

The Standian – Summer July 1958

Editorial Staff – Mr Frith, W.Barton, R.Fletcher, T.Mitchell, G.Jacobs

Business Managers – Mr Venvell, D. Kirkman

### **NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF STAND GRAMMAR SCHOOL.**

No decisive battles have been fought round Whitefield. King John was run to earth at Runnymede, not Radcliffe; Tolpuddle, not Tottington, was the home of the unhappy martyrs of Trade Unionism. Because so little of national significance has happened in this corner of England it is ignored by the standard text books, and its history is not easily unearthed. Nevertheless there is a wealth of interesting local history of which many boys in the School will know little or nothing. A few might be able to find the remains of the old Roman Road, but how many know that Radcliffe is mentioned in Domesday Book? Yet there it is:

“King Edward held Radcliffe for a manor. There is one hide, and another hide belongs to Salford.”

There is a great deal that can be written about all this, and we hope to do a little more research in later issues, but in this article we intend to confine ourselves to the subject that should be of greatest interest to all boys in the School - the history of Stand Grammar School itself. Our account is not meant to be a full history of the School, rather it is designed to illustrate some of the more illuminating aspects of the School's life from the seventeenth century until today.

Our story begins in April, 1688, with the bequest of Henry Siddall, a tailor of Radcliffe Bridge, who left in his will certain lands and messuages in Pilkington. The first trustee of the will was Thomas Sargeant, who was to collect the rents and profits of these properties, and to use them for the employment and maintenance of a teacher for a Grammar School. This teacher was to be elected by trustees, and was also to teach young children to read English.

Part of the land of Siddall's bequest was leased to the trustees of a Unitarian Chapel on condition that the building, which they erected in 1693, should be used as a schoolroom, except on Sundays and other times of worship. The first description we have of the school is included in an account of Prestwich Parish written in the early part of the eighteenth century:

“A Presbyterian Meeting-House is built on part of ye land, and a Dissenter teaches school in part of ye house; but, wt. is done with ye profits of ye Estate cannot be learnt.” Do we detect a hint of something suspicious taking place?

In 1721 William Walker, the most famous of early Stand schoolmasters, was appointed to the post which he held until 1763. It was during this time, in 1728, that a new School House was built, and in this simple one storied building it is believed that Robert Clive received part of his education. Clive was born in 1725, near Market Drayton, and at the age of two he was brought to the house of his aunt at "Bayley's Court," in Manchester. The evidence that Clive might have attended the School is only circumstantial, but there is no particular reason for disputing it. Certainly his mother and her family came from this district and William Walker, the Headmaster, was known to be their friend and constant visitor. It was probably whilst young Robert Clive was at School here that his uncle wrote:

"Bob has just had a new suit of clothes..." and then added:

"I am satisfied that his fighting (to which he is out of measure addicted) gives his temper a fierceness and imperiousness, and he flies out upon any trifling occasion; for this reason I do what I can to suppress the hero, that I may help forward the valuable qualities of meekness, benevolence and patience."

Happily for British fortunes in India, his spirit was never tamed, and the terror of local shopkeepers became the victor of Plassey.

It was because of his many pranks that the legend grew up that he was expelled from the School, but there seems to be no truth in it. In fact his Aunt "Bay" died in 1735, and soon after he was taken away from school and sent back to Market Drayton. It is pleasant to record that in India, years later, he sighed for "dear, delightful Manchester".

A number of letters addressed to some of the pupils boarding at Old Hall, Stand, in the time of William Walker, have been preserved. They were written by Matthew Nicholson and his wife Dorothy to their five sons, and extracts from some of them make interesting reading

Liverpoole,

My dear Childer,

23 April, 1729.

Yesterday I recd. Saml's (one of the sons) of ye 20 inst., but you had not then heard of your dear sisters death. It has pleased God to take from us a very desirable child and only daughter...

Dorothy Nicholson

This tragedy is the more poignant when we realise that seven years earlier the first-born son died at Stand aged 15 years.

The beginning of the next letter of May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1729, could be typical of a letter written to children at school today were it not for the quaint style:-

“We recd. John’s of ye 25th, ulto and Saml’s of the 2nd inst., and we are glad you are well and that John improves in his writing.”

Mainly the letters are concerned with family events, but here and there are scraps which reflect parental concern for their offspring “ God keep you from the yicess of ye age,” and, “Your Mother will get John a per of stockings sowne as shee can.”

