenants Account".

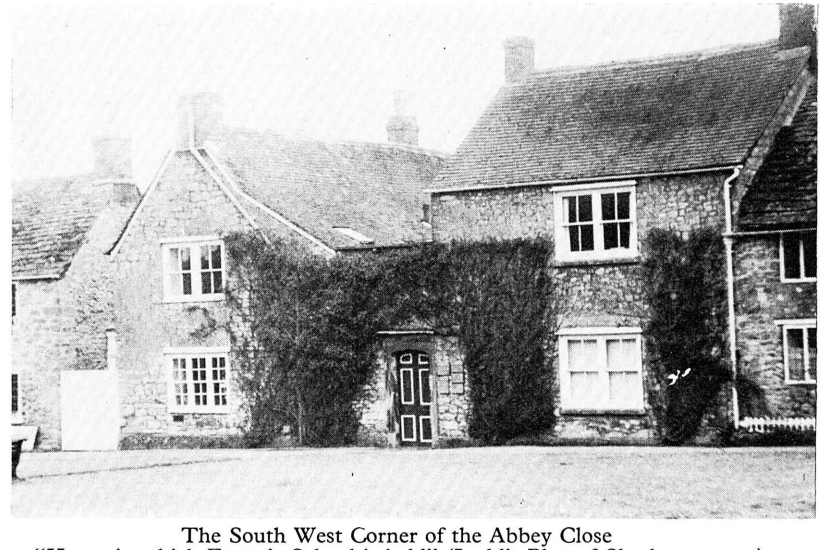
	£	s	d
By 4 Cows and 4 Calves seized 30 August 1715 (when John Jacob was run away) which were sold to Wlm Cooper for	16	00	00
A little stag of hay sold to Addam Stephens for	01	00	00
The after grass sold him till Lady Day 1716 for	03	00	00
The hay in Barns sold Wlm Evered for	04	06	00
The Great Hay Ricke sold Wlm Cake for	09	00	00
Another round Hay Ricke sold Wlm Evered for	02	10	00

The William Cake who bought the "Great Hay Ricke" was the next tenant: his signed agreement is in the same account book. He was tenant for the next twenty years.

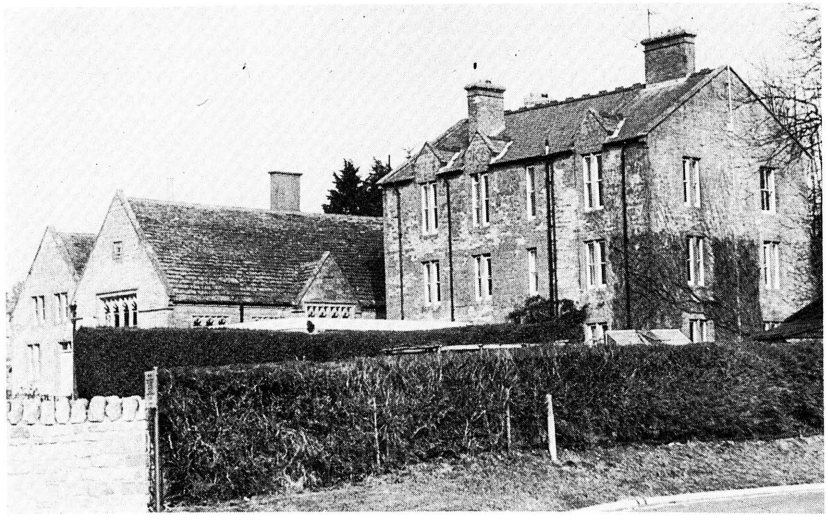
From time to time sums were expended on repairs to the buildings at Boys Hill including £48 in the years 1822 and 1823. In spite of this the Charity Commissioners



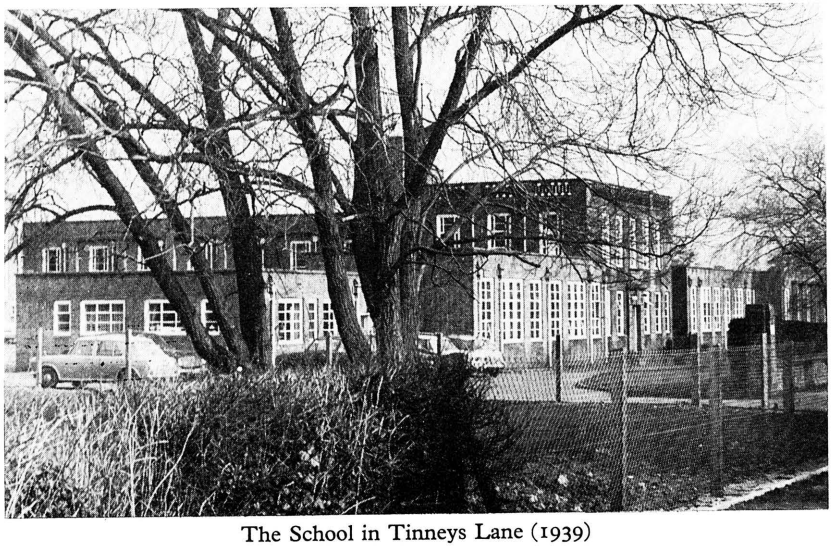
Foster's Farm, Boys Hill
"a Messuage or Dwelling House lately erected" (1640)



The South West Corner of the Abbey Close
"House in which Foster's School is held" (Ladd's Plan of Sherborne 1735)



The School (1875) and the Boarding House (1887), Hound Street



The School in Tinneys Lane (1939)

reported in 1836 that the house was in "indifferent condition" and the accounts for the year 1836/7 show that much was done. They include £30 2s. 6d. paid to Mr. Perrott, mason, and £22 2s. 6d. to Mr. Old, carpenter. The result was that on the "income" side of the account for that year there appears the item, "Balance received as a loan from Wlm Lord Digby's charity £20 15s. 6d.", an early example of co-operation between the two schools and one that seems to have been to the advantage of Foster's because although £7 14s. 10d. was repaid in 1853/4 there is no trace of a repayment of the balance of the debt in spite of the fact that as early as 1838/9 Foster's charity had a windfall when some timber from the estate was sold to Mr. Old for £20 and the accounts showed a credit of £19. This balance, as was normal, was paid into the Almshouse account in accordance with the directions of Richard Foster that the balance should be used for "the relief of poor people . . . in the . . . Almshouse".

Richard Foster, in his original deed, had directed that ten pounds be provided annually towards the education of ten poor maids of the town of Sherborne. This part of his instructions seems to have been ignored for many years. The early "orders" make no mention of girls and a register of scholars from 1707 contains no girls until 1738 when a heading appears "A List of Girls chosen into the Blue School pursuant to the gift of Richard Foster 1738". From then onwards girls as well as boys are regularly chosen and, from 1739, payments regularly made to a mistress for teaching them and to others for their clothing. In 1743 Lord Digby's School was founded and it became customary to pay the mistress of Lord Digby's School to teach the Foster's girls and since the Digby foundation included, from the first, a schoolhouse no doubt the Foster's girls went there.

Another direction of Richard Foster which was late in being put into effect was the payment of £5 legacies to the children of his brother John and his three sisters, Margaret Avokes, Alice Gudge and Phillis Bearde. These were to be paid "as soon as they may conveniently be raised" but it was not until April 1700 that the first of these was paid and not until June 1703 that the payments were completed. The list of recipients provides information on the fortunes of this branch of the Foster family. Like Richard, his brother William presumably died childless – or if he left children they were all dead by 1640, since they are not mentioned in the deed – and John Foster left only a daughter, Agnes, who was a widow in 1700. His sister, Margaret Avoke, in contrast, had nine children; most of these were dead by 1700 but legacies went to two of her children, both Sherborne yeomen, and were shared by eight grandchildren, Phillis Bearde left two grand-daughters and Alice Gudge a daughter. Places of residence are not always given but those that are include Yeovil, West Coker, Stoke Abbas, Melbury Osmond and South Moulton.

The 1640 Indenture had also stated that "out of the overplus of the rents and proffitts" plate for the communion table should be bought. The only example of this seems to have been in 1786. A silver almsdish in the Abbey Church bears the inscription, "Purchased in the year 1786 in pursuance of the will of Mr. Richard Foster dated 1640". On the reverse are the words, "This is one amongst other donations of Mr. Foster's will Under the Direction of the Masters of the Almshouse".

The six pounds, thirteen shillings and fourpence which Richard Foster directed should be paid to the Master for teaching the boys was not a large sum even by eighteenth century standards and the person holding the appointment was obliged to supplement it with other sources of income. The main one was, naturally, the teaching of additional boys, and from an early date the same Master was employed by Foster's and another educational charity founded by John Woodman.

In 1717 Woodman, by his will, gave £250 to the Churchwardens of Sherborne "to be laid out by them in purchasing such freehold lands in or near the said town as they (with the approbation of the minister and some other of the chief inhabitants of the said town) should judge fitting, the rent thereof to be for the quarterly paying of a schoolmaster to teach so many poor boys, being near a full seven years of age,

especially the sons of poor widows of the said town as they could agree for to read English and to write and cast accounts". In 1728 the money, plus an additional £50, was used to purchase about fourteen acres of land, called Pinknell, at Sandford Orcas. Obviously the same man could teach the Foster's and Woodman boys and the Report of the Commissioners for Dorset Inquiring Concerning Charities of 1836 stated that James Ellaway taught in his own house ten Foster's boys, thirteen Woodman's boys "together with other scholars". Incidentally a Richard Ellaway left Foster's School in 1759; perhaps it was his grandson who was its master in 1836, and incidentally the last master of the school as it originally existed. The name Ellaway appeared in Sherborne news again in 1881 when the *Sherborne Journal* for 23rd June reported that a little boy of that name, aged six or seven, was clawed in Half Moon Street by a dancing bear to which he had offered a piece of cake.

