

The Caistorian:
2020 edition

The 1960 School Walk: Sixty Years On by Adam Pountney (2010 – 18)

In the winter of 1959 and 1960, the Secondary Schools Subcommittee of Lindsey County Council decided that Caistor Grammar School would be no more. Devising a recommendation to be put to the whole County Council, reformist aldermen such as Thomas Scholey and T.F. Raby felt the school was a burden on the Lincolnshire education system and its existence was essentially unnecessary. Some wider council figures, such as alderman John Forrester, phrased the situation in a somewhat blunter fashion. To him, Caistor Grammar was an *'antiquated village school.'* From the position of the education subcommittee, the grammar school served a relatively small number of students and a compressed catchment area compared to the other local grammar schools of De Aston School in Market Rasen, and Brigg Grammar School, and supporting it seemed to be a waste of council funds. Arguments for its continuing existence going into the new decade seemed limited at best. The school was a non-viable entity. Therefore, the subcommittee proposed that Caistor's students could merely be dispersed to those schools and Caistor could be closed, a decision to be mulled over by the whole County Council on 19th February. It seemed as if 1960 was to be the end, or at least the beginning of a gradual process leading towards the end, of three hundred and thirty years of Caistor Grammar School's history.

Needless to say, the staff and students of the school, and many local residents all across Lincolnshire weren't exactly pleased about this recommendation. Whilst Ken Michel, the then-Headmaster of the school felt inclined to stick to a position of public neutrality about the council's recommendation, he chose to make neutral yet subtly critical statements in the pages of the Lincolnshire Times, one being that the *'knowledge of this [the recommendation] to the children affected morale'* at the school. Many disparate Lincolnshire individuals of relative public importance also expressed their dismay at this attempt to close the school. Religious figures were key opponents. The vicar of Caistor, John Colver, felt the school needed to be retained for the continuance of local social and moral values, and that the closure of the school would weaken rural life in the Wolds completely and totally. Even the highest religious figure in the county, Kenneth Riches, the Bishop of Lincoln, took to the Lincolnshire Times to express reasons why the school needed to remain. He personally extolled the virtues of smaller class sizes which created a more intimate and personal learning environment for pupils, and felt that arguments about the school's non-viable position could be reversed by catchment realignment and the expansion of boarding capabilities to serve RAF bases such as Binbrook, improving the school's position into the decade. In total, the Lincolnshire Times argued that 60,000 objectors existed, from individuals like Riches, Lord Yarborough and Marcus Kimball (the then MP for Gainsborough), to powerful organisations such as the Lincolnshire branch of the National Farmers' Union and various parish councils as well. But the most visible and most remembered aspect of the turbulent days of 1960 was something that seems almost mythic now when looking back from 2020. Undeniably it's an event firmly lodged in the annals of Caistor Grammar School's long history. Even the contours of the event seem like something out of an epic. Fifty-three students supported by parents and local residents, trudged on their own initiative through a 50 mph blizzard in the dead of night, waving lanterns to light the way through the Wolds, flying school flags and singing songs, all in order to make a twenty-six mile walk from Caistor to Lincoln. The exceptional nature of the school walk of the 18th and 19th February 1960 has not been eaten away at by time. For students to do this feat out of their own initiative and love of a school continues to seem truly remarkable. It seems closer to a well-organised protest march or a military operation, and in fact it was organised on more similar terms to such events than a mere night-time ramble. Sixty years on, looking back at the history of the school walk, its impact hasn't ebbed away. It was a powerful expression of student support that had definite impact in ensuring the school's future for years to come.

In the light of parental expression to the sub-committee's plans expressed in October 1959, it seems that in January 1960 a group of girl boarders living in Grove House (the boarders' accommodation once situated at the top of the terraces) got an idea about protesting the recommendation to close the school. As one of the boarders, Carole Saunby, put it at the time: *'It all started in the school dormitory one night when the girls were wondering how we could register our protest about the threatened shutting of the school. We had been talking about the marchers. We thought it was one way of showing how we felt.'* Inspired by marches such as CND's

Aldermaston protests, Saunby and her fellow girl boarders came up with a simple idea. It consisted of a protest march to Lincoln County Council's offices in order to hand to them a petition expressing student dismay with the education sub-committee's recommendation. The idea took flight amongst school students and a committee was elected within the school to handle organisation of the event. The committee consisted of Saunby together with Head Boy John Steel, Ian Palmer and Roy Schofield. Opting to organise the walk in a highly professional manner, they were supported by the boarders' house master, Mr A.C. Body, and began logistically mapping out the specifics of the route and organisation of the event, as well as organising the dispersal of information to the press to publicise the walk. They were also secretly approved and supported in this by Ken Michel whilst he chose to stick to his publicly neutral position.

Roy Schofield, writing in 2000, remembered *'doing most of the typing for this great event...writing to county councillors, politicians, press and TV, preparing the petition and printing letters seeking parental approval'*, amongst other tasks. Copies of the nascent committee's notes still exist, showing the scope of their ambition and the importance of what they were doing. There were to be *'no off the record interviews'*, *'no signs or gestures to television cameras which could be misinterpreted by the world'*, and students were to be warned on approaching Lincoln *'that an unguarded look, word or gesture could be detrimental to the school's future.'* Press



The planning of the walk.

was carefully controlled, with Schofield and the committee giving details of the route and interviews to newspapers in Brigg and Lincoln. This level of professionalism was carried over to the specifics of the event. The event was specifically planned to coincide with the 10am meeting of the County Council on the 19th February. By setting off at 10pm on the 18th, the petition could be delivered right on schedule before the council's meeting. The 18th was also the last day of school before half term, which meant the situation all lined up nicely. The petition was drafted and signed by one-hundred and thirty-one pupils of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth forms. The committee felt that younger forms would not understand the issues being discussed.

Whilst the petition was being written up, and the press were being worked with, various other logistical decisions were being made. Food and other provisions were arranged to be provided for, with Lincoln's youth hostel being used for breakfast on the morning of the 19th. Refreshment stops at Gibbet Hill near Faldingworth and Welton Airfield were set up, to be run by parents and administer soup and rolls throughout the night. A police escort, under Sergeant Deptford, was arranged. Fourth form boys were recruited to be lantern carriers (and possible emergency ambulance support) through the night. Together with the fourth form boys' ambulance support status in any worst case scenario, a first-aid van, organised by parent George Johnson and the chemistry master and staff support 'Pop' Linsell, was on standby in case anyone gave themselves a minor injury. Parental approval was sought, staff were recruited to supervise the walk, and fifth and sixth form student walkers were gathered together. Even two specially made school flags were put together, one representing past traditions and the other representing the future that the walkers hoped to ensure would occur. The committee had prepared for the walk completely, and prepared for every potential hurdle that could be thrown their way. After the school day of 18th February, 1960, the committee organised a press conference with representatives of local newspapers such as the Lincolnshire Times, the Market Rasen Mail, and the Grimsby Evening Telegraph as well as radio and television, to brief them on details of the walk. The atmosphere was somewhat tense. Edward Dodd, the Lincolnshire Times' journalist, wrote that John Steel *'slapped down one questioner who thought they might carry slogans like "Down with the County Council" and sing Army-type marching songs.'* Steel replied that *'This is not a joke or a rag.'* The seriousness of the students' mission was evidently weighing on the committee, which may have been compounded by the startling weather reports coming in about conditions overnight. The weather report from RAF Manby predicted *'a freezing, frosty night with possible snow showers.'* Writing for this magazine in retrospect, one of the walkers, Joy Lord (nee Carpenter) remembered the weather reporter glibly

but understandably saying *'Rather them than me.'* But the students continued preparing for the walk unabated by the gloom, equipping themselves with woolly jumpers, cycle capes, and jeans to protect themselves from the cold, whilst the threat of snow gathered in the skies above them.

By 10:15pm, spirits seemed higher. A fish and chip supper had been provided for the students, as well as press, parents and teachers, and students enjoyed cups of tea and showed journalists the two flags they had made. Roy Schofield remembered that at about this time, *'the weather deteriorated...and snow started to fall, gently at first.'* The students put on their protective clothing, and prepared to set off. The chair of the governors, A.H. Marrows, watched on from the school gates.

John Colver blessed the students and the marchers, one of whom was his daughter, Veronica, whilst Ken Michel gave a secular blessing, saying to the fifty-three marchers (twenty-eight boys and twenty-five girls) that *'This march will do more good than anything else to save our school.'* After this morale boost, the students headed



The walkers leaving the school

up to the start point of the walk at the Market Square, where around 400 or 500 well-wishers gathered, local Caistor residents and school teachers, parents and younger students alike. Right on cue, Roy Schofield remembered the weather deteriorating even more at this point, the snow and wind beginning to get more and more intense. At around about 11pm, the walkers set off, led by Mr Body as the pace maker, with the students being accompanied by 'Pop' Linsell (the chemistry master) and his wife Charlotte as well, together with a party of contingent police and press cars. The conditions that greeted the walkers were pretty miserable, to put it mildly. As Joy Lord remembered, *'the wind howled and the snow blinded us, then ice packed the roads and there was the hazard of sliding vehicles.'* The walkers were lucky casualties were light. In something out of a slapstick comedy, a police car was accidentally rammed into a ditch by a skidding car for the Hull Daily Mail. The only other casualty was a fifth-form girl, Jane Caswell, who dropped out at Market Rasen. She was possibly the same girl Joy Lord later remembered having to bundle in to the back of a police car whilst suffering an asthma attack. But besides these incidents, the walkers managed to all keep going, singing school songs and waving the flags through the night. By 4:15 am, after walking through Market Rasen and Middle Rasen, the party made it to Gibbet Hill. Roy Schofield remembered the beef broth and bread rolls provided by Dorothy Dixon (*'a butcher parent'* as per Schofield) and Ken Michel being very welcome, understandably so. The walkers swiftly pressed on, parent Douglas Kelloway's illuminated 'Ever Excel' school motto providing some motivation on their way, their pace leaving the huddled and cold press left under the coke braziers at Gibbet Hill. This first leg of the walk, eleven miles long, was the longest. The committee had devised the three legs of the walk (Caistor-Gibbet Hill, Gibbet Hill-Welton, Welton-Lincoln) to decrease in length to keep the impetus going. But whilst the second leg of the walk shaved two miles off the first leg, the walkers found it the hardest-going section. Conserving energy by stopping the school songs and not talking, the walkers trudged through settled snow and an unceasing head wind. The wind had gotten so bad at this point that the school flags had to be packed into to one of the cars. All of the energy that had gone into the first leg was replaced by a quiet air of determination. By the time they got to Welton, exhaustion was starting to take over, with 'Pop' Linsell tending to blistered feet and hot coffee from Mr Kelloway, a farmer parent, being enthusiastically drunk up. The one obstacle they found were Lincoln council's gritting lorries loading up, but this was swiftly avoided. After Welton, spirits started to lift as the sun began to rise, with Roy Schofield remembering how much *'the lights of Lincoln were a welcome sight'*, giving the walkers *'a 'target' to aim for'*. At around 6am, the walkers passed through the Priory Gate into Lincoln, where the city police replaced the Lincolnshire Police escort. Heading towards the YHA hostel, the committee's precision and preparedness managed to get the students to the hostel at 7:12 am, a mere seven minutes behind schedule, which considering the weather conditions is quite remarkable.



John Steel presenting Sir Weston Cracroft-Amcotts with the petition.

