

The Sixteenth-Century Articles of King's School, Bruton

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THE charter of Edward VI refounding Bruton School is dated 1 May 1550. By this the administration of the School property was entrusted to a body of twelve governors, chosen from 'the more discreet and upright inhabitants of the same town of Bruton and parish of Bruton'. In many instances the property of a school was entrusted to the town corporation, but no such corporation existed at Bruton. A. F. Leach on several occasions stated that Sherborne School was the first to be refounded with a board of governors created expressly to administer the property. But the Sherborne charter is dated 13 May 1550, and therefore the Bruton governors may claim to be the first school board, and to have formed the model, if model there was, for subsequent boards of governors of that reign. Moreover, although the charter is dated 1550, there are documents showing that the Governors were leasing the school estates in Michaelmas 1549.

The Register of the Governors, containing the accounts and details of administration, starts in 1552, and continues unto the present day. On the second page—though not the oldest, for the first sheets were bound in at the end of the first volume—is the oath which the governors took:

'Ye shalbe benyficiall and not hurtefull to the Free schole of Brewtone late founded by Kinge Edwarde the sixt, and shall not do procure or consent to be don any acte or actes wherby any hurte damage hynnderannce preiudice inconveniannce therof shall, or maye accrewe. You shall likewise kepe the lawfull counsell of yor fellowes nominated and elected governors of the same scole and nothinge utter or disclose whiche maye might or by any meanes shalbe to the hurte losse empaymerment hynderannce or damage of the same scole or of thenherntance of the same or of any parte or parcell therof. So god shall helpe you and by the contents of thys booke.'

Below are the names of twelve governors who took the oath on 12 January 1564. Eight other names were later added. Some names are scratched out and 'mort' or 'expulsus' are written against them.

Good intentions fortified by an oath are not enough, and more detailed rules were soon adopted. In 1566 articles were drawn up, either copies from, or modelled on those of Sherborne School which were borrowed for 6*d*. The original Sherborne articles have been lost,—perhaps they never got back to Sherborne, but in their muniments is a bill for engrossing them dated 1565. These articles may therefore apply to both schools.

The articles fall into two divisions, the first part relating to the governors, the second to the master and the boys. The first group resembles the ordinances of the guilds. The choice of the feast of Corpus Christi—a movable feast—as the day for the audit of the accounts emphasizes this point. The articles enjoining good manners for the boys and instituting Impositors may be compared with those drawn up for Eton in 1530 by Richard Cox.

Brewton Sexto die aprilis Anno domini 1566. Et Regni Reginae Elizabeth octavo tempore Willelmi Northe, Roberti Hellier, Roberti Plympton, Nicholi Lambell, Walteri Yllynge,¹ Christopheri Jonsons, Lodovici Plympton, Andree Powell, Edwardi Spicer, Thome Gent, Radulphi Larder et Thome Elliat gubernatorum schole prædiete, etc.

The good and wholesome articles and ordinances devised and made by the whole assent and consent of all us the governors at this present tyme of the Free grammer schole in Brewton founded and erected by the moste vertuous and excellent prince our late Sovereigne lorde Kinge Edwarde the sixt accordinge to the true effect tenor and meanyng of his saide letters patents grannted unto us under the greate Seale of Englande, for and in that behaulf: Aswell for the good quiet and honest order governance and direction of us the governors afforesaide and our Successors for ever, for the good order of the schollemaster and of his wages, For the good order of the scholers for the tyme beinge and of other officers by us for the same to be appoynted: As also for the like administracion, order, governance preservacion and disposition of all the rents possessions revenues and goodes apperteyninge and belonginge unto

¹ This has been written above the name Thome Cove, which is struck through.

the saide Free grammer schole of Kinge Edwarde the sixt in Brewton.