James Ellaway taught these boys "in his own house" because Foster's School had no Schoolroom until after the reorganisation of 1872. The only exception to this seems to be the year 1838/9, when the accounts show an item "Rent of School £4" and the following year "Paid Mr. Roberts for the use of a School Room for this Charity three quarters of a year's rent to midsummer 1840 £3". Ladd's plan of Sherborne dated 1735 marks a building in the southwest corner of the Abbey Close as "House in which Foster's School is held". This is almost certainly the building at present occupied by Messrs. Bartlett & Sons, Solicitors. Deeds exist which seem to show that this was purchased by a John Melmoth in 1758 and Foster's accounts show that in the same year John Melmoth became Master of Foster's. Hutchins *History of Dorset* (Third edition 1861–70 quoting the second edition 1796–1815) says: "There is also a boys' school founded by Richard Foster and John Woodman, lately held by Mr. John Melmoth. The house in which the school is now held situate on the west side of the churchyard between the vicarage and the almshouse is the private property of the present master".

There are certain difficulties here as by 1861 there was no master, James Ellaway having given up in 1860. The last recorded payment to John Melmoth is in 1802 (and the next person named in the accounts, in 1819, is Joseph Ayres who among other occupations was a part-time assistant at the Grammar School). Moreover it is not likely that Melmoth's successor took over the same house as in 1856 John Young Melmoth – probably a grandson of the Foster's Master of that name took over a solicitor's practice from Benjamin Chandler and operated from the same premises (the firm became Melmoth and Bartlett in 1876). Melmoth's predecessor as Master of Foster's was a Bartlett but there is no connection with the Solicitor, who came to Sherborne from Wareham.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the education provided by Foster's charity, was available from other sources. In 1771 the Newland Infants and Girls School was established; from about 1822 a nonconformist school (at first held five evenings a week) was carried on in Long Street and in 1857 the Abbey School (at first called the National School) was founded. These provided all and more of the education given by Foster's and in fact from about 1860, when James Ellaway retired, the Foster's boys, still clothed by the Charity, attended the Abbey School. At the same time the Grammar School, or King's School as it was now known, was ceasing to be a local school; an Enquiry into Sherborne Charities reported in 1863 that there were 139 boys in the school of whom about 102 were "from abroad".

The idea thus arose of a "Middle School" to fill the gap between the elementary education for boys provided by the Abbey and Long Street Schools and the classical education of the Grammar School. The establishing of such a school was urged about 1860 by the Headmaster, Rev. Hugo Harper, when the last Foster's Master retired. Accordingly, in 1863 an enquiry was held into the Charities of Sherborne, as the *Sherborne Journal* of 12th February reported:

"On Tuesday, Thomas Hare, Esquire, inspector from the Charity commission office commenced an enquiry into the charities of Sherborne. A new scheme has for some time been in contemplation for the amalgamation of Foster's and Woodman's

charities and the establishment of a middle school upon them, and we believe that this, the number of charities in the town, and the length of time that has elapsed since any enquiry was made – certainly over a quarter of a century – combined to obtain the Inspector's visit. The enquiry was opened in the Board Room of the Almshouse, where there were many of the Governors, but owing to the defective notice of the Inspector's visit there was not above half-a-dozen other persons."

At this enquiry the vicar, the Rev. E. Harston, said, "What we want the sanction of the Commissioners to do is to start a middle school for boys – the girls do very well". The Rev. Harper suggested that a good middle school was much wanted. There was the King's School for those who wanted a classical education and a good National School for the poorer classes. What was wanted was a school for those who were designed for a commercial life. When the Inspector suggested that a very superior National School might not be best the Rev. Harper replied that the farmers would not like their children to go to school with their labourers. When someone else suggested that there was already a good middle school in the town – Mr. Kidd's – the Rev. Harper made some disparaging remarks about private schools. "There was a good deal of humbug about them," a remark which led to the appearance of Mr. Kidd on the third day of the enquiry and a spirited defence by him of his school – to which boys came from the King's School to learn English! At the end of the enquiry into Foster's and Woodman's charities the Inspector said he would endeavour to get the consent of the Commissioners to a scheme for a new school.

Mr. Hare issued his report in the following May. He first dealt with the income and expenditure of the Charity. Among the payments were £6 for "Portion of the Pension to Jas. Ellaway, the late Master" (some came to him from the Woodman Charity also) and £2 10s. "Allowance to a former mistress, a person now of great age". He estimated that, if the system of clothing were ended, the portion of Foster's income applicable to boys would be about £40 and a further £30 would be available from the Woodman Charity. He continued, "I do not think it would be just or expedient to charge the estates of either Foster's or Woodman's Charities with any sum of money for the purpose of purchasing a site or erecting a building for the proposed Middle School. If a Scheme for such an institution be framed the building should, I think, either be hired or provided by private liberality. The Inspector was concerned that "the interests of the poor shall be preserved" and suggested that the Master of the Middle School should instruct a certain number of boys either free of expense or at about the sum paid at the National School; furthermore he advocated the provision of one or more exhibitions of £5 a year each to boys selected from the National and British (The Long Street) Schools having regard to the difficulty which the really poor have to dispense with the wages of their children by keeping them at school". The main support of the school he expected to come from "the paying scholars, sons of tradesmen, farmers and others who require a commercial education".

Nothing seems to have come of this attempt to reorganise Foster's but within a few years the situation had been fundamentally changed by the Schools Inquiry Commission (appointed 1864) and the Endowed Schools Act of 1869.

The Schools Inquiry or Taunton Commission, was set up to enquire into schools not covered by two earlier commissions, the Newcastle Commission (1858) on elementary education and the Clarendon Commission (1861–64) on nine public schools (Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors, Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury). In its report, issued in twenty-one volumes over the period 1867–1869, it dealt with private, proprietary and endowed schools. Of the last it confined its attention to 782 schools, including grammar schools, cathedral schools and the like, where the course of studies included Latin, and sometimes Greek, and took a form that assumed a university education would follow. It found that less than one in five sent boys to the university and reported, "Viewed as a whole, the condition of school education above the primary has been called a chaos and the

condition of the endowed schools is certainly not the least chaotic portion . . . it is clear . . . that there are few endowments applicable to secondary education which are put to the best use and very many which are working to little or bad use". The Commission attributed this failure partly to the operation of school statutes that were long out of date and the Endowed Schools Act (1869) which resulted from their report appointed three Endowed Schools Commissioners with power to draw up schemes of management for schools. Any scheme which survived local opposition, and obtained the approval of Parliament, the Education Department and the Privy Council had the force of law and the three Commissioners succeeded in getting 235 schemes made law before they were abolished in 1874 and their duties taken over by the Charity Commissioners.

The very first school to be dealt with was Sherborne's grammar school, or the King's School. The Taunton commission had visited Sherborne in 1865 and reported "Whatever may have been the class of boys for whom the founder intended to provide education, there can be no doubt as to the class who now actually use it and what might have been a mere provincial grammar school at present bids fair to rank among our great public schools". A new set of statutes was drawn up and came into effect in 1871. The main changes were that Sherborne boys could no longer claim free education at the King's School; its competitive scholarships were to be open to boys no matter where they lived and the Governing Body which had hitherto been the same as the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse was to be separate and no longer composed exclusively of local men.

At a public meeting in September 1870, called by the Squire at the request of many inhabitants, after much discussion including on whether 'free' meant 'without payment' or 'open to all' a resolution including the following clauses was passed.

"Recognising the altered condition of Education, the inhabitants of Sherborne are prepared to abandon any claim which they may possess to exclusive privileges under this charter, if the following scheme be adopted and they submit it as a fair and equitable mode of settlement and of promoting education in the way desired by the Commissioners.

"1st that the scheme for the management of the King's School be supplemented by a scheme for the foundation of a lower school out of other Charities.

"2nd that a sum of not less than £100 yearly be allotted out of the revenues of the King's School for exhibitions . . . to as many deserving boys of lower schools as can be admitted for the sum allotted."

The Endowed Schools Act had made it possible for Charities which had outlived their usefulness to be diverted to education if the trustees approved. A committee, formed at the meeting referred to above, consulted with an Assistant Commissioner and with the trustees (mostly the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse) and on 9th August, 1872, a scheme was approved. Ten other charities were amalgamated with Foster's and Woodman's to form the endowment of the new school. (The full list of these is given in Appendix B.)

1872–1900

The Scheme of 1872 first dealt with the amalgamation of the charities and then with the composition of the Governing body. There were to be two ex-officio governors, the churchwardens, plus the Chairman of the School Board, should any be appointed (Sherborne never had a School Board); the Almshouse, the King's School and the Vestry (later the Urban District Council) were to nominate two governors each and there were to be eight co-optative governors of whom at least two were to be women. The original eight, named in the scheme, included George Digby Wingfield-Digby, Rev. W. H. Lyon (the Vicar) and Rev. Hugo D. Harper (Headmaster of the King's School). The two women nominated were Lucy M. Wingfield Digby and Clementina Benthall.

The Scheme next dealt with the School and its management. Since Richard Foster's original bequest had been for girls as well as boys, half of the proceeds from the property he left was to be applied to the education of girls. A new Scheme for girls was envisaged but until one was made, "The Governors shall apply such one half of the income so arising for the purpose directed in this Clause as they may think fit". Under this Clause the Governors began to make an annual grant to the Newland Infant and Girls School. This school, with premises at the junction of Tinneys Lane and Newland, had been founded in 1771 with the residue of the funds of a defunct Society of Girls "for the Encouragement of a Virtuous Course of Life" (and known, from the green hat and gown that they wore to church on Sundays, as the Green Girls Society). In 1874 the school came under the management of the Governors of Foster's School and in later years was known locally as "Foster's Infants School". In 1875 the Governors decided "to appropriate £200 out of the endowment of the Newland School towards the enlargement which will obviate the necessity of having a School Board" (*Sherborne Journal* 18th June, 1875). The school continued until the buildings were bombed – fortunately after the children had left – in 1940. Just as part of the revenue from Boys Hill had to go towards the education of girls, so from Agnes Boughton's Charity £5 had to be paid annually to the Vicar of Hermitage – until this was met by a division of the Charity.