The walkers all changed into school uniforms at this point, and most ate what was a much needed English breakfast. Some were seemingly so nervous they didn't eat very much, with Roy Schofield being one of those not possessing an appetite that morning. At 10am they headed off from the hostel to Lincoln County Hall, holding the school flag banner and being cheered on by parents, teachers, friends, and supporters of the school. Joy Lord recalled even the County Council office staff cheering the students as they marched into the forecourt of the Council's offices, to deliver the petition to Sir Weston Cracroft-Amcotts, the chairman of the council, who was flanked by Alderman Raby and the council clerk, W.E. Lane. John Steel handed the petition to Sir Weston, who they graciously spoke to the marchers about their efforts and dedication to their school, saying that if he had been a member of the school he would have been a marcher. He invited the students into the council offices, and gave them all coffee and biscuits. From the council offices, forty-six of the marchers headed back to Caistor by coach, whilst six stayed in the public gallery of the council chambers

to watch the councillors decide on what to do about the closure recommendation. The council decided to give the school a stay of reprieve, and think on the recommendation, with Raby congratulating the pupils on their endeavour in the chamber, whilst still maintaining the committee's case was as strong as ever. After their long and hard work, Ken Michel treated the committee to lunch in the County Hotel. The walk had done what it had set out to do, and had prevented the school's fate being abruptly decided on a cold winter's day in 1960. But the turmoil carried on even after the walk. Raby and the Education Committee still pushed forward with their proposal to close the school, with a council meeting on this issue school occurring on Friday 6th May, 1960. It came to a narrow margin in the school's favour of 52-48. The legal case for the retention of Caistor Grammar School submitted by C.G. Barr of the Caistor Rural District Council, sent on behalf of the school governors, to the council in March presented a cogent argument for the future of the school that matched the opinion of people like Bishop Riches, particularly regarding expansion of boarding facilities, seemingly persuading some councillors, with Barr being congratulated by Caistor residents for this act, being heralded in the Market Rasen Mail in July 1962 as someone '*who kept the wheels of the opposition constantly turning in the fight to retain Caistor Grammar School.*' Conflict between the council and the school raged on into 1961, with a decision in November by Aldermen Scholey and Raby to turn down a £20,000 grant for a new hall and gymnasium that Caistor applied for being controversial. The subcommittee's argument was that they had a constricted budget to work with and more urgent funding issues to deal with. In reality, it took until 1964 for the county council to finally reprieve the school in total.



The opening of Lindsey House on 20th October, 1967

In the years after 1964, the council worked with the school to provide funding for the £68,000 Lindsey House to be built as boarding accommodation for the school. In one of those strange quirks of fate, eight years after being at opposing sides in the debate over the future of Caistor Grammar School, Thomas Scholey, T.F. Raby, George Barr and Ken Michel opened Lindsey House together on 20th October, 1967, a symbol of the future of Caistor Grammar School. By then the head of Lindsey County Council, Scholey quoted Sir Henry Newbolt, a former pupil of the

school, and his lines '*To set the Cause above renown, to love the game beyond the prize.*'

Scholey said after the council had decided to save the school, the building of Lindsey House was a way of building up the school, to show what could be accomplished when the council and the school worked together, his way of setting the cause above renown. For his part, Barr praised Scholey's fairness from 1960 to 1964 when he was opposed to the school's existence. The opening of Lindsey House symbolised the end to the long-running conflict between the council and the school which had raged on since 1959.

The school walk of 1960 represented a powerful display of student displeasure against any attempt to close the school they cherished and loved. Whether or not the county council would have given Caistor Grammar a reprieve on 19th February, 1960, without the efforts of the fifty-three students and the staff and parents who supported them seems doubtful. The courting of the press and the inherently symbolic display of students walking through snow, ice, slush and wind was a powerful opposition to the councillors' wishes to close the school. Together with the work of people like George Barr, and a powerful wider public opposition towards the school's closure, gradually the position of Raby, Scholey and wider aldermen opposed to Caistor's existence was whittled down by 1964. Arguably this second half of the story has sadly been forgotten now, with Barr's influential document in particular being of great importance to saving the school in May 1960. In contrast, the inherently symbolic action of the school walk has been understandably enshrined in school lore. The contributions of Mr Body, Mr and Mrs Linsell, and the students led by John Steel, Carole Saunby, Ian Palmer and Roy Schofield to protest against the school's closure are even part of the Founders' Prayers at the end of summer term service. Sixty years on from the walk, the power of their actions have not diminished in impact and power. Selflessly and proudly, they represented the virtues of Caistor Grammar School which still exist today. Without the walkers of 1960, Caistor Grammar School may truly have been no more.

The petition as presented to Sir Weston Cracroft-Amcotts on 19th February, 1960:

"We the present pupils of Caistor Grammar School, respectfully remind you that in the year 1630 our founder Francis Rawlinson, provided in his will for 'the foundation and maintenance of a free grammar school to continue for ever in the market town of Caistor. We still wish it to continue and it seems to us that a decision by you today to close our school will be breaking faith with the past and us; for we do not consider that the reasons advanced for its closure either good or sufficient. We therefore humbly petition that you will continue to maintain it and spend as much on improving its buildings as will bring them up to the standard of those younger grammar schools that are our friends and rivals. We believe that if this is done, those who follow us will so acquit themselves as to be worthy of your trust and that we shall not have walked in vain."

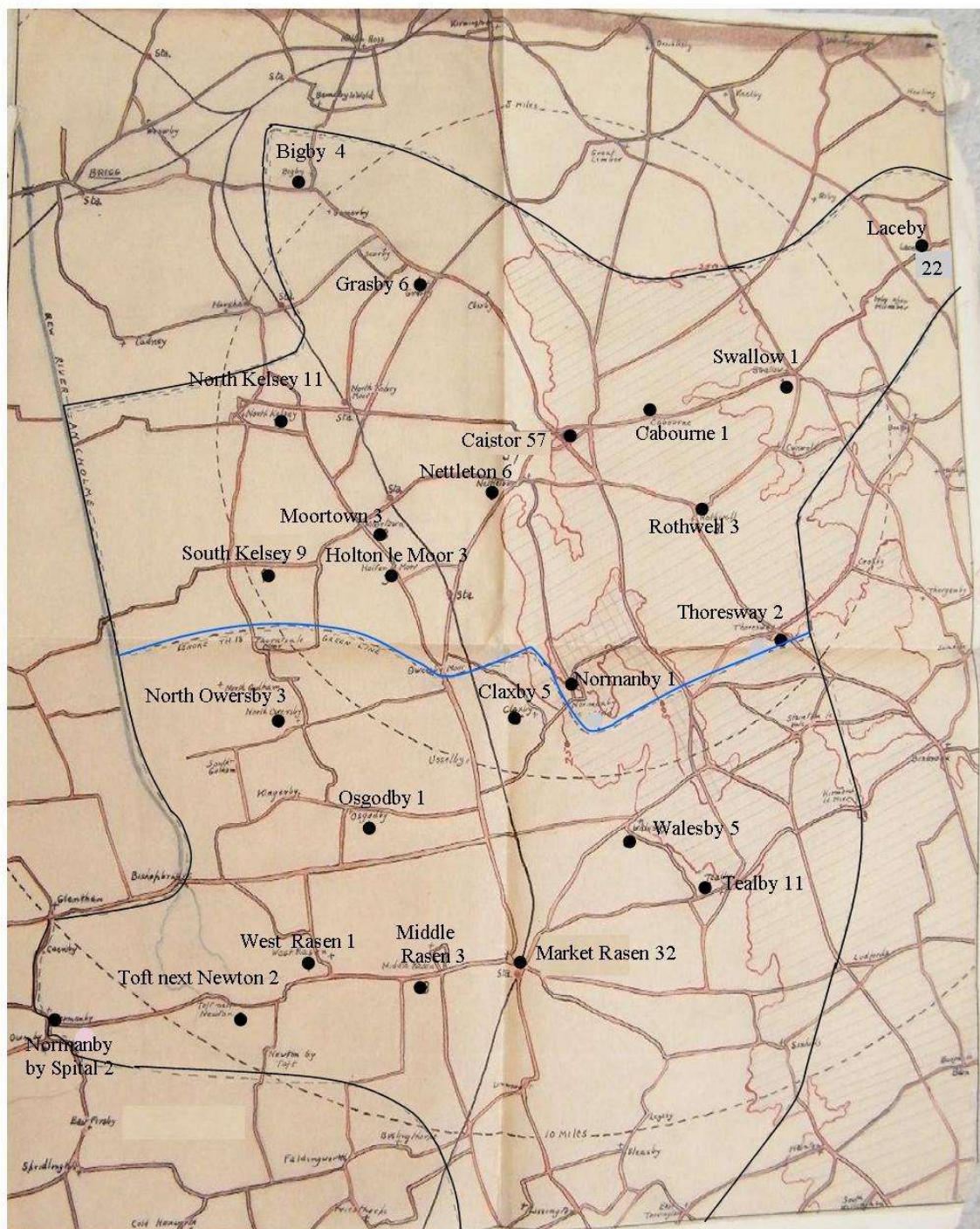
The student walkers of 1960:

John Steel, Carole Saunby, Ian Palmer, Roy Schofield, Peter Day, Kenneth Brown, David Poiser, Celia Cook, Michael Keyworth, Roy Kittmer, John Mellor, Ian Staves, Norman Wright, Maureen Bremner, Pauline Fox, Margaret Barr, Frances Brown, Mary Reed, Brenda Mellors, Beryl Suddaby, Josephine Pogson, Roger Camp, Michael Cavallini, John Dixon, David Harris, Barry Chambers, Douglas Kellaway, Roger Kent, Ronald Lane, Abdul Othman, Brian Proctor, Roger Shacklock, Ronald Shacklock, Anthony Walton, Michael Westerby, Vincent Wood, Brian

Lingard, Keith Taylor, Joy Carpenter, Jane Casswell, Christine Cliffe, Valerie Cross, Veronica Colver, Patricia Jackson, Sheila Palmer, Diane Dickinson, Helen Houlton, Jean Smith, Patricia Starbuck, Catherine Slogrove, Jennifer Stamford, Eileen Griffin, Rosalind Pentelow.



Caistor Grammar School Catchment Area - December 1960



The black line is the fullest extent of the catchment area, this applies to girls. The boys' catchment area is limited in the south by the blue line. The reason for the difference is that De Aston in Market Rasen was at that time a boys' only grammar school.

Two parts of the catchment area are beyond the limit of the map. Top right is Laceby, only the remainder of that parish is missing. At the bottom of the map some villages, as yet unidentified, are omitted.

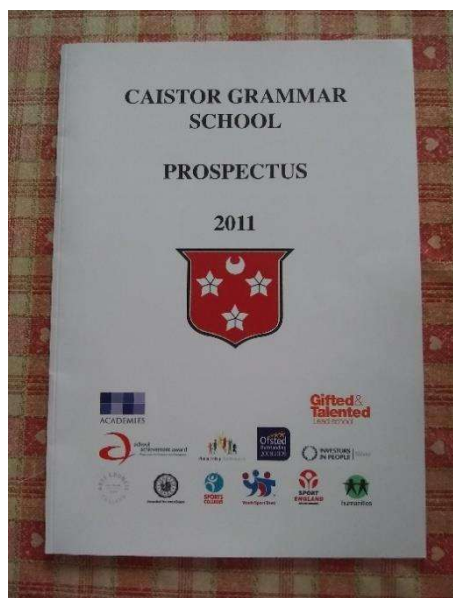
The total number of pupils is 194, but a photograph of the school's pupils dated October 1960 shows 216, so that map is incomplete in that respect. The 57 pupils from Caistor are from both town and boarders.