1. Furst be yt enacted ordeyned and for ever by the auctoritie unto us present governors and to our successors grannted that frome tyme to tyme whansoever we shall have just occasion to comme together in counsell that at the leste foure dayes before the tyme of our commynge together therbe sure warnynge geven by our younger or Junior warden either unto every of our owne felowes or by somme signe made with chalke in our dores with declaracion made unto somme of our householde that we must personallie appere and comme together att suche an houre of suche a daye in namynge of the same : At whiche daye and houre after the knowledge afforesaide all busines and maters of our owne set aparte we all do grannte consent and agree immediatlie to comme together, And there as by the Annientnes of our names shall then orderlye be called by the St[e]warde so shall we annswere therunto and everyone take place orderlye as he is called, savinge that the two wardyns and the Stewarde of our courtes shall always be placed in the myddest of our companye and none shall departe thence without leave untill the whole companye departe together.

2. Be yt farther enacted and ordeyned by thauthoritie afforsaide That if any one or mo of the governors so lawfullye warned do negligentlye absent themselves and not leave their for voyces and absence consent and voice with some other governors for them so that no governor shall have above the voice of one other governor That then he or they so negligentlie absenting themselves shall for every tyme forfeit and lose xiid. to be taken and levied of their gooddes and catells to the behouf and profet of our saide free grammer schole by the whole companye of the governors and to be paiede immediatlie unto the cheif warden then beinge, whereof the saide warden shall yerelye make his accompt, but if any doo this by negligence use to absent hymself as is afforsaide commonlye, that is to saye above thrise in one yere Then he shalbe utterly expulsed frome our companye.

3. Item be yt enacted ordeyned and establisshed by thauthoritie forsaid that for more quietnes sake, that our annient warden for the tyme beinge shall open at every tyme of our commynge together all suche matters as we be called to come together for, and that all the rest of the governors that will have any mater to be debated of commoned of before us frome tyme to tyme furst open and declare the same to the saide warden, whiche maters the saide warden shall not onelye diligentlie fornote and well marke in wrytinge : but also the same declare and open for any mater in question the Senior Warden to make motyon. Junior to speke furste. orderlie and accordingly at our next commynge together with the name of every persone that wolde have any mater ther to be opened and

declared, And when those maters have byn well commoned and declared orderly emongst us before we thoroughlie conclude of any suche matter as shall happen then in question the saide warden shall severally aske every governor his mynde advise and consent therunto begynninge furst at the youngest by election And so orderlye until he came to the Anncienst of the commpanye And so when every one hathe spoken his mynde and conscience then shall our Stewarde make furthe entre and recorde in our common booke called our ledger of every mater so Fullye concluded by us or by the more parte of us.

4. Item be yt by us the saide governors farther ordeyned and established by thauthoritie afforsaide that all and every of us now beinge governors do furthwith take our corporall othe and be sworne, And that every of our successors hereafter at his admission in to our companye shall frome tyme to tyme likewise take his corporall othe and be sworne for the due observacion and good kepinge of all and every article ordinance and statute now made or hereafter to be made of and for the saide free grammer schole, and of and for every and any thinge to the same belonginge and apperteyninge.

for the due observacion of every article by oathe

5. Item yt is by us governors ordeyned and stablissed by thauctoritye afforsaide that whensoever any shall take his othe and be sworne the warden or steward shall mynyster the same unto him, and the partie to be sworne standynge barehedded the othe shall laye his right hande reverentlie upon the hoolie evangelist which is godds booke, and shall saie after the warden or steward as hereafter followeth I do here willinglye withoute compulsion before god and you all swere faiethfully promesse and advisedly vowe unto god that I shall and will allwayes frome hensfurthe advancke setfurthe maynteyne and defende all and every article statute and ordynance now made or hereafter to be made for the good order governance and preservacion of the saide Free grammer schole, And the same shall kepe secrete and not disclose unto any persone or persons : but shall contynuallye observe kepe and fulfill to the uttermoste of my power all and every of them aslonge as I shall be of this encorporated and discrete companye even as God shall helpe me at my nede. And so shall he reverentlye kisse the booke in token of thaffirminge his othe. Then shall the most anncient governor take hym with reverence by the hande and welcome hym unto the companye, and so shall the other governors do orderlye untill he come unto the youngest of the companye, who takinge hym last of all by the hande bringe hym soberlye unto his place where he shall sitt.

