

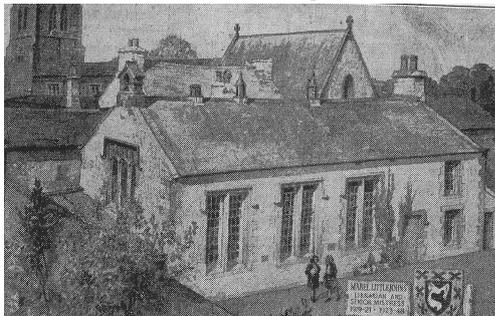
NEWSLETTER NUMBER 4 – October 2020 Edited by Anne Taylor

This newsletter is about schools: a little bit of history, some personal memories from Kirkby Stephen residents, and an article about writing materials from UEHS Secretary, Sarah Kirkup. Thank you to those who gave me permission to publish their memories and photographs, to Dave Williams for newsletter printing, and to Janet Swailes for permission to reproduce her mother's drawing of the grammar school in the early 1960s.

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KIRKBY STEPHEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL – notes by Anne Taylor taken from '1566 to 1966' by Alec Swailes



Above: A watercolour of the former Kirkby Stephen Grammar by Mr E Jeffrey, of Ravenstonedale – from a newspaper article of April 1955

In 1966 the grammar school celebrated its Quatercentenary with **1566 to 1966**, a special edition of the school magazine, written by Alec Swailes and illustrated by his wife Anne. It began with a brief history of Lord Wharton's school (Queen Elizabeth I's Letters Patent authorising the foundation is dated November 1566) and continued, with as much historical information of the school as could be found, up to 1966. Most of the information for this article is taken from that book.

Lord Wharton's foundation stated that *the parsonage house [...] and buildings in and about the same [...] shall be and remain for ever for a schoolmaster*. The parsonage house (now Church House), was for the schoolmaster, and the building opposite (now Local Links and Library) was the school building. Its purpose was to teach the humanities to poor boys.

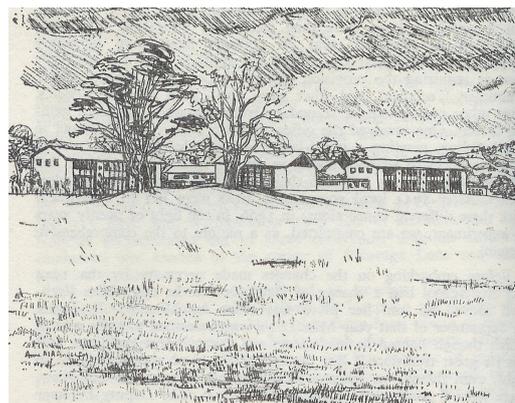
On the side of Church House there is a dated lintel 'ANNO 1677', and initialled 'SS' (see photograph), possibly dating from alterations made when Samuel Shaw was headmaster.



The school continued to provide education for boys only, although sometimes of variable quality, until 1879. It was then revitalised with the appointment of a new headmaster, Mr James Davis, and enlarged by accepting a few girls as well as boys. Davis was a 'new broom' whose *intelligent system, painstaking industry and sound discipline* was commended at the next annual inspection.

From 1883 to 1906 Dr Jonathan Nicholson was headmaster – an excellent teacher, remembered with affection by two former scholars who were still alive when *1566 to 1966* was written. The 1902 Education Act required better provision for the secondary education of all children, including girls, so the school in Appleby remained as a boys' grammar school, and the school in Kirkby Stephen became a grammar school for girls. This opened on 1st January 1908 in a refurbished school building. The second headmistress, Miss Whitley (in post 1909 to 1940), was a very successful and popular teacher who emphasised voluntary work and was keen to prepare her pupils for careers in the teaching profession. Many of those girls returned to teach in local schools after attending training college; in 1920 there were nine former pupils teaching in villages between Appleby and Tebay.

The next headmistress, Miss Rothwell, initiated Founder's Day in 1942, and asked permission of the College of Heralds to use Lord Wharton's Arms for the school badge.