The Caistorian:
2021 edition

ARTICLES FROM ALUMNI

Students Wanted! A short history of the school's prospectuses by Adam Pountney (Student 2010 – 17 Staff 2017 - 18)

Applying to secondary school can be a testing process, to say the very least. The endless onslaught of open evening after open evening, coupled with the angst over whether this choice is right and that choice is wrong, make choosing where to spend the bulk of your adolescence sometimes a very turbulent time. However, my opinion is that most of the time, people seem to make a decision based on something ineffable: a mere 'feeling' that a teacher, or a building, or a landscape, or simply an atmosphere feels right. Somehow, there's a voice of belonging calling to you, and often your parents as well. Despite all the events and advertising material, I ardently believe this feeling is what makes you pick a secondary school. That's what happened in my case with CGS. That feeling - and the fitness suite. Somehow on my open day, I envisioned spending six years of my life running on a treadmill. That didn't exactly happen. The feeling definitely has its limitations. However, despite all that, advertising *is* important. As much as it sounds somewhat odd to talk about a school as an institution that advertises to an 'audience', prospectuses are a highly important way in which pupils and parents alike tend initially to encounter any school, including Caistor Grammar School.



Sometimes, you'll pick one up at an open evening, as a means of support for the events going on, as something to thumb through on the kitchen table back at home. Occasionally, you might find them slipped through your letterbox or even handed out at your old primary school. As someone who isn't ashamed to admit they're a bit sentimental, I still have mine from 2011, gathering dust in a box in a cupboard, from which I've attached a few photos. Taking a quick look through it is an odd experience. Prospectuses don't really hold any personal memories of school for me, or for anyone. They act more as a reminder of a moment in time. On the individual level, they mark that shift in life from early childhood towards adolescence, something that is inherently emotional.

Yet on the wider school level, prospectuses serve as a vital historical document.

They act as a small window into Caistor Grammar's personnel, buildings and ethos, as well as a sense of what the school thought would attract pupils and parents to apply for attendance. This small window is even more valuable in the case of the older prospectuses existing in the Caistorians' archive, which are acutely important. For instance, prospectuses from the 1880s and 1910s provide photographs not available elsewhere to us, as well as names of teachers who otherwise might be lost to the historical ether. More generally, they tell us what the key 'selling point' of the school was thought to be – from 'clean air' in the case of the earlier prospectuses, to 'modern' buildings and technology such as the school gym or the BBC Micro in the 1980s. They even allow us a surface-level glimpse at the metamorphosis of the school in all forms of details – from buildings and rooms to uniforms and awards. Simply put, a prospectus can serve as a snapshot of a moment in time.



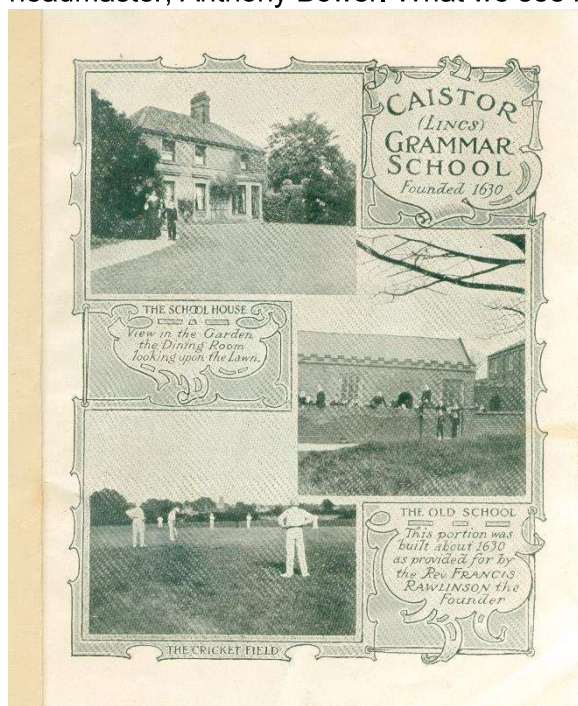
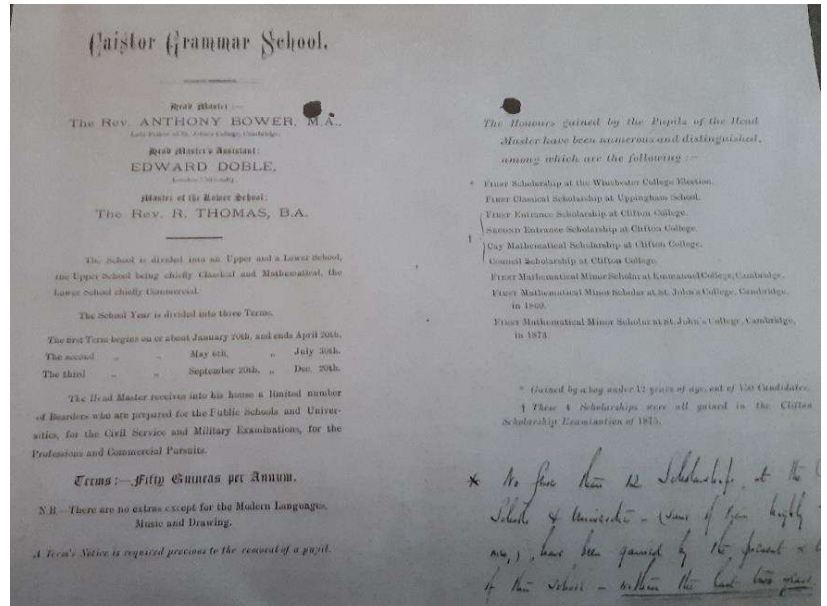
For instance, the earliest surviving prospectus that we hold seems to date from around 1887, and demonstrates the state of flux which late-Victorian secondary education found itself stuck in. Without turning this *completely* into a history lecture, a bit of context might be useful – so, bear with me.

From around the 1850s and 1860s educational commissions, such as the Taunton Commission, recognised that a tiered educational system was entrenched into English society. Whilst reforms such as the Elementary Education Acts of 1870 and 1891 to some extent improved access to schooling, by creating a number of non-religious board schools and free school places respectively, the actual form of the English educational system remained much the same as beforehand. The classical public boarding schools, such as Eton and Harrow, gave a classical education in Latin and Greek to the highest of the country's elites up to the age of 18, paying fees of around £100 a year. Below that, 'second-grade' schools were often only day schools teaching up to the age of 16. They often taught Latin, as well as more 'modern' or vocational subjects to only the middle-classes, including science, languages, and history, and cost around £35 a year. Below even that, 'third-grade' secondary schools cost only around £4 a year, and gave a so-called 'clerk's education' (often just arithmetic and the art of letter writing) to its pupils.

In the light of all this, where does the school stand in 1887? A simple answer is: 'Somewhere in the middle of all this.' CGS could reasonably be called a 'second-grade' school.

For instance, in terms of fees, the school is positioning itself at the higher end of the second-grade fee mark, at £50 per annum. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the prospectus takes great pains to stress the school's educational credentials and links to the higher-tier public schools. Much is made of *'the Honours gained by the Pupils of the Head Master'*, including four scholarships at Clifton College in Bristol, another for Winchester College (*'gained by a boy under 12 years of age, out of 150 candidates'*, no less), and three mathematical scholarships for St. John's College and Emmanuel College in Cambridge. The links with Clifton College were particularly apparent in these years, with the prominent late-Victorian and Edwardian poet and writer Henry Newbolt being one of several who made the journey from Lincolnshire to Bristol, later writing his semi-autobiographical novel *The Twymans* about his experiences in Caistor and Clifton College. But, more generally, the praise and positioning of the school is important. Here is a school that can easily serve as a bridge between rural Lincolnshire and what was clearly regarded as the stratosphere of British education: top public schools and Cambridge.

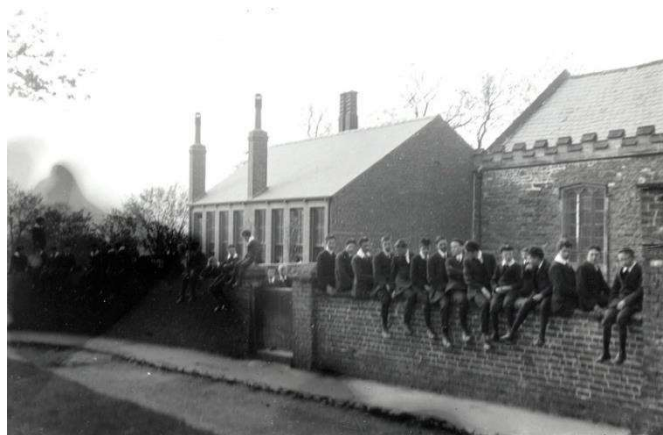
At the same time, Caistor is placing itself as a school that can also cater to those who require a 'clerk's education'. The prospectus clearly states that *'The Head Master received into his house a limited number of Boarders who are prepared for the Public Schools and Universities, for the Civil Service and Military Examinations, for the Professions and Commercial Pursuits.'* In terms of educational provision, it states *'the School is divided into an Upper and a Lower School, the Upper School being chiefly Classical and Mathematical, the Lower School chiefly Commercial.'* This effectively demonstrates the school being a hybrid between a second and third-grade school. The lower school offers a 'commercial' education, most likely being a polite euphemism for the clerk's education. Beyond this, we also see the intimacy of the school, with the small number of boarders received into the house of the headmaster, Anthony Bower. What we see is a school on the cusp of expansion and change in towards the turn of the 20th century.



By 1914, much had changed in Caistor, with a new Headmaster, H.E.J. Coxon, being appointed in 1913 and serving much as a new broom. Unsurprisingly, the 1914 prospectus champions much of the changes that Coxon and his predecessors had made. One change was simple, but reveals much about the change in British education from 1887 to 1914: far from being split between an 'upper' and 'lower' school, the renewed CGS was split between a *'Boarding School (for boys)'* and a *'Day School (for boys and girls)'*. Any sense of overt division based on subjects taught and any sense of educational standing being based on admissions to public schools had seemingly disappeared. Instead, the school was proudly claimed to be *'recognised by the Board of Education as an efficient secondary school.'* Approval now came, following the 1901 Education Act, from central government.

Coxon's vision also featured some deeply entrenched and developing ideas from late-Victorian and Edwardian environmental thought about the power of landscape and the importance of health for education. The environmental strain is particularly interesting, in the way in which it is intelligently used as a 'selling point' for the school's boarders, but also provides us a nice insight into the development of the school itself.

Much is made of the school being the '*healthiest school in Lincolnshire*, at an '*elevated position (400 ft.) on the Lincolnshire Wolds*', thus giving children a burst of '*bracing moorland air*.' This is particularly regarded as allowing the school to have '*a unique health-giving position such as few boarding schools in the East of England can offer*.' The prospectus also proudly linked this to improvements made in the boarders' dormitories, all of which were said to be '*warmed throughout by high pressure hot water pipes*.' More generally, it says '*the sanitary arrangements were all modernised and renewed in 1909*.' All this demonstrates the growth and modernisation going on within the school by Coxon. This was combined with a new sense of vigour about the school's own educational capabilities, something supported by the growth of subjects being taught in the school as well as in the actual physical growth of the school itself. Whilst the Old Hall is placed in the prospectus' photo supplement, possibly to root the school into tradition, the expansion of the school site is positioned more prominently on the front cover, with a '*new wing and workshop added 1909*' and an '*additional laboratory to be completed 1914*' being particularly significant in this regard. What is probably the former workshop can be seen adjacent to the Old Hall in this photograph.