6. Item we ordayne will and commande by thauthoritie afforsaide that From hensfurthe no persone be elected and chosen to be

of our companye of the governors but onelie suche as ys lerned or favourethe lernynge, A dweller and householder within the towne or parishe of Brewtone A good sober man of honest name and fame, And especialle if he maye be had or founde suche as is well knowne to be godlye and wise a favorer thereof well hable to live and beinge free Frome all other men at the tyme of his election, and a furtherer both of good order and also of good livinge, and that he be chosen and elected by the advise and consent of the whole companye of Governors or by the more parte of them allwayes to be chosen at the daye of our accompt deliberately and withe good advisement accordinge to the article herafter folowinge for the same.

7. Item we ordayne will and commande by thauuthoritie afforsaide this order and maner of chosinge a new governor be allwayes frome tyme to tyme diligentlie observed and kept without violacion or breche after the decesse or otherwise departinge of any governor, Furst the saide governors beinge sommoned as before, shall comm together into their common house, and there shall diligently consulte and debate emonge themselves whome they think moste mete to be chosen into their companye, and when every of their voices have byn therunto required in order as before is appoynted and ordeyned and they all or the more parte of them fullye agreed upon the same, Then shall they at convenient tyme sende for the same persone by the younger warden, and when he is comme before them Then the wardens (puttinge of their cappes reverentlye and the other governors doynge the like) shall saye unto them after this maner : Sir yt is not unknowne unto you but that the most vertuous prince our late soveragne lorde kinge Edwarde the sixt of his moste benevolous and habundant goodnes towards this towne and parishe of Brewtone whereof we be inhabitants hathe gracioslie founded and erected in the same a Free gramer schole for the latyn tonngue thereon to be redde and taughte unto all suche as be willinge and desirous to lerne the same And hathe by his gracious letters patents under the great Seale of Englande not onelie geven Frelye aleven pownds of goodde Lande by the yere besydes a licence to purchase or take in gifte twelve pownds more for the continuall mayntenance of the same schole : But also hathe made twelve of us householders of the same towne and parishe a bodye politike and incorporated by the name of governors for the good orderinge of the said Free schole and of all things therto belonginge, And fathermore by his saide highnes letters patents hath geven and grannted unto us now present governors and to our successors forever full authoritie and powre as often as it shalbe nedefull for us to elect chuse and take unto us of our neighbors householders in Brewton and parisshioners in the rome and place of any decessed or otherwise departed frome our companye such a one as we shall

Instructions be geven
to the new governor at
his elecion

thinke good and mete for the same, Wherefore we consideringe your honest wisdome and other good quietnes (worthie as we thinke of suche a companye) have sent for you to knowe your mynde herin whether ye be mynded and well willing to be of this our saide incorporated and discrete companye and to indevor yorself well and faithfullye together with us for thaccomplishment and fulfillinge of all suche statutes and ordinances as now are or herafter shalbe thought good and wholesome to be made by us, or by our successors for the good preservation and mayntenance of this our Free grammer schole of Brewton. Wherunto if he annswere that he is contented so to do, then shall all these othes be redde unto hym, and if he be contented to applye hynself diligentlie to the fulfillinge of the same then shall the warden or stewarde furthwith give hym his othe in maner and forme and accordinge to the order as is before declared, And then the hole articles and statutes shal be playnelie redde unto hym.