Clause 31 of the Scheme said "As soon as convenient after the date of this scheme the Governors shall proceed to erect buildings for the Boys' School upon some suitable site to be purchased or provided by them. It is intended that the buildings shall accommodate 100 scholars or thereabouts". This is the number that the Vicar, in the enquiry of 1863, had estimated a good middle school would draw.

"As soon as convenient" proved to be two years later. This was not the fault of the Governors who, in October 1872, instructed their Building and Finance Committee to examine various sites that had been suggested. The Committee reported in the following February that they had considered "1. The premises occupied by Miss Miles in Long Street. 2. The northern position of the field now used for fairs. 3. The field near the Station used for the Cattle Shows (now the Pageant Gardens). 4. The field in Westbury in front of the Union (the Workhouse). 5. The field in the corner between Cold Harbour and the Bristol Road". They recommended the Governors to apply to Mr. Digby for either the northern part of the Fairfield or the field in the corner between Coldharbour and Bristol Road. The Governors then arranged, with the approval of the Charity Commissioners, to purchase from the Digby Estate the Coldharbour site and to sell to the Estate in return "a close of land called the 'Lawn near Bedford Castle' at Castleton Highway" which had come into their hands with the Dorothy Eastment Charity; these properties were valued at £156 17s. 6d. Tenders were invited for building and that of Thomas Farrall of £1,178 (not the lowest which was £1,100) was accepted. All seemed ready to go ahead when, as reported in a letter to the Charity Commissioners, the Trustees of

the Digby Estate imposed "unreasonable conditions," including a six foot high boundary wall on the north and east and no window on the north side above 15 feet from the ground.

As a result of these conditions the project was abandoned (and Mr. Farrall when he heard about it, complained that he had laid in a stock of material and asked for compensation for this and loss of profit). Next the Governors, on a majority vote, resolved to purchase a house in Westbury offered by Mr. Mees. The Charity Commissioners insisted, however, on sending their own inspector to look at it and turned it down as unsuitable, much to the satisfaction of those Governors who had opposed the purchase; the Rev. Harper wrote to Thomas Ffooks, the Clerk to the Governors, "I rejoice in the good sense of the Charity Commissioners". A decision was then made to acquire the Fairfield site in Hound Street, the same exchange of land being arranged with the Digby Estate, and a contract was signed with Thomas Farrall on 1st August, 1874, to build a Schoolroom (again for £1,178) work to start before 1st December. To raise sufficient money, the Governors decided to sell "Avokes" in Newland which consisted of "a Dwelling House and Blacksmith's shop and premises adjoining and Six Cottages or Tenements and Gardens extending to Coldharbour. The sale of this had been recommended by the Estate Committee "as the buildings are very dilapidated". Joseph Pearce, the blacksmith, and others made offers each of £600 but the Charity Commissioners insisted the property be put up for auction. The sale took place on 26th May, 1875, and the purchaser was Joseph Pearce for £685. This property was bombed in 1940 and the site now forms part of those occupied by Messrs. Coventry & Jeffs and the Bere Regis Motor Services.

Meanwhile, in October, 1874, an advertisement appeared in several papers, including *The Times*, for a Headmaster: a bundle of written applications, twenty-four in number, survives. Among the candidates was a Thomas Arthur who had "kept a large Boarding School in Paris until the late Franco-Prussian War" and who listed the noblemen and knights whose sons had attended his establishment. However he was not among the short list of six, from whom was eventually chosen James Griffiths, aged twenty-eight, an assistant master at Adams Grammar School, Newport, Shropshire. Arrangements were made to open the School on Easter Monday, 5th April, 1875, a day that seems strange, especially as the Bank Holidays Act of 1871 had made Easter Monday a Bank Holiday, but evidently it was not yet taken as a general holiday. For each of the preceding eight weeks the following advertisement appeared both in the *Western Gazette* and the *Sherborne Journal*.

Foster's School, Sherborne
Established under the Endowed Schools Act, 1869
Headmaster: Mr. J. Griffiths
Late Assistant Master in the Grammar School, Newport, Salop, sometime Assistant Master in the Foundation School, Bedford and in the Albert College, Framlingham.
The above School will be opened on Monday, 5th April.
Candidates for Admission are required to attend at Nine o'clock a.m. for Examination.
The object of the School is to afford a sound Commercial Education for boys between the ages of 7 and 15.
The Subjects of Instruction are:
Divinity, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English, Latin or French or both, History and Geography, the Elements of Algebra and Geometry, some branch of Physical Science, Drawing and Vocal Music.
The Tuition fee is fixed at £6 per Annum to be paid terminally in advance. There is also an entrance fee of £1.
Applications for Admission, etc. or for further information may be addressed to Messrs Ffooks, Sherborne or J. Griffiths, Esq. Grammar School, Newport, Salop.

On 1st April, the *Western Gazette* reminded parents that Foster's New School was to open on the following Monday. The same issue carried a report from the *Newport and Market Drayton Advertiser* of a presentation to Mr. Griffiths on his leaving Adam's Grammar School. This took the form of "an elegant electro-plated spirit stand (highly chased in a Grecian pattern) containing three splendid cut-glass bottles (each bearing an electro-plated label) and a biscuitier to match". The boy making the presentation said that they would watch his future success with pleasure.

At last the great day came. The *Western Gazette* of 19th April, 1875, described it thus:

"Foster's School: This newly erected Commercial School was opened on Monday last. There was no public ceremony, as was anticipated, it being, we believe, reserved for the Examination Prize Day. The buildings are situated on an open and healthy site and have sufficient land adjoining for a play-ground and cricket field. The road is being widened, a new approach made and a boundary wall built. When this is done the whole will be complete. The school accommodation comprises an entrance hall, lavatory, large school room, 60 feet x 20 feet and two classrooms. The rooms are well-lighted and ventilated. The boys' desks are on the 'locker' principle so that the paper and books of each scholar will always be out of sight when the school is closed. Each seat is made to accommodate five. The Headmaster has a large and handsome desk fitted up in the centre of the room. On the first floor are the rooms which are intended for the person who attends to the cleaning, etc. of the School. The plans were prepared by Messrs. Slater and Carpenter, Architects of London and the works have been executed by Mr. Thomas Farrall of this town at a cost of about £1,250. Candidates for admission attended at the school on the morning of the opening at nine o'clock and were examined by the Headmaster (Mr. Griffiths) and, having passed, were admitted and classified. There was a very good number (nearly 40) of scholars for the commencement and, we understand, others are applying for admission. The inhabitants have only to support this new school and to obtain the support of others living in the neighbouring villages, to make it a perfect success, and of this there is every prospect. Assistant masters being necessary they will be engaged forthwith."

To this description can be added that of E. G. Newlyn, a pupil from 1886 to 1888, who wrote an article "Foster's School in the Eighties" published in the Summer, 1934 edition of the *Fosterian*.

"The school stood in the middle of a large gravel playground which was bounded northwards by a low wall along Newland and southwards by an iron fence which separated it from the big field that extended, as now, to the gardens in Long Street. Beyond the eastern wall was another large field which stretched to a long passage connecting Newland with Long Street."

The northern boundary here referred to must have been the road now called Foster's; the 'big field' is now the site of the New Digby Hall and the County Library; the long passage connecting Newland with Long Street was Stile Close Lane, widened and named St. Swithun's Road in 1894.

On 21st, 22nd and 23rd of July, the first inspection of the school was carried out by the Rev. H. D. Harper, assisted by five others, and in his report, read at the first Prize Day held a few days later, he said, "The school is being worked most satisfactorily . . . I congratulate the Governors heartily upon the state of efficiency which the School has already attained and confidently anticipate its shortly becoming a great success". The Chairman, Rev. W. H. Lyon, said, "The people of Sherborne ought to congratulate themselves upon having such a headmaster as Mr. Griffiths" and Mr. Longman hoped "the time was not far distant when everybody would be found speaking Latin and quoting passages from the classics, as had been predicted in past centuries. He had heard Sherborne called 'The Athens of the West' and he trusted the day would come when the truth of that statement would be manifest".

Alas for the high hopes, the forecast of the *Western Gazettte*, the confidence of the boys of Adam's School, the anticipation of the Rev. Lyon and the dreams of

Mr. Longman, the School did not prosper. The numbers, instead of increasing, fell steadily. In April, 1877, in an attempt to attract more pupils, the fees for boys from seven to ten years of age were reduced to £4 4s. "The Governors" said the *Sherborne Journal* "were assured that this would meet the wishes of the town and that a large number of new boys would seek admission. We are informed however that only one new boy applied. The result must be very discouraging to the Governors. There are now three masters on the teaching staff engaged to meet the large influx of boys which was expected under the new system. We trust the classes for whom the school was designed will embrace the privileges which their children can now enjoy".

Trouble of another, although perhaps minor, kind came in February 1876, when three parents, W. G. Pragnell, Edward Garrett and Edwin Pragnell, addressed a complaint to the Governors: "We the undersigned Parents of George Pragnell, Charles Garrett and Edwin Pragnell respectively, scholars at the above School, charge Mr. Griffiths the Head Master with having on Wednesday afternoon, February 16th before the duties of the School commenced, while in a fit of temper, caned the above boys in a most brutal and unjustifiable manner. And we pray that the Governors will investigate the matter.

"We also think it necessary to inform the Governors that the Head Master has not been punctual this term in opening the School thereby causing irregularity and loss of time to the boys, which the parents complain of."

What action the Governors took over these matters is not known as the earliest book of Minutes has been lost and all that survives is a page of rough notes dated 19th February, made by the Clerk which ends as follows: "The following complaint was then read (here copy it) Mr. Ruegg and Mr. Tanner stated that they had seen the boy's hand and after a long discussion it was proposed by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Penny" – the proposition is on the next, lost page. However it may be this unpunctuality that the *Sherborne Journal* had in mind when it reported much later, "The new institution was unfortunate in its first master". The article also criticised Mr. Griffiths' being allowed to take Holy Orders, which he did in June, 1877, on which occasion the scholars presented him with a "splendid book of Common Prayer".