Finally, there is an extract from one letter written by an elder brother (now left) to a younger, and this shows how little are the changes down the centuries of school life:—

“Brother Bobby is now at home, he got First of his class at Striving for Christmas - there were eleven in it.”

William Walker was succeeded at Stand School by the Reverend John Pope, who advertised the school in the London Chronicle of January, 1769:—

“This is to acquaint the Public that Stand School in Lancashire was opened on Monday Jan. 9th 1769 by the Rev. J. Pope for the purpose of instructing youth in the Greek. Latin and French languages; the elements of Geometry, Trigonometry and Algebra and the higher parts of Mathematics and Philosophical Knowledge..... Attention will be paid to their improvement in morals as well as knowledge. With respect to situation Stand has the advantages of a fine clear air (!) and a dry soil in a superior degree to any part of Lancashire.

N B—A Writing Master attends the School.”

Eighteen years later the School was advertised in the “*Manchester Mercury*” as follows:-

“The Reverend William Dodge Cooper of Stand, proposes opening his school again for the education of Twenty young Gentlemen on Monday Jan. 14 1788.

Board including washing .....£15 15s. 0d.

Instruction in English, Geog., and writing and accounts.....£4 4s.. 0d.

Entrance.....£1 1s. 0d..

The French language will also be taught grammatically if required.”

For the next seventy-five years nothing of outstanding interest is recorded, but in 1862 the old

school was pulled down, and a new building of two stories was erected on its site at a cost of £643. This was raised by subscription from the Chapel congregation, and was used as a Sunday School until 1892, when a separate room was built for this purpose. At this time the School stood in about four acres of land on a site just opposite the Unitarian Chapel in Ringley Road. The size of the endowment had been greatly increased through the generosity of the Crompton family.

In 1893 the Reverend William Healey, Headmaster of Stand, wrote in the *Manchester City News*:-

“In reference to the curriculum of Stand Grammar School I take this opportunity of stating ..... that the teaching is of as open a character as that at the Manchester Grammar School or at any of the public schools in the country.”

If this was so, then the School had certainly made good progress, and it is not surprising that under the formidable Mr. George Longman, who succeeded Mr. Healey, the numbers steadily increased from 24 boys to a record for the old premises of 81. There were three full time members of staff, helped by two visiting assistant masters, and accommodation was limited to three class-rooms and an extra “luxury” room, in the headmaster’s house. It was Mr. Longman who founded the “Standian,” and the library, and who started the celebration of Founder’s Day.

The Balfour Act (1902) gave a great impetus to Secondary School Education and in 1906 the trustees of Stand Grammar School surrendered their trust to the Lancashire Education Committee, which accepted all financial responsibility for the School. It was then reconstructed as a day secondary school for boys and girls, and a few years later the school was transferred to its present buildings, which were opened on the 6th September, 1913, by Alderman John Ragdale.

Numbers at once jumped to over 200, and in November, 1915, there were 220 boys and 173 girls in the School. It is strange to note that in 1915 about forty children had to be refused entry because the building, into which over 600 pupils are crammed today, was supposed to accommodate no more than 380.

The last major event in our chronicle took place in July 1937, when the girls removed themselves to a school of their own. There are those in the School today who regard this Great Schism as the darkest moment in our history, and it is very largely for their benefit that we add a few comments which may, we hope deprive these gay Lotharios of some of their romantic illusions. Only in time Sixth forms and in optional subjects (Latin , Spanish and Physics) did

boys and girls share a Form room, otherwise segregation was complete. The girls had their separate pitch for hockey, on the field behind the canteen, and in Assembly the boys stood on one side of the Hall, and the girls on the other. Indeed, one well established member of staff has commented that even on social occasions when time boys and girls were encouraged to meet, they would only do so under fierce compulsion! The Staff, too, were carefully divided into separate Staff rooms, and after the departure of the girls the second Staff room became, for a brief but glorious period, a room for the Prefects. Smoking in School by members of Staff was strictly forbidden. Mr. Locke, who was Headmaster during these years, worked hard for the establishment of separate schools, though, as he retired in 1937, he shared the fate of Moses, who saw the promised land but was not able to enjoy it.

Today the School is expanding rapidly, and new buildings are going up rather less rapidly to make room for "the Bulge". It is to be hoped that as the School gets larger it will not grow unto a huge impersonal machine for education, losing its sense of tradition and its awareness of the ideals which have guided it through 270 years of history.

M.J. Beech (8L).

