This was not produced as an essay, but notes for a talk, and may not be grammatically correct.

History of OSH to the Year 2000. Talk to Stourbridge Historical Society, 18.11.21

President and secretary, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for inviting me to deliver this evening's talk on a Stourbridge landmark, a very productive part of the erstwhile manor of Bedcote and something of a constant of the region's heritage for over 350 years.

I hope too, that it has interesting tale to be told for its own sake.

If I am this evening's storyteller then I would like to thank a number of individuals who have helped me to put it together. I am grateful to Beverley Hirons, Steward to the Feoffees, or trustees, of Old Swinford Hospital, who has given me access to over 350 years of the minutes from their meetings. I am grateful to Professor Adrian Hill, an old Foleyan, or old boy of the school, who is our leading expert on the relationship between the men who founded our school. We eagerly await the publication of his monograph on Baxter, Berry and Foley. I am also grateful to old Foleyans Professor David Walker, Rob Franks, John Whiting and Stuart McAllister, as well as Guy Sheppard and Bob Peake, whose insight has helped my construct the picture of OSH after World War Two, and who have been very generous with their time; and Nicky Rowberry, who has let us borrow some images from her great grandfather's story that I will tell you this evening. And finally, many thanks are due to former Headmaster Chris Potter, whose 23 year tenure as head enters the history books this evening.

Our story begins in the seventeenth century, when the cloth, glass and iron industries had already put this town and its inhabitants on the map.

It was in the year 1627, some 40 years before the foundation of the School, that Richard Foley moved across from Dudley, where he was mayor, to Stourbridge, coming to live in what is now the Talbot Hotel. He appears to have acquired lands and property bought from the Addenbrooke family, whose wealth came mostly from mills along the river Stour. Local historians Nigel Perry and Roy Peacock, whose respective works on the 'History of Stourbridge' and the 'Seventeenth Century Foleys' have been borrowed from extensively,

agree that Richard Foley was THE leading figure in Stourbridge by the eve of the English Civil War. **SLIDE 2** Legend has it that 'fiddler' Foley disguised himself as a musician on no more than two occasions whilst visiting Sweden and learning about contemporary technology which enabled bars of iron to be 'slit' into rods, which were then passed to nailers who gave them a point and head. At the height of his success, Richard Foley is judged to have been responsible for around 7.5% of English iron output. Allegations of industrial espionage aside, Richard Foley's wealth, estates and philanthropy – for he saved and restored the Grammar School in Dudley, would have made quite an impression on his son Thomas, the Founder of Old Swinford Hospital, who was tasked with managing his father's slitting mill in Kinver when he was but 19 years of age.

SLIDE 3 We tell our pupils at OSH that in today's world, Thomas Foley would have been viewed as a visionary entrepreneur, a brave politician at a time of considerable dislocation and uncertainty, and a committed, morally driven educationalist whose legacy can be seen in our community today.

In one of the few comments we have about his character, the prominent Kidderminster churchman Richard Baxter tells us that Thomas Foley was a 'just and blameless' man with 'great integrity'. Baxter continues to tell us that 'he had a horror of laziness in others and rejected it in himself completely'. This latter characteristic is most certainly supported by the historical record and the nature of his benefaction.

Before OSH, Thomas Foley had spent a good 30 years of his life, contributing to and then growing his father's network of enterprises to do with the iron industry. It operated mainly between the West Midlands, London and the South East in order to meet the demands of the governments of the time for iron weaponry and iron shot – and nails of course. In the 1640s, where Richard Foley supplied the Royalist war effort with iron products, pike heads and shot, his son Thomas did the same for the armed forces of Parliament. Accident of geography, rather than political allegiance, best explains this unexpected, but certainly profitable, family arrangement.

Thomas had married at twenty and his wife Anne gave birth to their first child when Thomas was 22. Anne came from Kent, where her father, John Browne, made iron weapons for King Charles I. **SLIDE 4** John Browne was the first holder of the post of 'King's Gunfounder' and

an arms maker of real importance. He had won, for example, the contract to provide 100 cannon to the 'Sovereign of the Seas', the 1,500 ton triple decker flagship of the king's navy. Ten years later, and on the other side of the English Civil War, Foley and Browne were receiving orders from *Parliament* of 86 guns.

With his brothers, Thomas Foley expanded his father's midlands operation, merging it with the southern English network he also came to manage firstly with John Browne, and then, after Brown's death, with Thomas's own sons.

By the time he was 50, with considerable wealth and a very successful career in the iron industry, status as an initially reluctant High Sheriff of Worcestershire and experience as an MP for Worcestershire and then Bewdley he had decided to pass on his industrial enterprises to his three sons.

He was at this time not only busy with his political commitments but also a new and exciting project - the foundation of his school - Old Swinford Hospital. **SLIDE 5**

We may assume that Foley would have been aware of the draft for his epitaph, found at Great Witley:

'the most distinguished of all his good works was an exceptional example of a training school which he had built in the county of Worcestershire donating it with the fullest and most ample of funds in which this most pious and prudent man desiring to halt godlessness and sloth, the growing evils of this age, ordered the pupils (of which he wished there to be sixty) to be imbued with reverence for the spirit and for a good education so from that school as from a training ground of virtue and good learning they should emerge profitably for themselves and for the country.'

His benefaction was indeed an example of the fullest and most ample of funds, and so I think it is fair to assume that Foley was committed to putting the school on the right path, and keeping it there for the longue durée.

Hospital schools, or schools that provided hospitality, also known as … hospitals, were set up as acts of charity, whose colour is blue, so were also known as bluecoat schools … and after cathedral schools, were among the first boarding schools as you may know.

Richard Foley, Thomas's father, had acquired common lands in what was then known as Bedcote manor in 1643 and building work for the Hospital began in 1667.

Now, Thomas Foley would not have been unfamiliar with the importance of local schooling, its operational challenges, fiscal needs and its moral purpose. His father, you may remember, effectively saved the free grammar school in Dudley from ruin, restored it established its endowment and recruited its first feoffees, or trustees.

He had also put Richard Baxter and James Berry in charge of it in 1638. These were men who became good friends of Thomas Foley and most certainly influenced his decision to set up the hospital in Stourbridge. Their story must also be told.

SLIDE 6 Richard Baxter, the moderate Church of England Divine, 'the chief of English Protestant Schoolmen' (Arthur Stanley, 19th Century Dean of Westminster) was possibly the most influential churchman of his time. He was very well known to Oliver Cromwell and, later, Charles II.

After an unhappy period in London in his younger years, which involved too much gambling and not enough Christianity, he returned to the Midlands to look after this ageing mother. His first appointment was at Dudley Grammar School and he preached his first sermon at St Thomas's, in that town. Here, he met a number of nonconformist thinkers and began to explore the place for free thinking in the Church. Baxter became a prolific writer, of course. His 'Saints' Everlasting Rest' is a classic of English devotional literature, was reprinted 12 times during his lifetime and is still in print today. For our pupils at OSH, Baxter is the man who wrote the words to Ye Holy Angels Bright – our school song- following the death of his wife, Margaret.

Baxter, legend has it, preached to Thomas Foley in 1655 on the 'Right Use of Wealth'. The sermon was expanded and published the following year and in it, Baxter emphasises the value of education. Indeed, Baxter recommends in this expanded sermon that those who can ought to 'take the children of the poor, and set them apprentices to some honest trade, and be sure you choose them godly masters, that may take care of their souls as well as their bodies.' Baxter would have been aware of the good work done by Christ's Hospital School, then situated in Newgate, London, and not far from Foley's London home in Austin

Friars. We can imagine him discussing this with Samuel Pepys, a strong supporter of Christ's and a contemporary of Foley and Baxter. Both are mentioned in his diaries. We believe that beyond Christ's, Baxter and Foley also went to visit Queen Elizabeth's Hospital in Bristol, Cheetham's in Manchester and Abingdon Hospital near Oxford. They appear to have done their homework.

James Berry, the radical to Baxter's moderate, had served as a cavalry colonel during the Civil War and after it was then appointed to the Commission of Ejectors for Linconshire. Here he would have had experience removing inadequate ministers … and schoolmasters. By the time Berry was advising Richard Foley on the school in Dudley, he had served as Major General of Herefordshire, commanded the largest regiment in the army, the Blues, and was one of Baxter's most ardent supporters and influencers. We believe that Berry had a more indirect influence on Foley and would have been instrumental in making the argument that schools had a transformational purpose, as well as a practical one. We see this in St Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 12, which would have been known well to these men, and where our motto comes from. The letter ends 'do not become overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good', which is our motto, yet it begins 'do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

It is very likely that these three men – Baxter, Berry and Foley - shared a particular view, probably in line with Presbyterian thinking of the time, that hospitals were places for a transforming ministry which valued, alongside the work of transformation, informational education and vocational education.

And, given their nonconformist sympathies and their suspicion of meddling by central government, it would have been important to set the hospital up so that it could become self-reliant.

It is worth commenting at this point on the generosity of Foley's benefaction:

His will identifies a number of assets to be used in support of the school and the board, lodging and education of its pupils, who needed to come from what would later be called the 'deserving poor. The School was endowed with some 1500 acres of land in the locality, including the manor of Pedmore, with a further £2000 invested in land and property in

Stone, Staffordshire. Rental income from this portfolio was more than enough for the schools needs. Accounts from the 1680s show that the rents were valued at over £660 and the costs were under £600.

