

**HOW OSGATHORPE LOST ITS THOMAS
HARLEY ENDOWED FREE GRAMMAR
SCHOOL AS RECORDED IN NEWSPAPERS
OF THE DAY -
PLUS SUPPLEMENTARY BACKGROUND
INFORMATION**



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - OCTOBER 2023

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

This shows the Harley endowed free Grammar School in the 21st century with the headmaster's house to the right.

INFORMATION REQUIRED

Although the school was closed in 1901, there apparently being insufficient pupils available to teach, we know that a number of years later it was re-opened for the teaching of infants. There are two photographs dated 1927/8 and 1962 under the 'Supplementary Information' section confirming this. The author would welcome further information on this.

The following is an extract from an interview with an Osgathorpe Framework Knitter in 1844 regarding Osgathorpe schools

6388. Is there any free-school in Osgathorpe?—Yes, a free-school and a National school.
6389. Do the frame-work knitters avail themselves of those schools to send their children?
—Some do, but they do not go past six or seven years of age, because they are then put to work. When I was a boy I lived at Belton, and I used to go to the free-school at Osgathorpe. There were 60 scholars at that time; now there are not above ten or a dozen.
6390. Do you think that diminution in the number has arisen from the parents putting the children to work at an earlier age than formerly?—I should think that is the chief cause.
6391. Are there any allotments of land in Osgathorpe?—There are several

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENDOWED FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

THE OSGATHORPE THOMAS HARLEY CHARITY

Thomas Harley was born in 1613. That was the year in which London's Globe Theatre burned to the ground during a performance of Shakespeare's Henry VIII; mathematician John Napier finished twenty-five years of research perfecting Logarithms; Puritan concern was increasing over the growth of 'alehouses' as social centres, with dancing, 'mummers' and sundry celebrations; and people shuddered at the recent revelations about the evil activities of the 'Witches of Pendle' - and at all witchcraft tales.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS HARLEY

Thomas was born to Francis and Ruth Harley of Osgathorpe, Leicestershire, the second child in a family of four boys and two girls. It seems likely that the Harley's were the typical small landowning family that was the backbone of rural life, the local worthies who organised the village community, dispensed poor relief, set a good example, and might aspire to becoming Lord of the Manor one day. Francis, the eldest son who would inherit the majority share of any estate, stayed at home. The others needed to seek their fortunes elsewhere – Thomas went to London, as did youngest son Nicholas, but William only went as far as Leicester. Ellen married at Breedon-On-The-Hill, and Anne at Bagworth. Camden's Britannia described him simply as: "Thomas Harley, citizen of London". Whether he was in business and if so what type is unknown, but he did marry and survive two wives, Joan and Mary. Both had been widows of 'citizens of London'. Widows were subject to being recycled, due to the average low male age at death, and their acquired property often made them a more attractive proposition than a single young woman with a dowry. One can only speculate how much of a London gentleman's wealth came from shrewd marriages. Whatever Thomas Harley's affairs were, they were carried on during a very turbulent and dangerous period in English history - the Civil Wars between Parliamentary and Royalist forces and their ideals - now over simplified to 'Roundheads versus Cavaliers'. He may even have seen King Charles I on trial and later beheaded at Whitehall. Then followed the disturbances of the Commonwealth period, then repression under the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. London was a Parliamentary stronghold and virtually under martial law, of course, and so was Leicester, but Ashby, just five miles from Osgathorpe, was in a pocket that was staunchly Royalist - and paid the price. It must have created difficulties in communication and travel but Thomas Harley undoubtedly kept close ties with his parents, elder brother Francis and family in Osgathorpe. This may be inferred by much of his accrued holdings in land and property being in and around the area Snibston, Hugglescote, Walton, Belton, Whitwick, etc. Francis Harley Senior died about 1658, followed by Francis Harley Junior about a year later, leaving widow Sarah and children Francis, William and Ruth. Thomas Harley was now the senior member of the family and approaching fifty years of age. Good reasons, perhaps, that by the early 1660's he was resident in Osgathorpe, possibly at Osgathorpe Hall (Farm). The timing was fortuitous; London became very unhealthy in 1665, and very warm in 1666. Charles II had also returned to his childhood roots with the restoration of the Monarchy. Thomas Harley married for the third time, to yet another Mary, and yet another widow, of Samuel Blount, Rector of Walton. Perhaps because he had no children of his own, Thomas Harley assigned some of his holdings to a fund in order to eventually found a free school in the village for local children. The intention was ultimately to send Divinity students to Cambridge. Unexpectedly, it was said, early in 1668 Mary found that she was pregnant, and understandably Thomas wanted to drop the school plans to make provision for his new heir. Mary not only persuaded him to continue with the project, but, as she had been the widow of a Rector, must have been instrumental in adding a home for 'clergymen's widows' to the scheme, greatly increasing the expense. Mary must have counted herself fortunate in her remarriage, most clergymen's widows immediately lost the family home, which went to the new cleric, of course, and could find themselves in dire straits, especially when left with young children. Daughter Mary was

born in August 1668 and survived. She proved to be Thomas Harley's only heir as he died in January 1670, at the advanced age of fifty six years. Mary was widowed for a second time, which was not unusual in those days, and with a sixteen month old child that would never know her father, but would live to the same age. Recent work in May 2017 replacing the wooden flooring on the north side of the church aisle has revealed the memorial stone to Mary recording her death on 24th June 1724. The stone is in too poor a condition to contemplate removal but its position under the rear most pew is recognised by a brass plaque. Thomas Harley was buried at St. Mary's and later a plaque incorporating his Arms and a fulsome testament to his life and generosity was erected on the South chancel wall by his trustees. This has now been relocated onto the North wall.