8. Item we ordeyne and will by thauthorite afforsaide that ther be alwayes two of our companye sworne wardens of whiche
The office and duties of the wardens for Receipts and payments. Wherein is sett forth the tenor of their oathes. thone shalbe and be called senior or cheif warden the other the Junior or under warden, and their onelie office and charge ys and shalbe to receve take and kepe unto behouf and profett of the schole all and all maner of

rents fynes herrietts amerciements and other profects whatever do presentlie or herafter shall by any iust and right title of them assembled together in our companye belonginge and apperteyninge unto the saide schole, and also to leavie paie and discharge all the other governors of the schole of all and all maner of quick rents payments sutes services and duties dewe to be don paied or levied, by the saide governors unto all and every whatsoever degree, estate and persone or ought to be done or paiede and that at suche due tyme and place as is mencioned in our letters patents to be don and paiede, And herunto they shal be sworne and their office declared unto them by thes articles.

9. Item yt is farther enacted and agreed by the authoritie afforsaid that the saide wardyns with the Stewarde of our landes shall
for keping of our corte and making . . . tenements in their own propre persones kepe corte in and uppon every parsell and porcion of our saide lands where any courte before tyme hath byn kept, And then if any bargayne in hande or in revercion be ther to be solde they shall with all diligence lerne and knowe the same with the commodities thereunto apperteyninge. And afterwards if any man therbe that will buy the same to take the best offer poyntinge the partie to resorte unto the rest of our governors and there to take his full consente of bargayne and sale in our common house therunto appoynted.

10. Item yt is moreover agreed and appoynted by thauuthoritie afforsaide that the senior or cheif warden do and shall yerelie on the fest of corpus christi commonlye called corpus christie daye or on the monday next after the same fest at the fardest make

The daye when the senior warden is to make his accompt. This daye is altered at the accompte of Mr. Kene made the xiiith daye of October in Anno domini 1614 prout patet in folio 108. On the third daye of October 1620 at the Accompte of John Sampson the daye for the accompte was by the Governors then present ordered to be uppon Corpus Christi daye or uppon the Mondaye then next.

and kepe his full perfect and finall accompt of all and almaner of profets and sommes of moneye aswell by hym receved taken and had of For and concernynge the possessions revenues and gooddes belonging and apperteyninge unto the Free schole afforsaide (of the arrerage wherof if any be he shall withoute dilaye make full payement). As also of all maner of rents payements and somes of moneye by hym layed oute or paieade for or concernynge the saide Free grammer schole,

or of any parte or parcell belonginge to the same And thereof immediatlie shall then be clerelie acquitted and discharged. Into the office of whom so acquitted and discharged the Junior warden shall streightwayes enter and succede who immediatlie shall take unto hym one felow warden appoynted hpm by the other governors whiche furthwith shalbe sworne faithfullye to exercise and occupie the saide office duringe his tyme Frelye withoute any wages therfore.

11. Item we ordeyne and will by thauctoritie afforsaide that no persone hereafter be admitted or made stewarde and keper of our

for the elecion of the stewarde and his oathe.

said courte but suche as shalbe an hable persone for the good accomplishment and sure performnce of the same office And hym not

onelie to swere for the good and trustie doinge of the same : but also to kepe secrete and not to disclose or oppen any counsell or commonycation had betwixt the saide governors in their common house or elsewhere in payne of deprivation of his saide office.

12. Item it is agreed ordayned and established by the authoritie forsaid that no governors now beinge nor hereafter to be shall dis-

for keping of counsell upon payne of deprivation.

close or open to any persone or persones any of those articles statutes and ordinances now made or hereafter to be made. Nor open or disclose

any counsell or commonycacion had or to be had betwene the saide governors in their common house, or elsewhere whensoever they shall assemble themselves together for any mater concernynge the saide Free schole uppon payne of deprivinge and utter expulsyon of hym or them so offendinge frome the saide corporacion for ever.

13. Item it is further ordeyned decreed and concluded by the like Auctoritie that neither tenement bargayne nor ferme nor any other parcell of Lande now belonginge or that hereafter shall

belonge unto our saide Free grammer schole shall at any time be let set or grannted otherwise then for three lives or for twentie and one yeres and that in our common house by us all onelie And that all and every our tenannts do paye and be bounde to paye theire rents allwayes quarterlye unto our bayliffe and Reves And they to paie likewise the same furthwith unto our cheif wardyn.