T. M. Mitchell (7L).

---

## **ON LIVING IN RADCLIFFE.**

To the stranger, nothing perhaps could appear more dismal or more soulless than Radcliffe, For those of us who share the dubious privilege of citizenship, the town where we live does not seem a particularly wonderful or interesting place. Most of its distinguishing features seem at best banal and at worst downright distressing. It has no real claim, to historical greatness: its past has no very significant tale to tell, no faded glories, no astonishing achievements. A battered old tower, the remains of a Roman Road, a few other archaeological trifles, but nothing in effect that any small industrial town could not half-heartedly boast.

Its geographical worth, does not entitle it to any special place among towns. The brown polluted river is hardly used, except as a cheap sewer. The country around, being neither extravagantly mountainous nor comfortably flat, is obstinately commonplace in its dull

mediocrity: no gorgeous dramatic heights or placid fertile plains here.

Radcliffe's industry is chiefly remarkable for the fact that it could quite easily be carried on elsewhere. The tide of prosperity has turned, and several factories have closed down, or work only part of the week.

The entertainment it provides is very plain fare. If you seek theatrical highlights or cultural excellence, you will not find them here. Nice church socials and an abundant chain of public houses cater for the town's Saturday night boredom and thirst. Most leisure time is spent in the home, keeping watch "o'er the Telly" by night. If home begins to pall, journeys are made into some far country (Bury or Bolton) in order to spend ones substance in riotous living.

There is no beauty in the long stretches of sameness called streets with their monotonous matchbox houses and pathetic patches of garden sufficient only to grow a few weeds. The various pungently different smells have to be experienced to be believed. There is a distinct smell from the river, from the gas-works, from the paper mills, from the fish and chips shops, all combining to thicken the atmosphere to the consistency of a satanic potage. Colour and light seem filtered through a dirty pall of smoke, and architectural elegance is nowhere to be found among the squat, ugly buildings.

Yet in spite of the smoke, the squalor, the smells, and the sameness Radcliffe has an appeal of its own; powerful and tangible in its way, neither depending on aesthetic values nor springing entirely from an affection born of long familiarity. Not all is ugliness. There are green fields, and there is also a special type of "countryside", a sort of no man's hand where the town has retreated, and nature has been left to decorate broken rows of houses, old forgotten machinery, canals, and slag heaps as attractively and as quaintly as possible. Attempts have been made to grow flowers in order to brighten the gloomy atmosphere and round about there is a man-made countryside of golf-links and reservoirs, with a skyline broken by stark factory chimneys in place of graceful buildings, Perhaps it is second-hand finery, but it has a certain sturdy effectiveness of its own. On a clear night Radcliffe loses much of its ugliness, and lights across the valley shine almost mysteriously in the calm of the darkness and the stars.

The people who live there are mostly solid, generous, unaffected, and fiercely independent. It is a compact community, set in its ways and powerful in its prejudices—far more homogenous than a sub-utopian jungle of "semis" like Prestwich. As a symbol of their solidness stand the

Pennines, bleak and gaunt, yet with a strange rugged charm of their own.

Our feelings about places cannot be disentangled from the events with which they are connected, and the place where we are born and brought up is bound to have the strongest associations for us. As we pass along the drab familiar streets between the rows of small houses crouching sadly under the mist, memories tug persistently at the consciousness. Here is something that cannot be judged by aesthetic standards alone; it is something felt in the blood a complex pattern of emotion in which love and hate are closely interwoven, and which conditions our attitude to a town, no matter how ugly, which is also our home.

—W. BARTON (8L),

---

## **APRIL IN PARIS.**

The sound of the sea, which had been so welcome after ten hours of travelling by train, now boomed tediously in our ears. There is nothing beautiful or romantic about the sea when viewed from the midst of a throng of unhappy people trying, without much success, to keep their breakfasts where they belonged. There is nothing soothing about the waves striking the side of a ship, as there is at Blackpool when the waves gently lap against the shore so that you long to be out there in time infinite expanse of sea. There is no feeling of elevation, no desire to recite patriotically when you see the white cliffs fading in the distance,

We, a party of twenty Standians, neatly but reluctantly clad in School blazers and cajoled into obedience by Messrs. Bradley and Ratliff, peered hopefully for the French coast. At last it loomed on the horizon - a long line of sand, clay, and foliage moulded by nature into the shape they call France.

After being hustled through the “Douane” and bustled into a large train, we arrived two hours later at Paris, where the coach which was to meet us failed to materialise. Our chaperons smiled imperturbably, but we, bleary eyed, exhausted, dirty and hungry had lost our sense of humour, and were more than relieved when a coach drove up and the driver, complete with moustache

and beret, signalled us in.