THE CHARITY ESTABLISHED BY THE WILL OF THOMAS HARLEY

Thomas Harley's will dated June 11th 1670, appointed Francis Harley, his nephew (aged thirty), and John Smith, nephew-in-law, as principal executors to carry out his instructions. To them, and their heirs, was conveyed most of his properties upon trust. He directed them to use the rents and profits to build two houses of three bays each, one for a school room and schoolmaster's house, the other as a dwelling for six poor minister's widows. These to be constructed on the strip of land opposite St. Mary's church with the curious name of 'Brewettts Hempleck'. Upon completion, eight persons would manage the investments to create an annual income of £100 - £40 for the Schoolmaster's salary and £10 per widow. Francis Harley and John Smith would nominate schoolmasters and widows until Mary Harley reached the age of eighteen, when she and her legal heirs would assume that responsibility. If she died, or her legally born heirs died, the function would pass to Francis Harley and his heirs. The Churchwardens would intervene if the responsible person lapsed in duty. For the £40 salary the schoolmaster was required to teach basic education, reading, writing, and arithmetic, to a maximum of fifty pupils, also the classics and mathematics if required and keep the school room and house in good repair. Thirteen years later, in 1683, an 'Indenture of Lease and Release' was made between Francis Harley and John Smith and six other persons. It stated that they had, in pursuance of the Will, built the six bays of buildings, plus outbuildings, on 'Brewett's Hempleck', made as a school room and schoolmaster's house and the other for six poor minister's widows. It went onto detail the transfer of holdings to the trustees, with a long list of the properties, many named, such as: 'Tweene Town's Close', ([This was in Donington le Heath where a present road to a cul-de-sac still retains the name of Tween Town](#))) or 'Hornebuckles Orlesbreach' and 'Donnington Cow Pasture'. The list ended with a small piece called 'North Orchard', purchased to enlarge the rear of the schoolmaster's house.

THE START

This 'Indenture' document states categorically that the buildings existed and were finished in October 1683. They may have been functioning earlier, of course, but this appears to be the earliest provable date at which the Harley Charity proper commenced operations. Did it really take thirteen years to raise the cost of construction and get the annual income to £100? There was a sequel: in that same year, inspired perhaps by seeing the buildings finally finished, the Will of the Reverend John Allsopp bequeathed £160 to the Harley Charity to house one widow. It took sixteen years, and a law suit, to finally build a cottage "on the hospital grounds."

THE WIDOWS

The Charity ran into 'widow' problems right from the start, due to the living arrangements being devised by a man. A report by the Charity Commissioners, quoting old documents, spelled it out: "The building used as the Almshouses consists of three distinct tenements containing three rooms, one on the ground floor, and another above, with an attic. It was originally intended, as directed by the Founder, that each tenement should be inhabited by two women, living together, and occupying the same apartments; but in consequence of the disagreements that took place under this arrangement, it was found necessary to allot to each woman a separate room." Given Thomas Harley's extensive experience with widows he should have known better! The report continued: "There is a small garden attached to each room in consequence, however, of the limited accommodation in the Hospital, the Charity is

not much sought after, and the Trustees have frequently had considerable difficulty in filling up vacancies." That was to be the story for the entire life of the almshouses, compounded by the small annuity offered, and finally led to the building being physically divided into just two dwellings. Allsopp's Gift cottage suffered the same problems, often being uninhabited for long periods. This cottage was built to the east of the original almshouses and can be seen on the 1885 issued 6 inch O/S map



The above section from Emmanuel Bowen's county map of 1756, showing at "Osgathorp" in the top LH corner a Hospital for 6 clergy men's Widows.

THE CHANGES

The Will had not stipulated the usage of surplus monies above the specified income of £100 per annum. Seventy years after commencement one person was very unhappy with what was happening and took action. The Master of the Rolls, in a suit against Philip Harley Bainbrigg and Harley Vaughan, decreed that new trustees would be appointed by the court; he also proposed a scheme for the future application of surplus income. An Order of July 1761 decreed that all profits, after building repairs, etc., should be divided into eight equal parts - one part to each widow, and the remaining two parts to the schoolmaster. Accordingly, more of those 'Indentures of Lease and Release' documents transferred all the Charity properties to eight new trustees in April 1762. The names of the new trustees is not known, and may well have included Harley relatives, but the true descent of the Charity's officers from either Mary or Francis intended by Thomas Harley was broken by the dismissal of his grandson, Philip Harley Bainbridge, and his nephew's grandson, Harley Vaughan. Various 'Acts of Enclosure' changed the face - and the life - of the countryside by ending inefficient 'strip farming', and enclosing waste, common and forest land. Harley's Charity gained by being awarded several acres, including four acres of Charnwood Forest. The poorest country people lost - deprived of their subsistence they drifted to the towns. Land values rose rapidly, and land owners got richer. The Charity Commissioners Report of 1837 recorded that the Charity owned some 230 acres, rented at £280 per annum. Part of the money invested in these properties had come from a windfall - literally, timber felled by a storm in 1805 was sold for £984, twelve shillings. About £200 worth of timber remained.

THE SCHOOL (ENDOWMENT FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL)

The report stated that the custom was to appoint a clergyman to the post of schoolmaster, the appointment considered to be for life.