14. Item it is ordeyned and decreed by the forsaide authoritie that none of the goods and profetts growinge and commynge of the possessions lands and revenues of our saide Free gramer schole shall at any tyme be employed or bestowed, but onelye to and for the use mayntenance good encrease and furtherannce of the said Schole and of suche things as now do or hereafter shall belonge unto the same as sone as the said Schole shalbe oute of debte.

15. Item yt is moreover ordeyned and agreed by the forsaide authoritie that for the saffe and sure kepinge of our letters patents, of our Seale of tresaurie of our evidences, of our presidents, of our books of recordes, of our courte rolls and of all other our articles monyments and writings, or of any other our things necessarye to be saffellie and secretlye kept, there be one fayre and stronge coffer with iii locks prepared and made oute of hande and three keyes belonginge unto the same, of which keyes the moste anncientest and cheifest governors shall kepe iche of them one, the cheif warden the other.

16. Item yt is further decreed and ordeyned that whansoever any one of our companye ys departed oute of this transitorie worlde that then the scholemaster and all his scholers shall come unto the dore of the hym (if it be not in the plague) and all the governors likewise in honest and semelie apparell, and so accompany the dede corps into the churche, the scholers with the master goynge before the corps and all the governors comynge after orderlye two and two as they are anncient in there vocation.

17. Item it is further ordeyned and appoynted by the forsaide authoritie that if any unsemelie or slannderous wordes happen to be spoken by our saide Free schole by our scholemaster or scholers of the same, or by our companye of governors, that then the saide unsemelye speker be sent for before us and be required to declare upon what occasion he hath so unsemelye and so unhoneestlye spoken of suche a schole and companye, but if he be founde to have spoken untruelie and withoute iust cause let hym acknowledge his faulte and be gentlie reprehended for the same and avertised to do no more so, and so be dismissed, But if he

will stubburnely still stande to his untrue and slanderous reporte than let us see hym corrected accordingle to the example of all others to be warre by hym, But if he be any one of our companye that shall so unsemelie and slannderously speke and that beinge duelie proved the same person shal be furthwith deproved and banished frome our companye for ever.

18. Item yt is decreed ordayned and stablised by thauctoritie afforsaide that at every chosinge of any governors and at every wardens Accompt not onelie thes our good and wholesome articles and statutes, but also tharticles and grannts made unto us in our letters patents for the same schole shalbe orderlie and distinctlye redde and declared that every of us by the eftener hearinge of the same maye the better understande them and therby the more better and diligentlier employe ourselves unto the due kepinge and fulfillinge of the same to the uttermost of our powers, whiche god of his mercie grannte us all willinglie to do unto whome be honor praise and glorie everlastinge. Amen.

Fr. Lynnewraye, Senr.

[This clause was added later.]

Item it is ordered and establiished by thauctoritie of this whole companye that all and every some and stock of moneye whiche shalbe or happen to comme to thands of the governors to thuse of the schole shalbe putt into the schole chest and shall their remayne locked to thuse of the schole until suche tyme as by the whole companye it shalbe thought convenient and nedefull to disburse the same. Savinge that at every accompt their shalbe delivered to the Master warden or Receyvfor for that yere somoche moneye as shall paye the scholemasters wage for the next quarter then followinge.

xvii^o die junii Anno Regni Reginae Elizabethae xiii^o.

Fr. Lynnewraye, Senr.

Brewton

Articles concernynge the order of the schole, the scholemaster and the scholers of the same devised by the assent of the governors of the same schole the sixt daye of aprill Anno regni reginae nostrae Elizabeth etc. viii^o 1566.