From the outset it had been hoped that a Headmaster's House would be provided so that the Headmaster could take boarders. As early as September 1874 a public meeting held in the Town Hall had passed a number of resolutions on this matter suggesting either that Mr. Digby be asked to provide a house "Charging for the same such a rent as would pay him . . . a moderate interest on the outlay" or that a Limited Company should be formed to do the same (paying a "clear Dividend of £5 per cent"). Following this meeting the Governors passed a resolution, "That it is the opinion of the Governors of Foster's School that provision is required for the accommodation of Boarders desirous of attending the School and they will gladly co-operate to the utmost of their power in any well-considered Scheme for making such provision". Nothing came of this scheme and meanwhile Mr. Griffiths rented a large house, Haddon House, so that he could take boarders; the house was expensive and he was forced to charge a high rate. He appealed to the Governors in vain to pay the rent and rates of his house so that he could take boarders at a lower rate. His payment consisted of a basic salary of £50 a year plus a capitation grant of £1 3s. 4d. per term for each boy paying the full fees of £2 and 14s. each for those between seven and ten paying the reduced fee of £1 8s. The accounts for the year 1877 tell their own story. For the first term he received capitation for 43 boys at £1 3s. 4d. each, a total of £50 3s. 4d., and a total income, with one third of his salary, of £66 16s. 8d. The figures for the second term were: 30 boys at £1 3s. 4d. each and nine boys at 14s.; total capitation £41 6s. and total emoluments £57 19s. 4d. The third term shows a drop in capitation to £29 17s. 4d. (22 at £1 3s. 4d. and six at 14s.) and in total income to £46 10s. 8d., £20 less than in the first term. The result of this was that Mr. Griffiths went bankrupt. The *Sherborne Journal* for 6th

September, 1877 states, "A meeting of the creditors of the Rev. J. Griffiths was held on Tuesday evening, when an estimate showed liabilities about £800 and assets £200 and it was determined to take the matter into bankruptcy".

On 20th September, 1877, in his report to the Governors, Mr. Griffiths wrote, "Circumstances quite beyond my control compel me to tender my resignation as Head Master of Foster's School . . . During the two years I have been here I trust I have not failed in throwing all my best energies into the work of that School, though I have had such difficulties to contend against as would have led many a young beginner like myself to give up the task in despair . . . Had I received that support from the town and neighbourhood which I looked for when I came, and which a year and a half ago I was induced to believe I should certainly obtain, I should have been looking forward with pleasure to a much longer stay . . . I leave (the School) in the hope that ere long its expectations will be fully realised and that its future will be bright".

Thirty-five candidates applied to succeed Mr. Griffiths and from a short list of five James C. Cooper, late of Tor College, Torquay, was chosen. In his first report to the Governors 12 months later he wrote, "On coming to Sherborne in December, 1877 I found that only ten boys were returning and it was with great difficulty that I succeeded in raising this number to 24 by the 22nd January, the day fixed for the re-opening of the School. This was increased to 29 in May . . . and again to 36 in September". The report goes on, "With regard to the work and discipline of the School it is needless for me to say that it was in a most deplorable condition and that it has given me an immense amount of trouble and anxiety to make it at all presentable by the end of the year . . . I am glad to be able to state that there has been a marked improvement in the general behaviour of the boys during the year and that not a single case of wilful damage to School property has come under my notice". As to finance: "The numbers are at present of course very small and far from paying, nor do I think the School can be made to pay without a Boarding House, as I have lost fully £120 since I came to Sherborne, and I do not think that we can ever reckon on more than 50 Day Boys".

In spite of Mr. Cooper's efforts the fortunes of the school did not improve. A year later the *Sherborne Journal* reported a meeting of "those interested in the welfare of this School". "There was a large attendance of parents who had not sent their boys and it appeared from their expressions of opinion that they were perfectly satisfied with the education which their children obtained at the National Schools" and "no Single instance of a new boy was promised". The situation was so serious that at the request of the Governors one of the Assistant Charity Commissioners came down to Sherborne to discuss the future of the School. The *Sherborne Journal* of 19th February, 1880 reported the meeting:

"Mr. Fearon, one of the Assistant Charity Commissioners, attended at the Digby Hotel on Monday and Tuesday, at the request of the Foster's Governors, to advise them on the state and future prospects of their School. It having transpired that some of the Governors had expressed an idea that the school might be converted into an elementary school, the supporters and well-wishers of the school took alarm, and a memorial was quickly and extensively signed deprecating this intention and a representative Committee . . . were asked to meet the Commissioner and explain the feelings of the town. On the Monday, Mr. Fearon had a long interview with the majority of the Governors . . . it was admitted that Foster's was not in a satisfactory state and the Commissioner went carefully through the clauses of the scheme and the proceeds of the endowment and expenditure. He also listened to various suggestions from some of the Governors, amongst others that of obtaining support from the endowment of the King's School. From what could be gathered from observations made by the Commissioner it was concluded that he was unfavourable to lowering the standard of the School.

"On Tuesday, Mr. Chandler, and Mr. Ruegg, with Mr. W. Miller, Mr. Dalwood and Mr. Adams (the Committee referred to above) had a shorter but very

satisfactory interview with Mr. Fearon. His attention was drawn to what occurred at the public meeting in September, 1870 when a settlement may be said to have been come to on the educational question affecting Sherborne. It was shown that as a condition of abandoning any claim which they might possess to exclusive privileges in King Edward's School it was agreed that 'a sum of not less than £100 yearly be allotted out of the revenues of the King's School for exhibitions to deserving boys of lower schools'. At first it was intended that this endowment should be given to boys of Foster's School exclusively but it appearing that the Commissioners were determined not to localise such a privilege, it was agreed that the Exhibition should be open to lower schools generally. What was complained of was that this condition had never been carried out, but had in fact been evaded, by enforcing on the competitors an examination in Latin and Greek, the latter of which was not taught at Foster's School . . . It was now asked that the King's School should meet Foster's in its difficulties and either make a yearly contribution to its funds or provide Scholarships that could be obtained by Foster's boys. As regards its own funds, the Committee pointed out that a yearly payment of £45 to the Infants School in Newland did not appear to be absolutely compulsory. A suggestion to sell the estate called Boughton's and build with the proceeds a master's house . . . was noted down for further consideration. But the idea of converting Foster's into an elementary school seemed to be a danger of which there need be no fear."

In April the Charity Commissioners turned down the idea of using money from the endowment to build a Boarding House, "it would not be proper, in the present state of resources of this foundation and looking to the very moderate success of the school". They had however communicated with the Governors of the King's School on the subject of a grant and the result of this was that on the 9th June, 1880 these Governors unanimously resolved to grant the sum of £100 a year for three years to Foster's School. The Charity Commissioners also persuaded the Foster's Governors, reluctantly, to give up for the time being the payment of £45 a year to the Newland School. "They pointed out that the original intention of the 1872 scheme was that this sum should be paid towards the higher education of girls, and no school providing this existed as yet in Sherborne." (Lord Digby's School was an elementary school until 1905.)

With this financial help the school was enabled to continue and at Prize Day in March, 1881, the Vicar reported that "the school was now in a more prosperous position than it had been for some time" and there were now 40 boys as compared with 25 a year earlier. However, the situation was unsatisfactory in view of the temporary nature of the King's School grant and attempts were made to get it made permanent, and even raised. The Governors of the King's School seemed not unwilling but the Commissioners would agree only to a grant of £100 for a further three years and then £50 a year in perpetuity. This annual grant is still made by the Governors of Sherborne School to the Foster Educational Foundation. At the same time the desirability of a Boarding House was frequently stressed, for example by the Vicar at Prize Day in August 1883. On 27th September of that year the *Sherborne Journal* reported that Foster's had opened with increased numbers which would have been larger if the Headmaster had had accommodation for more boarders – "his house having been full for the last twelve months". In September an Assistant Charity Commissioner again visited Sherborne and, as well as the question of the King's School grant, that of a Boarding House was raised: "If Foster's Governors could be allowed and assisted in building a master's house a considerable increase both to his income and the revenues of the school would be afforded". In July 1884, at a meeting of the Governors it was resolved to ask the Charity Commissioners to assent to the building of a Boarding House at an estimated cost of £1,250 and in August the *Sherborne Journal* declared "the Boarding House for 30 boys is, we hear, to be erected forthwith". There was apparently further delay for it was not until December 1885, that the Charity Commissioners authorised the sale of Consols (which realised £364 12s. 3d.) and the raising of a Mortgage of £1,000 for building

the long desired house. On the 4th February, 1886, a contract was signed with George Pitman of Milborne Port to carry out the work for £1,248 12s. 6d. and in February 1887, the house was ready:

"A master's new residence and boarding house in connection with this school has been built adjoining the old school block and connected therewith by a vestibule leading to the dining hall which has been converted out of one of the classrooms. The school now forms a commanding and conspicuous block of buildings, situated in a healthy and elevated part of the town overlooking the slopes and Sherborne Park, with views extending into Somersetshire. The Sanitary arrangements have been carried out in accordance with the latest known principles of sanitary science". (*Sherborne Journal,* 18th February, 1887.)