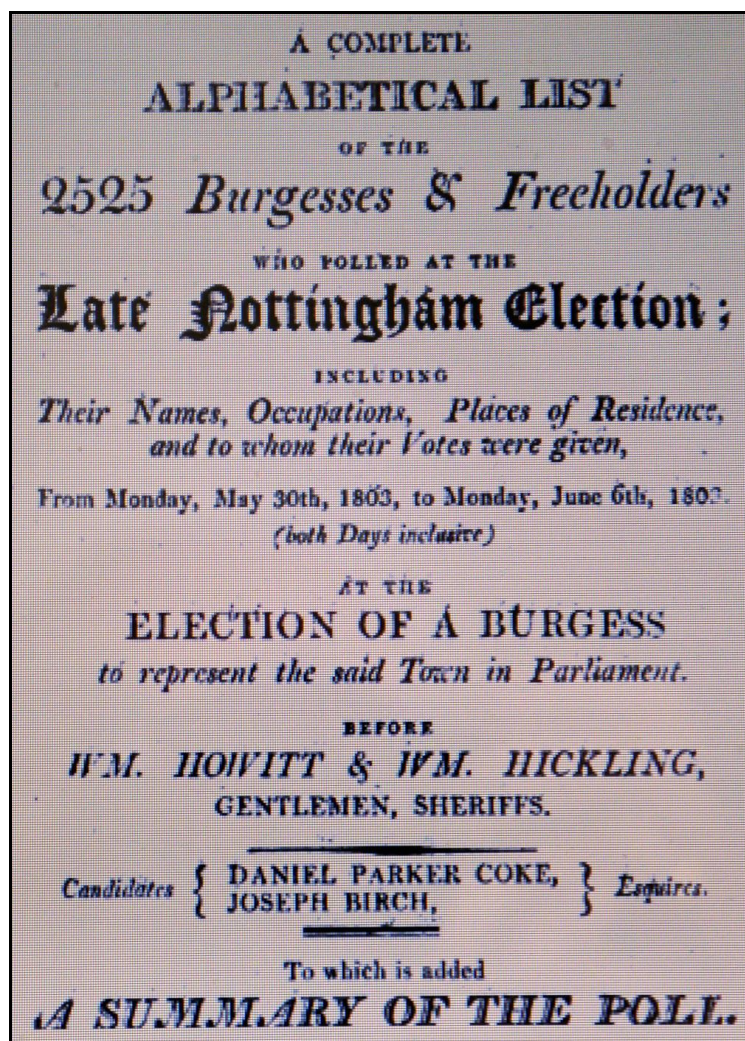
The oldest reference to a school master which was found in the parish records was Cornelius Smedley (no reference to being a clergyman) with a date reference of 1685 / 1686 although it is likely that he was school master earlier than that date. He is recorded as being there in 1713 still but would have retired prior to 1716 as the Rev. Charles Clarke, was recorded as school master from 1716 to 1727 and the parish records show him as being buried in 1736.

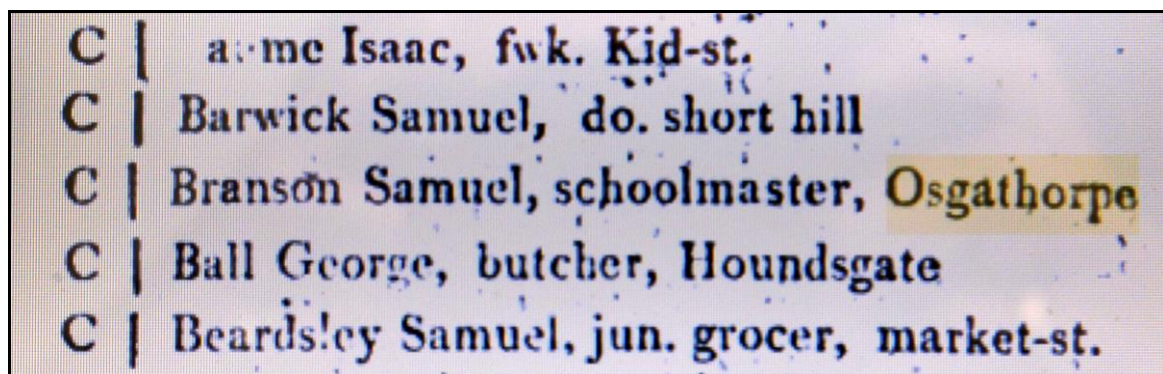
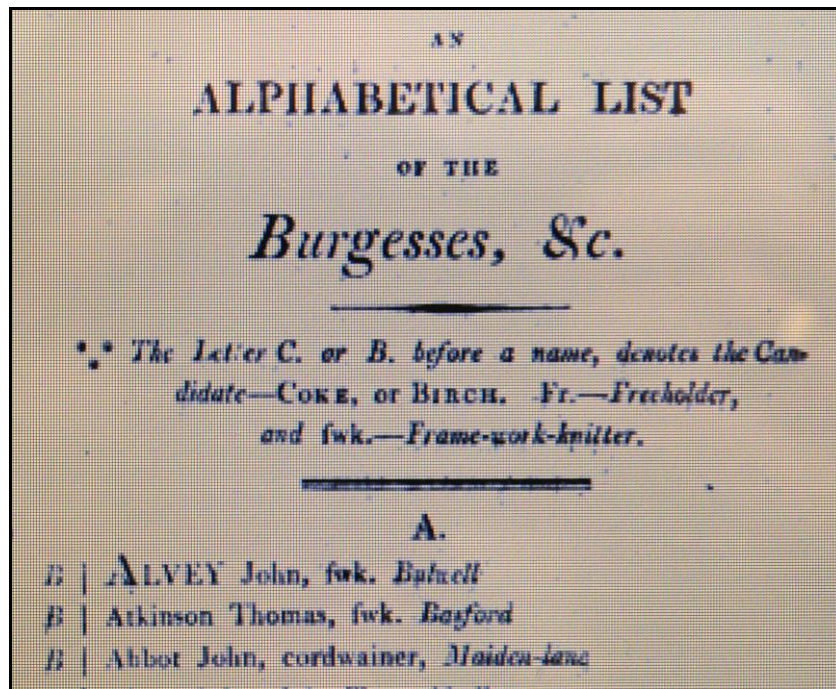
No further reference to a school master has been found following Rev. Charles Clarke until that of Mr. Samuel Branson who had taught there for 40 years from c.1782. He did not appear to be a clergyman:-

Leicester Chronicle – June 21st 1834

DIED:- In his 72nd year, Mr. Branson after having been nearly 40 years as master of the endowed school at Osgathorpe, in this county. His charitable offices to the poor as a medical adviser and otherwise rendered him a valuable member of society, and will cause his loss to be greatly felt in the neighbourhood.

The following illustrations establish that Samuel Branson was the master at the Grammar school in 1803. In order to be allowed to vote in the election, he must have owned a property in Nottinghamshire at the time. They also show that he voted for Daniel Parker Coke.