This is directly connected to a broader range of subjects which the school can now provide an education in, with the prospectus claiming that the school now contains '*three modern classrooms, a Science Laboratory for Chemistry and Physics as well as adding another Laboratory for Biology and Agricultural Sciences, so that the work of those pupils whose future will lie in the Commercial World or a Profession shall not interfere with those who intend to take up Agriculture or Horticulture*.' The prospectus proudly demonstrates the school's new educational facilities, whilst also subtly demonstrating to us the entrenchment of the old educational divisions of the second-grade/third-grade schools of old, in terms of the division between 'commercial' and scientifically-minded pupils.

and Classics have been awarded the pupils in various University Final Examinations, while one of the pupils is still at Cambridge holding a scholarship won at this school, and two others are competing London University Bourses.

Situation.

The school occupies a **unique health-giving position** such as few boarding schools in the East of England and no other in Lincolnshire can offer. **The Wolds** attain at Calton a height of **450 feet**, and on the Western slope of these the school is situated. The altitude renders the climate extremely bracing, while the air from the neighbouring Moorland is refreshing in the extreme. The **drainage** is on the **most modern system**, and it made the more effective on account of the position of the school on the hillsides. **Abundant supplies of pure water** are also available. In fact, the site is an ideal one for a boarding school.

Buildings.

The premises have been enlarged on several occasions to meet the ever growing demand for class-rooms, and now include a large Hall, three **modern glass-rooms**, a **Science Laboratory** for Chemistry and Physics, a large **Joinery Shop** for Manual Instruction, Play Grounds, **Playing Fields** (8 acres) for Cricket, Football, Hockey, and Tennis, while at the moment of writing plans have been prepared for adding another **Laboratory for Biology and Agricultural Sciences**, so that the work of those pupils whose future will lie in the Commercial World or a Profession shall not interfere with that of pupils who intend to take up Agriculture or Horticulture. For those pupils the school also possesses **Experimental Gardens**, where the best methods in the Laboratory can be put into a practice, and where experiments in sowing, manuring, ensilaging, insect pests, grafting, etc., can be made.

Boarders.

The School House which adjoins is large and fitted with **every convenience for Boarders**. The **Dormitories** are very lofty and are warmed throughout by **high-pressure hot water pipes**. The sanitary arrangements were all modernised and renewed in 1909.

No pains are spared by the Head Master to make the school life of the Boarders one of the happiest parts of their lives. The **Diet** is unlimited in quantity and is of the very best quality. The health and comfort of the boarders are carefully attended to by the Doctor, to whom junior and delicate boys may refer for medical aid. For leisure time gymnastic apparatus, a library, workshop, and facilities for photography are available.

A Dual School.

Until 1908 the school was reserved exclusively for boys. Acting upon a suggestion of the Board of Education, the Governors decided to throw open the opportunities for a first-class education to girls also.

Apart from certain lessons in common, boys and girls have no communication with each other. They enter and leave at opposite ends of the school. If boarders they live in separate houses; the boys under the charge of the Head Master, and the girls under that of the Head Mistress. Organized games are arranged on separate days—for boys on Mondays and Thursdays, for girls on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Five years have now passed. The experiment has been a **great success**. The boys have not lost in manliness—they have gained considerably; the girls have not become coyish—they appear to feel constrained to adopt their most dignified and refined manners.

The common presence in the class-rooms of boys and girls has been found the strongest possible incentive to hard work; the boy inclined to be idle is prevented from following his inclination but he should have to exhibit his ignorance before a girl. The reverse also is true. In fact, experience has shown that those lessons taken in common are followed with greater attention than those which are taken separately. It is not very astonishing however. The custom of having separate schools for each sex dates from a bygone monastic age, when the education of girls was considered superfluous. Hence our great Public Schools—for boys only. These naturally suggested their schools. And in spite of this our Modern Universities, where the education of our young people usually between the ages of 18 and 22 is carried on, are *dead*. Even at Oxford and Cambridge lectures and examinations are now open to both sexes. Why separate them in schools? The Dual School has come to stay; it has justified its existence.

Health Certificate.

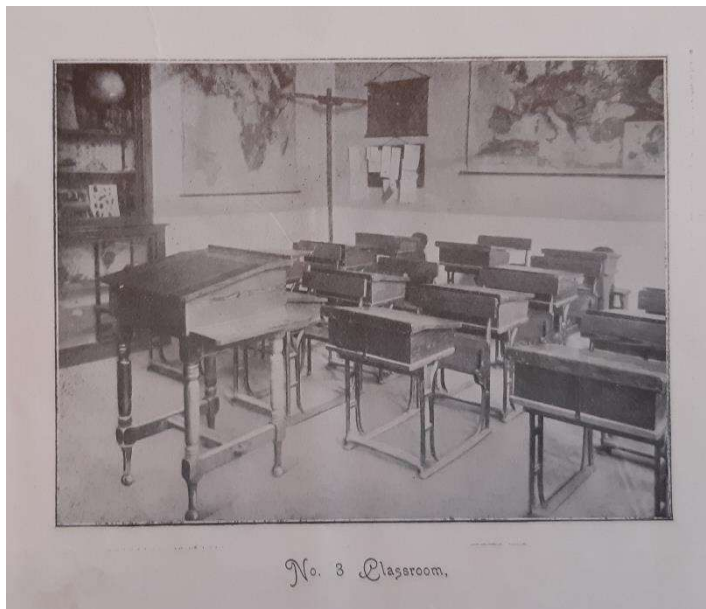
A Health Certificate and notice of the reopening of the school is sent one week before the beginning of each term, and must be signed by the parent or guardian, and returned with the school response. No child who has been exposed to infection within three weeks of the opening of school is allowed to return until a medical certificate certifying freedom from infection has been forwarded.

Admission.

Pupils are admitted from the age of seven, and may remain until they are nineteen, or longer by special permission. Before admission they should be able to read, write, form cursive, and do easy sums in the first four rules of arithmetic. An entrance examination, graded according to age, is held on the first day of term. A Form of Application for admission may be had on application to the Head Master. In the case

Perhaps the most fascinating paragraph is that detailing the school's shift towards both male and female education from 1908, as suggested by the Board of Education. The prospectus uses this as an opportunity to stress the virtues of a dual educational system, which was limited to 'certain lessons in common.' The prospectus states that *'The common presence in the Class-room of boys and girls has been found the strongest possible incentive to hard work; the boy inclined to be idle is prevented from following his inclination lest he should have to exhibit his ignorance before a girl. The reverse also is true. In fact, experience has shown that those lessons taken in common are followed with greater attention than those which are taken separately.'* This is an interesting window into the gendered sense of Edwardian education that evidently persisted at Caistor.

What is as interesting is the way in which Coxon and the prospectus uses it to stress Caistor's forward-thinking compared to the public schools that around thirty years earlier Bowers had sought solely to emulate. The prospectus notes that *'The custom of having separate schools for each sex dates from a bygone monastic age, when the education of girls was considered superfluous. Hence our great Public Schools—for Boys only. These naturally suggested Girls Schools. And in spite of this all our Modern Universities, where the education of our young people usually between the ages of 18 and 22 is carried on, are Dual. Even at Oxford and Cambridge lectures and examinations are now open to both sexes. Why separate them in schools? The Dual School has come to stay; it has justified its existence.'* Far from seeking solely to emulate public schools, Caistor seemingly desires to transcend them.



The 1919 prospectus mimics much of the content of the 1914 prospectus, but expands in regard to the school's links with universities and the Civil Service, much as Bowers' prospectus had done so in 1887. It states that *'The pupils of the School have won a long list of successes in Public Examinations and in subsequent life. At the present moment one of its past students is Vice-Principal of Birmingham University, and another is one of the Chief Permanent Officials of the Treasury, upon whom recently the title of K.C.B. was conferred.'* Scholarships it mentions include the *'Tancred, Prowde and Humphreys scholarships'* at Cambridge, the latter of which seemed to be a vestige of a long-running relationship between

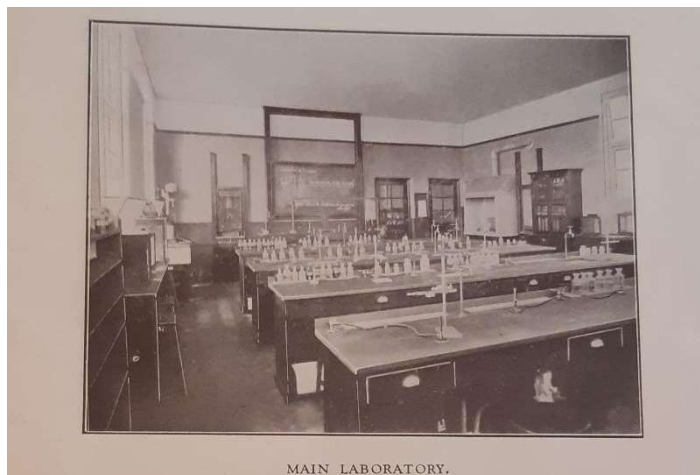
Jesus College, Cambridge and the school in the early years of the 20th century. In 1914, for instance, the school had 'first claim' on the Humphreys scholarship. According to the Jesus College archives, this is named after Charles Humphrey, who matriculated at the college in 1718, and left a scholarship to be given to a *'Pupil of Caistor School, or failing that, Louth or Alford School, or failing such any from Lincs.'* This demonstrates an interesting connection between Cambridge and Caistor that so far, we know relatively little about.

What is most interesting is that we get images of the interior of much of the school in the 1919 prospectus that we don't have equivalent sources for elsewhere, at least not as early as 1919, showing that some of the claims in the 1914 prospectus may have been slightly grandiose. Despite the prospectus claiming that *'each boarding house contains numerous cheerful, airy dormitories'*, the dormitories don't exactly look terribly cheerful to my eyes. I'll leave it up to you to decide.



We also get a precious glimpse of the interior of one of the school classrooms as well, which may perhaps be what is today's staffroom.

Finally, we also get a look at the expansion of the school's natural and health-inclined outlook that was so central to the 1914 prospectus, with a couple of pages detailing the school's outdoor swimming classes in the Wolds. I can't say that's something I missed when I was at CGS, but it's quite an evocative image that demonstrates how much educational concepts about exercise (and health and safety!) have changed in the years since.



By 1931, the school had again significantly expanded once more, with the new (now Old Building) being opened by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch in the year beforehand. Disappointingly for anyone interested in the history of the school, the 1931 prospectus essentially duplicates the contents of the 1919 prospectus, despite some interesting photographs of the restored Old Hall and the new wing which don't seem to exist elsewhere in our archive, such as this one of the school's '*main laboratory*.' Other photographs showcase additional modern developments similar to those praised in 1914 and 1919, such as the school's new showers, which appear to be the boys' toilets in the Old Building underneath the staff room. The photographs may showcase the new, fresh classrooms and facilities in the Old Building, but it also continues to duplicate photos from 1919 as well, such as the exact same photograph of the dormitory above. This proves frustrating, but is mitigated by the fact we hold extant photos of the interwar boarders' dormitories in postcard photographs from the 1920s.