The point here really is that the benefaction meant and intended that the school would to be able to stand on its own two feet. Again, our Founder's intention was clear. **SLIDE 7**

And it would be made clearer still by the historic mission of the feoffees, who were and still are the trustees of the school. An extract from it may be seen written beside the portrait of the Founder which hangs in the Oak Room, to the side of our library, or at the bottom of this lithograph, found in the National Portrait Gallery

It reads:

'To my faithful relations and friends, the feoffees that are and ever shall be, chosen to this trust, it is my last and earnest desire that you suffer not from neglect or unfaithfulness this house or the means thereunto settled in you to be disposed of otherwise than is expressed in the settlement thereof, and that no boys be chosen into it but such as are really objects of charity, and that they may be taught by such masters as may breed them up in the fear of God, and that when they shall be fit to be apprentices, care shall be taken to place them with such masters as may answer my great end, being the glory of God, and their real good.'

This Christian, moral and philanthropic intent is also reflected in his epitaph, of course and it was for the first feoffees, including Thomas and his sons, to see the job done.

As it is to this day, when members of the Foley family and local and committed members of our community continue to fulfil the obligations of their enfeoffment.

So, the intent of the Founder, influenced of course by Baxter and Berry, was to provide apprentices for their own benefit and for the wider benefit of the region and country. In this regard, OSH was a very different school to Stourbridge and Dudley grammar schools, with their focus on Latin. Old Swinford Hospital was about a far more technical and practical education in order to secure for each boy an apprenticeship. **SLIDE 8**

Former Headmaster Laurence Sheppard, back in 1953, gives us a concise summary of the substance and status of the early modern of apprenticeships.

He writes:

‘Apprenticeship in those days meant very much more than engaging an employee. It meant an undertaking given in all good faith to regard a boy as a human being to be helped and trained. The employer was required by the feoffees to pledge to teach the apprentice 'his craft or mystery'. When a boy was apprenticed, indentures were drawn up and signed by all the parties to the agreement, namely the employer, the boy, the parent and the feoffees. The Feoffees were always very particular about the credentials of the master and at one time insisted on a certificate of character from the employer's churchwarden. The indenture gave the employer the right to inflict 'moderate chastisement', and it bound the apprentice to be a loyal servant and not to contract matrimony or haunt taverns or play unlawful games.

That’s a lovely bit of prose.

SLIDE 9 Here is a copy of an indenture from 1901. William Rubery, who we will meet again this evening, is apprenticed to Alfred Hancox, Wheelwright.

This means of training boys was a preparation for becoming an independent and skilled worker in later life, with the means to support his family, the community and those boys who would later be indentured to him. For the poor boy to become elevated in this way, at this time, was a big deal.

Yet apprenticeship was actually in decline throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, as wage labour became more common and it became more difficult to set up as a master. Thomas Foley’s endowment, however, meant that the feoffees could pay the master generously at the time of the indenture and the hospital had continued success in apprenticing the boys right up until the end of the 19th century and into the early years of the 20th.

<u>So far, then, we can say with some confidence that Old Swinford Hospital was given a benefaction, and it was given a purpose and a plan.</u>

But schools need pupils, of course. So who were they, and where did they come from?

There has been some debate about when the first boys came to OSH and, therefore, when the true foundation dates from. Indeed, in 1870 a bicentennial medal was struck to

commemorate this very event. Yet in 1967 we celebrated our 300th and in 2017 we celebrated our 350th

I think here we turn to the research undertaken by Professor Adrian Hill. The first entry into the Hospital was for William Perkes, admitted on the 13th June 1667. 38 more boys were admitted during that first year. The 60th boy was admitted to School in 1670, at which point the '60 poore and honest boys', as per the Founders instructions, were in situ. This suggests that the first boys lived in the existing cottages on the manor, rather than in the main school building, which was probably incomplete in the summer of 1667.

And who were these boys? **SLIDE 10**

They came from 'poor but honest' families who 'through poverty' would not 'otherwise be educated'. These quotations come from the rules which Foley established, and are listed in his own handwriting in instructions to his brothers, sons and 'friends and relations'. No boy was eligible whose parents had ever received alms of the parish, and thereby Thomas Foley intentionally excluded a significant group. Remember that he abhorred idleness and laziness and quite possibly shared some proto-Victorian attitudes to do with the undeserving poor. If there was a preference, it was for the skilled worker with a number of children to clothe, house and feed.

Former headmaster Chris Potter, who has also done some detailed work on the first years of the life of the hospital tells us that 'boys had to be between 7 and 11 when admitted, free from infectious diseases and bodily infirmities and were usually apprenticed at 14. Parents had to be members of CofE (we think there were no Catholics until the 1950s). Certificates of baptism needed to be readied for inspection.' Sixty boys made up the school as we have seen, '46 'parish' boys from named parishes in Worcestershire and Staffordshire, normally places with which the Foleys had a connection, including six from Kidderminster, four from Bewdley and four from Dudley, The other 14 'choice' boys were chosen by Thomas Foley or the Feoffees from anywhere in Britain, this arrangement continued until well after the First World War.'

The feoffees would approach the vicar, churchwardens and overseers of the poor whenever there was a vacancy and request that two names were put forward for each place. Two feoffees would then go and select one of the two boys for admission.

It appears to have been a matter of some prestige for the boys to come to the hospital:

The Churchwardens and Overseers of Dudley wrote to Thomas Foley in June 1670, expressing 'abundant thankfulness' for 'favour towards us, by affording ye poor boys of our Dudley some room in that foundation, and to taste ye sweet effect of your bounty and charity'; paryaing that 'God would bless and prosper your virtyous self and all your offspring and relations'.

We may seek to construct a picture of what life was like for the first boys, their (two) masters and the employees of the School by sifting through the minutes of the feoffees, or trustees, which date from the 1660s to the present day.

The most striking feature of feoffees minutes in the 17th and 18th centuries – especially when compared to the 19th - is actually the relative ***absence*** of school business. This probably meant that there was nothing exceptional was going on. Perhaps understandably, and given their background as businessmen, landowners and local notables, the feoffees were more interested in the fortunes of the estate and their portfolio, which was very secure throughout the early years of the school's history, and became stronger still in the later 1700s when coal was discovered underneath their landholdings.

Given that the minutes always have a financial aspect to them, we note that in the first years of the school's existence, it cost about £4pa to feed each boy. The requisition list includes store cattle and pigs; butchers meat; grain; cheese and butter; bacon and salt; poultry; turnips and apples; hops, wine and cider.

Slide 11 We also learn, however, that there were stocks at the front of the building, but we are unsure whether they predated the hospital and came rather from that piece of common land in the manor of Bedcote, once owned by Richard Foley, Thomas's father.

Boys would have worked on the home farm and in the bakery but perhaps not in the school's brewery. In 1682 the Feoffees expanded the operation by appointing a granary to

be built, with a yard enclosed with brick. In the same year, we see the appointment of the second head, John Pearkes, and we learn that Broadhurst, the first and outgoing head, who appears to have died in 1682, was to have his funeral costs paid by the Feoffees and also the debts he owed them cleared. These debts, it appeared, were rental arrears he owed the Feoffees, presumably for his lodgings on site.

The new Headmaster's marital status (single) gets a mention in 1687 because now the feoffees have decided that the Headmaster will live rent free 'and for his future encouragement his wife if he marieth sall dyett and lodge with him in the Hospll. gratis until the feoffees Trustees Governors or the Major part of them Shall Otherwise order.' Sure enough, by 1687 Pearkes had got married and his wife was the new school house keeper.

The curriculum was intended to focus on reading, writing and casting accounts, and there would have been a good deal of scripture. In 1694, the cost of books for the whole year was £31 17s. 4d. A 'not too bookish' curriculum, according to former headmaster Sheppard.

But the honeymoon period, if there was one, was well and truly over, when in 1704 nearly a quarter of the school was expelled for rising up and beating and abusing their Headmaster, Mr Perks.' 12 of them were expelled, and it took the feoffees a while to replace them from the appropriate parishes and with boys whose families had not been in receipt of any poor relief. Finding the right eligible families was, at times, quite a difficult task.

The hospital was always careful to track the destinations of its apprentices. The first 12 boys, admitted in 1667, did indeed secure apprenticeships of the kind intended for them by the Founder. William Perks, the first name on the admissions register, was apprenticed to Joseph Parkes of Wolverhampton, locksmith. The others went to tailors, glaziers, blacksmiths and nailers.

By the end of the 1670s around 50 had gone to London and 20 to Birmingham. A quarter or so ended up in the cloth industry and maybe 1 in 10 were apprenticed by blacksmiths or nailmakers.

100 years later they more likely to go to local manufacturers, from candlestick makers to locksmiths, toymakers and whitesmiths.

The School had become established by this time as an institution which sent out into the wider world apprentices who had received an education intended for them to engage sufficiently with commercial and industrial enterprises. The education was all about setting them up for their point of departure and readying them for the wider world. It still does that today, of course.