The Reverend Doctor Theophilus Henry Hastings Kelk (a large name for a small school room) was appointed in 1833. He received the use of the house, schoolroom and garden rent free, a fixed sum of £40 annually and a proportion of the other income of the charity, giving him an annual income in 1839 of £107 out of which he had to pay for an assistant usher. He was required to teach up to 50 boys reading, writing and arithmetic, and also the classics and mathematics if required without any extra charge, although it was rare for there to be a full complement of 50 scholars and there were only 42 registered in 1839. It had become the custom to charge an entrance fee of two shillings and sixpence (13p) per boy, although there was nothing in the Will to authorise it - and it was certainly against the spirit of the foundation. The books and stationery were provided by the pupils. No boy was admitted under eight years of age, or if unable to read. Very few stayed beyond fourteen years. "They are all the children of small farmers, trades people and the labouring classes, and do not require to be instructed in the Classics and Mathematics", declared the Reverend Doctor Theophilus Henry Hastings Kelk. The school could accommodate 60 pupils and the master was also allowed to take paying pupils into the school, although there were only two fee-paying pupils at this time. The school was built of uncoursed Charnwood stone. In the 1851 census Rev. Doctor Theophilus Henry Hastings Kelk was recorded as still being a clergyman & master of Thomas Harley Grammar School after some eighteen years, but appears to have retired around this time

Leicester Mail – November 18th 1869

DEATHS, KELK – At Newbold, Ashby de la Zouch on the 13th inst., the Rev. T. H. Hastings Kelk, B.A., Jesus College, Cambridge and head master of the Grammar School, Osgathorpe, Aged 75

In 1854, 1855, 1861, 1863 and 1870, Edwin Charles Warner was recorded as being the master.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Loughborough Monitor – January 16th 1862

GRAMMAR SCHOOL – OSGATHORPE

Conducted by Mr. C. E. Warner and assistant master.

Pupils are carefully prepared for commercial and agricultural pursuits, being thoroughly taught the usual branches of a liberal education, including book-keeping and practical land surveying.

The situation is healthy and every attention paid to the domestic comfort of the pupils.

Terms and references on application

The School will be re-opening on Thursday, 23rd January 1862

LADIES SCHOOL – OSGATHORPE

Mrs. C. E. Warner informs her friends and the public of the neighbourhood, that it is her intention to “open a school” for the education of young ladies, on Monday January 27th

Circular of Terms on Application

Ashby de la Zouch Gazette – December 7th 1878

DEATH OF Mr. C. E. Warner. – Many of our readers will notice with regret the announcement of the death of Mr. C. E. Warner, of Osgathorpe. Mr. Warner was the son of the late Mr. Warner, of Ashby de la Zouch, who was for many years master of the Grammar School here. When quite a young man, Mr. C. E. Warner was selected by the Trustees of Burton’s Charity as headmaster of the Loughborough High School, and he continued to hold the appointment until the opening of the new Grammar Schools. A year or two afterwards he removed to Osgathorpe, where he established and conducted a private school for many years. His death will recall many pleasant memories of school life, and of the generous genial disposition and sterling integrity of the old master.

In 1891 and 1895, Kelly’s directory recorded that the master at the school was Edward E. Serres B.A.

Ashby de la Zouch Gazette – August 8th 1885

WEDDING FESTIVITIES. – On Wednesday, the 29th Ult., this pretty village was *en fete*, the occasion being the return of Mr. E. E. Serres and his bride from their wedding tour on the Continent. Garlands and Wreaths were suspended across the principal street, and all the inhabitants turned out to welcome the happy pair. Mr. Serres has been for some years head-master of the Grammar School and his bride, Miss. Saunders, R.A.M., is a niece of the Vicar, The Rev. W. A. Williams.

It is interesting to note that Edward Serres was actually born in Singapore, which was part of the East Indies at the time. In the 1861 census, his brother Henry, aged 35 is recorded as living with him. He was a Curate and was also born in the West Indies, but it is not possible to decipher the actual town.

In 1891 John James Serres who was the Osgathorpe surgeon was living / practicing at the Osgathorpe House. Presumably he was a relative of Edward E. Serres B.A. (possibly his brother). He was born in Trichinopolly in India in the State of Tamilnado See the supplement on Osgathorpe Medical practitioners at the end of the book.

The school was closed in 1901 due to insufficient pupils, but under a new scheme, the board of education on the 28th March 1907 awarded a sum of £100 to provide for exhibitions tenable at public secondary schools for boys and girls under certain conditions; a further sum of £100 to be applied in maintaining a secondary school at Coalville and the residue to increasing the number and the value of the Harley Exhibition and for maintaining a library in the school buildings at Osgathorpe. **The following transcribed newspaper articles provide details of the years leading up to the closure of the school.**

Under the 'Supplementary' feature at the end there is evidence that after a number of years, the school was opened as an infant school, but little is known about that chapter in its life.

A SERIES OF TRANSCRIBED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WHICH REFLECT THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL

Transcribed from the Leicester Chronicle Saturday 11th November 1893 CHARITY COMMISSIONERS ENQUIRY AT OSGATHORPE HARLEY'S CHARITY

On Tuesday, R. E. Mitcheson, Esq., assistant Charity Commissioner, held an enquiry into the management of this charity in the Grammar School, Osgathorpe. Deputations were present on behalf of Osgathorpe, Belton and the County Council. The last named consisted of Councillor A. A. Bumpus, J.P., Councillor Betterton and Mr. A. J. Baker, organising secretary of the Technical Education Committee. There were also present Mr. T. Husbands C.C., and Mr. J. Peer. - The commissioner said he desired to receive suggestions for the improved administration of the charity funds, more especially of the portion donated to education. - It transpired during the enquiry that three widows, recipients of annuities of £70 per year, were non resident at Osgathorpe, which is a violation of the trust. The gentleman who spoke on behalf of Osgathorpe and Belton were in favour of improving the existing grammar school, whereby a large number of scholars would be led to attend. The Rev. W. A. Williams, rector of Osgathorpe said he was not a trustee of the charity, but a meeting of the parishioners had been called, and he and others had been appointed to interview the commissioner. He trusted that whatever new developments took place, the privileges attached to the grammar school would not be jeopardised, seeing that the National School of which he was a manager, was conducted in one small room, and it was with difficulty that proper education could be conducted there in the more advance standards - [SEE SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION AT THE END](#)

