

Rev John Goodall
Headmaster of Lincoln Grammar School 1725-1742
Occasional Paper No 70
From the Garton Archive

Compiled by Peter Harrod
December 2024

Regular readers of the articles from the Garton Archive at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School (LCHS) will know that Lincoln Grammar School was housed in the upper storey of the Greyfriars in Lincoln from 1588 to 1900. During that period of time the School had more than twenty headmasters, one of whom, John Goodhall, held the reins from 1725 to 1742.

The source and inspiration for this article about Headmaster Goodall came from the unlikely pages of the October 1986 edition of the *Graffoe News*, the parish magazine of the Lincolnshire villages of Boothby Graffoe, Wellingore and Navenby. I am most indebted to retired history teacher and historian Judi Jones, who drew my attention to an article in the magazine about Goodhall, who was vicar of Wellingore from 1735 until his death in 1742. He held both the post of Headmaster of Lincoln School and Vicar of Wellingore simultaneously from 1735 to 1742. He must have been a busy man. My story begins in that article which was written at the request of Lincoln Christ's Hospital Girls' High School alumna, Mrs Elizabeth Danels, by Professor Charles Garton who was on leave at the time from his post as Professor of Classics at the State University of New York in Buffalo and was conducting research at Cambridge University, his *alma mater*. The following paragraphs are my edited version of that article.

When the older printed books of the Wren Library at Lincoln Cathedral were being catalogued during the 1970s about one hundred of them were inscribed as having originated from the personal library of Rev John Goodhall. He was a scholarly man and unsurprisingly most of his books were Latin and Greek Classics. He had begun to purchase them as a freshman at Cambridge, or possibly even as a schoolboy at Oakham, and he continued collecting them until his early death at the age of forty-seven.

Professor Garton wrote that Goodhall must have lived near Lincoln Grammar School in St Swithin's Parish as he is buried there. In his forties, unless he had the support of a curate, he must have spent the best part of two hours on Sundays riding each way to conduct the services. Little is known about him as a vicar, but as a headmaster he had asserted his authority over his usher, or undermaster, to such an extent that the usher complained to the Visitors (the equivalent of Governors) that the Headmaster was too bossy and was constantly interrupting him during his lessons in order to

discipline boys of the lower school. However, his main complaint was that the master (see Note 2) kept promoting those boys who could pay the highest fees to the upper school with the consequence that the master's salary was enhanced, and his own was reduced. When the Visitors, including the Mayor and the Sub-Dean, arrived to investigate the matter, Goodall arranged a speech day in which two senior boys were put up to speak on behalf of the master in Greek and Latin respectively. One of them recited a poem he had written in the style of Homer, arguing that there cannot be and should not be more than one boss. The other boy declaimed in Latin that the School had a very good and kind headmaster and that there was nothing amiss that required regulating as far as he was concerned. The Visitors upheld Goodhall's authority but ruled that he must show all due civility and kindness to the usher and also not poach on his boys if it meant causing an imbalance between the upper and lower schools. Goodhall remained in office for another ten years until his untimely death. A more detailed and forensic account of the feud is given later in this article including how the dispute was resolved.

I now turn to Professor Garton's monumental draft of the long and complex history of Lincoln School to continue the story of John Goodhall's headship, and what follows is a selective summary and synthesis of Chapter XXIX (Garton, 1988).



A view from Broadgate of the Greyfriars Building on the left

During the summer of 1724, the dean and chapter of Lincoln Cathedral informed the new bishop, Richard Reynolds, that Lincoln's Grammar School's headship had become 'void' because the headmaster had 'quitted', although the usher had stayed on and had carried out his duties diligently. The city was apparently concerned about the vacancy as the citizens of Lincoln had been taking an unusual pride in their School, and the civic authorities were anxious to attract the sons of gentry and professional men following a decline in numbers during the latter stages of the previous headship of John Garmston. It had, the authorities had said, 'gone much to decay', and was 'failing in both standards and numbers', to such an extent that when Garmston left there were fewer than thirty boys enrolled.

The main cause of the decline was the insufficient endowment which kept the headmaster's pay low and failed to make allowance for a house sufficient to accommodate a large number of boarders. In the absence of a constructive offer from the cathedral the city authorities deemed it necessary to make a unilateral decision to increase the endowment. By this means the city hoped to secure a thoroughly competent head educated at one of the most prestigious schools at that time, Westminster or Eton. The issue was discussed at a council meeting held in July 1724 in the *Guildhall* and it was agreed that it was imperative for the School to flourish and that it could not do so without a good master and a house fit for the purpose of providing suitable boarding accommodation which would be provided for the first time in its history. It was proposed and so ordered that the headmaster's salary be doubled to seventy pounds per annum which included a provision for a suitable house, with the condition that a well-qualified master educated at Westminster or Eton, and 'of such standing in the university' be appointed.