SLIDE 12 But the uniform has changed a little. For the first boys, the knee breeches, blue coats and flat caps were embellished with stiff white collars and cuffs. To kit out sixty boys in 1692 cost around £6. This costume was amended slightly in 1836 with the addition of corduroy trousers, which is the picture you see here, and the removal of the stockings, but largely continued until 1928.

There is one more piece of evidence from the earliest years of the school greets us each morning on our way into work, and bids us farewell at the end of the day.

We are very fortunate at OSH to have, and to use, the original school buildings.

SLIDE 13 What we now call 'Founder's Building' and which has had many names over the years, is the original school building. Reputedly designed by a student of Christopher Wren, Its Jacobean style and pronounced chimney stacks would have looked a lot like Thomas Foley's own manor house in Great Witley.

I shall use the language of a 1913 survey 'A History of the County of Worcestershire' to describe it to you:

The original building, which is of brick with stone dressings, is three stories in height and faces east. The plan is oblong and two rooms in depth. The eastern side of the ground floor is occupied by a large schoolroom, part of which is now used as a dining hall, and by the board room which opens out of it at the northern end. On the west, at the rear of the building, are the kitchen, staircase and the master's rooms. Some original wainscoting still remains in the large schoolroom, into which the main entrance opens directly. The board room, now used as the head master's study, has its original panelling in good preservation. Over the fireplace at the west end of the room hangs the portrait of the founder, Thomas

Foley. The apartments at the north-west corner of the building seem to have originally formed the head master's house. The first and attic floors are occupied on the east side by large dormitories. The ground and first floors are lighted by small stone-mullioned windows, and the stories are marked externally by moulded string-courses of stone. The entrance doorway is in the centre of the east elevation, and has a moulded semicircular head springing from panelled pilasters, surmounted by an entablature, the centre of which is crowned by a curved pediment. The whole is flanked by large inverted consoles. In the head of the door itself, which is a fine piece of 17th-century joinery, is a small wooden figure of Charity. From the centre of the building rises a small brick turret, capped by a modern lantern. The roofs are tiled.

That building is central feature of the view to the west from Oldswinford down to Stourbridge, and that view has remained largely uninterrupted for 354 years.

THE 1800S

If the first 130 or so years of the school was all about setting up and settling down, change was coming.

The experience of the French revolution and the wars that followed it, the impact of the industrial revolution, the rapid growth in population and the many different and competing ideas of the age meant that Old Swinford Hospital was bound to experience change of some sort in the nineteenth century.

The contemporary debate on education seemed to have its origins in three competing groups of commentators: the public educators, the industrial trainers and the old humanists. By the end of the century, OSH would possibly find itself in all three camps, although the Headmaster was unsurprisingly bent on keeping it in the second one.

We are also incredibly lucky, and indebted to him – a former president of this society, I believe - that we have Professor Eric Hopkins's substantial essay published in 1969 the British Journal of Educational Studies 'A Charity School in the Nineteenth Century: Old Swinford Hospital School, 1815-1914.' Together with the professor's work and our Feoffees' minutes, we can go some way to chart the course of the changing school, and in more detail than, say, the period 1667-1800.

School numbers, for instance, grew from about 60 in 1800 to 120 in 1850 and, depending which account you read, were somewhere in the region of 160 by 1900. A building programme saw the School's footprint more than double in size. The curriculum evolved and included new subjects. The key events, at a local level, that prompted change, were quite probably the visitation of a charities commissioner in 1832, and the headship of William Maybury nearly 50 years later.

Before we discuss the changes, it is worth noting that some things stayed the same. Boys rose at 6am in summer and 6.30am in winter and went to bed at 8pm, attending prayers twice a day at 0900 and 1800. Holidays were a month at Christmas and five (or sometimes more) weeks in the summer. 30 hours a week was spent in lessons, learning largely by rote.

Smallpox inoculations were essential when the boys started. Remaining at OSH during times of contagion was the norm, or going to the Sanitorium in Halesowen if they fell seriously ill. OSH built its own impressive Sanitorium in 1875, during a measles and scarlet fever epidemic. This building is the one we now call Foster House and overlooks Heath Lane towards Mary Stevens Park.

The boys' life was still rather Spartan and tough, even if they would have been regarded, amongst their contemporaries, to be very lucky indeed to win a place at Old Swinford Hospital and on the path to apprenticeship and work. It was bread and milk for breakfast, with coffee, butter and dripping from 1876, I might add. Meat was for dinner four days of the week with bread and cheese on the other three. All in all, it was similar to other boarding schools at this time.

It is not an understatement to suggest that there would have been a Dickensian feel about the place. Former headmaster Sheppard kind of gave the game away when, discussing the school history for a 1968 article following the tercentenary year, he noted that 'only fifty years ago pupils were scrubbing the floors as they might have done in an orphanage. (We even have visits from old boys who remember it- he added). ' We have no reason to disbelieve him – the frame of reference for an Old Boys reunion, for example, can easily begin some 60 years before they say grace and serve the beef.

I shall read on:

Mr Sheppard likes to show visitors the once cobbled playground that not so long ago, was the boys' only recreational area. In those days, too, they washed by a cold tap outside. In the past 50 years, he commented, we have seen the school change from an orphanage into an educational establishment.

I feel that is a little harsh, because unlike the orphanages of the 19th century, and as we have seen this evening, OSH was most certainly not overfunded, nor would it become overcrowded. There was corporal punishment, of course, which continued well into the 1960s.

The conditions, however, were very tough and at times physically brutal, and so the boys would occasionally take matters into their own hands, like those great rebels back in 1704. Some of them surely felt that their only options, crudely, were either fight or flight.

Here the Feoffees minutes continue to make enlightening reading.

For example, in 1812 they instructed that 'that Charles Thring of the parish of Bromsgrove be and now is expelled for frequently absenting from this school.'

It would get worse by the 1840s. Once more, the boys were running away. The Feoffees admonished the Second Master for beating the boys too harshly and later dismissed him for improper conduct.

At a special Meeting of the Feoffees held this 10th. day of February 1841, there was an enquiry into the behaviour of ..

Petford

Hitchin

Jordan

Dixon

Perrins

Stokes

(Great schoolboy names, these.)

Enquiry was made into the cases of 6 boys who had run away from the school during the last week, when it appeared, after a full enquiry, that no blame whatever was attributable to the Masters, or any part of the Establishment: and whereas such conduct appears to have been committed in a mischievous spirit, is subversive of order, giving much trouble and uneasiness both to the Masters and Feoffees, and tending to bring discredit on the school; Ordered, that Petford, having attempted to run away a second time, & to stab with a knife the boys sent in pursuit of him, be expelled forthwith; that Hitchon, having been a ringleader in robbing the Estblishment of bread, cheese, bacon, candles; his general character also being bad; he also expelled, the Feoffees fearing that communication with such a boy might prove injurious to the welfare of the school; & that the remaining four boys be each punished with a flogging.

It was ordered also, that in future the Master be ordered to strike out the names of all boys who ran away from the list of scholars; and that he shall inform their parents, that they are expelled the school, stating the cause threof. Ordered also, that a copy of these proceedings be read by each Master in the school rooms, & be sent to the parents of all the boys.

Pour encourager les autres.

It wouldn't be the last attempted great escape either. 1850s – the minutes record continued flogging and expulsion for serious offences, including running away. The Feoffees report of 21 September 1854 states that 43 boys had run away and the ringleader and expelled. The head at the time claimed the school was in 'a state of rebellion'. . Special enquiry as to why (Feoffees) and seemed that not enough food and cruel treatment by the second master. In 1855 boys were still absconding en masse … this time, the feoffees felt the head was being too soft on the boys. A new rule was introduced that the first offence for running away was a headmaster flogging, and for the second offence - the expulsion.

You might sense that there is a far more detailed and operational quality to feoffees minutes at this time, than there was in the 1700s, and there is also a much greater interest in the affairs of the boys. This was primarily due to a visit of a charity commissioner in 1832…

The Commissioners of Enquiry into the administration of charities were looking –across the country – to boost charitable accountability; to combat fraud and to have the charities put their affairs in order and found – in the spring of 1832 – that the hospital had 58 boys on roll rather than the expected 70 with an annual income of £2400 so why not expand more the rightfully asked, in terms of numbers and facilities (180)

So numbers gradually increased to 100, with 120 boys in 1852, and the Barn was converted to classrooms with a dorm upstairs.

The decades after this visit also saw the formal appointment of the Second Master and a Medical Officer who now visited weekly and came to vaccinate every new boy on entrance.

The Feoffees themselves carried out weekly inspections of food, clothing and education. Half-yearly examinations – prizes, were instated, and of great satisfaction to pupils would have been the arrival of pewter plates cups and basins instead of wooden ones (bring some along)

This different level of scrutiny of school life from top to bottom can be seen in another entry from the 1840s.