He trusted that the charity school would remain in existence, so that the more advanced scholars might be transferred to it from the National School. - Mr. T. Platts remarked that they desired the Grammar School to be placed under Government inspection and to teach elementary education would be foreign to the wishes of the donor, and in opposition to the trust, and he did not think there was the slightest probability of such desire being entertained by the commissioners. Elementary education had already been provided by the State, and they must look to the National School for it. This foundation was distinctly for a Grammar School - that is, education in advance of that provided at the National School in the village. - Mr. T. Bentley (Belton) expressed an earnest wish that the Grammar School should not be taken away from the village, as it had been of great service to the people of Belton for many years. The reason why it had not been lately so successful was, in his opinion, because the trustees admitted scholars from schools under Government control without due enquiry, the results being that, having left the National School they escaped the attention of the Attendance Officer, and by now and then putting in an appearance at the Osgathorpe School were evading and breaking the Education Act. This had led to the deterioration of the school and the diminution of its scholars. He submitted that the people of Coalville, Hugglescote were placed at a great advantage in having direct railway communication with some of the best schools in the country, whereas Osgathorpe and Belton were miles away from a railway whatever. The Osgathorpe School could be made a capital centre for higher education. He could not see why in justice the emoluments of the charity should be taken from the district, placed in a more populous centre, and they in the neighbourhood to whom the charity belonged be called upon to send their children five or six miles to a decent school. In his opinion the school had proved a failure because of the trustees being non-resident and unknown. He had lived in the district for years and did not know who they were. He advocated very strongly that local men interested in the welfare of the school should be entrusted with its management, instead of, as now, gentlemen who, he supposed, lived many miles away. - The commissioner asked whether a scheme would be acceptable by which the existing National School should be called upon to provide all the necessary elementary education for the parish, and the funds of the endowment be utilised for the purpose of an intermediate school in some more populous centre such as Colville or Hugglescote, were there was a dearth of

such education and a rising demand for it. The trustees of the charity had negotiated for the sale of some coal and other property for about £4,000, to be paid in instalment in a certain number of years, and that the money thus available might be utilised in the erection of first class school buildings with an endowment of something like £200 a year for the work of intermediate education. It was understood that in the event of such a scheme coming into operation the County Council would make grants towards defraying the annual cost of education and the new buildings, and would also assist in the matter of scholarships. There would also be a charge, say from 6d. to 1s. per week, so that with all this assistance there ought not to be difficulty opening a first class school somewhere in the neighbourhood of Coalville, where no such school existed. - It was pointed out to the deputation from Belton that they had no legal claim on the charity, and that any rights the Osgathorpe people may have would be very fairly met by creating free scholarships to the new schools, such scholarships not only to cover the actual cost of education, but allowing a fair margin to cover expense of getting to and from Osgathorpe. - It was understood that the trustees were disposed to acquiesce in some arrangement by which the funds should be better utilised for educational purposes than at present. - Prior to the enquiry the commissioner had an interview with the trustees.

Transcribed from the Leicester Chronicle - Sat 18th November 1893
THE OSGATHORPE CHARITY
PARISHIONER'S MEETING

On Monday evening, under the chairmanship of Mr. Platts, a meeting of ratepayers in Osgathorpe held a meeting in the National Schoolroom, to protest against the removal of the endowed school from Osgathorpe to Hugglescote or Coalville. Amongst those present were the Rector, Rev. W. Williams, Mr. Price Kidger, Mr. Knight, and others. The meeting was largely attended.

The chairman said that it had been stated that the liberal party of Osgathorpe had endeavoured to favour the removal of the school, but as a matter of fact he had not attended a single meeting. Had he and his party known, the school endowment question would not have been brought to the present crisis. There had been negligence respecting the schools of the present period, and amongst those to blame were the trustees, who had not been to inspect the place, which was not creditable to the endowment or the scholars. (Hear hear). Why had it been thrown at the liberal party that they had been concocting the removal of the endowment? They as liberals were not desirous of doing any work underhanded, and he hoped the meeting would give evidence of opinion on that point.

The Rector suggested that the consideration of the school endowments should be freed from politics. It was a great surprise to him that politics had been introduced. The idea that the matter had been started by the Liberal party was owing to the fact that the matter was taken up by the Liberal agent at Loughborough. - Mr. Peer. There was no cause to complain of the inference so drawn. It was strange, he thought, that they should have a visit from one of her Majesties assistant commissioners, and if it had not been for the courtesy of Mr. Platt, they would not have held the meeting. It was due to the Liberal party to say that there did not seem to be the slightest effort to conceal anything - far from it - for one of the Conservative party was asked to take the chair, and the purpose of the meeting made known. If they had known what the intension of the commissioner was, they would have prepared themselves, but even the chairman did not know, and it would be unjust to attribute to him or the Liberal party any intention to reserve that which should be known to the ratepayers (Hear, hear). The ratepayers were confronting a common danger, and they should endeavour to maintain the interests in the school.

Mr. Bentley remarked that the residents of Belton had no idea that the schools were to be removed. The ratepayers thought him premature in his actions, and when a meeting was called they thought it needless, but they did not know what might happen. Neither Belton nor Osgathorpe would have had information if it had not been for Mr. Peer, the Liberal agent, who called on him and said he had received a very curious letter, and asked what he knew of the Osgathorpe Charity. He told Mr. Peer that he knew nothing, Mr. Peer added that he had received a letter from a clergyman who appealed to his (Mr. Peer's) party to support the ratepayers who were against the removal of the endowment. Further, the clergyman said, "I've looked in vain to the other side, and I've come to the conclusion that abuses have to be

fought by the Liberal Party". He again told Mr. Peer that he knew nothing of the charities. Mr. Peer warned him to look out, and the next intimation he had was a paragraph in the 'Loughborough Herald' stating that a Commission was coming, whose visit was appointed before Mr. Peer knew anything about it. The object was get the consent of the trustees to move the school to Hugglescote.

A ratepayer : who was the clergyman?

Mr. Bentley : I can't state his name. I was asked to keep his name secret.

The Chairman said that the ratepayers had been served very shabbily and if it had not been for the local paper, 'The Loughborough Herald', the facts would not have been known, and it would have been said that they took no notice of the meeting with the Commissioner. If they had known what was taking place, they would have been prepared for him. The Chairman proceeded to refer to the resolution passed at the meeting at which the Commissioner attended, and said the Commissioner ignored it. The Commissioner had his 'needle pointed to the north', and whatever was said, he favoured the scheme for the removal of the school to Coalville. They were fighting for the benefit of Osgathorpe and he hoped they would succeed. He had sent a copy of the resolution to the Charity Commissioners, but was it worth while fighting against the Commissioners.