However, in the autumn of that year the dignitaries reported that they had been unable to find a candidate 'in all respects so qualified' but, not wishing to miss out on the generous mood of the city, suggested that John Goodall seemed to be eminently suitable. He was twenty-nine years old, educated at Oakham, a school with a growing reputation under a highly successful headmaster called Henry Wright who had sent more than twenty boys up to one Cambridge college alone, St John's. Goodall was one of those boys and had returned to Oakham in 1717 to gain some two years of sound teaching experience as usher under his former head, besides becoming ordained and serving as a village curate. He was described as 'not without a measure of ambition' and had taken his master's degree, a *sine qua non* for the job in hand. His love of learning was confirmed by the significant classical library he was assembling, and he was a person of good character deemed to be one who could pull Lincoln School together. He was approved and nominated for the position and his appointment was finally sealed in July 1725 following a successful probationary year.

Goodall was only about one year older than the usher at Lincoln School, John Arnold. Arnold had been born in the city, had gone from school to Magdelene College, Cambridge, and had been curate of local parishes in Greetwell and Nettleham for a couple of years, and also where he lived in the village of Boultham on Lincoln's doorstep and within easy walking distance of the School at Greyfriars. The master and usher did not get on too well, however, perhaps because of their near parity of age, and in time there developed a clash of personalities which must have soured the atmosphere at the School. Income for the School came from a variety of sources. In addition to a one-off payment on entry, other fees could be levied including donations given an annual festivity called 'Potation Day' which was the equivalent of a modern open day or old boys' gathering. Some boys who were born in Lincoln were able to claim a free education under the terms of the Deed of Union of 1584, but attempts were made to close that particular loophole as time went on.

The School actually had two boarding houses during the Goodhall years as Arnold, who was married by 1722, also entered the house mastering business receiving boarders into his home just as Goodhall did. Boarding fees were entirely a matter of negotiation with parents, and both houses were evidently close to the School in the

parish of St Swithin's. Two known boarders of Arnold's were members of the ancient family of Scropes and two of them were great grandsons of Sir Adrian Scropes, who had been made a Knight of the Bath after the Restoration. A third, Thomas, became a Lincolnian and a boarder and was admitted to Goodall's house in April 1731 at the age of eight, but was later transferred to the usher's house as it was thought that he would be happier with his brothers. Thomas in fact led a colourful life. He appears to have stayed on at school until he was seventeen and Professor Garton suspects that it was he who had carved the 'bold, deep seriffed' initials 'TS' on the old oak table which is now the oldest piece of furniture in the Garton Archive at LCHS. The table, thought to be some four hundred years old, found its way from Greyfriars into the Library at Lincoln School before being moved to its present location. In Garton's words, it has 'time-worn to a colour approaching black and is carved with innumerable graffiti'. These include the initials EKD which I am convinced were carved by a former colleague of mine, Edward K Dix, who was a pupil at Lincoln School during the 1940s.

From Lincoln School Thomas Scrope went up to Christ Church College, Oxford, where he matriculated but there is no evidence that he took a degree. Garton described him as living in the penumbral area between sane and insane. He saw himself as a politician and, after commanding a company of the militia in south Lincolnshire, he stood in a Lincoln by-election and turned up on the day before the poll with a mob, causing a riot, storming the *Guildhall* and driving everyone out while breaking all the windows and engaging in other mischief. He came bottom of the poll! Later in the same year he attended the Visitors' Gallery in the House of Commons, and allegedly drew his sword. He was committed to a madhouse. He later admitted that he had behaved like a fool, and vowed that, for happiness during the remainder of his life, he must have recourse to the internal resources of his own mind and put his faith in his Creator.

One of the issues in the state of the School which Goodall and his usher sought to arrest was the decline in numbers. When Goodall took over it was likely that the numbers had sunk to below thirty whereas forty years earlier there had been sixty boys, which was regarded as an acceptable norm by the cathedral dignitaries and the Visitors. The social balance remained much as before with a slight swing in favour the gentry. Overall, there were sons of cathedral dignitaries, clergy, choirmasters and an organist. There were also sons of tailors and gardeners, and a surgeon, a yeoman, a husbandman, a glazier, a grocer, a carpet-maker, a net-maker, a cobbler and the son of a headmaster. Apart from boarders such as the Scropes who came out of town, the Lincolnians unofficially divided into those whose homes were above or below the hill, a somewhat artificial division which remains even to this day. Garton reported that this marked distinction formed an obvious division and was a sufficient cause of hostility among the young scholars which led to 'squabbling factions' each claiming its superiority. 'Many and hot were the skirmishes on that topic.' It brought into mind skirmishes that existed in the 1950s between the secondary modern schoolboys on the St Giles estate and the grammar school boys who were recognisable by their uniform and especially their caps which were regarded as legitimate trophies. The cries of 'Grammar, Grammar crying for yer mamma', and 'Tech, Tech, wash yer mucky neck' would ring out along Macauley Drive and elsewhere on the estate. I do not recall the girls being subject to such taunting but those on either side of the eleven-plus