At an adjourned Meeting held this 26th. day of January 1846

A consultation having taken place among the feoffees respecting the resolution of the last Meeting

It was considered

That in addition to the Salary of the Head Master due on the 25 day of March next the sum of 20£ be immediately paid to him so as to make it three clear Months Notice from the 19th. day of January inst., and that his Services cease from this day –

That in Consequence of the Application of Mr. Evans the under Master, for the Saituation of Head Master, and In Consideration of his good and steady Conduct during the five years he has been here, he be elected Head Master forthwith, but that he continue in the Establishment upon the same Terms & salary until the 25th. day of March next, and from

that time that he be continued with the same Salary & subject to the same rules & regulations as the present Head Master –

Mr. Dixon (that's the outgoing head) having appeared and being informed of the previous resolutions, was paid the 20£ and the following testimonial upon his Application was given to him

"We the undersigned feoffees of Oldswinford Hospital hereby certify that Mr. Mathew Dixon has held the situation of Head Master of this large Institution for a period of nearly seven years during which Time we have been fully satisfied with his Experience, Capacity, and facility of teaching and for his Civility good Temper and Attention in conducting the business of a commercial School – And we regret that some pecuniary Embarassments in which he is unfortunately involved, render his Continuance at this Hospital impossible

Dated January 26 1846 at Oldswinford Hospital"

There's an agreed reference for you.

You can imagine the boy's nicknames for Dodgy Dixon and Earnest Evans, but Evans only lasted three years, which in the lifetime of an OSH Headmaster is not long at all.

Anyhow, it seemed that under the new arrangements, nothing got past the feoffees.

What did the boys learn, you might ask, other than how to run away and frighten their masters?

Well the Old Swinford curriculum evolved during these years, moving beyond 'reading, writing and casting accounts' to quote the Founder, to History, Geography, Woodwork and Euclidian Geometry. By the end of that century, the first evidence of what we now call the co-curriculum could be seen in sport, shooting, extension lectures and even trips and visits … to the seaside no less. This would be in keeping with the mood of the age and the gradual realisation that education was a moral, social and physical as well as an intellectual and economic activity. It is one of the things that gives English education a certain distinctiveness, even to this day.

The intent behind the curriculum is summarised for us here by R T Kindersley, Master of the Court of Chancery. He had been sent a report on the revised scheme for the running of the charity and observed that OSH provided the following:

A good practical education suited for the male children of a poor population employed in mining, manufacturing, agricultural and commercial pursuits and proper religious instruction according to the principles of the Church of England as by law established.'

Such education was to include 'Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, History and Geography and such branches of Mathematics and such practical Sciences and Arts and such Languages as the trustees shall from time to time deem best adapted to the wants and of the Boys Resorting to the School.' (1849)

The feoffees, for their pains, instructed examiners to come into OSH and give an assessment of how the boys were doing. They had instituted the sitting of exams in order to track levels of attainment.

Here are some fragments of reports from the middle of the nineteenth century.

I have examined the first and second Classes in the Church Catechism & Bible History, and was altogether much pleased with their Answers – In the repetition of the broken Catechism they were both of them quite perfect. The first Class were also very intelligent in Answers not in the book and seemed to understand the subjects well - The second Class were less intelligent in such questions, but still creditable with respect to the Catechism – If I were to suggest any point that seemed to me to require Improvement, it would be with respect to the History of the Apostles. I also examined both these classes in Geography, in which they seemed remarkably well informed . They are all of them attentive and seem well disciplined.

Probably because they were afraid of being flogged, but there are signs that there was more ambition behind curriculum at this time.

Another assessor writes:

I beg to observe that the Standard of Education in the School is likely to be lowered by the admission of boys who are not able to read. Of the Number admitted in April last, I am informed, all but three were unable to read.

This latter comment is not significant and the pattern of illiteracy on entry would be a perennial challenge for the Headmaster, the Second Master and the Under Master, even though across the country literacy rates were rapidly increasing during the 1870s and 1880s.

Inspection reports do not tell all, of course.

In 1865 the Headmaster, Mr Anderson, was bemoaning that

'of the 11 boys admitted last summer, six were ten years of age and only two below nine; who of those above ten did not know the alphabet and could not count to a score; only three could say the multiplication table in a tolerable fashion; and although above half of them could repeat more of less the catechism, not one of them could give a decent answer to the most simple and elementary question on scripture or the catechism.'

But the curriculum plans just ten years later show an ambitious curriculum, where the senior pupils, were taking in arithmetic, Euclid, algebra, reading, history, physiology, geography, grammar, mapping, writing and entering sums … and more scripture.

And the school was still succeeding in preparing its pupils for, and securing for them apprenticeships and, as such, following the Founder's earnest desire and getting them, once more to that point of departure.

Professor Hopkins, as part of the research for his 1969 paper, listed the destinations of the boys in the 1850s: a confectioners in Aberystwyth; an architect in London; the Bristol Steam Navigation Company; a dispensing chemist as well as the manual trades of that century: rollers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, coach builders and also retail: grocers, drapers, bakers.

Interestingly, the *parents* of these very boys were now expressing an interest in destinations and at times Parents object to apprenticeship destinations provided by Headmaster. The schools solution was swift, that parents would find an alternative themselves or the feoffees would not pay the premium which accompanied the indenture, and this could ranged from £4 to £10 – £10 was half the headmasters salary (see page 185)! We will not meet OSH

parents again in our story until around 1979, so we are not yet able to shine much light on their stories.

Hopkins concludes that 'it was clear, by the middle of the nineteenth century, that the Black Country and the counties beyond it needed apprenctices; OSH helped supply them and the education it provided was directed narrowly to that end.'

SLIDE 16 A new headmaster took over in 1883 and he was as committed to this end, if not more so, than his predecessors.

William Maybury had spent 10 years as third master and second master before becoming headmaster in 1883, serving until 1928. This association of 55 years is the longest we have, on record, for any headmaster.

Maybury certainly improved the quality of life of the boys through introducing elements of what we now call the co-curriculum. We can list some of his achievements and he sounds like our first 'modern; head, if we can use the term. Athletics, cricket, magic lantern lectures, woodwork, drill and shooting, reunion dinners and seaside visits became part of OSH life under the new head.

His struggles were largely to do with finding the boys apprenticeships.

The 1870s really does mark period of change when boys who now left school for work other than apprenticeships (p188), especially to the Great Western Railway, which had offices in Stourbridge, or the iron bucket works in Lye. Maybury blamed it mostly on the economic recession that hit Europe at the end of the 1870s, but to be fair apprenticeships had been in quiet decline throughout the nineteenth century.

By the beginning of the twentieth, the writing was very much on the wall. Where 17 boys had been apprenticed in 1904, and 16 had gone into paid employment, with 9 finding no posts at all, the equivalent figures for 2014 were 10 boys apprenticed, 22 into paid employment and 2 with no posts.

By the turn of the century, the boys themselves had definitely concluded that they could avoid apprenticeships and indentures.

They had worked out that they could claim the £10 premium intended for the master if they were found an equivalent position without indentures. You can imagine the resourceful young men seeing this as quite an opportunity. The solution, which appeared to work, for while at least, was to offer apprentices an end of term grant, which they could apply for aged 21 and on successful completion of the apprenticeship. According to Maybury, this caused a brief uptick in uptake.

SLIDE 17 By the eve of the war, the school stood at 160 boys and five masters. One hundred years earlier there had been 60 boys and two masters.

The war years did not really see a significant change in the daily lives of the boys. Rationing was only introduced in 1918 and the school continued to generate much of its own food. Maybury's reports to the feoffees tell us of matters to do with the boys' conduct, academic work, health, sporting achievements and destinations. Here, Maybury laments the diminishing number of apprenticeships and observes that, increasingly, the boys found themselves in 'situations where they may or may not be bound'

1916 must have been a tough year for the Headmaster. Like many schools, old boys fought and died at the Somme. The Feoffees needed to grant him time off, most unusual for Maybury, for reasons of ill health and he could not have been unaffected by the deaths of the boys he knew so very well. 10 boys were killed in action during that year. Many other would have been injured.

But he seems, like all OSH heads, to have enjoyed good sets of sports results. For Maybury, foorball was a particular interest. 1916 was a good year: Played 7; won 5; lost 1; drawn 1; goals for 40; goals against 14. **SLIDE 18**

1917 was not such a good year on the football pitch, and the minutes of December 1917 give us further insight into the hardships of boarding life during the war.

Health I regret to report the death on Sept 10th, of Desmond Dunn (3825) of Quarry Bank of "Purpura Hemorrhagica". He was sent to the nursery on Aug 24th, with skin eruption, but gradually grew worse, & died, altho a special nurse was engaged, & every care taken of him. We have a good number of boys suffering from skin eruption, probably due to war Bread.

> J Law (3811) has been away from lessons since Oct 15th suffering from faintness. We have seven cases of ringworm.

The following year Maybury wrote to the feoffees of Old Swinford Hospital that 'we now have between five hundred and six hundred old boys serving with the colours. I have heard of several being prisoners of war in Germany.'

SLIDE 19 Maybury would have known, and known well, each of those 48 boys whose names may be found listed on our memorial in the Great Hall. He wrote to each family when he heard the news that any former pupil would not be coming back from the War.

He must have known them as pupils and later young men and apprentices; he would make a point of going to speak with each one at reunion events. There are too many stories of the fallen to tell this evening and I do not wish to do their memories an injustice, but they fought, mostly as enlisted men and NCOs, on land, sea and amongst those who fought in the air.