It was explained by a gentleman, who produced a report of the Charity Commissioners produced in 1838, that the wish of the testator Harley who left the charity stated that the Endowed Schools should be erected on a field in Osgathorpe, such field being named in his will.

Mr. Williams (rector) produced a copy of Harley's will, and said it had been proposed that the schools should be taken away to admit of a higher grade school elsewhere. Extraordinary ! Could anybody say that with the number of scholars at 50 they were not willing to afford the higher education ? The Rev. gentleman went on to speak of the benefits the school had conferred on the village. It fitted boys for commercial life but the commissioners appear to have harped on one string, and included a scholarship for divinity. It would be far from his intentions as a rector to oppose such a scholarship. The school had done good work, and for many years was the only school that had provided education for the humbler classes. It was very unfair that the school should be taken from the poor or middle classes to provide for educating boys in a higher station of life. Villagers had gone out into the world from Osgathorpe, a credit to the schools and village in which they were taught and why should they sacrifice the school to a fad : A voice : I say no ; Distinctly no !

The rector said the headmaster of the school Mr. Serres, deserved encouragement. There was no desire to turn everything upside down. The trustees, though an upright body, had been misinformed as to the meeting.

Mr. E. De Lisle had expressed his wish to attend the meeting, and he (the rector) looked to him and others in the village to avert the removal of the Foundation from Osgathorpe to Coalville.

Mr. Coshier urged that the trustees had not done their duty, and asked Mr. Serres how many times the trustees had visited the school in 16 years.

Mr. Serres answered that in 16 years the trustees had visited the school twice, the first time being in 1879 and the second time a few days before the meeting

The Rector stated that he had a series of resolutions, which he read as follows : (1) "That this meeting - having been informed by the deputation appointed by the parishioners of Osgathorpe to meet her majesty's Assistant Charity Commissioners, R. E. Mitcheson, Esq., that the latter propounded to them a scheme, which, at his recommendations, will probably be submitted to the Charity Commissioners for the withdrawal of the endowment of the free school in this parish founded by Thomas Harley, Esq., which has been in existence for two centuries, and has provided a sound and useful education for the youth of the same and the neighbouring parishes, including especially those of Belton, Thringstone, Coleorton, and Worthington, and for the employment of the mid endowment with any additions accruing from the recent sale of coal on the property of the charity, in erecting a new school and maintaining the same, in the locality of Coalville or Hugglescote, whereby the present school in respect of its educational use will be lost to Osgathorpe and the immediate vicinity - protests against any such scheme as unjust in itself, and a flagrant breach of the covenants of the trust which ordered that the school should be built in Osgathorpe and endowed with a salary for the master, in order that free education may be given to 50 boys, who should come to it constantly to be taught, such boys being necessarily drawn both from Osgathorpe and its

vicinity, owing to the inability of such a large number of scholars being gathered from Osgathorpe".

(2) "That this school has done good work, and been most useful to the neighbourhood, to which there is abundant testimony given by the inhabitants generally of this and the neighbouring parishes, and from the fact that many men filling important positions in the railway and other industrial departments, as well as many farmers and tradesmen in the district received their education in this school".

(3) "That though under certain contingencies a further provision was contemplated by Mr. Thomas Harley for the founding of scholarships in the school and at Cambridge for the encouraging of divinity, yet the express order of the will that the 'master was to teach freely all the boys not exceeding the number of fifty who would come constantly to the said school to be taught', without any restrictions as to the subjects of instruction, coupled with the certainty that within a village and its locality where no school exists, such boys would be mostly those requiring a sound and useful education in the ordinary subjects, permits the conclusion to be drawn that the school founded by Thomas Harley was not designed to be of the character suggested by her Majesty's Assistant Commissioner, and recommended by him to be built in another locality, out of the endowments belonging to the school".

(4) "That this school has suffered from the absence of any proper system of visiting on the part of the trustees, and that in addition to the executing of repairs needed in the school premises, and promised to the present master on his appointment by the trustees nearly 15 years ago so to adapt it to its being convenient for the taking of boarders, grants of books for the use of scholars, and other apparatus for the use of educational purposes, would tend much to the prosperity of the school".

(5) "That this meeting desires to express full confidence in the present master E. E. Serres, B.A., Trinity College., Dublin, and in his ability to carry out any reasonable scheme which may make the teaching in the school suitable for those desirous of attending a higher grade school".

(6) "That the parish and neighbourhood should have a voice in choosing managers from time to time to carry on the school".

Those resolutions were unanimously carried.

Mr. J. Towle (Thringstone) contended that it was very important and necessary, owing to the population of Coalville, Whitwick and Hugglescote, that this school endowment should be removed from Osgathorpe as recommended by the Charity Commissioners. They had a limited population in Osgathorpe, while in the parishes named they had an increase, and it was desirable that the charity should confer the greatest benefits on the greatest numbers.

After the meeting decided on forming a committee, Mr. Price Kidger asked whether the parish could not have resident trustees.

The Rector : The Parish Councils Bill will provide for that.

Mr. Bentley thought that little could be said to the trustees, seeing the distance they lived from Osgathorpe.

A proposition was passed unanimously that 4 persons from Osgathorpe, 2 from Thringstone and 2 from Belton be elected to form a committee to form a scheme to present to the Charity Commissioners so that the charity and schools might still be retained in the village of Osgathorpe.

Mr. Price Kidger alluded to the attacks on the Liberal party : but Mr. Platts thought the explanation of the vicar covered the matter. On the suggestion of Mr. J. A. Goodman, however, the meeting at once formally acknowledged that the attacks on the Liberal party were without foundation.

It was decided to send copies of the resolutions to Mr. Johnson - Ferguson M.P., the Charity Commissioners, the trustees, their agents, the County Councillors and others.

Mr. Price Kidger urged that Mr. Betterton should be written to.

The Chairman said that Mr. Bumpus of Loughborough was willing to assist them.