Yet, despite this, some small changes have occurred from 1919 which are mentioned in the prospectus and are quite fascinating when trying to get a sense of how the school had altered in the interwar period. We see the school's extra-curricular provisions being particularly highlighted, such as the Chemical and Scientific Society (which also provided '*lectures on photography*'), and A.C. 'Tishy' Storr's school orchestra being hailed as something which will '*be of great advantage to [pupils] in after life.*' But in a broader sense of the school's educational provision, the prospectus seems oddly reticent in actually stating that anything had changed since 1919. Perhaps little had? We get some idea about the expanded teaching of French, or a wider scientific element to the curriculum (as demonstrated by the society above), but CGS seems to have been strong in science and mathematics even back in Bowers' day, judging by the number of mathematical scholarships in



the 1887 prospectus. Simply put, it's a frustratingly limited glimpse into the interwar period, a period of great change in British education before the educational reforms of 1944 and the significant shifts in British education that reared their head in the 1960s. Our archive of prospectuses from 1931 onwards is somewhat scarce, with perhaps the most interesting example we hold being the 1960 prospectus, which

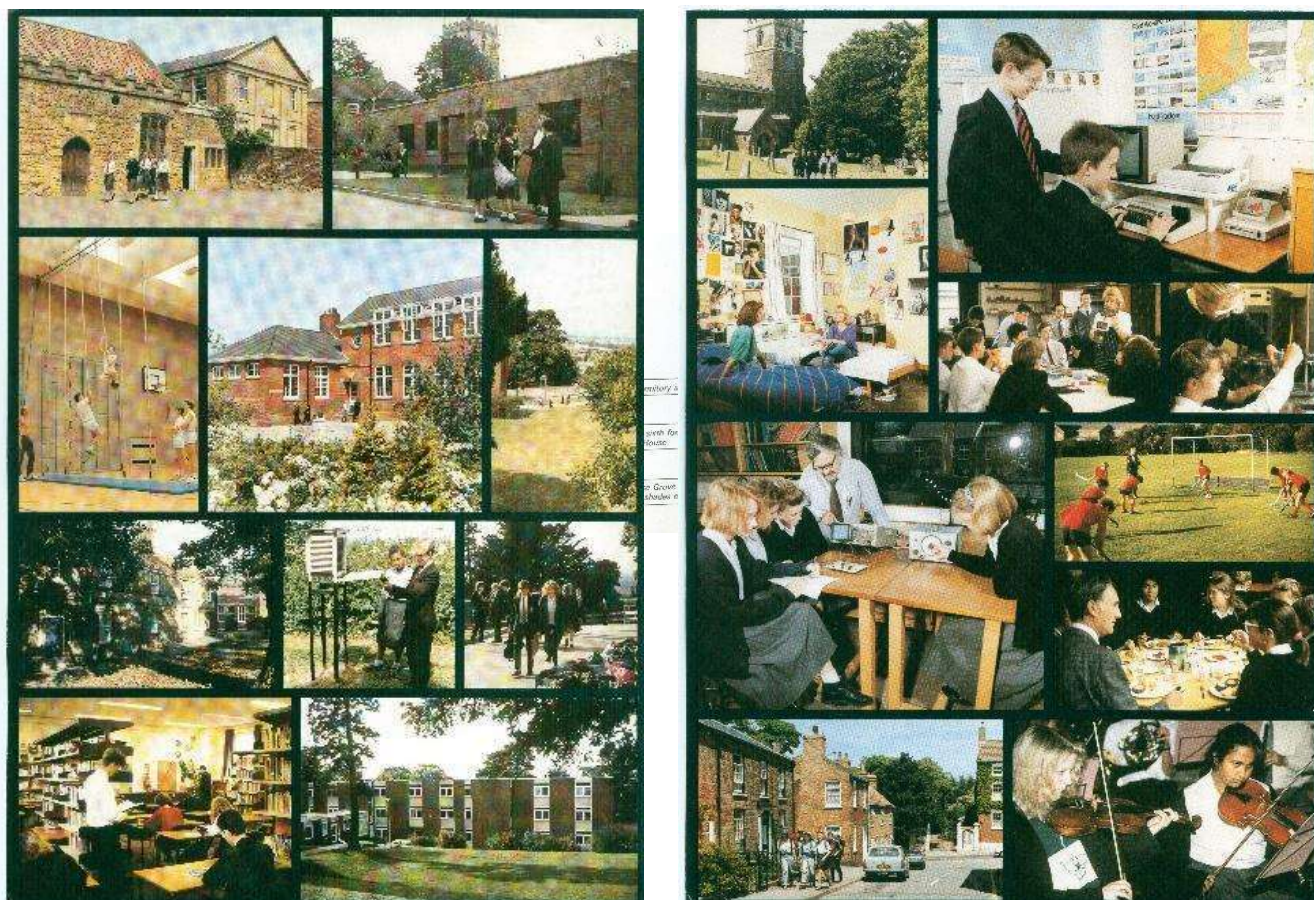
features a unique aerial photograph of the school site prior to the building and opening of Lindsey House in 1966, and also teases at the existence of the school's Folk Dancing Club, something that has alas since disappeared into the school's history. Maybe it's time for a revival?

Regardless, the school's metamorphosis through the 1970s and 1980s culminated in the building of the Manning Building between 1982 and 1984, something that marked a distinct shift in the topography of the school. By the late 1980s, many of the elements that made Caistor its recognisable 21st century self were beginning to be brought into being. Unsurprisingly, prospectuses from the 1980s highlighted the Manning Building as well as as the new school gym.

As with the earlier prospectuses under Coxon, modernity is regarded as a 'selling point', even extending to focusing on now-dated technology such as the BBC Micro. In around 1988, the school produced a special photo-prospectus to accompany the standard one. Despite being packed to the brim with black and white photographs, it also featured two extra colour supplements I've attached below, which are quite interesting. One shows other new additions to the school site, such as the new school library in the bottom left, which was opened by the poet Vernon Scannell in 1983 as a renovation of the former Caistor Congregational Chapel.

The second supplement together with the black and white photographs within the photo-prospectus also provides a unique glimpse into the later era of Caistor as a boarding school. We get a glimpse into the interior of Grove House, which was demolished in c1985 but stood at the top of the terraces near what is now Speakers' Corner as boarders' accommodation. For instance, the second photograph on the right of the second colour supplement gives us a rare look inside a Grove House bedroom, decorated in peach paint and papered over with Tom Cruise posters.

We also get a look at Casterby prior to its conversion into the Sixth Form centre, giving us another evocative glimpse into boarders' accommodation that seems quite alien to those of us who have attended the school since the end of boarding on the site. For instance, included within the photo-prospectus is a fascinating photograph of what is now C2, but which I knew perhaps most as the



home of the Debating Club in the last few years. Clearly, it was a larger boarders' room back in the 1980s, and it's quite interesting to see it looking so different from how I remember it. Despite dating as relatively recently as the mid-1980s, this prospectus is as vital a snapshot in time as that from 1887 for anyone interested in the history of the school.

One of the last prospectuses we hold dates from 1991, and is perhaps one of the last relics of advertising for boarders at Caistor Grammar, which finally ceased in 1995. Besides allowing another interesting glimpse into the boarders' accommodation, a venerable early-nineties timewarp, we also get to see another link back to the past. Here we see a school coming close to the turn of the century still looking to persuade people from as far as *'other parts of Lincolnshire and from Humberside and Yorkshire'* to board at CGS. It's even noted that *'Ninety minutes will bring you from Sheffield.'* In 1919, a similar (and perhaps slightly fanciful!) argument about Caistor's accessibility was advanced by Coxon, whose prospectus proudly noted that the school is *'conveniently reached from Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, etc.'* and that *'Many of its pupils come from London.'* More research is needed on

those pupils making the journey all the way from London to board, but it's an interesting idea and connection between these two prospectuses. Both are trying ardently to sell a school perched on the Lincolnshire Wolds as being easily accessible from many parts of the country. How effective this was is something that it might be worth finding a bit about.

Using prospectuses as a way to seek an insight into the history of Caistor Grammar School does have significant downsides. They're not exactly the most in-depth sources about the actual day-to-day running of a school, something that to be quite honest is probably best found in students' diaries. In fact, besides the odd staged photograph, the absence of student voices is quite marked.

What we do get, however, is a really interesting series of documents that can be laid on top of each other, presenting both similarities and differences to how the school was run over the course of one-hundred years and more. We get to see how much ideas about landscape and environment, as well as the trappings of modernity (from sanitary pipes to a BBC Micro – not a phrase I ever

expected to write!), came to be seen as important for the school all across the period. We get to see the school's continuing focus on a scientific and mathematical education, from the scholarships highlighted by Anthony Bowers in 1887 through to the society noted in 1931.



Have you thought of Weekly Boarding?

Caistor Grammar School has taught local children for 361 years. We are proud of our reputation as a purposeful and friendly school that achieves very good academic results.

We have recently gained grant-maintained status and are expanding to meet parental demand. We want to increase our boarding by attracting boys and girls from other parts of Lincolnshire and from Humberside and Yorkshire.

Boarding at Caistor offers more than access to the Grammar School. It builds confidence. It is fun.

Boarders are free to go home every weekend if they wish. Those who stay enjoy the company of their friends and a programme of sport and recreational activities.

Boarding fees are £1,200 a term. The Governors offer three Humphrey Scholarships to assist applicants of high academic ability. County Council grants may also be available. There is no charge for tuition.

Why not pay us a visit and meet our boarders? Bring a friend and spend a night with us.

Sixth Form boarders have single or twin study bedrooms.

These Third Form girls share a dormitory for four.

After prep there's time to relax.

Caistor has good access by road. Doncaster is about an hour's drive away. Ninety minutes will bring you from Sheffield.

But, perhaps what is most stark and clear in the collections of prospectuses we hold is the continuing sense of a school that cares about its students in a way not just in terms of what academic grades they achieve, but as individual human beings made collective in year groups and classes. The joys of an education at Caistor Grammar School can't just be found in the material 'selling points' that these prospectuses belabour at us, but in an ineffable feeling that seeps in between the lines of all these pages, made concrete by the students and staff you meet along the way teachers and friends. It's that very same feeling that whispered to me ten years ago: one of kindness, friendship, home and belonging.

I carry it with me, always.

Unearthed once more: the 1906 School Inspection Report by Adam Pountney (2010 – 18)

As an interesting bit of context for the article written on the school prospectuses, we've managed to find in the archives the 1906 report on the School's inspection. Despite the best efforts of Anthony Bowers to present a positive image of the school in 1887, the realities of the School's position under Bowers and his successor, Robert Thomas, were somewhat less than rosy. The inspector for the Board of Education, a Mr. Young, gives a pretty scathing account of the school before 1906, but seems to argue that the school was heading on an upward trajectory, something that H.E.J. Coxon managed to render apparent following his appointment as Headmaster in 1913.