divide might have had more subtle and nuanced ways of claiming their supposed superiority.

The schoolboys' week in Goodall's era began on Sunday when the boys were, without exception, expected to attend church. The choirboys, of course, were needed at service in the cathedral. During the 1680s, the time of morning school had been fixed at 6am in the summer and 7am in the winter, but the headmaster had discretion over this matter and by the year 1730 it had been brought forward one hour to 7am in summer and 8am in winter. Afternoon school began at 2pm, but it is not known when it ended. Perhaps that was also at the discretion of the master. The school day began and ended with morning and evening prayers.

The children sat on 'forms' in groups according to their age and progress, which is the origin of the term 'form' still used in schools today. Some of the children were still in need of being taught to read and write while others were able to begin the long process of learning Latin grammar. The main textbook at the time was William Lily's *Latin Grammar*, the forerunner of more modern texts such as *Kennedy's Latin Primer*, invariably altered to 'Eating Primer' by mischievous boys! I do hope you will not look upon this as a confession! Ovid was foremost among the poets studied in both the lower and upper schools, and Latin verse composition was introduced where appropriate which led ultimately to a study of Homer and the first two books of the Iliad. Latin and Greek were the mainstay of the curriculum but, no doubt influenced by the cathedral close and the needs of the choristers, the pupils also learned vocal and instrumental music. There was no mention of art.

Out of school during their free time, the boys enjoyed a number of pastimes. A favourite was horse-racing, and there were racecourses both to the north and south of the city. Both flat racing and steeple-chasing were scheduled for Lincoln from 1727 but the famous Carholme track was not laid out until later in the century. The attraction was not limited to racing as the events became a high social occasion for both sexes, including dances 'to unite them'. I wonder if they were the precursors of the sixth form dances in the 1950s where I met my wife Ann, a South Park girl. Garton also paints a vivid picture of the episode of a 'Religious Mob'. There was a time when Lincoln Cathedral was the tallest building in the world when each of its three towers had a spire. However, the spire of the main tower collapsed in a storm in 1548 and the spires on the smaller western towers had become unsafe by the 1720s when experts were advising their demolition. The mob, suspecting that the towers themselves were to be demolished, went on the rampage but were later placated after receiving assurances that only the spires and not the towers were to be taken down for safety reasons, and the offer of 'something to drink'! The mob then went downhill, breaking windows on their way, and retired home to bed or to the alehouse to carouse all night! However, the spires, precarious though they were, did remain in position until 1807.

Back in school the boys were put through their books and some of the senior ones were drilled into taking part in the annual Christmas 'public exercise' of Latin and Greek speech-making, a practice of rhetoric that had been in place since 1684 'for the honour and reputation of the school'. The boys held Goodall in awe as a scholar and authoritarian, and at least five boys who went up to Cambridge between 1731 and

1740 were to inform their college authorities that they had been schooled by 'Doctor' Goodall although there was no evidence that he had ever been awarded a doctorate!

In 1731, the School came within a whisker of losing its headmaster. A vacancy had occurred at Stamford School and an approach was made to Goodall who, unhappy with his relationship with his usher, was strongly tempted. However, following protracted negotiations over salary and other conditions, Goodall decided to remain at Lincoln where the boys were increasingly caught up in the developing conflict between headmaster and usher referred to earlier in the article in the Graffoe News. On the surface, the conflict was about authority but deeper down it was all about money. There were insufficient pupils to make both master wealthy, but each master felt compelled to fight to retain or to take over as many boys as possible, and in particular those whose parents could be charged higher fees. In essence, Goodall believed that the master should have and enjoy the same authority over boys in both the upper and lower parts of the School as was what he claimed was the case with masters of other schools of a similar standing. The crunch came over the matter of 'removal', or the transference of boys from the lower to the upper school. The principles laid down in 1684 were that the number in the upper and lower schools should remain more or less even, and that the usher must not admit or retain boys who were qualified to do the work in the upper part of the School. Conversely, the master should choose boys to transfer to the upper school on strictly academic grounds.