The chairman alluded to the presence of Mr. G. H. Poynton who he thanked for the assistance he had rendered. He moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Poynton.

Dr. Serres seconded the proposition w, when he knew sometime ago of a similar parish was carried. Mr. Poynton thanked the meeting, and said that if he had rendered any assistance, he was glad, and would do so on any other occasion. He could not conceive why they wanted to remove the charity to another parish, when he knew some time ago of a

similar charity better endowed, that had several masters and only three scholars. Why therefore should Osgathorpe with 50 scholars, be removed to another parish?

A vote of thanks to the Chairman concluded the meeting, which lasted upwards of three hours.

Transcribed from the Coalville Times - Friday 18 May 1906

OSGATHORPE GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOUNDATION

A NEW SCHEME

PROPOSED SECONDARY SCHOOL AT COALVILLE

We have received a draft of a proposed new order and scheme to be submitted to the Board of Education for approval dealing with the foundation of the Osgathorpe Grammar School. It will be remembered that owing to a lack of pupils, the school was closed a few years ago and a suggestion was made for its removal to Coalville. Considerable opposition to this was raised, but the Board of Education ordered an enquiry as a result of which a new scheme has been drafted. It was announced at the last meeting of the Coalville Urban District Council that a copy of the scheme had been received, and the Board of Education desired to be made acquainted with any observations the Council might have to make thereon. The Council at the present time has the matter under consideration.

It appears that the foundation was created by the will of Thomas Harley dated June 11th 1670. The new scheme provides that the foundation shall in future be managed by a governing body consisting of twelve persons of whom eight are ex officio governors - the Trustees of the Non-educational part of Thomas Harley's foundation for the time being, and four representative Governors to be appointed each for a term of three years - two by the Leicestershire County Council and two by the Osgathorpe Parish Council. A representative Governor need not be a member of the appointed body. The first representative Governors to be appointed by the Leicestershire County Council shall be appointed each for the remainder of the term, for which the existing County Councillors were elected, and thereafter till the appointment of his successor. Religious opinions or attendance or non-attendance at any particular form of religious worship is to not in anyway affect the qualification for any person being one of the Governing Body under the scheme. Except in special circumstances with the approval of the Board of Education in writing, no Governor is to take or hold any interest in any property belonging to the foundation otherwise as a trustee for the purpose thereof or receive any remunerations or be interested in the work or supply of goods, at the cost of the foundation. Four Governors will form a quorum, the chairman having a second or casting vote.

The provisions for transferring the administration of the foundation to the Governors state that the transfer is to be made at the expiration of two calendar months from the date of the scheme. The headmaster's house and detached piece of garden belonging thereto is to be let at the best rent obtainable. The Governors may allow such part of the present school buildings as they think fit to be used by the managers of the Public Elementary School for improving the existing accommodation of that school and, subject to the conditions of the latter clause, the buildings of the school of the foundation may be appropriated and used by the Governors for a library and reading room for children and young persons who are not more than 21 years of age, for the purpose of pursuing their education. The library is to be open to children and young persons whose parents are bona fide residents in the Parish of Osgathorpe, and who are or have been in attendance at the school of the foundation or at the Osgathorpe public elementary school. The Governors may from time to time let or lend such parts of the buildings as they may think, for evening classes, lectures and other purposes not interfering with the educational character of the foundation.

The clauses dealing with the application of income state : the sum of £681 12s 1d. consols, now standing in the name of the official trustees of charitable funds on investment account for

the trust of the foundation and representing the portion of the income of the foundation applicable for educational purposes, shall under the authority of the Charity Commissioners be sold as soon as conveniently may be after the date of this scheme, and the proceeds of such sale, together with any cash standing to credit of the same account be remitted to the Governors or as they direct to be applied in or towards the establishment of a new secondary school at Coalville. After payment of the expenses of administration, the Governors shall apply the net yearly income of the foundation as follows :-

(1) They shall apply the yearly sum of £100 in the maintenance of exhibitions, to be called the Harley exhibitions, each of a yearly value of not less than £15, nor more than £20, together with, if the Governors think fit, such a further sum for the maintenance of the holder, as they may think fit, tenable at Coalville Public Secondary School, or at any other Public Secondary School, and to be awarded as nearly as possible equally between boys and girls who are not more than 13 years of age on July 1st immediately preceding the award of the exhibition, and who are and have not for less than three years been in attendance at a public elementary school, with a preference for children duly qualified as aforesaid whose parents are bona fide resident in the parish of Osgathorpe, and in default of such children, with a preference for children whose parents are bona-fide residents in the parishes of Thringstone and Belton, and in default of these, children whose parents are bona-fide residents in the County of Leicester.

(2) They shall apply the residue not exceeding the sum of £100 in any one year in or towards the maintenance to the said Coalville Public Secondary School.

(3) They shall apply the ultimate residue, if any, in increasing the number of Harley exhibitions, or maintaining the library or providing books therefore.

The exhibitions are to be freely and openly competed for, and no boy or girl is to be deprived of any advantage or emolument out of the foundation on religious grounds. In cases of misconduct or idleness, the Governors have power to deprive the holder of an exhibition.

Continued over page

Dated 1st November 1906.

*The Trustees of the
Osgathorpe Charity*

*to.
Dame Ada Morton
counterpart.*

LEASE

*(of)
School House and Garden
at Osgathorpe for 5 years,
from 29th September 1906.*

to.