Many came back to fight for their country having left it not long after leaving OSH. Like Walter Harris, who had apprenticed as a printer but then went to work as a journalist in Canada. He left his wife and daughters to fight in France with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. Or Richard Daffon, apprenticed to FR Harcourt, Hairdresser of Netherton, who joined the Australian Imperial Force in Liverpool, New South Wales, in 1915, who survived Gallipoli but who, like, Walter Harris, was killed on the front line in France.

A story more local to home is that of William Rubery, whose family's research may be found online and I am grateful for Nicky Rowberry for letting me use it this evening.

William was born on 30th June 1887 in Pensnett, to Thomas Rubery and Mary Hannah Crow, who had married in Netherton near Dudley in 1874. By the 1891 census, the family were living in Kingswinford, where Thomas was working as a Loader. William was recorded as Willie Rubery aged 3, with 4 older siblings also present, plus a new baby. In 1901 the majority of the family (with 2 further additions) were still living in Kingswinford and Thomas was employed loading boats. William was not at home with the rest of the family though; he was a pupil at Old Swinford Hospital.

By October 1901, aged 14, his father had him apprenticed to Alfred Hancox, a wheelwright. The apprenticeship was to last until William was 21 years old on 30th June 1908.

Sadly, William's father Thomas died the following year, aged just 52, leaving his wife with several young children to support. Despite this William was able to complete his apprenticeship and become a wheelwright. Not long after completing his apprenticeship he married Gertrude Lloyd at Holly Hall church, Dudley.

In 1911 William & Gertrude were living in Holly Hall, where William was working as a coach builder, presumably putting his wheelwright skills to good use. They had already had 2 children, although sadly the first of these had died as an infant.

William enlisted within the first few months of the war starting in 1914, eventually becoming a Sgt in the Worcestershire Regiment. By the beginning of August 1917, his Battalion was stationed near Elverdinghe in Belgium, preparing for the bigger Ypres offensive and the attempt to take Passchendaele. A German shell killed Willliam and a good number of his comrades as they were digging in.

SLIDE 20 His wife, Gertrude received the letter all must have dreaded on 29th August 1917, with the news that her husband William Rubery was dead. Their fifth child was born just 2 months later.

SLIDE 21 Sadly, OSH was never going to be unaffected by the pandemic of 1919 and 1920 which followed the Great War. Here is the Sanatorium from that time. In common with many contemporary diagnoses, it was at first thought to be as diphtheria as Maybury's report of June 1919 attests:

I regret to report that an epidemic of diphtheria broke out in the school on Feb 17th and quite half of the boys have been affected. On May 3rd it was decided to gradually close the school by sending home those boys reported "negative" after bacteriological examination. At present only 13 boys remain who will go shortly. We had an outbreak of influenza in March when 25 boys were isolated in a room at the top of the Old Building. The most serious cases of diphtheria were Askins who died in the isolation hospital Halesowen after

an operation (Tracheotomy) and Gilbert Lloyd and [Evans] who are now convalescent. Perkins was seriously ill with septic eczema but has now recovered.

The work of the school has been disorganised in every way and no educational progress has been made. Exams have been cancelled.

In the same report Maybury's comment on apprentices confirms a pattern that he could surely see happening some 20 years before.

'Twenty boys leave this term. All have situations to go to but I regret to say none with a view to apprenticeship.'

Remember, that in his eyes the apprenticeship was both consistent with the will of the Founder, as well as a tried and tested method of getting the boys to a point in their lives where they could be respectable and self-sufficient.

For Maybury, it must have been harder still when, in 1921, he found himself compelled to put forward the argument that the abnormally high prices and impact of the miner's strike on the feoffees mining royalties meant that the hospital needed to find a way to reduce its expenditure. Maybury's solution, which was supported by the Chairman of Feoffees, P Foley Esq, was to reduce the number of boys by between 32 and 34. It was simple arithmetic. The annual cost to the hospital of a boy in 1920 was judged to be £41 and the deficit was estimated at £8,901. The election of boys to the hospital was therefore suspended until after December 1922.

By 1928, when Maybury retired, there were about 100 boys at the School. The curriculum had a breadth which we would, in part, recognise today, and the co-curriculum, such an important part of school life, was well established.

But if Maybury felt anxious about the future destinations of the boys, I do not think he would have been disappointed.

SLIDE 22 The new head was Captain Stone, who like William Rubery had fought with the Worcestershire Regiment during World War One. He had arrived in 1928. Within a year,

the old uniform of the apprentices had been replaced by a more modern dress, and during the 1930s some new and forward thinking teachers were recruited, some who served for very many years and whose names will be known to some of you in the audience today: Mr Wilkinson, Mr Childs and Mr Bartlett, affectionately known as SPUD.

The daily routine at this time hadn't changed that much since the early years of the school's foundation. Wake up at 6.45am, beds made by 7.15am. breakfast at 8 and then off to morning prayers in the Great Hall. Lessons finished at 4.45pm, and then a short break before tea, prep, prayers at 8pm and lights out at 9pm. At times, during the evenings and at weekends, the boys would manage to squeeze in Sea Scout, Air Scot, Boy Scout and army cadet activity. Hymns were learned on Saturday mornings and church at St Mary's on Sundays, so long as the weather was good enough to get there.

But the war brought with it some changes in the boarders' everyday lives. The air raid shelter was frequented by boys shivering through the night and trying to keep warm by ingesting hot chocolate brought over from the head's house, or clutching a baked potato.

The food, we are told, did not improve much. Boiled fish; porridge; rice and lentils were staples, but tinned tuna and tinned pineapple were served on special occasions. Unlike their predecessors in 1914, this time there would be rationing. Tuck shop had gone, and would not return until well into the 1950s.

When the war came and a number of teachers went off to enlist, OSH had its first experience of female teachers, yet we do not at this time have too much detailed information on what they taught. So, along with the boys' parents, we have another constituency whose stories still need to be unearthed.

Inevitably, news came back of those members of the community who had died. Captain Stone would share this news with the boys in the Great Hall, and lead them in prayer. And it must have been difficult news to take, especially when the boys knew those young men who had been killed in action, and were at School with them so very recently. 22 boys have their names on the WWII section of our war memorial in the Great Hall.

Roland James was one such name. He was Head of School in 1936 as well as captain of football and cricket. He was also a leading member of the gardening club and a highly regarded helper of the younger boys in prep, especially if anybody had any Physics work to do. Roland James was killed when his ship, the Royal Oak, was sunk by a U-Boat at Scapa Flow. He was 18. Boys who were at Stone's assembly that morning in October 1939, including Barry Bruff, whose personal reminiscences are shared with us in an article written in 1991, and Maurice Evans, who was President of the Old Foleyans Association for many years, tell the story. It is said that, with tears streaming down his cheeks, Stone was unable to continue to speak to the boys and fell into a state of shock, during which is deputy, Spud Bartlett, moved him into an anteroom to settle himself.

By the end of the war, the number of boys at School had fallen to 70 and its finances were not strong. For this reason, the School entered into an arrangement with Worcester Country Council where 10 would have their boarding places paid for by that council. Similar arrangements were made in 1947 and 1948 so that boys from local authorities from all over England could have access to an OSH education with fee support from the taxpayer. Change was clearly in the air, because up to this point, boarding fees were met by the feoffees.

The apparent new direction was cemented in the decision to move, in 1949 to Voluntary Aided status. This status has been enjoyed by the school ever since, and entitles the school to have its running costs in curriculum paid by central government via the local authority. Boarding, even though boarders may have their fee paid by the local authority, is a separate arrangement and a separate form of revenue for the school. The feoffees, meanwhile, owned and maintained the land and buildings. As such, it is possible to refer to OSH as a state boarding school from this time, although its official title was a Residential Technical Secondary School, and it retained the 11+ exam.

SLIDE 23 1951 saw the next Headmaster, Peter Sheppard, assume office. Sheppard had worked as a housemaster at Lancaster Royal Grammar School, so knew his way around boarding, and had served as a captain in the Indian Army during the war. He was an English teacher by trade, however, having graduated from Merton College Oxford before the outbreak of hostilities. This explains his nice turn of phrase.

The next fifty years is really the story of the modernisation and then transformation of the school and its journey to find its place within maintained education. **SLIDE 24** The slide you now see comes from 1976, towards the end of Sheppard's time in office. The eastern vista remains the same, but you can see the more modern hinterland heading up towards the rugby pitch at the top of the screen.

The post-war journey had its fits and starts, as you might expect. OSH would see the gradual and then full growth of its Sixth Form, a modern building programme and, by the end of the century, the replacement of employment at age 16, by a new convention: university matriculation at 18.

This path would not have been clear to Sheppard at the beginning of his headship, however, nor would it have been clear to any head in charge of a school so soon after World War Two, despite the grand designs of the 1944 Education Act.

Two years into his headship, Sheppard wrote a piece for a local periodical entitled:

From Charity School to Residential Technical School (1953)

He explained that

The average age of leavers is 16 years 8 months; some boys stay on until their national service call up; the bulk of the leavers take up industrial (placements), but there is a wide variety of careers which interests the boys.

He added:

The standard of intelligence carries to a certain extent; some boys have reached a pass mark to a grammar school, but are thought to be more suited to the practical education provided here. Others are slightly below this standard.