The 'New School' by Anne Swailes

Many of the girls lived some distance from Kirkby Stephen and lodged with families in the town from Monday to Friday. By 1946 numbers had increased so much that a large house, Melgates, (today the Sports and Social Club) was leased as a school boarding house, altered to accommodate 25 girls and a Matron, and continued in use until 1955.

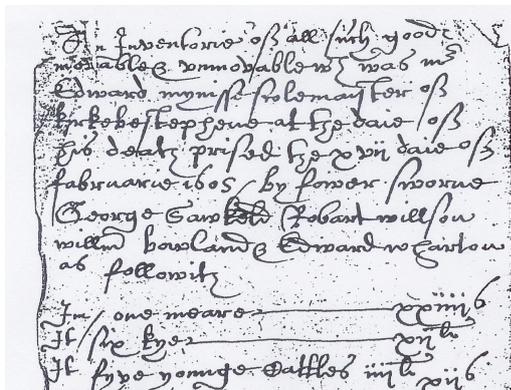
The 1944 Education Act, declaring that all children must have secondary education suited to their age, ability and aptitude, meant that three types of secondary education should be provided: grammar, technical and modern. All three types in one school was called 'multi-lateral' or 'comprehensive'. Kirkby Stephen was described at first as a bi-lateral school because it offered grammar and modern only, some of the technical elements were missing.

From Swailes **1566 to 1966**: "On April 5th, 1955, we left the old school building in which education has been given to boys and girls of this district for 389 years [...] and on the 27th May the School was officially opened by Sir James Turner, the President of the National Farmers' Union."



THE FIRST SCHOOLMASTER notes from Margaret Gowling

In **1566 to 1966** Swailes quoted a school governor, writing at around 1680, who listed all the schoolmasters he could trace up to that date: *the first one [i.e. 1566] was Mr Edward Minyes borne at Castlehill neere Edinburgh.* Myynesse/Minyes/Wemyss/Menzies (there are various spellings and interpretations) had been teaching at Ravenstonedale School, and was chosen by Lord Wharton because he was a staunch Presbyterian.



Copy of the inventory made at the death of Minyes 1605

Judging from the furniture and food supplies listed in the inventory the schoolmaster seems to have had boarders in his house as well as day boys. As stipulated by Lord Wharton, he lived in what is now Church House. He also seems to have had a

farm – there are 6 *kine* and 5 *young kine* listed in the document. He had lent money to two men at a time when there were no banks, and his books, clothes and mare all suggest he was better off than most people.



SCHOOL MEMORIES compiled by Anne Taylor from interviews with several Kirkby Stephen residents

Kirkby Stephen County Primary School (also known as the Council School) before the Second World War:

"The headmaster was Mr Frank W Parrott – we used to say: 'Polly parrot ate a carrot on the way to Crosby Garrett.' He was a Quaker and a very enlightened headmaster – he would not use corporal punishment. His lessons were different, he would just talk to us. His favourite subject was astronomy, and we learnt all the constellations. I remember another talk, using the Nine Standards as a reminder of the 9 gifts of the Holy Spirit (from Paul's Letter to the Galatians): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control."

"Miss Evie Wharton (later Mrs Dent) taught the first class of the infants, and Miss Bogue the second class. In the juniors we had different teachers for different subjects. One day at the start of the war in 1939, Mr Parrott talked to the whole school, to teach us a new word: evacuee. He told us the evacuees were leaving their homes and their families to come to this area and be at our school. They would be arriving by train the next day, and we were not to go up to the station to gawp at them. Well, of course, we hadn't known about them arriving before Mr Parrott spoke about it, but now we did, so we all went up to watch them arrive (where Pennine View caravan park is now) in the train from the north east before they pulled in at the station (Kirkby Stephen East on the Stainmore Line). They were hanging out of the windows and waving and cheering."

"School dinners started at the same time with a very good cook, Mrs Patterson, who had come with the evacuees and their teachers. The meals were served in the Temperance Hall."

"Soon Mr Parrott was giving us special lessons in grammar, because some of the evacuees from Tyneside said things like *give us a lend of your pencil* and we had started to copy them, so we were all taught the correct usage of *lend* and *borrow*. I remember one evacuee, Ronnie, who stayed in Hartley, would be followed to school by