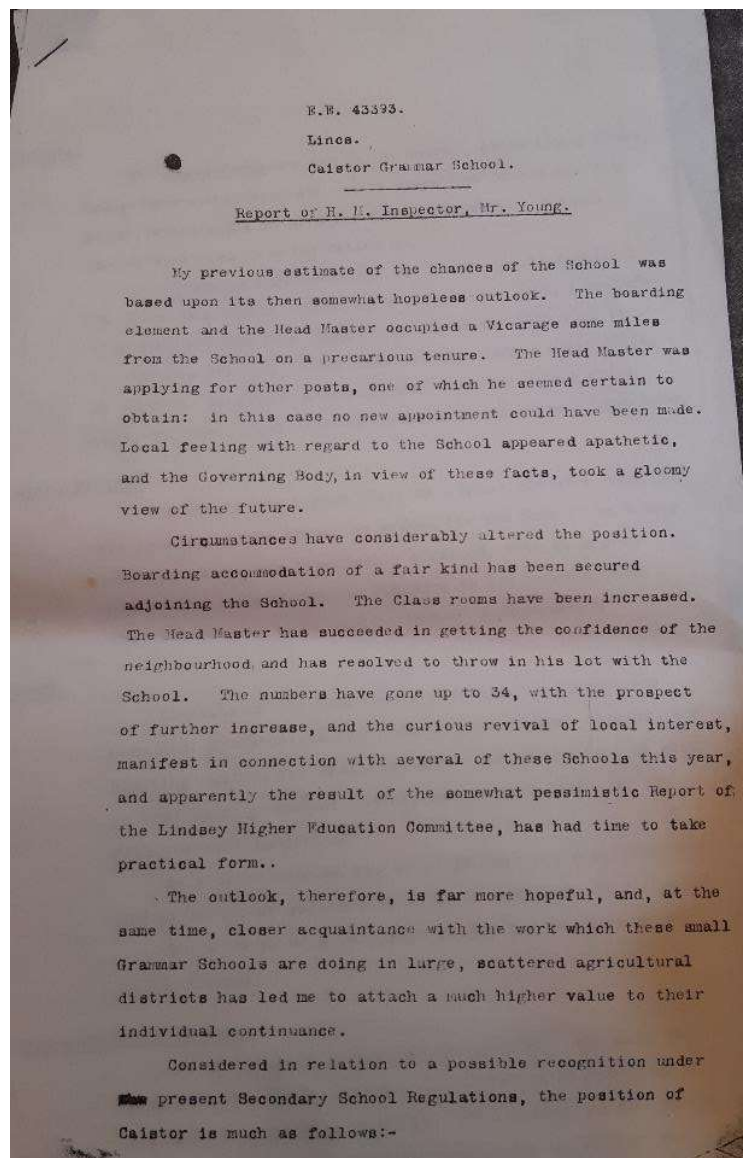
The first part of Young's report is as follows:

'My previous estimate of the chances of the School was based upon its then somewhat hopeless outlook. The boarding element and the Head Master occupied a Vicarage some miles from the School on a precarious tenure. The Head Master was applying for other posts, one of which he seemed certain to obtain: in this case no new appointment could have been made. Local feeling with regard to the School appeared apathetic, and the Governing Body, in view of these facts, took a gloomy view of the future.'

This is very interesting in itself. Far from the intimate bastion of learning that fed pupils to public schools such as Clifton College or Cambridge colleges such as Emmanuel College that was presented in Bowers' report of 1887, the school instead appears to have been in a dire state of morale with a Headmaster intent on leaving, and a governing body taking 'a gloomy view of the future.' However, by 1906:

'Circumstances have considerably altered the position. Boarding accommodation of a fair kind has been secured adjoining the School. The Class rooms have been increased. The Head Master has succeeded in getting the confidence of the neighbourhood and has resolved to throw in his lot with the School. The numbers have gone up to 35, with the prospect of further increase, and the curious revival of local interest, manifest in connection with several of these Schools this year, and apparently the result of the somewhat pessimistic Report of the Lindsey Higher Education Committee, has had time to take practical form.'

Here we get a small glimpse into the changing state of the School prior to Coxon's arrival. The numbers seem to have been dire prior to the 1900s (35 being noted as an achievement makes this quite clear), but expansion in terms of boarders' housing and classrooms (such as what may perhaps be the RE classroom, O6) seems to have made a massive difference to morale.



Additionally, the new Headmaster, Arthur Brookes, seems to have personally improved morale above and beyond the personality of Bowers. As Young notes:

'The outlook, there is far more hopeful, and, at the same time, closer acquaintance with the work which these small Grammar Schools are doing in large, scattered agricultural districts has led me to attach a much higher value to their individual continuance.'

Interestingly, as the opposite to what Young said, arguments about the closure of Caistor Grammar School from Lindsey County Council in 1960 often hinged around the idea of the School's irrelevance in the predominantly agricultural Wolds. It's a fascinating difference between the early century ideas of grammar schools being the best education for those in rural villages, to the mid-century ideas around larger comprehensives such as De Aston being best to pool students into one larger school.

The vast bulk of Young's report preoccupies itself with noting the then-current state of the school, in terms of buildings and student composition, which makes it another very useful source in addition to prospectuses of this time. We can see from the prospectus that:

'The class-rooms are now two in number, satisfactory rooms, and a Laboratory, adequate, and a class room in the Boarding house, which could be used for School purposes. A small Manual Work room is being fitted up. The Boarding accommodation, for 15-20, is old fashioned but clean and simple, including a fair dining room, a preparation room for boarders (usable as Classroom) bath room etc. The offices are bad. Under this heading, with a small outlay on offices, Cloakroom accommodation, etc., the School might pass, but additional rooms are desirable and offices imperative.'

The limits of the school, despite changes and improvements, are seen to be particularly acute in 1906. Despite investment in building new classrooms and improving facilities, the dire state of the School's offices and a lack of improvement in modern boarding accommodation seem quite damaging. But perhaps we see here a small glimpse at the passion behind the School's staff: far from spending the money available on improving their own offices, they first spend it on classrooms and educational provisions. This is seemingly confirmed by a comment from Young discussing the School's finances, which were in a bad way in 1906, with credit of £290, a debit of £287, and additional spending such as £40 for the 'board of the assistant master' which was 'paid by the Headmaster.' Arthur Brookes was literally personally investing in the school. As Young writes: *'It will be seen therefore that the School is not paying its way; that the Head Master is paying largely from his own pocket, and that the Governing Body are not financially responsible.'*

The limits of School finances even affected staffing; the staff only consisted of:

'...the Head Master (efficient and keen), one permanent assistant (a fair teacher), one student teacher, and visiting masters for Drill and Art. It is proposed to secure an additional permanent Master, but [unsurprisingly judging by School finances] it is doubtful if the finances will support it. At present, both on the score of numbers, qualifications and of amount of salaries it would be difficult to recognise.'

improbable that, while the numbers remain under 40, it could be assumed that the minimum of 20 in the Cadres would be sufficiently assured for purposes of present recognition.

x

Finance.

Balance sheet, roughly, as at present:-

<u>Credit.</u>		(This has been usually under-estimated: £125 i.e., in the Lindsey Report.)
Endowment, nett, (less Trust charges, Mortgage, etc.)	£125	
Fees (34 boys at £3.15s less 6 scholars = 28 boys)	£105	
		= £290
<u>Debit.</u>		
Establishment charges, Rates, Cleaning.	£13	
Repairs, Heat, Light	£10	
Head Master's salary	£130	
Head Master's Capitation on 28 boys at £3 per head	£84	
Assistant Master's salary	£50	
		= £287

This does not include:-

Board of Assistant Master (Paid by Head Master)=	£40
Rent of Boarding House " " " "	£25
Bursaries of £5 on 5 scholars (which they propose to terminate this year)	£25

It will be seen therefore that the School is not paying its way; that the Head Master is paying largely from his own pocket, and that the Governing Body are not financially responsible.

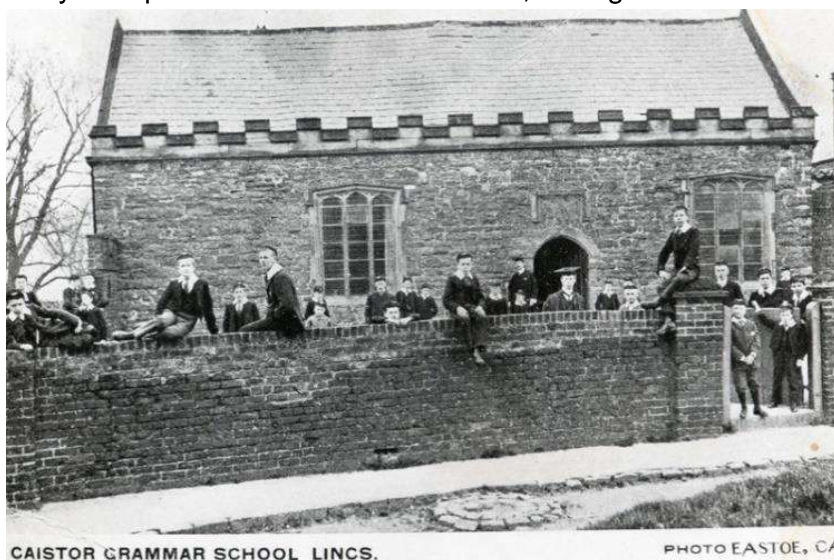
The conclusion on this score is again against the possibility of present recognition.

[The future prospects, if the School sustains its present improvement are better:-

3.

Despite the limits of staffing and the inability to expand the school in this sense, Young writes that: *'The work is of a very fair class, and the boys do well in the Locals.'* The actual number of these boys were tiny. Young states:

'Of the present 35 boys 27 are over 12: the ages vary from 11-17. The Head Master is confident of retaining a sufficient proportion until 16. The revival of the School, however, makes it premature to judge, and in view of the general difficulty experienced in the County, it is improbable that, while the numbers remain under 40, it could be assumed that the minimum of 20 in the Course would be sufficiently assured for purposes of present recognition.'



18 of these boys were from Caistor, whilst 6 more were from villages *'to the immediate North West and North East.'* Interestingly, *'only 9 of the boarders come now from outside the County'*, suggesting a decline in boarders from perhaps Yorkshire that had occurred since Young's earlier report. This was probably due to Caistor being *'poorly served by trains.'* Despite this, Young states that *'the Headmaster is already succeeding in establishing a connection with...scattered villages and Schools.'*, and that *'The new docks, building at Immingham [on the Line to the North] and the proposed ironstone works [just South of Nettleton] may also have some effect on the future of the School.'*

What seems to have allowed the school to survive in this period seems to be a disposition against Market Rasen's schools from the villages around Caistor. As Young writes, *'Market Rasen is the real competitor'* but it: *'...does not touch the interior of the district, or any of the places from which Caistor might hope to draw. It appears to have the reputation of not providing a class of education suitable to 'rustic' needs, and there is clearly very strong local feeling against it in the smaller towns to the North. The best evidence of its failure to supply the place of Caistor is to be found in the fact that when Caistor was practically moribund, only two Caistor and Nettleton boys went to Market Rasen, and one of them was a County scholar. The rest went to no Secondary School at all and remained in the shops or farms, while some 4 or 5 went to distant Boarding schools.'*

Perhaps Caistor's ability to survive its *'moribund'* phase under Bowers was down in part to luck and local resentment of Market Rasen. The fascinating concept of *'a class of education suitable to 'rustic' needs'* might in fact suggest the continuation of a third-grade education within Caistor even under Coxon's curriculum, teaching agricultural skills and providing a *'commercial'* education was something in fact prized by local residents alongside the route that provided a second-grade scientific route. As Young put it:

'It may be concluded that for the majority of boys in this scattered district it is a case of aut Caistor aut nihil [either Caistor or nothing.]'

Additionally, what the document allows us to see which the prospectuses clearly don't is who these students actually were. We might get the occasional photograph of boys sitting alongside the Old Hall in some of the early prospectuses, which also exist in the association archives. But beyond that, we know precious little. Young gives us an annoyingly brief insight; the students were: *'...sons of well-to-do tradesman, farmers and professional men. The majority are proceeding into the lesser professions, a certain number probably to the universities, and some back into business.'*

Regardless of who they were, the paltry number of students were considered to be something which could be used to try to help the school's finances.

The Governing Body, Young notes, considered:

'...that there would be no objection to its rising to £5, in view of the local interest now taken.'