To accommodate this standard of intelligence, the school developed a kind of twin track curriculum from the third year post-entry, where day pupils who had passed the 11+ at OSH were more likely to go along a technical and engineering pathway, whilst boarders studied the rural sciences.

Four years later, the school was inspected by HMI and by this stage the small Sixth Form was up and running. Perhaps indicative of the journey the school still had to make and the fact that the head had his work cut out is the comment the inspectors made on 'staff':

The Headmaster was appointed in 1951. His first six years at the school have been years of constant change, and now that the broad lines of policy have been laid down and tolerable accommodation obtained, he is wisely re-examining the aims of his school.

There are four or five good teachers and most of the staff are interested in and thinking about the many problems thrown up in the school at its present stage of development, but several do not appear to have the teaching skill required to meet fully the challenge of new ideas.

There was probably a little too much learning by rote, which is unsurprising given its status as orthodoxy for the previous 290 years.

In conclusion, (the HMI continued) if a challenging alternative to a grammar school education is to be provided, standards of attainment will have to be raised and work so planned and presented as to stimulate and encourage boys who learn best in practical situations while making demands on the ablest among them.

There we have it.

Regardless, it was clear that OSH was not attempting to ape the local grammars, but maintain its distinctiveness.

By this stage, OSH been in the state sector for less than ten years. This inspection must have been an interesting experience for feoffees and governors, who are now of course quite used to them.

About 13 years later, Sheppard's understanding of what OSH was becoming during his tenure can be found in a written submission to the recently convened Newsom Commission on Public Schools. The commission was tasked by Ted Heath's Government to explore the ways in which private boarding schools could be made more socially inclusive, could enter

the state system and could justify their charitable status. This back in was in 1968 and the debate goes on.

Shepard described OSH as a blueprint for what the public (by which he means private) school of the future may become. He explained that OSH boys came from all walks of life and family background, and who intended to better themselves through the education and the opportunities provided. To paraphrase him, it was a diverse and aspirational community.

Through strategy and necessity, Sheppard appears to have shaped a school which was preparing the boys not only for employment after school, but also further education. Thus, by the end of his headship OSH, like so many other English schools had quite a comprehensive range of destinations, indicative of the needs and the dispositions of its leavers.

The school in the 1950s and 1960s was run by axis of SPUD Bartlett, and the head. Nicknamed 'Grinner' the Headmaster is described as distant but caring. One recollection has him running an outward bounds activity in Abersoch when a pupil, clearly too unwell to continue, needed to be taken home. So Mrs Sheppard, at her husband's behest, came to the rescue, driving all the way over to the Llyn from the Black Country, and back again with her patient, who she returned safely home.

Sheppard also seemed to have an enthusiasm for getting the boys to see the benefit of knowing about current affairs, enjoyed his English literature teaching and most certainly improved the quality of the food. SPUD Bartlett, on the other hand, ran the school (with the help of his prefects). Corporal punishment was not yet a thing of the past, and former pupils do remember the different methods of administering it by 'Bruiser' Bradley, 'Butch' Johnson and 'Tex' Hunt. This means of disciplining pupils was common across all institutions at this time, of course.

CHRIS POTTER ARRIVES.

The final head in the period of history covered by this presentation, a classicist from Cambridge, arrived from Ardingley College in 1978. **SLIDE 25**

Chris Potter knew virtually nothing about the school prior to his first visits, but the cigarette stubs in the prefects common room in Barn Block seemed to suggest that there was still a little work to do and so diminishing the power of these over-eager and, at times, hands-on disciplinarians. His early meetings with parents suggested that there were some teachers who needed to reassess their priorities, which he duly facilitated. The other great challenge was keeping the Local Authority at arms length in order to protect the schools boarding revenue from external control, something which the finance department in Dudley could become quite aggressive about.

By this stage, OSH found itself struggling to recruit boarders from outside of Dudley. The 1974 boundary changes meant that OSH was isolated within the municipal borough. Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Shropshire County Councils and Local Authorities were reluctant to contribute to the teaching or boarding costs of pupils going out of county. This meant that school numbers had fallen to about 300, with 150 boarders and 150 day pupils.

One such pupil, who wished to come to OSH but whose Local Authority was refusing to pay up, was one PAUL COKE FAULKNER from Solihull. Potter encouraged his family to appeal. Shirley Williams, who was Education Secretary at the time, reviewed and found in favour of the family who could send their son to OSH. It was a landmark ruling. Doors were now open for boys from other LAs to come to OSH and the right of parental choice was embedded in 1980 Education Act.

This important recruitment boost for the school was aided by a more flexible approach to boarding life at OSH. Potter could see that the 1980s was a time when public schools were reluctant to have their pupils go home at weekends. OSH could offer something else in its weekly boarding provision. This meant that prep school pupils began to choose to come across to OSH at 13+ and boarding numbers rose once more.

The head and governors then embarked on an ambitious policy of boarding expansion throughout the 1980s, with four new boarding houses and noticeably improving facilities.

Without a doubt, Chris Potter was establishing OSH as one of the leading state boarding schools in the country, with 550 pupils on roll when he retired in 2001.

Under Potter, the Sixth Form developed a sharply competitive edge to it which was clearly seen in the destinations of the boys. In 2000, a modern sports hall and gym replaced the old one, supporting the journey of OSH sport – and especially rugby – towards its current position.

SLIDE 26 Potter's 23 years at the helm ended in 2001, and it is no understatement to claim that he had transformed the OSH into the modern boarding school which it is today.

POSTSCRIPT.

If a bluecoat boy from the summer of 1667 were to be transported to the middle of the school campus in the Year 2000, he might not quite know what was going on.

But were he to spend the day shadowing the boys: wake-up; breakfast; registration; lessons; tea and cakes; activities; sport; prep; supper; more prep; detention; more activities … he wouldn't feel that the school day had changed all that much in his 333 years. Were he to walk down to the Hagley Road and look back, he would see a view that had remained largely unchanged for all of that time.

He would know that it was still his school.

The indenture might have been replaced by a university offer, but the school's commitment to getting young people ready for that point of departure – and beyond – was as strong as ever.

Mindful of this evening's audience, which is a wonderful mixture of local historians and those with a personal connection to the school, it is worth concluding that the Founder's aims can be seen reflected in the hospital's practice for over three centuries. The reason for that, firstly, lies in the strength of the benefaction and its stewardship over many years. Secondly, that relative to the historical context, the headmasters and feoffees have interpreted and then applied those aims to their own times, thus allowing the school to evolve, but not deviate. And finally, OSH continues to take great care over the destinations of its leavers. For this reason, it remains well qualified to make informed judgements about Thomas Foley's real legacy – his pupils.

We will end with Thomas Foley's epitaph, just one more time

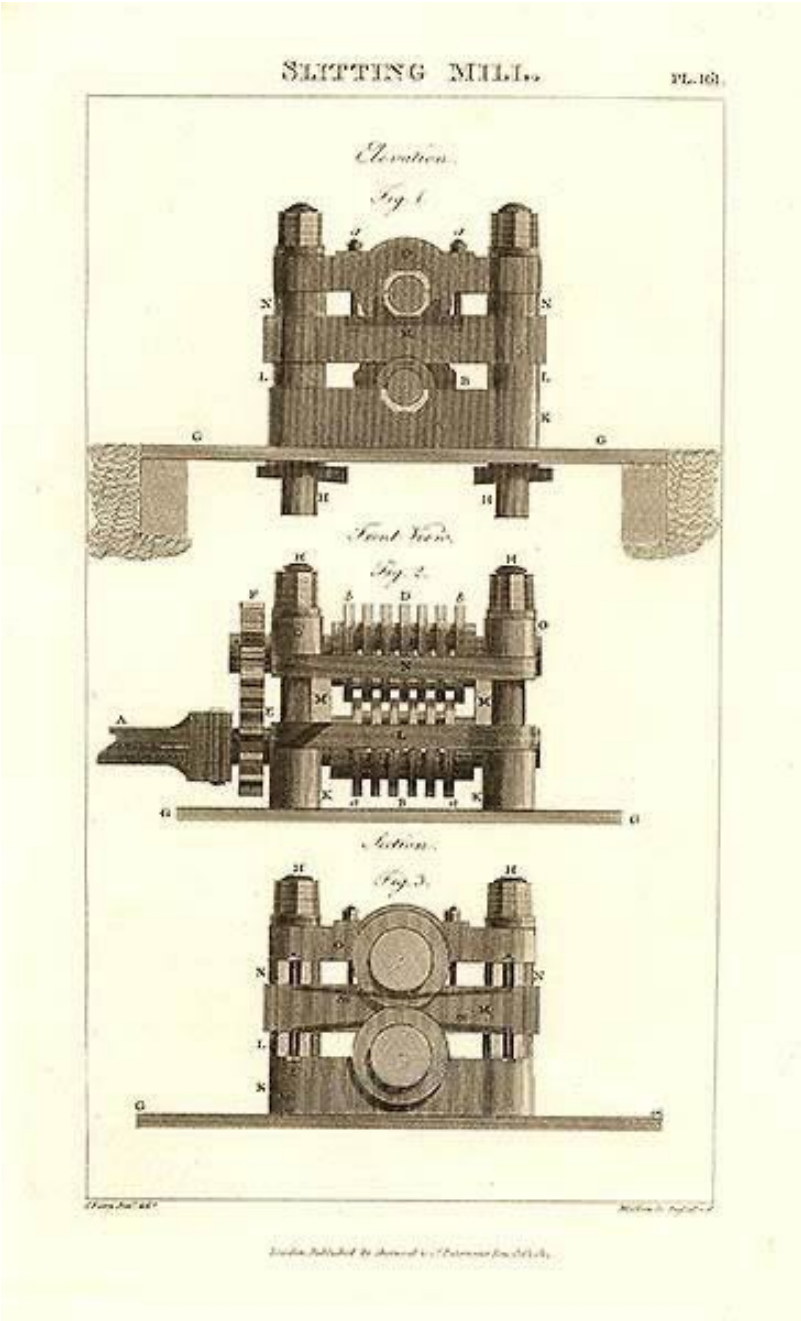
‘the most distinguished of all his good works was an exceptional example of a training school which he had built in the county of Worcestershire donating it with the fullest and most ample of funds in which this most pious and prudent man desiring to halt godlessness and sloth, the growing evils of this age, ordered the pupils (of which he wished there to be sixty) to be imbued with reverence for the spirit and for a good education so from that school as from a training ground of virtue and good learning they should emerge profitably for themselves and for the country.’