As Professor Garton put it, Goodall's practice in 'removing' pupils (the origin of the term 'Remove' in later public and grammar schools) to the upper school 'got Arnold's goat', suggesting that the real reason for Goodall's practice was less to do with academic criteria and more to do with pecuniary benefits. However, in 1730 the upper school had 21 boys and the lower had only 35 so clearly an evening-up was justifiable on the face of it. But there was a problem. The usher's top two forms were academically ready to be 'removed' but they consisted mainly of freemen's sons who would generate little profit for the master. Goodall's solution was to take the top three classes, or fourteen boys altogether, which would neatly reverse the disparity of numbers in the lower and upper parts of the School. Arnold fumed!

Professor Garton reported that Speech Day of December 1732 was long remembered, and his lengthy and detailed narrative of events meticulously researched, captured both the spirit and the solemnity of the occasion. It was the day which the Visitors had chosen for the start of a probing visitation. Arnold had been drawing up a list of complaints against Goodall to be presented to the Visitors in what seemed to resemble a court of law. Goodall himself was known to be worried, though protesting his innocence and criticising his usher for his resistance to his authority. In his defence, he had organised two senior boys with sufficient knowledge of Latin and Greek, to present a short formal address in either language presenting his case, improbable though that seems today. The boys, no doubt somewhat gleefully, entered into the spirit of the occasion. The first boy, speaking entirely in Greek, argued that a school could only function efficiently if there were only one boss. Professor Garton (1994) provides a translation of part of his poem, written in the style of Homer:

I do not count among good things

A curst plurality of kings:

One king, one master let us have

Him to whom right the sceptre gave...

The second boy, speaking in Latin, stated that, in his opinion, the affairs of Lincoln School were being conducted in accordance with the system under which it had long flourished, and to his knowledge there had been no departure from past practice and no breach of the approved ordinances by which the School was governed. He concluded by appealing to the Visitors not to cause rapid disruption to the School by undermining the authority of the headmaster.

Following the boys' speeches the parties settled down to the serious business in what was described by the chapter clerk as 'an inquisition as to the rules and governance of the School'. Both Goodall and Arnold were given the opportunity to state their cases through questionnaires and follow-up elaborations. Among issues such as afternoon punctuality (known to be lackadaisical) and 'barring out' (see Note Three) the time-honoured question of punishment was raised and the following question was put to both master and usher:

"Have you encouraged your scholars by gentle allurements, or otherwise daunted and discouraged them by churlish behaviour and severe correction, as by wringing them by the ears, or beating them on the head and hands rashly and severely?"

A leading question if ever I saw one! No doubt sensing the tenor of response required, both respondents adopted a liberal alternative. The master insisted that he practised mildness rather than severity and did not abuse the boys. On reflection, however, he did admit that he used more severe methods when necessary. In answer to a question about the curriculum Arnold stated that the headmaster prescribed a method of teacher and the usher duly followed it. Goodall, however, disagreed, accusing his usher of having given him 'great uneasiness' by publicly opposing his orders.

However, it was the thorny subject of the fees and 'removals' that were at the heart of the case and ultimately its resolution. Garton reported that it was not an easy situation for the Visitors to resolve not least because there was a clash of wills and temperament, and an incompatibility between the two masters. It was late January 1733 when the Visitors gave their decisions in a six-point statement which avoided laying blame but emphasised the need for equity of numbers between the upper and lower schools and confirming the need to respect and implement the orders made in 1684 for the efficient government of the School. Elsewhere, Garton reported that the Visitors upheld the headmaster's authority but said he must show all due civility and kindness to the usher and not poach on his boys if it meant putting the upper and lower schools out of balance (Garton 1994).

For the purposes of clarity, it should be pointed out that the upper and lower schools were taught by the master and usher in the same large upper storey of the Greyfriars building and 'interference' by the master was one of his usher's complaints. In addition, both would have been well aware of the other's methods of teaching as they were in

effect part of an early experiment in 'open plan' teaching and learning! (see photograph below)

The Visitors had made the best of it. Their settlement was calculated to meet the usher's complaints while giving as little offence as possible to Goodall. A classic British compromise! It seems also that the masters themselves decided to make the best of it. Arnold stayed on as usher until 1738 when he received church preferment and became rector of Burton, a village a few miles to the north of the city. He was a sensible man and did not become embittered or alienated from the School as evidenced by the fact that he enrolled his son William as a Lincoln School pupil under Goodall. As for Goodall himself, nothing came of his ambition to be headmaster of 'a better school'. He did not resign, but like Arnold he had clerical 'irons in the fire', and showed an interest in two positions: the rector of Wing, a village now in Rutland, that was about to become vacant, and the vicar of Carlton Magna on the seaward side of Louth. However, around the age of forty he was given the vicarage of Wellingore some ten miles south of Lincoln which is where this story began.