By the time that the Boarding House had been built Mr. Cooper had left. In August 1878 the view had been expressed that his stay in Sherborne was likely to be permanent "as there is every probability of soon having a master's house" yet it was just as real progress was being made to provide this that he left. In 1881 his capitation payment had been raised to £5 and £4 when he was threatening to leave and go to Shaftesbury but he had written a strong letter to the Governors in November 1883, concerning their proposal to reduce this grant when the new Boarding House was open. "I am quite willing to do everything in my power for the good of the School but having lost such a large amount of money during the first three years I was in the school I do not see that I can make a further sacrifice." Mr. Cooper gave notice in June 1884, and left at Christmas. After leaving Sherborne – in debt – he opened a private school in Paignton with a capital of £150. All went well at first but later the school failed and he fell into the hands of moneylenders He gave forged promissory notes (in the name of W. B. Wildman of Sherborne School) and was in 1897 sentenced at Exeter to five years penal servitude and subsequently declared bankrupt. At the preliminary bankruptcy hearing his assets were said to consist of a cricket bat and two leg guards.

The next Headmaster, chosen from about 80 applicants, was A. P. Irwin who had been assistant master at the School since 1881. It was during his Headmastership that the school at last began to prosper, although at first Mr. Irwin, like his predecessors, found the post anything but financially rewarding, especially since, with the opening of the Boarding House, his capitation fees were reduced. In his report to the Governors in April 1887, he said, "I am sorry that the boarders have not increased and in all probability the cause is traceable to the new house. Under these circumstances I find it impossible at present to make the income pay the expenditure, and I am a considerable loser. I must ask you therefore to reconsider the question of the Capitation Fees which you reduced last term to £2 10s. – the former grant was £3 10s. and nothing below this would meet the present expenditure. I would remind you that in the late Headmaster's time it stood at £4 10s. and £5 . . . I think you will find on comparison that my source of income from the school is not as good as many of the Elementary Schools in and around Sherborne – in almost each case the Master has his house rent free as well as taxes".

By 1890 things were better and at Prize Day it was reported that the number of scholars exceeded that at any previous time and that Mr. Irwin's house was 'filled out' with boarders, but they soon began to decline again and at the Prize Day four years later the Headmaster of Sherborne School said that Foster's School had been having a hard time lately – but it was not the only school in the town which had been having an experience of that kind, "Mr. Irwin and himself were each suffering from . . . absence of boys". Mr. Irwin did all he could, as he wrote in his report to the Governors in January 1894: "I have sent out prospectuses to the number of 1,000, visited most of the outlying villages, and whenever and wherever the chance of a possible pupil presented itself, I have made the most earnest endeavour to obtain him for the school". And again in February 1895: "Personally I may say I have done everything that has suggested itself to me to increase the numbers. Whenever there have been boys likely to come to the School I have sent at

once prospectuses to their parents and notices of the opening of the School at each successive term; I have even gone so far as to call upon parents to solicit their Sons coming to the school. In fact I have left no stone unturned to work up the School to its former level. I may add too that any sums of money that have come to me privately have been expended in maintaining the efficiency of the School and I am now a considerably poorer man than when I had the honour of being appointed Headmaster."

Amongst the reasons to which Mr. Irwin attributed the falling off of numbers was the agricultural depression. In 1893 he reported, "Many farmers (have) removed their sons, stating that times are now so bad they can no longer afford the sum necessary to educate their children" and in 1895, "I dare not say confidently in face of the continued agricultural depression that the numbers will show any great increase for the succeeding year. I can only say that I trust they may".

The long struggle which Foster's had endured against insufficient money largely came to an end when, in 1896, the County Council began to provide grants and scholarships. (The Governors had themselves begun to award some exhibitions to elementary school boys in 1890.) The Technical Instruction Act of 1889 and the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act of 1890 gave the newly formed County Councils the power to spend a penny rate and 'Whiskey Money' (from an excise on spirits) on technical instruction, which was held to cover almost all teaching except Latin and Greek. A condition of these grants was that the County Council should be represented on the Governing Body and this was brought about by an amendment in 1899 to the Scheme of 1872. This added six Representative Governors: two appointed by Dorset County Council, three by the Urban District Council of Sherborne and one by Castleton Parish Council. At the same time the Churchwardens ceased to be ex-officio Governors, the Vestry ceased to appoint Governors and the numbers of Co-optative Governors was reduced from eight to six. By this amending scheme it was also laid down that "The School shall be conducted as a School of Science or otherwise, so as to be qualified for grants from the Department of Science and Art". (Other alterations of the Governing Body have been made from time to time, the latest being in 1974 following the reorganisation of Local Government.)

In 1896, the County made a grant of £125 towards the building of a laboratory, the two-storeyed building by the entrance to the old school buildings. At its opening the *Western Gazette* described it as "not remarkable for its architectural beauty". The ground floor was a Woodwork room and the upper floor a Chemistry Laboratory. In later years this became the Staff Common Room. Both rooms are now used as Common Rooms by fifth and sixth form boarders.

From 1897, the County gave an annual capitation grant, which amounted in that year to £106. The total income in 1895 had been £409 4s. 9d.; by 1897 it had risen to £693 14s. 10d. The difference made by these grants and scholarships is clearly shown by an article in the *Fosterian* of Easter, 1934: "Some Recollections of Thirty Years Ago": "The year 1897 witnessed the beginning of a revolution in the constitution of the school. At that time it was in essence a day school, with comparatively few boarders. The institution of County Scholarships changed all that. In 1897, the first batch of about half-a-dozen County Scholars arrived, to be followed in the succeeding year by a further dozen or so. This process continued year by year so that by 1900, there were about 40 boarders, drawn from all over the County." (Perhaps these recollections were not entirely accurate. In a subsequent issue of the *Fosterian* the date of the first County Scholars was put at 1896 and their numbers at "over twenty followed by a smaller number the next year".)

Another matter settled in these years was that of the part of the Boys Hill income which was earmarked for the education of girls. In July 1884, the Charity Commissioners proposed that since there was no secondary school for girls in Sherborne this should be applied to Foster's scholarships of not less than £10 or more than £25 at the Milton Abbas Girls' School at Blandford for girls living in

Sherborne. The radical *Sherborne Journal* was outraged: "Foster leaves money to found a school in his own town of Sherborne; Government officials appropriate this to a town twenty miles off!" the opposition was sufficient to make the Commissioners change their mind and at the beginning of 1886, a new scheme was adopted whereby the money was used to provide one exhibition of £21 tenable for three years at "some place of secondary or superior education" and a number of £2 scholarships to be held at "some secondary or higher elementary school". These exhibitions and scholarships continued to be awarded for nearly twenty years, until a new scheme was adopted in 1905, and the holders of the £21 exhibition normally attended Sherborne School for Girls and the £2 scholarship holders, Lord Digby's School.

A timetable, undated but belonging to this period, gives information as to the organisation of the school, the hours of attendance and the subjects taught. The school was divided into three forms, although the first two forms were on occasions taught together. School started at 9.30 and went on, with a ten minute break at 11.00, until 12.30 at which time there was Extra Work and 'Turned Lessons' (could this mean repetition of unsatisfactory work?) on four days a week. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays there was school from 2.00 until 4.30 followed by a further half hour of Extra Work and 'Turned Lessons'. The Third Form returned at 6.00 and had lessons until 7.30 (Mondays and Thursdays) or 8.00 (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays). There was no school Wednesday afternoons but on Saturday mornings there was 'Examination' from 9.45 to 12.00, then Drawing until 1.00 and finally a further half hour of Extra Work. As for the subjects taught, they included Scripture, English Grammar, Spelling and Dictation, Reading and Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic Tables, Geography, Mapping, History, Latin, French. The senior form instead of Dictation and Tables, did Algebra, Literature, Composition and Natural Philosophy.

A notable omission from this list of subjects is any branch of Science. At a meeting of the Governors in March, 1882, a memorial signed by several of the parents of the boys asking whether the Governors could this year make a small grant for the purpose of teaching Chemistry was presented. It was favourably received, the Governors feeling that it was a most desirable subject to take up, and referred to the Finance Committee. When the subject was first taught is not known but in April 1884, at Prize Day, it was reported that "two new subjects had been introduced, Chemistry and Physiology". The first qualified Science Master was Mr. C. H. Robinson who was appointed at the end of 1896. He is easily recognisable in early photographs of the school because he was, as one of his referees put it, "deformed, being almost a hunchback and very small in stature," a consequence, says another referee, "of an accident in his childhood". In spite of his physical handicap Mr. Robinson did good work at the School and glowing tributes were paid to him by the Headmaster, Governors, and Inspectors. This did not, as will be seen, prevent his being harshly treated at a later date.

An interesting survival from these early years is a copy of an Arithmetic examination paper for Form I, dated Christmas, 1887. As was usual before the days of typewriters, this is printed. The questions consist of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and the first one reads: "Write in words and add together 46528, 38167, 60825, 48267, 48325". An attempt to relate the subject to contemporary life can be seen in Question 5: "How many marbles can be bought for 11d. @ 36 a penny?" and Question 6: "Queen Victoria was born in A.D. 1819. How old is she?".

Just as the school seemed to be settling down to a period of quiet and steady progress another blow fell on it with the sudden death of the Headmaster. He had not been well for some time, as the author of the previously quoted *Fosterian* article says: "No one who was a member of Mr. Irwin's class during his last months in School is likely to forget his habit (caused by his malady) of falling asleep in the middle of a Latin sentence, waking up five minutes later to start off again at the correct word". However his death was unexpected. According to the *Western Gazette*

of 13th April, 1900, "The deceased caught a chill when acting as a referee in a School football match on the Terrace on the 4th inst and although he seemed to recover on Sunday, death occurred at about 9.30 a.m. on Monday, the immediate cause being pneumonia". Mr. Irwin was 41 years old and left a widow and two daughters, of 14 and 7; he had married the daughter of J. H. Dalwood, a Sherborne chemist, in August 1885; she died in 1950. In the minutes of the Governors meeting on 30th April, 1900, the following entry appears, "On the proposition of Canon Lyon, seconded by Mrs. Digby, the following resolution was unanimously passed: The Governors of Foster's School desire to place on record their deep regret and sorrow at the sudden death of Mr. A. P. Irwin, their Headmaster, who by his indefatigable energy and perseverance in spite of long continued ill health had filled the School and brought it to a high state of efficiency. They desire further to express their sincere condolence and sympathy with Mrs. Irwin and her children".