**Dame Ada Chaundy Morton leased the School House and Garden
for 5 years from the 29th September 1906**

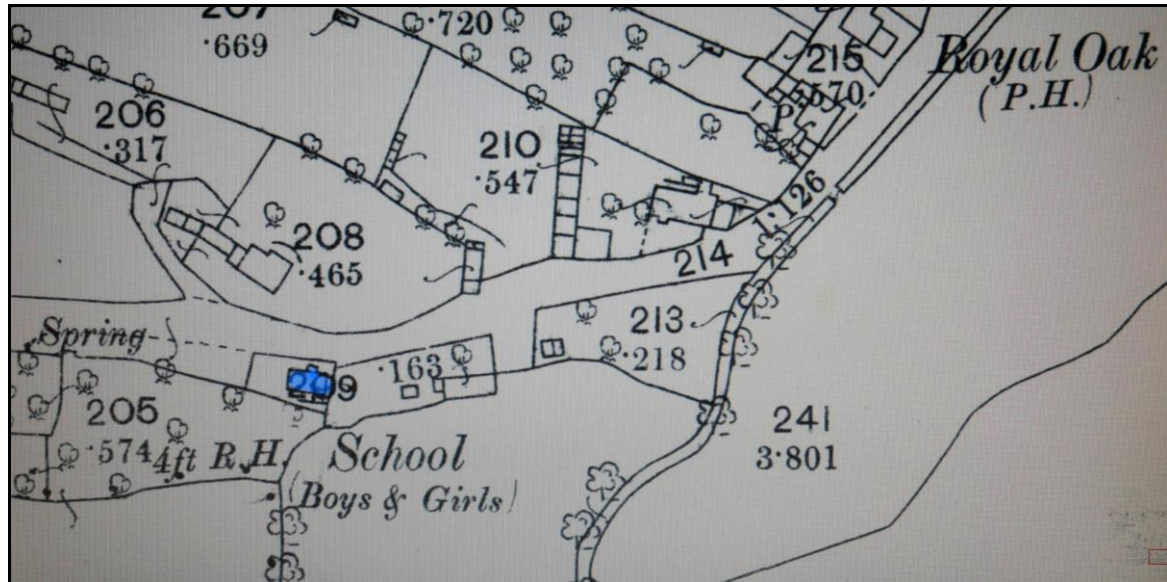
As a result of the new order and scheme, a new grammar school was built and opened in October 1909 on Forest Road, Coalville and now known as Newbridge High school. It was designed by Barrowcliff & Allcock and built by William Corah and Son. It was restored following a serious fire in 1984.



It is thought by the author that this school was almost certainly built on land owned by the Osgathorpe Thomas Harley Charity who owned a considerable amount of land in this area, but further research is required to confirm this.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

OSGATHORPE ELEMENTARY MIXED NATIONAL SCHOOL – MAIN ST



The location of the Osgathorpe elementary mixed school (National school) on Main Street, coloured blue - 1883 issued 25 inch O/S map.

From c.1810 the rate of school building increased dramatically, because of competition between the dissenting and Anglican churches (Historic England, 2017). In 1808 the nonconformist British and Foreign School Society was established. In 1811 the Church of England established the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. From that date 'British Schools' and 'National Schools' were erected with grant assistance from the voluntary societies.

A National School (public mixed elementary) was built in 1836 in Osgathorpe on a site donated by the late John Bainbrigge Story Esq who was lord of the manor at the time. The Rector and Church wardens were the trustees and managers.

A History of Leicestershire Schools records *that this was a mixed school and an infants' school attached to the Anglican church, which in 1846/47 27 boys and 13 girls attended on weekdays, and an additional 5 boys and 12 girls attended on Sundays. The school being partly funded by a grant of £35 from the National Society and the annual costs of circa £26 were met partly by subscriptions and partly by payments from parents.*

Continued over page



The photograph can be dated to 1902. Note the children at the front are posing on a pegged rug, made from cut up strips of material pegged into a hessian backing. The school had an average attendance of 48 in 1901 when Miss. A. Parker was the headmistress, and she is likely to be the lady on the LH side. Presumably the gentleman in black on the right of the photograph is the rector at the time, the Rev. Augustus Williams. Another teacher at the time was Sarah Pepper who is possibly the other mistress next to the Rector.

Fanny Emma Pepper is 6th from the right on the front row. Horace Pepper is on the front row at the LH end and George Pepper is 4th from the left on the second row

The following teacher's names have been recorded in Trade Directory and Censuses and are all thought to have been at the National School:-

In 1841 Elizabeth Todd is given as the teacher at the infant school.

Lucy Asnet is recorded as the mistress in William White's 1846 Trade Directory.

In 1851, Mary Meakin is a school mistress.

In 1861, Sophia Meakin is a school mistress.

In 1851 and 1861, Cassandra Branson is listed as a Day School Mistress.

Mary Ault was recorded as being a mistress of the National School in 1851, 1855, 1861 and 1863. Mary was born at Tamworth in 1801 and was married to Samuel Ault, born in 1807 at Belton who was an Ag labourer.

By 1870 Miss Mary Ann Huddleston was the National School mistress.

The 1881 census records Emma Hughes as a teacher

Kelly's directory of 1891 recorded Miss Annie Knight as mistress.

The 1891 census records Edith E Goodman as an elementary teacher

Kelly's 1895 directory records a Mrs. A. Marriot as being the mistress at the National School.

In 1901 Mary Earp, Gertrude Lakin, Sarah Pepper and Harriet Roadley are all recorded as school teachers. One school master named John G Beutley is recorded, but we cannot be certain where he was teaching. Robert T Hance is living in Osgathorpe but he was teaching at Griffydham Wesleyan Methodist Day school, Peggs Green

In 1911, Ethel Annie Lager is recorded as the Head Mistress & Frances G Lakin, Amelia Parker and Catherine Vereburry as teachers. Effie Gimson is recorded as an elementary teacher.

Kelly's directory of 1916 records that the school will hold 50 children with an average attendance of 48 and Miss. J. Blackwell was the mistress.

It seems reasonable to assume except where otherwise stated that all those teachers recorded above taught at the National School.

Numerous records about the National School from when it was first built are held at the record office at Kew. Unfortunately none of these have been digitized and appointments to view these at Kew are required.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE THOMAS HARLEY ENDOWED FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Although the information is somewhat sketchy, photographic evidence and information from local village people confirms that the former Endowed Free Grammar school was re-opened as an infant school. Below is a photograph from 1962 taken at the Thomas Harley School.



This 1962 photograph shows a class of 8 infants.

At the rear from L to R - 1st pair, Sandra King & Valerie Greasley, 2nd pair, Irene Allard and David Bramley.

Front L to R - 1st pair, John Bennet, Ann Arnett, then Linda Arnett, and far right Philip Bennet.

Continued over page



**The Harley School pupils
thought to be dated 1927 / 8**