A 20th Century view of the Greyfriars Schoolroom looking towards Broadgate

Meanwhile at school, the opportunity to replace Arnold as tutor arose and Goodall persuaded the city council to appoint a younger, more compatible and more malleable man, George Skelton, who had been a former pupil of his and the very boy who had backed him against Arnold at the memorable Speech Day, and who graduated from St John's College, Oxford in 1737. It was probably two years later when he took up the position of usher and took his job seriously enough to be appointed acting headmaster when Goodall died.

Professor Garton continued his chapter of Goodall by mentioning some of the boys who had successful careers after leaving Lincoln School. Those included the four Pownall brothers one of whom, Thomas, a Fellow of the Royal Society, was sent by George II in the 1750s to govern the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Other notable

scholars included Thomas's brother John, who became Secretary to the Board of Trade, and John Sibthorp who became Sheridan Professor of Botany at Oxford. Garton also reported that, while Lincoln School produced only ten or so MPs in total, he wondered whether it was simply by chance that four of them were pupils of headmaster Goodall. However, Garton concluded his chapter by stating that John Goodall was not one of the more distinguished or well-known of the headmasters of Lincoln School. He seems to have maintained something of the quietness and solitude of the scholar, supported by the fact that, as long as he lived, he continued to build up his library of the classics which he had begun at Cambridge. He is known to have owned at least one hundred volumes of classical authors including Horace and Cicero.

Sadly, John Goodall suffered a fatal illness which overtook him at the young age of forty-seven. He died on the 25th May 1742 and was buried close to his beloved Lincoln School at the old church of St Swithin's of which hardly anything now remains. It is not known if he left a family. As stated at the beginning of this article, his books were bequeathed to the Wren Library at Lincoln Cathedral where they remain to this day.

Note One

There are six doctorate dissertation-length volumes in Professor Charles Garton's monumental draft history of Lincoln School covering the years 1090 to 1850. Copies are housed in the Garton Archive at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School, the Central Library in Lincoln, the Cambridge University Library and the British Library.

Note Two

The titles 'headmaster' and 'master' are used interchangeably through this article.

Note Three

Barring out was a feature of John Clark's headship during the first half of the 17th century, and the definition given in Occasional Paper 64 from the Garton Archive collection is reproduced below:

A widespread custom in schools up to the 19th century was the 'barring-out' of the schoolteacher by his pupils. On a day sanctioned by custom (but varying from place to place), the pupils contrived to bar the door with the teacher outside, often with his connivance, and refused to let him in until he agreed to their terms, which were usually for a half-holiday, or something similar. By the 19th century the custom was relatively controlled, but in previous generations had been much rougher. On at least one occasion, in Scotland in 1595, a magistrate who was helping the teacher gain access to the school was shot dead by one of the pupils. Not surprisingly, local authorities

waged a continual war against such activities and gradually succeeded in taming and, eventually, eliminating the custom (Oxford Reference). According to Leake (1906) it was the custom at barrings-out at Lincoln School at Christmas and on Shrove Tuesdays for the boys to break all the windows, a custom which the common council understandably sought to discourage.

References

The Graffoe News, October 1986

Charles Garton (1988) Lincoln School 1883-1792 Chapter XXIX Unpublished

Charles Garton (1994) Lincoln School: a Summary Honours Board *Second Edition*
The Old Christ's Hospital Lincolnians' Society, Lincoln

Professor Charles Garton's Primary Sources

Charles Garton spent hours in the UK doing research for his draft and unpublished history of Lincoln School during the long summer vacations from his position as Professor of Classics at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Chief among his sources were the Statutes of Lincoln Cathedral, the volumes of Lincoln City Council Minutes, the Papers of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral, the Lincoln Record Society, and Sir Francis Hill's series on the history of Lincoln.

Other noteworthy sources included A F Hurst's seminal work on the history of education, including his chapter on the Victorian History of the County of Lincoln, Histories of Parliament in the House of Commons Library, Clive Hurst's Catalogues of the Wren Library, records in Oxford and Cambridge of alumni of the universities, John A Schutz's book on Thomas Pownall, the Dictionary of National Biography, and the Boston (Massachusetts) Weekly Newspaper of the 25th August 1757.

Garton uses the historians' method of referencing whereas I am more comfortable with a modified version of the Harvard system favoured by social scientists.