Mr. Irwin was the first Headmaster to be permanently commemorated in the school. A plaque, now in the school archives, was placed by the Old Boys' Society which he had founded in 1885, on the wall of the main schoolroom – now the Dining Hall of the Boarding House.

After 1900

There were over a hundred applicants for the vacant post of Headmaster of Foster's School. Among them was one to whom the Clerk wrote, "I think however that the Governors would certainly require that the Master's wife should be English" and to an acquaintance who was considering whether or not to apply, "I am not quite sure whether you would like the post or not. It has never been held by a gentleman and there would therefore be a prejudice against the holder from a social point of view. I forget whether you have any university degree or not but of course if you have this would probably make it all right with the Masters of the King's School who form a large portion of the local society".

The candidate appointed was Mr. John Crichton, B.A.(London) but it was not long before he was at loggerheads with the Governors. The numbers in the School, especially of boarders, declined again and as a result the Headmaster asked to be allowed to give up the practice of providing board for two of the three assistant masters. In February 1904, he wrote, "The falling off of the number of Boarders and the consequent decrease in my income both from the School and the Boarding House compels me to ask you to relieve me from Boarding at least one master". In spite of being supported by the report of the Board of Education Inspector in the following November – "This arrangement is very undesirable and, if it continues, an adequate allowance should be paid to the Headmaster for this purpose." – The Governors were unsympathetic and complained in their turn of the lack of comfort provided for the masters, and decided to inform the Headmaster that "he should make the Masters more comfortable".

Mr. Crichton continued to press for some relief and in May 1906, the Finance Committee reported to the Governors concerning the question of salaries for assistant masters. The Headmaster had stated that it cost him £25 per annum for boarding each master and he could not, in consequence of the decrease in the number of boarders, continue to undertake the liability. His salary was about £200 and the house; the masters' salaries were Mr. Robinson £150 and Assistants £50 and £45 and Pupil Teacher £20, Mr. Crichton told the Committee that for the first three years when there were over thirty boarders he could manage to Board the Assistant Masters, but now that there were only 14 he could not, and he asked to be relieved of the charge. He suggested that either he should be paid an allowance or the Masters should be paid non-resident Salaries.

At a Governors' meeting held in the following September a supplementary report on the subject of the decrease of Boarders, called for by the Finance Committee, was read. In this Mr. Crichton argued that the reason was the decline in the number of County Scholars. These first came to the school in 1896 and by 1901–2 had reached a total of 23. Since then the opening of new Secondary Schools at Weymouth, Bridport and Poole had brought many more boys in touch with a day school and since 1904 no County Boarding Scholarship had been given. The number of private Boarders was always small and now stood at seven, compared with a maximum of eight before 1896 and nine when he took over from Mr. Irwin. At the same meeting the Finance Committee reported that in July, Mr. Crichton had asked, "that he be allowed to give provisional notice to the Assistant Masters who would if they boarded out require an additional salary of £35 each or he would undertake the boarding of them at £30 each. Your Committee then considered the financial position of the Foundation and felt they could not make any recommendation nor give the permission required." The minutes of this meeting continue, "A discussion took place as to the question of Masters. The Chairman said they were face to face with a disagreeable crisis, as he was afraid there was a loss of confidence in the School. The Committee acted rightly in not giving Mr. Crichton the per-

mission he desired, and he (the Chairman) was inclined to think that as the Headmaster no longer held the confidence of the great bulk of the people, the time had come when it was advisable for the good of the school to have a change. Mr. Nutt agreed.

"A discussion ensued as to Mr. Crichton's conduct outside the School which was considered very unsatisfactory. It was therefore thought by several Governors that the Headmaster should be asked to resign. It was ultimately resolved on the proposition of Mr. Bell, seconded by Mr. Newlyn, that the Chairman should interview Mr. Crichton and express the Governors' wish that he should tender his resignation."

On 18th October, a special meeting of the Governors was held; the main business was, "Resignation of Headmaster" and the minutes record: "The Chairman explained that he had intimated to Mr. Crichton that after what had come to their notice the Governors thought he should retire. He said he knew he had been very foolish and was quite ready to send in his resignation but hoped an immediate one was not demanded. He (The Chairman) told him the Governors would be quite content if he resigned according to the Scheme in six months time. The following letter from Mr. Crichton was read.

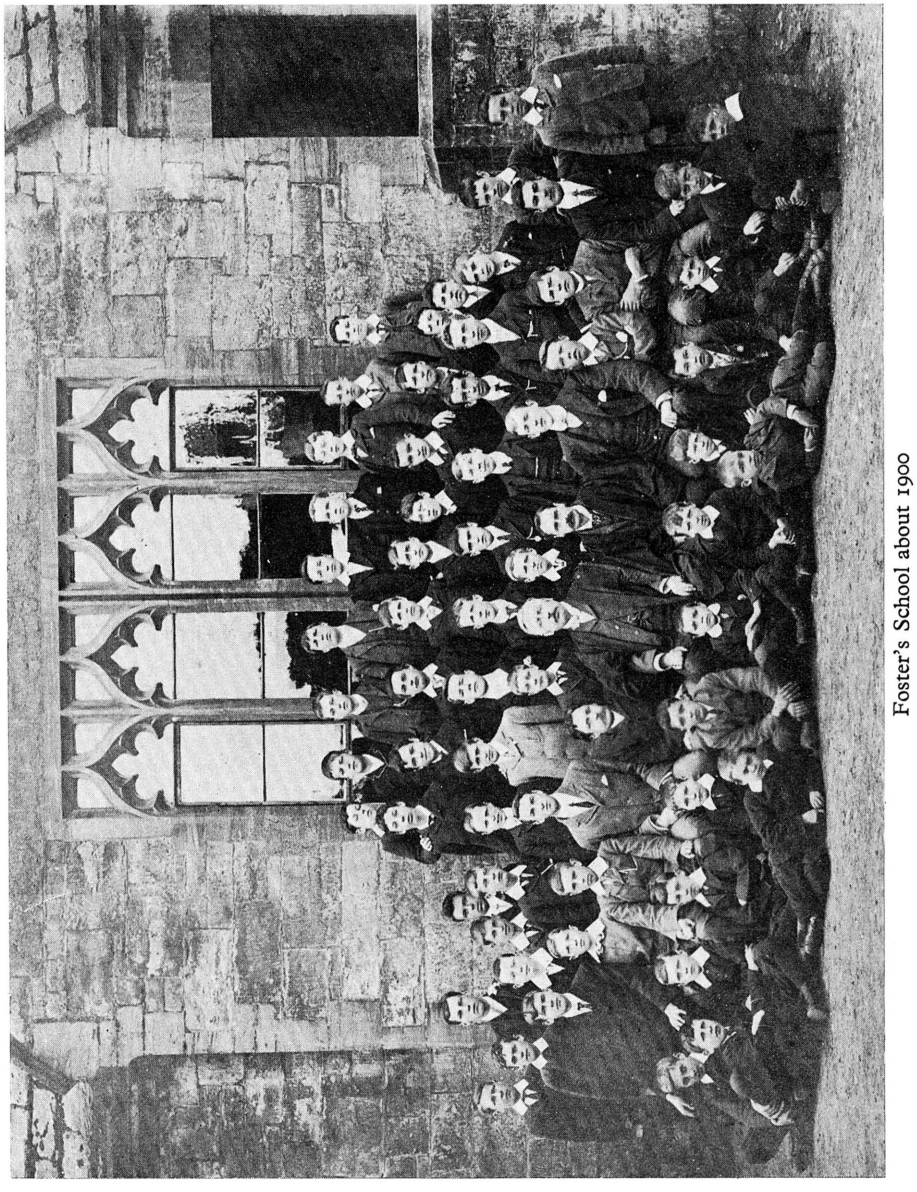
To the Rev. Canon Gooden,
Rev. and Dear Sir,

I feel that after the meeting of last week, the Governors of Foster's Endowed School and myself as Head Master, are not in harmony. As, in my opinion, the closest sympathy should exist between the Governing Body and the Headmaster, especially in a School such as that over which I preside, I feel it my duty to offer you my resignation, the same to take effect from the end of the Easter Term, 1907.

I am, Rev and Dear Sir,
Yours obediently,
Jon Crichton

What the "conduct outside the School" discussed by the Governors was is not now known. Certainly, no knowledge of it reached the boys with whom "Jon" was a popular Headmaster. When Mr. Crichton left in April 1907, he was presented by past and present boys with a Silver Rose Bowl "in token of their regard for him and their appreciation of his services during the time he had been Headmaster. They all regretted that he was severing his connection with the School and offered him and Mrs. Crichton best wishes for their future welfare". Mr. Crichton was "deeply affected" (*Western Gazette*, 12th April, 1907). What happened to him afterwards is not known although in his last report to the Governors in February he had asked for "their kind assistance and influence both individually and collectively in his endeavours to obtain another post".

During the Headmastership of Mr. Crichton an important development had been the amalgamation of the governing bodies of Foster's and Lord Digby's Schools and the upgrading of the latter to a Secondary School. This came about in connection with the Pupil Teacher System. Since 1846 this apprenticeship system for intending teachers had been in existence and from about the turn of the century Foster's had participated in it. In 1903, a new scheme was formulated by the County Council, under the Education Act of 1902, and the result of this was, as the Clerk to the Governors reported to the Charity Commissioners in October, "unless the Governors are prepared to provide instruction for the female pupil teachers, they will lose a considerable portion of the grant which had hitherto been given by the County and which had helped to raise the school to its present prosperous condition". Their first proposal was that "instead of providing an exhibition and scholarships, as at present . . . the money could be applied towards providing secondary education (for girls) on the lines of the School for boys". However, in February 1904, the Managers of Lord Digby's School invited the Governors of



Foster's School about 1900



A. P. Wise, J. Bickell, F. E. Harris, A. Coombs, J. Webster, J. Ring, Mr. R. J. Gibling
J. Pearce, D. Hodges, R. Heemmins, C. Alford
R. Corbett



N. P. Baker, K. S. Gay, A. G. Hann, M. W. R. Johns, Mr. P. D. F. Miller
D. H. Farley, D. L. Dike, A. L. Bragg, M. G. Hicks, A. M. May
C. G. R. Mintern F. B. S. Poole

Foster's to a joint meeting, a result of which was a unanimous resolution "that application should be made for the amalgamation of the two schemes, by the transference of the property and powers of the latter body to the governing body of Foster's School". The result of this was a scheme, in May 1905, by which although the two schools were to continue to have a separate existence they became part of the same Foundation. Their sources of income also remained separate although the part of the original bequest of Richard Foster which was applicable to girls, now became part of the income of Lord Digby's School. The two Schools have shared the same Governing body ever since.