In combination with the school expanding to 40 pupils, plus the paying off of the school mortgage in 1916, as well as *'the £75 conditionally promised by the County, and the Board's Grant of £40.'*, the report states that the School might have been able to raise £205, helping to bolster the shaky

financial foundations

that Arthur Brookes

had tried to repair

himself. In his

concluding remarks,

despite the financial

difficulties laying

behind the school,

Young writes:

'...no competing

School can warrantably

claim to fill with equal,

or better, effect.'

What we therefore see

in this report is the

School in a state of

flux, between the

somewhat damaging

leadership of Bowers

and the long years in

which Coxon acted as Head. We see a School plunged dangerously over a financial precipice, with

a Headmaster personally attempting through his own finances and willpower to keep the school

viable. Yet, the School is gradually and slowly growing in size, and maintaining a peculiar influence

as the educational destination for the sons of farmers and tradesmen in the Wolds. The boarding

facilities might not be perfect, but they can be (and will be) improved.

So, despite the rocky state which the School is in, Young leaves in the report a sense of hope and

optimism about the School's future, something arguably brought into more concrete being under

Coxon's long Headship. We are provided with a vital historical document showing where the School

had come from in the 1880s and 1890s, and where it was headed into the interwar period, and

beyond.



The Caistorian:
2022 edition

CAISTORIAN DAY by Adam Pountney (2011 – 2018)

On Monday 18th July, Caistor Grammar's current Year 7 group were treated to an exciting off-timetable day; a day through which they could begin to learn about the School's rich past and legacy. Certain core elements of this history have always been taught to new students, such as the importance of the School's Founders through the naming of the House system or the Founders' Prayer. Despite this, an opportunity was seen by members of the Association and the Headmaster to teach these students about various events in the School's distant and recent past, broadening their knowledge about nearly four-hundred years of school history in a fun and engaging manner.

Whilst the mission was simple, delivering the Caistorian Day initially seemed anything but. As a subsidiary aim of the day was to teach the young students about useful public speaking and PowerPoint presentation skills, the plan was to lecture to the students about key events in the School's history, from which they would plan arguments about which event they thought was the most important. They would then deliver this to their fellow students through a PowerPoint presentation and series of speeches, thus introducing a competitive element to the day to (hopefully) make it fun and engaging for them. To make this process manageable, the hundred-or-so Year 7s were split into six groups and rotated around four lectures and two skill sessions before going off to plan their arguments. This meant we needed to narrow down around two-thousand key events in the School's history (the number may be a slight exaggeration) to four. This was a hurdle we had to contend with: choosing four events certainly wasn't simple. One person might think an event was important; another might think it was relatively trivial. Choosing a broad spread of events across time seemed important, as did events which both lecturers and students could smoothly argue were important in a short space of time. We also needed events that would reveal really interesting elements of the School's history to these young students that they probably wouldn't know about beforehand. Balancing all of these elements was very tricky. We certainly couldn't patronise them or talk down to them, but we couldn't assume they'd stay with us if we discussed complex elements of the School's past that might be more suitable to GCSE or A-Level students.

The founding of the School in 1631 was the first event that we set on. It seemed pretty obvious. Students could easily argue this was the most important event in the School's history, as without it the contributions of Rawlinson, Ayscough and Hansard there could be no school in the present day. Yet they could also argue as a counter-argument to that that the School might have been founded by other founders at another time, and that it was successive individuals that really made the School what it is. We also had a wonderful opportunity to teach them more about the founders: about their backgrounds at South Kelsey and Biscathorpe; their roles in life; the specifics about the founding documents of the school. We even utilised text from Rawlinson's will and tried to get the Year 7s to translate 17th century English into 21st century English before revealing what it meant to them. This pushed them a little bit and also let them try out a bit of acting and primary source analysis without them really realising. They therefore got to know about the founders in a way which bridged the simplicity of the Founders' Prayers and House system and the depth of the research led by the Archive Group.

Our second event was 'The Walk' to Lincoln in February 1960. This also seemed like an excellent choice for us to teach to the Year 7 students. At the base level, 'The Walk' certainly put pressure on Lindsey County Council to keep the School open, meaning we could present an argument to the students which they could build on themselves towards the end of the day.

We could also present an intelligent counter-argument to them about the importance of George Barr and the School's governors constructing a legal case for the School's retention in the years after 1960, which some students utilised. Rather than undermining 'The Walk's' importance, this showed the students how both student-led activism and (perhaps overlooked) behind-the-scenes work were equally important in preserving the School. More than anything else, teaching the students about 'The Walk' was self-evidently important. Despite the recognition of key individuals such as Alan Body, 'Pop' and Charlotte Linsell



Back row L to R Adam Pountney, Terry McTernan and Marcus Croft.
Front row: Some of the 102 Y7 students who took part in the day.

along with the students themselves in the School's Founders' Prayer, the actual history of 'The Walk' is little known by students today. This seemed like a wonderful opportunity to reverse that.

We then chose two other events which were certainly less obvious and easy to agree on. The introduction of girls to the School was perhaps the least contentious. Whilst research by the Archive Group shows that there may have been the odd female student at CGS in the 19th century, the School was for all intents and purposes an all-male school until 1908, when female students began to be formally admitted to the School. In the same year, the School thus hired Miss Edith Richards to be the School's Mistress for Girls and matron in Grove House. Therefore, by focusing on 1908 as the de-facto introduction of girls to the School, we could effectively teach the students about many aspects of the School's history. This included the School's dire student numbers in the 1890s and 1900s (partially alleviated by the introduction of girls), the very existence and location of Grove House (a fact unknown to all the Year 7s beforehand) and life within Grove House for female boarders through oral history. Thanks to our photo archive, we also showed students the introduction of new sports such as hockey into the School. Students thus argued this was important as it positively changed the School's internal demographics and culture, but also helped to save the School from potential closure in the 1900s.

Our final event was the end of boarding in 1995. There was some discussion amongst ourselves about whether this could be argued by students to be the most important event in the School's history, as it may have been irrelevant to the School's ultimate survival in the late 20th century from the perspective of Council and LEA decision-making. However, it was also felt this could be a great means by which to teach students about the long-standing practice of boarding at the school, a practice of which all our Year 7 students were completely unaware beforehand. By discussing the end of boarding, we also gave them a potted history of boarding itself: how many boarders there were; where people boarded (whether in Grove House, Casterby, Lindsey House or the Red House, for instance); why they boarded; what boarding was like socially and culturally. Using interviews by boarders from the 1920s to the 1950s, the students could reflect on how positive or negative boarding was, as well as learn about the dangers of reading too much from one person's opinion and using that to generalise about many people's collective experience. They could therefore argue that the end of boarding was the most important event in the School's history as it irrevocably altered the actual experience of going to school by turning the School entirely into a day school and preventing students from living on site.

On that Monday, the hottest day of the year, the students (and ourselves) were certainly grateful to be in air-conditioned classrooms. The students certainly enjoyed the challenge of arguing to each other the respective importance of events in the School's history, with all of them getting deeply immersed in the day's programme and one or two future actors perhaps being spotted! Yet as important as the day's formal aims were it was the small things that fascinated these students.

From my group (the introduction of girls), one could find students intrigued and amused by the peacocks outside Grove House; where Grove House even was; the dresses hockey players wore in the 1920s; the stern looks of some of the teachers; the chamber pots used by boarders. I could go on. More than anything else, they all had fun learning about history which they hitherto knew barely anything about, smiling and laughing as they went along. One of this Association's aims is to 'preserve the history of the School, and to make it available to all who may be interested'. I think that at the very least we lived up to that, getting them intrigued in the roots of their very own school on that swelteringly hot July day.

Adam Pountney (2011 – 2018)

ANTHONY BOWER: MAN OF MYSTERY by Adam Pountney (2011 – 2018)

Anthony Bower is long forgotten. No-one fondly remembers him anymore; anyone who did is long dead and buried. We have no photographs of him; no plaques proudly bearing his name; no buildings named in his commemoration. He is hardly one of those names in Caistor Grammar School history that rolls off the tongue. Simply put, he is hardly famous (or infamous) today. This is perhaps unfair. His eventual resignation as headmaster in 1884 after a thirty-one-year headship (from 1853) makes Bower one of the school's longest-serving headmasters, rivalled in more recent times by figures such as Henry Coxon, Ken Michel or Roger Hale. His arrival at the school was in what can best be described as fascinating circumstances. His impact on the school in terms of student discipline and site spread was significant. He was even a student at the school years before 1853. A Lincolnshire boy turned leading Cambridge mathematician, a vicar turned headmaster, Bower was an intriguing man of many facets. Whilst we can only scratch the surface of his life to get skin-deep information, scratching around to discover a fragment of his life story is undeniably worthwhile.

Bower seems to have been born in around 1823 or 1824 in Caistor. His father, also called Anthony Bower, was according to one source (*Alumni Cantabrigienses*) the 'yeoman of Caistor'. According to another source, a 1941 Royal Society obituary of Sir Thomas Little Heath (a Caistorian who died in 1940), the older Anthony was also a tanner, a fact confirmed by the 1841 census. The obituary also states that the younger Anthony may have been 'a self-educated man', and 'a man of great natural ability'. The former is not strictly true: whilst Bower may initially have been self-educated, he was certainly enrolled at Caistor Grammar School sometime in the 1830s, when William Ellis was headmaster of the school. However the latter – his 'natural ability' – is certainly true, as Anthony Bower progressed beyond Caistor to the University of Cambridge, as demonstrated by *Alumni Cantabrigienses*.

Compiled together by the obsessive Venn family and first published in 1922, this book traces almost all Cambridge alumni from the university's foundation to 1900, Bower amongst them. Bower was admitted as a sizar (financially-supported undergraduate) at St John's College in July 1842, age 19. In 1846, he then graduated as the Tenth Wrangler and a scholar, gaining his honorary MA in 1849 and then serving as a fellow of the college from 1849 to 1852. Graduating as the Tenth Wrangler means Bower was the tenth-highest ranked Mathematics student in the whole university, a feat acknowledged by his admission to a college fellowship three years later. Simply put, Bower was bright. We can imagine him now, dashing around Cambridge, gown flowing behind him, trying to solve some algebra puzzle in his head, as all Cambridge undergraduates of course do.

But we can get beyond this imagining of the young Bower. First of all, this magazine's very own editor had a little look in the Lincolnshire Archives this summer, dredging up a letter written by Bower to Caistor luminary J. G. Dixon on 21 December 1842. Here's what Bower wrote:

'My dear sir, I have long thought of writing to you, but have never had sufficient leisure or opportunity till the present. You will therefore I know pardon my delay, which under other circumstances might have been deemed importunate or difficult. My examination is now quite over, and I am happy to inform you, that I have passed it very comfortably, and am ranked in the first Class. It began a week ago on the Saturday, and continued until the Thursday following and a very anxious and laborious time it has been, but my highest expectations have been realised, and hitherto I may say, that I have been very successful. I intend remaining at College during our Vacations, in order that my studies may not in the slightest degree be interrupted, as every moment to me is valuable, and I must make good use of all present opportunities, for my future advantage (if I should be spared) depend a great deal on my Exertions now. I am very Comfortable, as I have got nice rooms in College, and am quite a retired and solitary student. I hope the progress of Thomas and Marmaduke is to your satisfaction; I should also like to know how James and John William are attending in their studies, and if it would not be too troublesome to you, or if you could spare a few moments, I should extremely like to hear how they are going on, as it would be to me very pleasing, and interesting information. I have (thank God) very good health; with this blessing combined with perseverance I hope to surmount the many difficulties there are to contend with. I shall therefore be careful as possible if my health, for without this I am aware that I can do nothing.