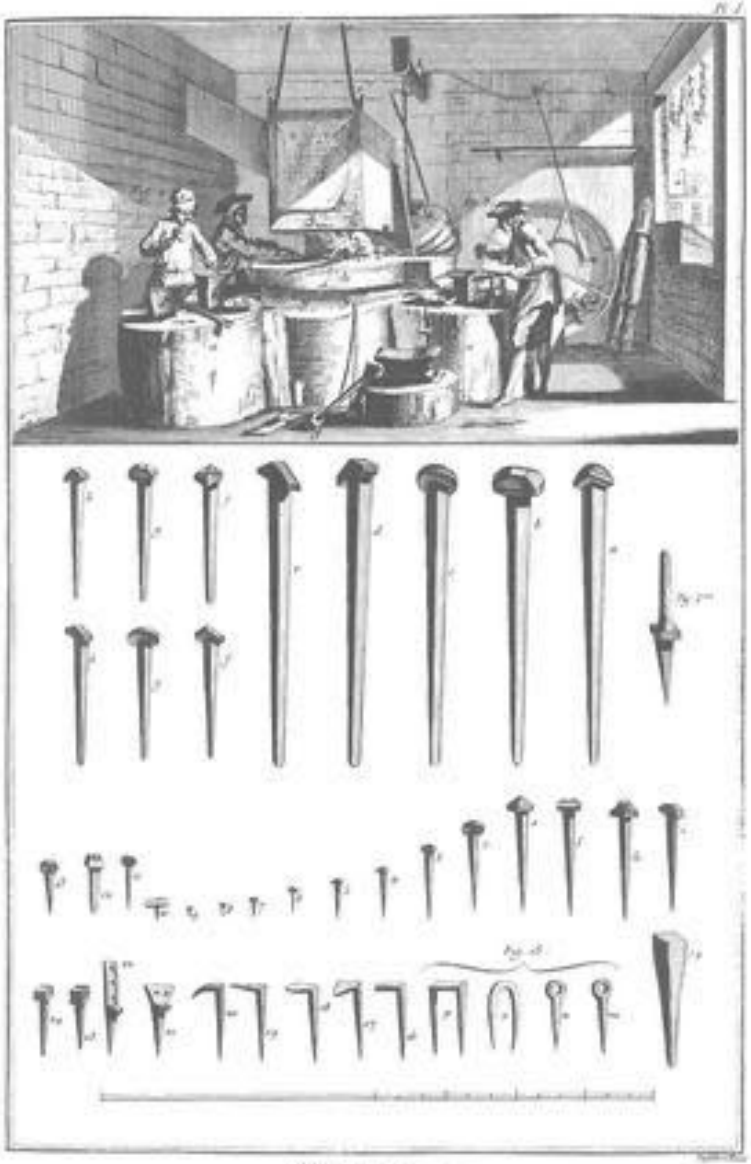
SLIDE 27 Thank you once more for your time and for company this evening.

The History of Old Swinford Hospital

November
18.2021







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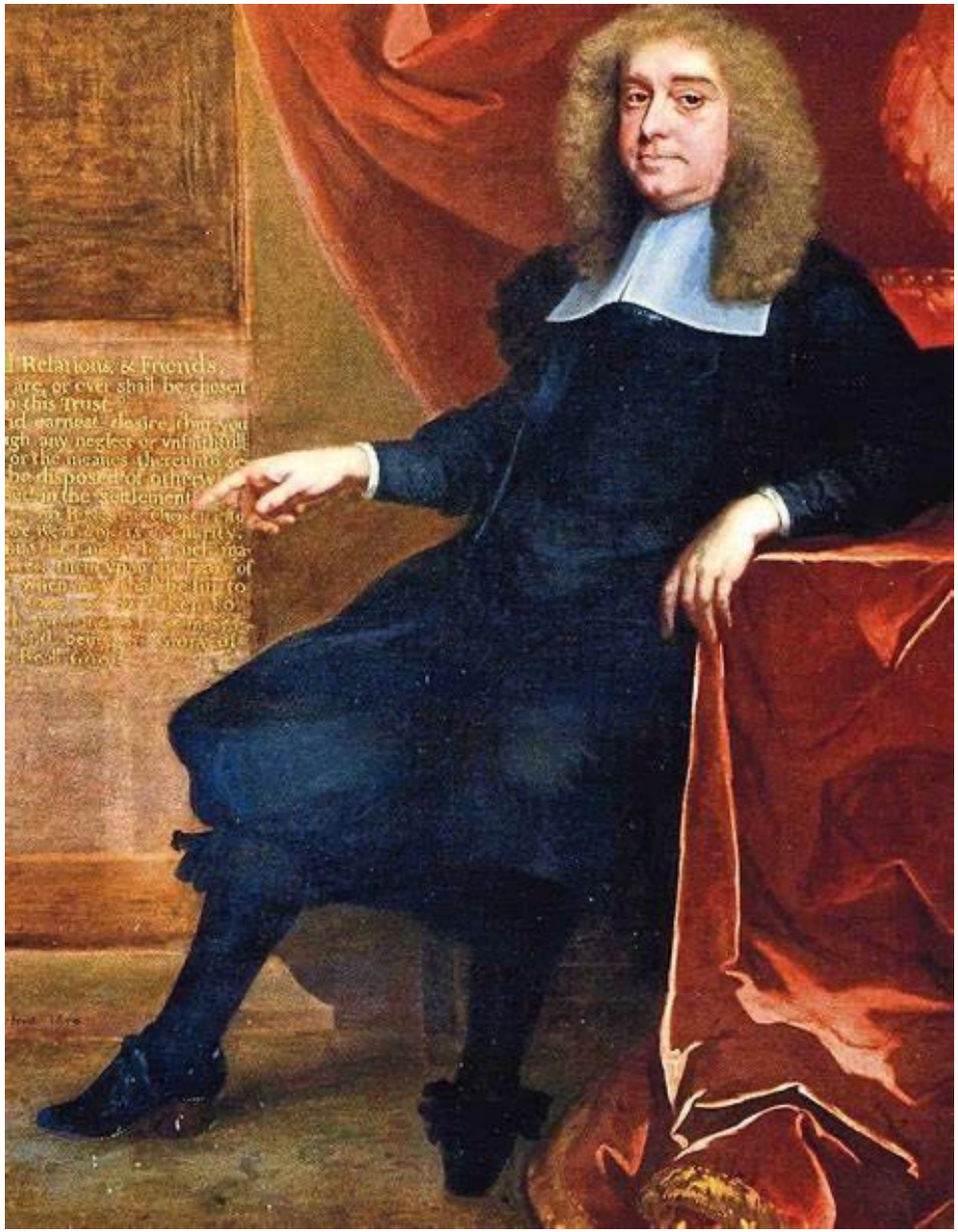

Relations, & Friends



7 - SUSSEX IRONWORKING. PARLIAMENTARY EMISSARIES QUESTION THE KING'S GUNFOUNDER







The Rt. Foley Esq. of Willey Court, Founder of Stourbridge hospital.
Died Oct. 1 1677, aged 39.

To my faithful Relations and Friends, the Truffees that now or ever shall be chosen to this trust.