1. Imprimis for asmoche as the fundacion and erection of our said fre gramer schole is appoynted and ordeyned by especial words in our letters patents for the same to be onelie a free grammer schole That is to saye a schole wherein scholers maye and shall from tyme to tyme be lerned and taught to perceave and understande the Latyn tonge and that frelie Be it therfore enacted and by us present governors ordeyned and established for ever by the

What scholers are to be admitted into the free schole.

Authoritie to us commytted that frome hensfurth none be taken or admitted to be of this schole there to be taught but onelie suche as be at the Least readye to entre ther grammer That is to saie suche as can reade Latyn and englisshe and somewhat wryte wherby they maye the better, redier and soner become lerned in the tonge afforsaide for the which entente and cause they are thither brought.

2. Item yt is ordered and decreed by thauctoritie afforsaide that the scholemaster shall not at any tyme for his recreation or pastyme absent hymself frome the schole and towne of Brewton above xiith dayes at severall tymes in the hole yere, And at no tyme he shalbe and lack but that he give warnynge unto the wardyns of his absens if it above one daye At which daye and tyme the wardyns shall in wrytinge diligentlie note the tyme and dayes of his absence that he do not excede and passe the nombre of his saide appoynted dayes.

3. Item it is further appoynted and ordeyned by the forsaide auctoritie that every day in the mornynge Immediatelie upon six of the clock the scholemaster shall enter into the schole and after the common praiers whiche hereafter shall be appoynted there orderlie and devoutlie said the scholemaster shall here all them furthe to saie their parte rules and other things that be under his tuition and teachinge and further instruct them according to thorder of his saide schole. And if any be found absent he shall streightwayes send for them, and at their comynge ponynshe them discretlie according to their faulte. And he shall contynue there untill eight of the clocke, at which tyme the scholers shall go unto their breakfast who by nyne of the clock shall com unto the schole agayne, and there contynue untill it be Aleven of the clock diligentlie employenge themselves unto such studious Lernynge as the master shall appoynt them unto, At which tyme they shall go to dynner and then depart ii and ii together in good order untill thay be comme home, and frome thence returne agayne to the schole half an houre before one of the clock at the farthest. And then at one a clock shall the master enter the schole agayne and their diligentlie employe hymself untill it be three of the clock, and shall enter agayne at Foure and there remayne untill five, and then shall they all departe for alnight in like good order as is beforesaide. And this order shall they dayly observe and kepe in goynge and comynge to and frome the schole.

4. Item for avoydinge of to muche licentious libertie of playeing be it enacted and authorised by thauctoritie afforesaide that no scholer shall have licence to playe in any weke wherin is any hollye-daye, and every wyke wherein is no hoolye daye to have a licence at the discretion of the master if the weather so fyne for one after none in the saide weke. And every half hollydaye to kepe their

schole untill Evenynge praier, and then to comme to theyre churche orderlie and ii and ii to say their evenynge praiers to the laude and praise of god.

5. Item That good maners maye be encreased together with good lernynge as it is semelie be it likewise ordeyned that the scholemaster shall diligentlie frome tyme to tyme give earnest warninge and charge unto his scholers to behave themselves scholerlike that is to saye honestlie and soberlie bothe at meate and otherwise in all things as well in the streate as ellswhere, that all persones may well perceve them by their sober behavior to be scholers indede. And the scholemaster shall frome tyme to tyme appoynt discrete Impositors everywhere to marke the rude and ill behavior of their felowes, and wekelie to correct and soberlie ponyshe the scholers offendinge by the informacion of the saide impositors. And farther the saide master shall withoute faile every monethe once at the least surelie knowe of the householders where any scholer or scholers are boured whether he or they do behave themselves soberlie and honestlie or no in their houses, And if any faulte by their hoste or hostys be declared worthie punysshment the master accordinge to his discretion shall correct, commanding the amendment of the same, And also that there be order taken by the scholemaster that his scholers shall alwayes use the latyn tongue with their felowes aswell withoute the schole as within for the better encrease of the same.

finis
q[uod]d[icit]

Laudetur Deus.
Fr. Lynnewraye.