

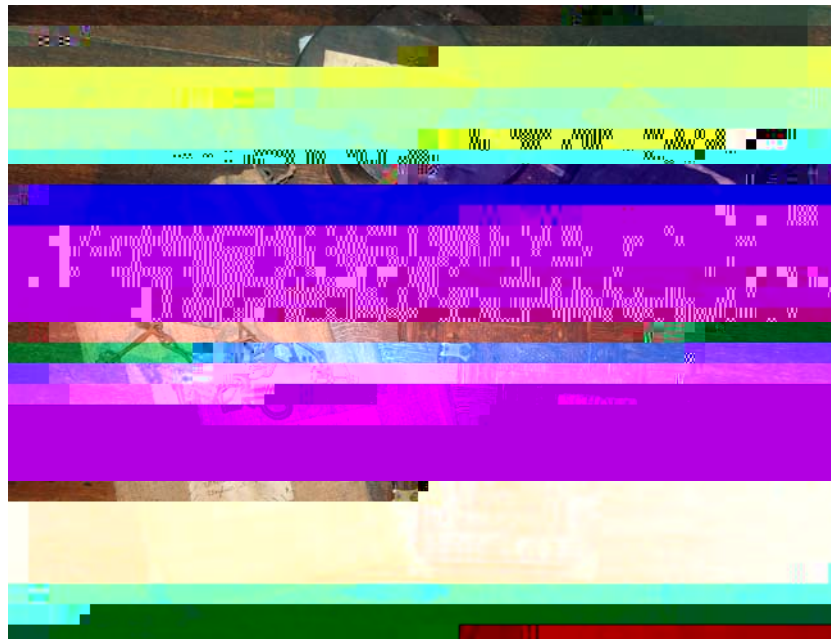
seems never to have been used and the documents were kept instead in the second oak chest.

Running costs of the school derived largely from an annual subvention out of the rectorial manors of Brill, Oakley and ~~As~~ ^{As} stall, which lay within Bernwood Forest in Buckinghamshire, very near to the Oxfordshire border. The almshouse was funded out of rents from two local pubs, a farm at Long Crendon, and twenty-one houses in Thame. In the 1580s the rights to the lands and income was challenged by the Dyrham family, hereditary royal foresters, and the resulting and complicated tangle of arguments came to the Exchequer Court which at first found in favour of Sir John Dyrham. The trustees of Thame School retaliated with their own Chancery case, arguing that the rectory of Oakley was coterminous with the rectory of Brill and encompassed the entire forest area, and they requested Erasmus Williams, a fellow of



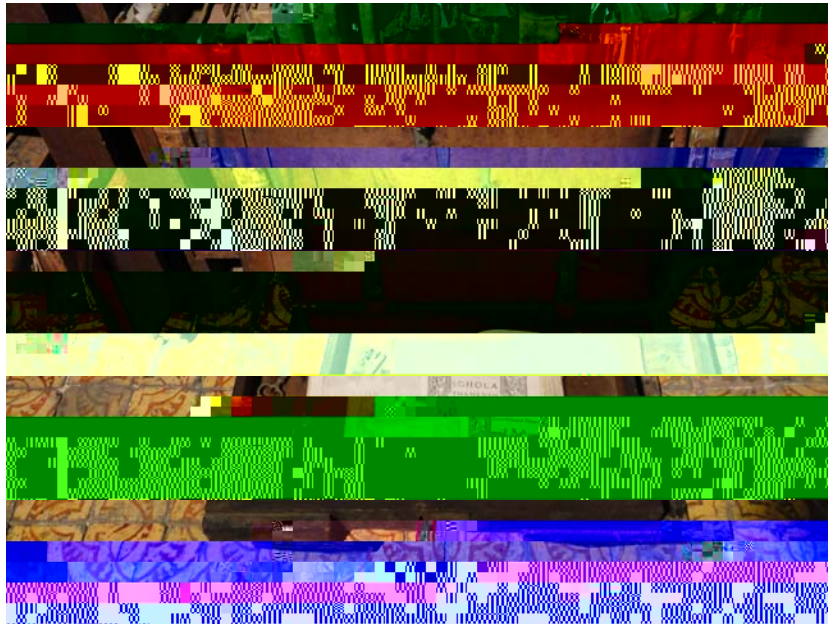
(NCA 3240)

The account rolls and some of the legal papers are still preserved in their original draw-string document bags of sacking coarse linen, onto which are sewn, with enormous stitches, their contents labels, but the documents have suffered no obvious damage from such (literally) homespun storage. Inside their oak chest they jostle alongside the property deeds and leases which are stored in small rectangular or circular leather-covered deed boxes, ~~thier~~ secured by parchment ties and paper labels written in an exquisite Tudor italic hand.



If the organisation of the deeds chest seems eccentric, it pales to insignificance when compared with the printed and bound copies of the school statutes. These, in perhaps one of the most bizarre forms of record-keeping ever known, were nailed

inside the desks of the master and usher. The master's copy came to New College (complete with part of the desk) some time in the nineteenth century. Printed on vellum, it has protective brass studs and horn label on the cover, but is firmly fixed inside the desk by four large metal rivets through its front cover. In fact the volume is of considerable bibliographical interest, the printing being the work of H. Bynneman and the cover (seen better in the Usher's copy, which is also in the college archives) lavishly tooled with blind-stamped ornaments around yet another horn label affixed by an engraved brass holder.



Whenever the mastership fell vacant, New College had the right to put forward two candidates, usually from among its own fellows, and the final choice was made by the Earls of Abingdon as the descendants of Lord Williams. The appointments were not always successful. For example, the fellows' voting papers survive for 1647 and record the names of two candidates recommended by Warden Pincke and the senior fellows. One of them, Thomas Kitchener, decided to shorten the odds by voting for himself, but it made no difference as Lord Abingdon chose a quite different candidate, William Ayliffe, as the new master. During the eighteen large te(n)-omwifixed W

School established a charitable trust~~1874~~ headed by the Warden of New College and the Chairman of the Thame Poor Law Union Board of Guardians, assisted by ten governors. A new school house for day boys and boarders was built in 1879, the money being raised from the sale of most~~the~~ of school's landed property. The scheme was modified in 1911, and after 1944 the~~school~~ became a voluntary controlled school under the new Education Act. Today it is a thriving and popular comprehensive school.