On the resignation of Mr. Crichton the Governors who had previously been concerned at the high cost to the School of the Science teaching, resolved, on the advice of their Finance Committee, to give preference to a candidate for the Headmastership who was qualified in Science "with a view to minimising the large outlay now incurred on that head". About 70 applications were received and from a short list of three, Mr. T. L. Hutchins, M.A. B.Sc. from Kirton Grammar School, Boston was selected. In February 1907, on the instructions of the Governors, Mr. Crichton gave the entire staff of the School notice "in order to give the new Master a free hand". Mr. Hutchins, in January, wrote to the Clerk, "No master has applied to continue at the school except Mr. Robinson to whom I was compelled to give an unfavourable reply". The result was that Mr. Robinson, who had given good service for so long, found himself without a job. In vain he appealed for reinstatement, even for a term, so that he could apply for another post as "Science Master at Foster's School" rather than "out of a situation" and in vain Mr. Prosser, an official of the National Union of Teachers at Bath, wrote to the Chairman on his behalf: "Mr. Robinson's long and markedly successful service in the School certainly constitute a moral claim on the Governors for their sympathetic aid, while Mr. Robinson's physical defect, his age, his necessarily limited (scientific) scope of work and the paucity of situations such as he requires render his case a peculiarly difficult one." The Governors were not very sympathetic saying that he had apparently taken no steps to secure a post and "if he looked out for himself the Governors would do all they could to assist him". Perhaps they relented to some extent as there is an obscure reference in the minutes of the subsequent Governors meeting, in September, to his "dismissal and re-engagement only as Instructor in the Workshop". If this was the Woodwork Shop he was not there when the school was inspected in October 1908, Woodwork instruction then being given by "a local Cabinet maker".

Mr. Hutchins in his first report to the Governors spoke of a lack of esprit de corps and of the absence of the spirit of work and general inability to concentrate, due probably to the fact that two, and sometimes three, classes were held in the same room: "Any unusual occurrence in one form invariable draws the attention of all the occupants of the room, so that it is impossible to keep a class closely to its work for more than a few consecutive minutes." He considered classrooms or a folding partition an absolute necessity. The Governors suggested a curtain instead but the Inspectors (in July 1907) also considered a partition or classrooms urgent, as they had already stated, in a report in the previous year. In February 1908 quotations for a partition were sought and in May an order was given and the work done for £30.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hutchins continued his good work. In September 1907, he reported, "A large amount of useless literature was taken from the boys last term". In February 1908, he said, "It is very pleasing to record a very decided change for the better in the work, the boys being much quieter, neater in their habits and setting about their work in a more business-like way". The number of boarders did not, however, increase and in May 1908 Mr. Hutchins attributed this to the fact that "the School is still suffering somewhat from its reputation".

Following an Inspection of the School in October 1908, a meeting of the Governors was held at which several inspectors were present. They remarked on a great improvement since the previous year. One of them said he did not think it

could be disputed that the salary was insufficient for a man of Mr. Hutchins standard and position (and this salary had been increased only the previous month, when the Chairman had said that he did not think Mr. Hutchins would remain at the School on the Salary he was receiving). One point, said the Inspector, deserved emphasising: the fact that he himself had to pay out of his own pocket the Board and Lodging of the two Assistant Masters. The salaries offered to the two Assistants were £50 and £30 respectively; it was quite certain that these sums were not sufficiently attractive to a really good man. The Governors could take it that the Headmaster having to supplement the salary with Board was a very serious charge on the Headmaster, who was already underpaid. This seems to be a complete justification of Mr. Crichton; one wonders whether it came to his notice.

The report of the Inspectors criticised the teaching of the unqualified, assistant staff and emphasized that the Governors must obtain some good men who would be likely to stay, and for this they must be prepared to pay more. This point had been made by the Inspectors in July 1904, when it was reported, "In this class of School one of the most serious dangers is a constant change of Masters. The two members of the present Staff whose salaries are inadequate came at Easter. As one of them has been at 17 different schools in a teaching career of 13 years, and the other at nine schools in eight years, it is hardly to be expected that they will stay long here".

This time the Governors took more notice of the Inspectors' report; of two new masters appointed in 1909 one, Mr. Robert Gibling, served the School for 38 years, giving up through ill-health in 1947. There are memorials to Mr. Gibling in the School and many Old Fosterians remember him with affection. In 1919 Mr. M. M. Welcher joined the Staff and served until 1956; from then onwards Foster's became notable for the length, rather than the brevity, of the service of its Assistant Masters.

During the Headmastership of Mr. Hutchins the School expanded considerably, particularly after the First World War. Its numbers at Easter 1918, were 68; a year later they were 93 and by the Autumn of 1920, 135. These greater numbers necessitated extra accommodation; after the war three ex-Army huts were purchased, and occasional use was made of the Long Street Schoolroom and Woodwork was done in the premises in Newland that became part of Dewey's Garage. Many modern features of school life had their origin in these years: the *Fosterian* was founded in 1908; the Old Boys Club, first founded in 1885, was refounded in 1913 (only to be overtaken by the war and resuscitated yet again in 1929) and Old Fosterian colours "a very handsome blend of green, gold and chocolate" were adopted the following year. The colours gold and chocolate had already been adopted by the School, but unfortunately it is impossible at present to say when. They and the badge were already in use when the earliest surviving minute book of the Governors started in 1898. There is no likely connection between the Stag and Richard Foster who as a yeoman was unlikely to have had a crest. The name "Foster" is however a corruption of "Forrester" and a stag is thus a most suitable emblem. In Fairbairn's *Book of Crests of the Families of Great Britain* nearly all families named Foster who have crests have the stag in one form or another. The colours of the school were changed to the more easily obtainable blue and yellow in 1951 but the Old Fosterian colours remain unchanged. The motto 'Possunt Quia Posse Videntur' (They can because they believe they can) was adopted in 1962. Caps were gradually phased out and disappeared in July 1974.

Other innovations were the appointment of Prefects (1920) and the introduction of the House system (1923). At first there were three Houses: St. Aldhelm's, consisting of Boarders and some day doys, St. Bede's and St. Dunstan's. In 1965 a fourth, School House, was added and this became the Boarders' House (still with some day boys). The Commoners' Society was founded in 1924.

Mr. Hutchins retired in 1929 through ill health but continued to take an active interest in the School until his death in 1943; a display case in the Library and a pavilion clock are memorials to him from the Old Fosterian Association. There is also a photograph of him, presented by his widow. The report of an Inspection just

before he retired said, "He has given the School of his best and has never spared himself. He has devoted himself wholeheartedly to the interests of the boys and has done much to raise the whole standard of work". He was succeeded by Mr. H. Lush, M.B.E., M.A., under whom the school continued to grow until it became essential to provide new buildings.

In his report to the Governors in September 1933, Mr. Lush raised the question of additional classroom accommodation. At that time it was decided to postpone any idea of extension until the numbers stabilised at about 150 but at the end of the following year, when they stood at 142, plans were drawn up to build in the Fairfield. The County Education Officer was against this as it would leave no room for playing fields. (For many years the School had used the Terrace; in 1877 the *Sherborne Journal* reported, "A splendid site for a cricket and recreation ground has been prepared by the liberality of Mr. Wingfield Digby . . . All will be ready for this season and the scholars of Foster's School and the Sherborne Cricket Club for whose use the ground is appropriated will be able to enjoy the sport 'to the full' ".)

In April 1935, the Governors resolved that the most satisfactory course would be the purchase of "The Wilderness" but this was similarly rejected by the County. Meanwhile the Higher Education Sub-committee of the Dorset Education Committee had passed a resolution in February, "that the Committee consider favourably the provision of a new Secondary School for boys at Sherborne to take the place of Foster's Grammar School". This, when reported in the *Western Gazette* under the heading "New School instead of Foster's?", caused alarm and the publication of a letter from Mr. Lush, in which he explained that "the Governors of Foster's School have not asked the Dorset County Council to provide a New Secondary School for boys at Sherborne, but suggest that they should prepare and submit to the County Council 'a Scheme for erecting new buildings on a new site, on the assumption that the name of the School and Governing Body will not be changed' ".

The next problem was that of a site and, as in 1874, several were considered, among them the present site of Coldharbour Hospital and a field in Horsecastles Lane lying to the south of, and adjoining, the field in which 'Kenelm', a House of Sherborne School for Girls, is built. Eventually, however, the County, over-riding the objections of some Governors, decided to purchase the site in Tinneys Lane where Lord Digby's School had already had a hockey pitch since 1924. A contract was made with Mr. E. G. Wilkins, of Marnhull in January 1938, to erect the new buildings for £20,864 and work commenced in the following July. In its Easter, 1939 edition, the *Fosterian* reported that rapid progress was being made and "there seems to be little doubt that we shall be able to begin the new school year there in September, and the official opening has already been fixed for October". It also reported that the Old Fosterians' gift to the new school was to be an "automatic scoring board" and that the Palmer Fund (See Appendix C) was to be used in part to panel the Library in oak. Before the buildings were ready the Second World War had broken out and the *Fosterian* for Christmas 1939 said, "The autumn term of 1939 is not likely to be forgotten by Fosterians. We had expected to enter the new building at once and with a flourish of trumpets; but we found ourselves obliged to remain in the familiar surroundings of Hound Street for the first month and when we actually moved, on October 11th and 12th, it was with the inevitable regret that the promise of an era of new happiness and prosperity for the School should have coincided with so dark a moment in world history".