The following morning, having recovered from our trying journey, we were conducted on a tour of the capital, visiting amongst other places the Opéra, and the President's Residency. Our French guide had to ask Mr. Bradley to translate every other word, which caused uncharitable reflections about the value of his presence, but doubtless he meant well. In the afternoon we visited the Pantheon, where Voltaire, Victor Hugo, and other illustrious citizens of France lie buried. Inevitably someone succeeded in losing himself, and was eventually discovered playing dominoes in the crypt with a young lady. In the evening we were left to our own devices but only after Mr. Bradley had encouraged us to accompany him on various outings to theatres and cinemas.

By this time we had discarded our blazers for more exotic garments, which included bright yellow ties purchased in France for one and sixpence, amid other articles of clothing frowned on in academic circles.

The next day we visited Les Invalides, where the tombs of Napoleon, Foch, and many other soldiers are to be found. That afternoon was one of the few fine periods of the trip, and we all marched obediently to the Paris Zoo. A cynic might ask what the Paris Zoo has got that Belle Vue or the Bio. Lab. hasn't. Anyone who has been to the Paris Zoo will confirm that French elephants, French zebras and moreover French birds are better than any in the world.

That night, after a five course meal, some of the more adventurous boys, now looking unmistakably French, went for a stroll along the Champs Elysees casting hopeful glances at the more risque nightclubs. Their disappointment at finding that the admission fee to these establishments was at least fifteen hundred francs, was such that they entered the nearest café and drowned their sorrows in weak lemonade.

On Wednesday we went to the Paris mosque a modern building. This was a most interesting visit but the Oriental effect was somewhat marred by the fact that two of the Moslems who were kneeling in prayer were wearing lurid socks of the Woolworth' variety which, did not harmonise at all with their Eastern robes.

Versailles was the next excursion. The palace itself was very fine, but the town round it was painfully slow. Our guide was a small Frenchman who spoke as if he were announcing a boxing match -

“Messieurs et Mesdames a droite vous avez ...” Then after his peroration he would leer

impatiently at Mr. Bradley whilst the latter translated, taking care to omit the more scandalous details. At last we were dismissed with the Pagliacci-like words which became so familiar to us:-

“La visite est terminee.”

A full day trip to Fontainebleau, by way of Barbizon, occupied the next day. Barbizon is a delightful little village where in about 1840 a group of painters, including Corot and Millet, broke away from the conventional ideas of the day amid painted nature as it appeared to them. This was France as I had imagined it; for the first time we saw the France of Cezanne so different from the brash Paris of Toulouse Lautrec. Reluctantly we left Barbizon, just as coach loads of Americans drew up, no doubt ready to buy the place and take it home brick by brick.

Within three-quarters of an hour we reached Fontainebleau, after a perilous ride along the dusty wood-lined road. As it was now approaching the end of our stay in France, and we all had plenty of francs left (save for one poor lad who had squandered his all within two days), we “let ourselves go” and bought postcards of Fontainebleau with reckless abandon

The following day we fulfilled every tourist’s ambition with a visit to the Louvre, where we saw the almost legendary Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo and other treasures. Unfortunately our tour had to be curtailed to enable us to make the ascent of the Eiffel Tower. It is a long way up the Tower, but it is well worth the trouble for the view from the top is magnificent. All Paris can be seen, the bridges over the Seine, Les Invalides, and far in the distance the glistening white of Sacre Coeur.

In the afternoon some of us decided to do some shopping. We entered an impressive looking store and I promptly knocked a box of liquid polish all over myself and the store. A strenuous continental argument boiled up, and it was not until the manageress, who could speak English, came along that I realised that they were offering to compensate me for staining my trousers. However, a rugged youth, who used to be a friend of mine, kindly turned down the offer in his best accent, and dragged me, wet and bewildered, out of the shop.

On Friday we made a final tour, first to the Sainte Chapelle and then to the Conciergerie where we were plunged into the tragic world of Robespierre, Danton, and Marie Antoinette. Our last evening was spent in Montmartre, which at night is like a dream. Sacre Coeur, lit up, is like something out of the Arabian Nights, and the artists painting by candlelight add to the romantic effect. Far below lay Paris, like a cluster of jewels in the black velvet night.

In time morning we started our return journey, and with docile resignation we began to drop into the old routine. But none of us will ever forget the wonderful holiday made, possible by the patient tolerance of Mr. Bradley and Mr. Ratliff to whom we extend our sincerest thanks.

—H. JACOBSON (5S).