It is my last and earnest desire that you suffer not through any neglect or unfaithfulness, this house, or the means thereunto settled in you, to be disposed of otherwise than is expressed in the settlement thereof, and that no Boys be chosen into it but such as are real objects of charity, and that they may be taught by such masters as may bound them up in the fear of God; and that when they shall be fit to be apprentices, care may be taken to place them with such masters as may answer my great end, being the glory of God and their real good.


a
b
c
d
e



This Indenture

Bearing Date the ninth day of October one thousand nine hundred and one and made between William Rubery

one of the Scholars of the Hospital of THOMAS POLEY, heretofore of Witley, in the County of Worcester Esquire,

deceased, of the first part, Alfred Mancox of Pensnett, in the county of Stafford, Wheelwright and The Reverend Ithel George Owen

of the second part, The Reverend George Gilbanks (Trustees of the said Hospital, present at the meeting held on the day of the

date hereof, at the said Hospital, in the Parish of Oldswinford, in the said County of Worcester, for this purpose) of the third part, and Thomas Rubery of

Pensnett in the county of Stafford, father of the said William Rubery,

of the fourth part Witnesseth, that the said William Rubery

hath by the consent as well of the said Trustees of the said Hospital, as of the said Thomas Rubery,

put himself an Apprentice with the said Alfred Mancox to learn his Art; and after the manner of an Apprentice with him to serve, from the day of the

date hereof ~~unto the end of the Term of seven years, or~~ until the age of *twenty-one years*, on the thirtieth day of June, in the year one thousand nine hundred and e from thence next ensuing, and fully to be complete and ended; during all which Term the said

Apprentice shall and will faithfully serve his said Master, and shall keep his secrets, perform his lawful commands, preserve his said Master from hurt or damage in his Person, Relation

Cattle, Goods, and Wares, to the best of his power and skill; and shall forewarn and withstand his said Master



A MODERN BOY IN OLD UNIFORM


Wilsonford Hospital School, Hourbridge.
Founded by Thomas Foley Esq. 1667.



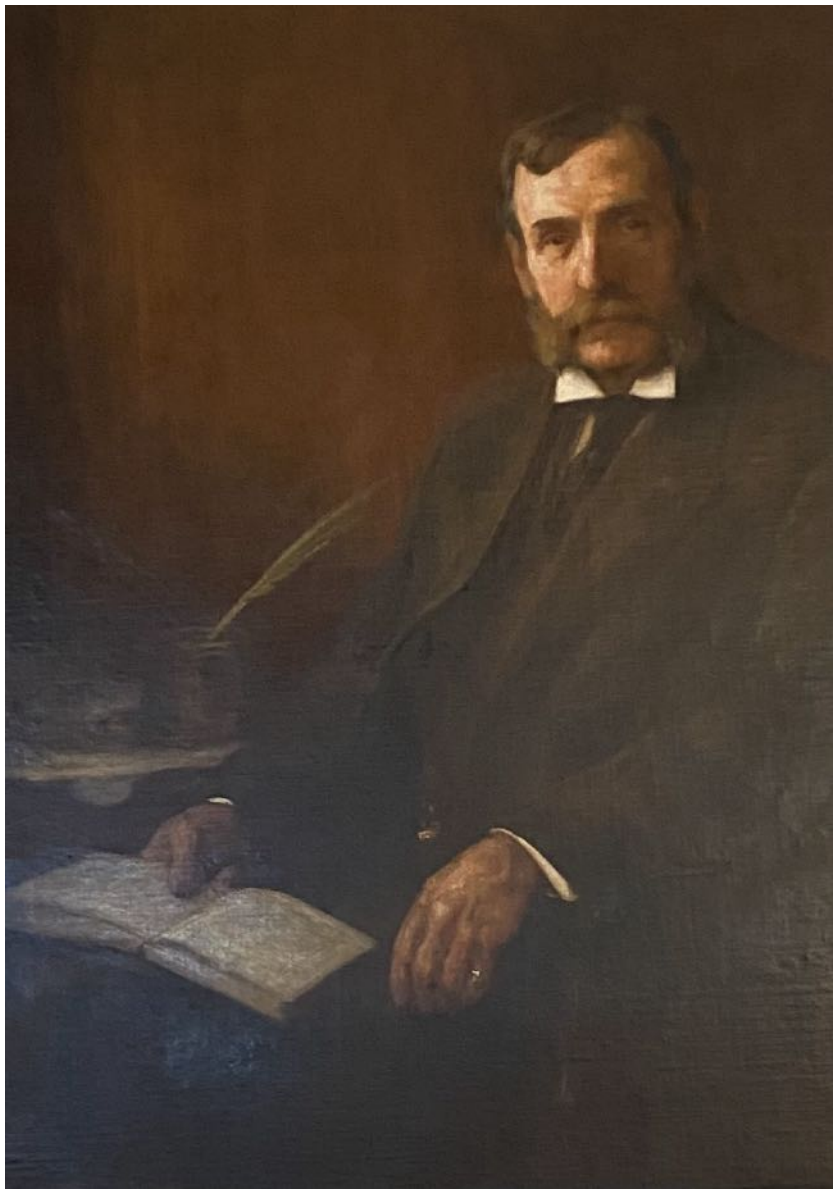


Photograph taken 1910-1913 © Historic England Archive
ref: op14833





William Maybury




Oldswinford Hospital Boys.




IN MEMORY
Old Boys of Old Swinford Hospital killed in the service of their country
World War I
IN MEMORY
Old Boys of Old Swinford Hospital
Killed in the service of their country
World War II
2010-11 FOSTER 2017-18
2011-12 DUDLEY 2018-19
2012-13 FOLEY
2013-14 FOLEY

No.
(If replying, please quote above No.)

ARMY FORM B. 104—82.

TERRITORIAL FORCE RECORD OFFICE W.A.F. W.1.

Record Office,

29 AUG 1917 191

Madam

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of:—

(No.) 201436 (Rank) Sergeant

(Name) William Rubery

(Regiment) 7th WORCESTERSHIRE REGT. (Posted 8th Battn.)

which occurred with the British Expeditionary Force, France

on the 17th August 1917

The report is to the effect that he was Killed in Action

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

I am to add that any information that may be received as to the soldier's burial will be communicated to you in due course. A separate leaflet dealing more fully with this subject is enclosed.

I am,

Madam,

Your obedient Servant,

MAJOR

for Col.

Officer in charge of Records.

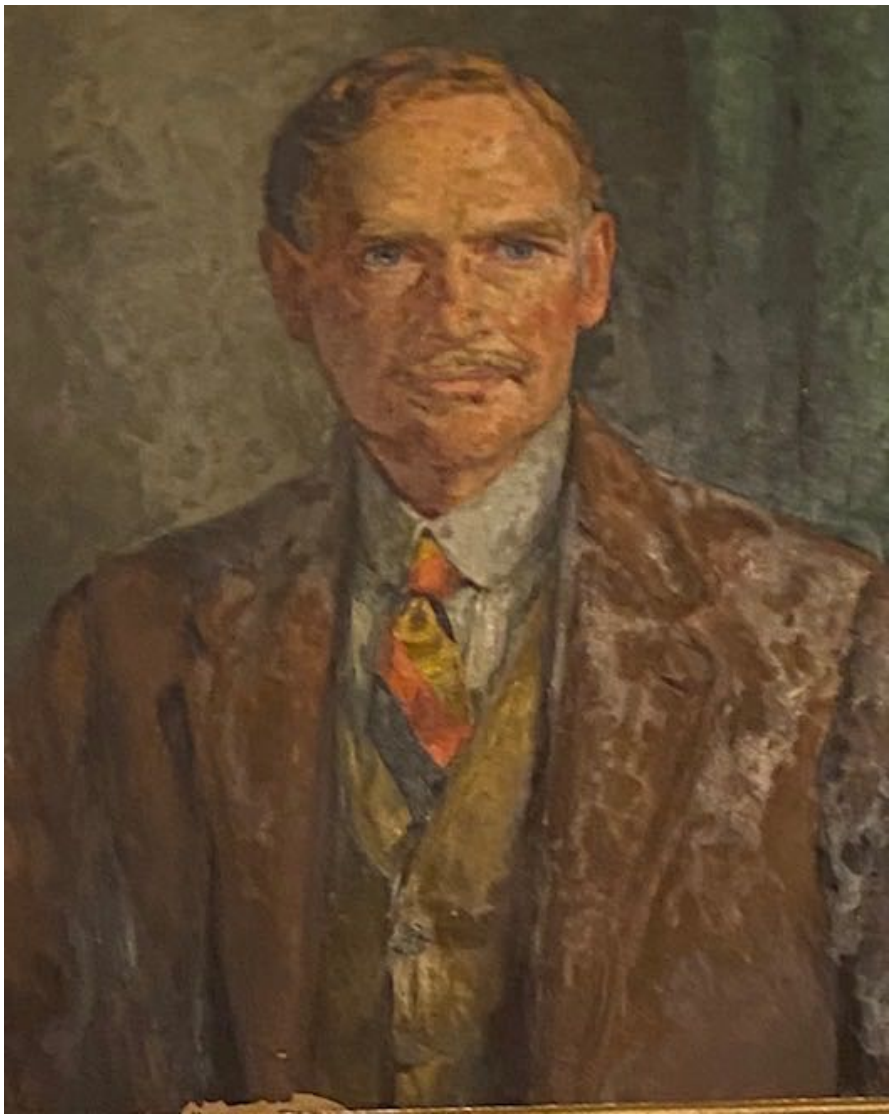
I/c T. F. Records

Mrs Gertrude Rubery
8 Vine Street
Hart's Hill
Dudley. Worcs

18307. Wt. 15148/M 1365. 175m. 2/17. R. & L., Ltd.


Oldswinford Hospital Sanatorium.

Captain Stone



Peter Sheppard





Chris Potter