As a consequence of the move to buildings provided by the County Education Authority the status of the School changed, as had that of Lord Digby's when in 1930 they moved to Sherborne House. Now in March 1938, the Governors passed a resolution: "That Richard Foster's Boys' School be closed as a School of the Foster and Digby Foundation as from the date on which it can be re-opened as a Provided Secondary School under the same name as heretofore". After the implementation of the 1944 (Butler) Education Act all fees were abolished and entry to

the School depended on the 'eleven plus' examination, or other means of selection. The separate existence of the School was threatened in 1949 when the Minister of Education suggested to the Dorset County Education Committee that a single mixed Grammar School should replace Foster's and Lord Digby's School. A public meeting of protest was organised but no more was heard of the scheme.

In 1959 Mr. Lush retired and was succeeded by Mr. J. G. Sugden, M.A., A.R.C.M., during whose period of office renewed threats to the independent existence of the School arose, this time from comprehension. In January 1965 Mr. Sugden left to become Headmaster of Wellingborough School and Mr. C. R. W. Francis, B.Sc., M.A., replaced him at Foster's.

The last ten years have seen quiet but steady progress with notable development of the Sixth Form and a great increase in the number of boys proceeding to universities. Total numbers have passed the 200 mark and extra accommodation has been provided, including a separate Chemistry Laboratory and a demonstration/lecture theatre named after Mr. P. D. F. Miller, Mathematics master from 1934 until 1971 and Second Master from 1947. The other main development has been the increasing co-operation with Lord Digby's School, especially in the Sciences and in other Sixth Form work.

What the future will bring is uncertain but Foster's can claim in spite of many difficulties to have fulfilled the wishes of the inhabitants of 1870 and to have provided a good education for the boys of Sherborne and the surrounding district.

Appendix A

Masters and Headmasters of Foster's School

1687–1692	John Foster
1692–1693	Lawrence Phelps
Michaelmas 1693	Jo. Pearce and Mr. Napper
March–November 1694	John Painter
December 1694–1702	Hugh Pride
1703–1705	Charles King
1705–1706	John Seager
1706–1708	Thos. Grove
1708–1723	John Butt
1723–1757	John Bartlett
1757–1803 (?)	John Melmoth
1819–1820	Joseph Ayres
1830–1860	James Ellaway
1874–1877	James Griffiths
1877–1884	James Cooper
1884–1900	A. P. Irwin
1900–1907	J. Crichton, B.A.
1907–1929	T. L. Hutchins, M.A., B.Sc.
1929–1959	H. Lush, M.B.E., M.A.
1959–1965	J. G. Sugden, M.A., A.R.C.M.
1965–	C. R. W. Francis, B.Sc., M.A.

Appendix B

Charities Amalgamated in 1872 to form the Endowment for Foster's School

1. *Richard Foster's Charity* (see page 4).
2. *John Woodman's Charity* (see page 9).
3. *Agnes Boughton's Charity* (see page 3).
4. *Sir John Horsey's Charity*: Founded in 1589. Consisted of £10 per annum for 26 years to be invested in Stock to maintain the poor of Sherborne.
5. *William Knoyle's Charity*: Founded in 1678. Consisted of £46 13s. 4d. to be employed in loans to young occupiers in Sherborne.
6. *David Llewellen's Charity*: Founded in 1605, by which he gave £10 to be invested and employed for the benefit of the poor of Sherborne.
7. *Simon Whetcombe's Charity*: Comprised £50 to be employed for loans in Sherborne.
8. *Dorothy Eastment's Charity*: Founded in 1686 by will of Dorothy Eastment, whereby she gave £50 to the Master and Brethren of the Almshouse, the interest to be applied in buying shifts for poor old wives and widows. This was invested in the purchase of two acres of land at Castleton Highway, called 'The Lawns'.
9. *Robert Avoke's Charity*: Founded in 1720. Comprised a dwelling house in Newland and another adjoining, the rents and profits of which were to be laid out in bread for the poor of Sherborne.

10. *George Connington's Charity*: Founded in 1698. Consisted of a yearly rent-charge of £1 upon a field called 'Four Pitts' payable to the Churchwardens and Overseers, and to be distributed to 40 poor persons in Sherborne in bread.
11. *Charles Bull Hart's Charity*: Founded about 1805. Consisted of £100 in 3 per cent Consols, the interest to be applied in purchasing dowlas shifts for the poor deserving old women of Sherborne.
12. *Robert Goadby's Charity*: Founded in 1778. Consisted of £200; two thirds of the interest to be distributed annually to the poor of Sherborne, the remainder to the Vicar and Churchwardens. (This part was not included in the endowment of Foster's.)

Appendix C

The Sir George Pragnell Prize and other Prizes

Among the first pupils of the re-organised school in 1875 were four Pragnells, three of them sons of W. G. Pragnell, head gardener at the Castle*. The eldest of these was Captain of School from 1875 until 1877. He was apprenticed to the Drapery trade at Exeter and in 1881 joined a London firm of wholesale drapers, becoming managing partner in 1907. He was a keen sportsman and founded the City of London Swimming and Athletic Association and was a founder member of the Royal Life Saving Society. He also devised a scheme whereby employees were given three weeks holiday on full pay providing they spent fourteen days in a Territorial Army Camp. This scheme was eventually adopted by nearly 2,000 firms and was known as the Employers Territorial Association.

In the Birthday Honours of 1912 George Pragnell was given a Knighthood; he was also a Lieutenant of the City of London and a Justice of the Peace.

Sir George was a great supporter of his old School and was largely instrumental in the founding of the Old Boys Club, of which he was President, a post he again held when the club was reformed in 1913. At the end of the Christmas term 1912 he presented the prizes, including "his special prize which took the form of a handsome engraved silver tray" (*The Fosterian*) and he continued to donate this annually until his sudden death in February 1916, at the age of fifty-three. His widow continued the tradition until her death in 1940. The prize, in the form of a book, was given the next year by Mr. W. F. Henning, the Chairman of the Governors, but the following year Sir George's brother, Walter, took over the responsibility and on his death in 1944, left a sum of money to ensure that the prize should be given in perpetuity.

The prize, for the "most manly, truthful and thorough" boy in the school was originally given on the vote of the boys but latterly at the discretion of the Headmaster. In recent years it has come to be regarded as an award for the Captain of School.

A contemporary of George Pragnell was Arthur R. Adams, eldest son of the principal Sherborne jeweller and watchmaker. Having qualified as a solicitor in England he went out east and became a member of the bar of the Federated Malay States and Johore and acting Solicitor-General of Penang; in 1918 he became a K.B.E.

Sir Arthur Adams was treasurer of the original Old Boys Club until his departure for the east and became a Vice President of the revived Association in 1929. He presented the prizes in 1936 and shortly afterwards instituted a prize for Science. He died the following year, aged seventy-five.

Mrs. A. J. Palmer was the mother of F. R. Palmer, an Old Boy who was killed in the First World War. She donated an Honours Board in 1918 and a second one, containing additional names, in 1932‡. She died in 1934 but before her death made provision for a History Prize in memory of her son and a French prize in memory of his friend, A. J. Brooks, who was also killed in the war. In her will she left £300 and the residue of her estate (an additional £126) to the School.

In 1950 the Rev. H. A. G. Belben and his sister endowed a Divinity Prize in memory of their father, A. H. Belben, who was a pupil from 1884 to 1888 and who died in 1947.

* The other Pragnell was the son of the landlord of the Half Moon Hotel.

‡ After the Second World War these were joined and matched by a similar double board containing the names of Old Boys killed in that war.

Appendix D

The School Song

At the OFA Dinner in November 1930, Mr. C. A. Lowman regretted that there was no School Song and urged some inspired members of the School, past or present, to supply the deficiency. This led one Old Boy to submit a song written about 1907 by Mr. Bolshaw, an assistant master. Mr. Lowman and Mr. Gibling did not think this a good enough composition – the School was worthy of something better. Eventually a song was written by Mr. Littleton C. Powys, the Chairman of the Governors, aided, it would seem by the original manuscript, by Mr. Gibling. A rousing tune was composed by Mr. J. Barham Johnson, Music Director of Shrewsbury School. The song was first performed in public at the OFA Dinner in November 1932, (the names of the singers are recorded in the *Fosterian*) and was regularly sung at School functions until about 1960 and at OFA Dinners until much later. It was last performed at the Fiftieth Commoners Concert in 1973.

I

Nestling mid the Hills of Dorset
In the Vale of Yeo,
Lies the pleasant town of Sherborne
Founded long ago.
In this famous town of learning
Stands the school that we
Think the best and hold the dearest
Of all schools that be.
Chorus:
Therefore raise we loud our voices
And sing with all our powers
Him, whose memory cherish
In this school of ours.

II

Nigh three hundred years have vanished
Since our founder's day,
He who loved the boys of Sherborne,
Loved and helped for aye,
So All Hail! to Richard Foster
To whose vision clear
Owe we now the Education
Offered to us here.

III

Thanks to Richard Foster's goodness
Here we work and play
Learning lessons that will help us
This and every day;
Learning all the wondrous mysteries
That our books contain;
How to live our lives most fully
By use of hand and brain.

IV

How to hit the winning sixer,
How to kick the goal,
How to make the wickets scatter
With that fast ball we bowl;
How to face the struggle bravely
When things all go wrong,
Showing that our games have made us
Generous, just and strong.

V

Soon the world will call our service,
Gladly let us give
All the best that we have learnt here
To those with whom we live.
We'll be straight in all our dealings,
Loyal, clean and true,
And count the sins of cruelty
The blackest we can do.