*Please to give my love to Thomas, Marmaduke, James and John William. My respects to Mrs Dixon, wishing you the
Compliments of the Season.
I remain yours truly and ?*

Anthony Bower

St John's College, Cambridge
Wednesday Evening, 21st
December 1842

(We are struggling to read the word
after 'yours truly and ? - Any
suggestions? Ed)



What can we glean from this? At face value, Bower is a diligent student. Yet reading between the lines, perhaps he's homesick: staying in college over the Christmas period of his first year away from home, alone for perhaps the first time in his life. To learn more, we have to go elsewhere. In 1893, the year of Bower's death, The Eagle magazine (the alumni magazine for St John's College) published an obituary for Bower that sheds light on his early years. For instance:

'It is said that one of his first acts after obtaining his Fellowship was to present his father with the freehold of the farm which he occupied. He is remembered as a great chess player and a punster who vied with J. C. Adams in keeping up the old Johnian reputation for punning.'

A doting son? A great chess player? A punster? All interesting character details (I think I'm going to call myself a punster from now on), but what else can we find? We can find little things, such as more about his chess credentials in a 1915 article painting him as one of the best early Cambridge chess players, but what else? Thankfully, quite a lot. The then rector of 'Bigbsy, Lincolnshire' (presumably Bigby), the Reverend T. Field also wrote into the 1893 magazine, having by coincidence been a 'Fellow and Tutor of the College'. His 'interesting notes' on Bower reveals as much about Bower as it does Field himself:

'Anthony Bower, of humble origin, proceeded from his native place, Caistor, Lincolnshire, to St John's College in the October Term 1842, having had comparatively small educational advantages beyond what the old-fashioned school of his native town afforded. He was a most industrious student and being true to his natal tongue was almost as marked in his generation for his unyielding Lincolnshire speech and accent - a speech, if peculiar, dear to those who have at all studied its delightful Scandinavianisms - as for his hard reading and his progress. It was natural that the somewhat delicate-looking pale-faced bright-eyed student should have felt the change from the bracing air of the grand North-Lincolnshire Wolds to the relaxing atmosphere of Granta and 'sedgy Camus'; (possibly 'vous avez change tout cela' by this time). He certainly went in to the Senate-House in anything but the health and constitution needful to 'stay the course' successfully in an unwarmed Senate-House, and his degree, actually, did not correspond with his place in College and his rightful expectations'.

Beyond the somewhat fruity descriptions of Caistor's educational capabilities and the Lincolnshire accent, along with Bower perhaps undershooting his capabilities in his degree result, Field goes on even further to reveal more about Bower:

'But in course of time Mr Bower became a Fellow, though not more than a Bye-Fellow - his attainments in Classics being but scanty then, and having been more or less laid aside ex necessitate rei - still, the writer of these notes can testify to the reality of his taste in that direction, as well as his desire to improve, for, within the latest years of his life it was a joy to him to try his hand on translating some ode or other of Horace into English verse, which he would not, however, in spite of its merit, permit to other eyes. But his first and material success was in private tuition: next to the few 'great guns' of the day, probably no one was more successful with his pupils; and certainly none managed to take a greater number than he did; thanks, first to unsparing labour, and then to his method, and neatness and precision of work'.

It was this unceasing dedication to teaching that he combined with a growing passion for the Unitarianism espoused by James Martineau. As per *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Bower's interest in religion seems to have eclipsed his passion for mathematics. He was ordained as a deacon in 1851, abandoning his academic life in Cambridge to initially become a priest in Ely in 1852. Yet as Field reveals, this may have not been enough for Bower. He goes on to write about Bower's

subsequent passage to Caistor in 1853 (following the death of William Ellis) as fulfilling Bower's effective destiny:

'Mr Bower's life was one of unpretending, very unassuming, merit, and industry. There can be no doubt of his mathematical abilities or attainments; none – or even less – of his singular unambitiousness. When the Caistor Grammar School became vacant, after a few years of his Fellowship, it seemed as if his heart and his hope, his ambition and his affection were satisfied, by seeking and obtaining it: and there he made his mark by long years of laborious and well-directed work, to the benefit of the Town, and the middle classes on particular of the neighbourhood, where the school enjoys now a well-deserved repute. His merits were various and very considerable; his desire of other distinction than just that of doing well what he had to do, was singularly limited; he was, in the common sense of the term, unambitious, but he will not have passed away unappreciated nor unhonoured.'

Did Bower return to Caistor Grammar School as headmaster as it seemed his destiny? Did he return as it satisfied a perceived desire to demonstrate devoted service and dedicated teaching? Maybe. Yet as important may have been another factor: love. The latter can be argued thanks to yours truly carrying out a bit of historical detective work. In 1854, as per *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review*, Bower (listed both as 'Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Head Master of Caistor Free Grammar School') married Martha Collins Colton, the 'niece of R. Colton, esq'. We can find builder Richard Colton in the 1841 census living in Caistor with (almost certainly) his wife Martha, aged forty-five. Alongside the older Martha in the house is the younger Martha, age fifteen. And who do we find above the Coltons on the 1841 census? None other than a certain Anthony Bower, aged eighteen, living with his father. More likely (but not impossible) than a whirlwind romance in 1853 and 1854, we could surmise Bower saw an opportunity in Caistor's need for a new headmaster in 1853 to marry either his childhood love or a love fuelled one day visiting home from Cambridge. Who says romance is dead?

Bower's return to Caistor in 1853 wasn't without its hurdles. One rather large one was a significant dispute in 1853 between the school's patron, Ayscough Boucherett and the Charity Commissioners overseeing all charities within England and Wales, of which the school was one. Both thought they had ultimate authority to appoint the school's headmaster, but Boucherett won: his candidate (Bower) could take up his role. And once he took up that role he seems to have approached it with great vigour. Whilst the aforementioned 1941 obituary has some seeming inaccuracies (such as Bower being 'awarded a Fellowship' which 'he either declined or resigned...in order to get married', which doesn't seemingly line up with Bower's marriage), it offers an interesting portrait of Bower's headmastership:

'He was a good mathematician and a real schoolmaster, such as was not rare in the days before the inspector and the code. Half a dozen boys sat close around his desk; he warmed to excitement while they read their Latin or Greek together. But the homelier wits sat afar off, at double desks in the big schoolroom, and played Noughts and Crosses or what they pleased'.

Further still can be gleaned from Henry Newbolt's 1911 book *The Twymans*, a fictionalised retelling of his school years at Caistor which begun in 1873, years after Newbolt's brother had attended the school. Bower was revived from beyond the grave as Reverend Ambrose Tanner:

'...Tanner saw his opportunity, when he returned to his old school as Headmaster, after a brilliant but disabling career at Cambridge. He boldly handed over to the Lower Master the whole list of plebeian scholars and developed the Upper Division into a separate school for the sons of gentlemen, of whom in a very short time he had some thirty under his own roof'. (p. 42)

Newbolt also gives us more about Bower, about his kindness and his sense of school discipline:

'Every morning at three minutes to nine the Headmaster left his private door and took the road, accompanied in very orderly fashion by a bodyguard of the elder of his pupils, the procession being closed by Mr Slingsby, the usher, with a straggler or two'. (p. 45)

'[Newbolt's protagonist] already felt much liking for this little man with the big head and ceaseless activity of mind, of whom every one else seemed to stand so much in awe. Certainly to the new boy he was reassuringly kind'. (p. 45)

Whilst Bower's kindness extends to playing chess with the students, he also is presented as a far more complicated man than we'd otherwise suspect. For instance, Newbolt:
'...endured this strange man's volcanic temper...[yet] never doubted that he was his father's friend and his own. But in many of his new companions he saw that the Headmaster inspired a kind of panic. The moment the approach of the autocrat was spied...it was announced with the cry of 'Nix ! Nix!'. (p. 46)

In contrast to the Bower whose students could play Noughts and Crosses, this Bower taught:
'...in a large room where forty boys were working...Nix's eye was upon every individual, his ear open to every sound, his attention miraculously awake to every sign of diligence or slackness. He seemed to be at the same time overseeing all and working with each; and by an unexpected approach and the play of a strong right arm he would untiringly check or stimulate their very activities...it was impossible to feel lethargic when a cut or a flogging might resound in any part of the school at any moment'. (p. 47)

Whilst Bower's teaching style may have been disciplinarian, it is arguable his teaching style managed to consolidate the school internally and ensure numbers of students remained consistent or grew from the fifty students the school boasted in 1854. As per both Newbolt and the 1941 obituary, it seems he engendered great fondness from students as well. Undeniably, Bower exerted great impact on the school site as well. Upon becoming headmaster in 1853, he bought Grove House back (having been owned by the school from 1775 to 1805) and made it both his home and the school's boarding house, as noted by Newbolt. It seems he even lived there until 1887, three years after he resigned as headmaster. In this regard, he reshaped the school internally and externally alike. As for Bower, he couldn't remain at the school forever, teaching with perhaps what could best be described as a gloved fist. In 1877, whilst still teaching, he also became Vicar of the Church of Saint Margaret at Usselby, south of Caistor along the present-day A 46. In 1887, he also became the Vicar of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Cabourne (then spelled Cabourn), just east of Caistor. He carried on in these religious positions until his death on 22 May 1893, being found dead in his conservatory at the vicarage in Cabourn from heart disease, a full life tragically ended in an instant. Yet we can unearth more about Bower, in just one single snapshot of that full life. Also found in the Lincolnshire Archives was a photograph from Holton Hall in Holton le Moor. The archive manifest claims this is from the 1887 Golden Jubilee celebrations, which certainly makes sense, although Bower is noted as being head of CGS, despite his resignation in 1884.

Regardless, the photograph means we can finally put a face to Anthony Bower, along with his wife Martha. Sitting far left in the front row is Bower himself, looking rather like he's pulled out of the pages of *The Barchester Chronicles*; third from right of that very same row is Martha. So, far from being a man of mystery, Anthony Bower was a distinguished mathematician; a caring (if disciplinarian) teacher; a leading local figure; and, for one snapshot, a man reclining in a chair, clad in a frock coat, boutonniere in his lapel, looking content and happy with (arguably) a life well lived.



Ode To Portacabins: The History Of Temporary Buildings At CGS by Adam Pountney (2011 – 2018)

This summer marked the end of an era at Caistor Grammar School. With little pomp or ceremony, the last temporary portacabins on the school site – what were now known as P1, P2 and P3 - were demolished and swept away. This might not be a particularly notable event if it wasn't for these cabins' long and storied history. For far from being temporary, these cabins had acquired a sort of semi-permanence on the school site. The latter two cabins (P2 and P3) had been part of the school site for nearly sixty years, surviving long past their projected lifespan. Yet this fact was becoming all the more apparent as the years went by. Slowly decaying with age, the wood at their base becoming one with the ground and the weeds, it was clear that these buildings had to go. They were no longer fit for purpose. After multiple previous attempts in the last twenty years to replace the cabins, this year marked a turning point, thanks to a significant pot of government funding finally allowing the demolition and replacement programme to take place. And so the wreckers came in, ending over half a century of school history in one fell swoop.

Year 7 students arriving at CGS in September will instead attend lessons in a new building to the south of Lindsey House, to be known as Grove Court. Unlike those portacabins, Grove Court won't be freezing in winter. It won't rot into the ground. It will be fit for purpose in the 21st century, replete with classrooms fitted with hi-tech SMART boards and decent lighting. Simply put, these students will never have the peculiar experience of being taught in one of those classrooms, something which even dates my recent time at CGS as being firmly in the past. P2 was where I got taught History for four of my seven years at the school. I have vivid memories of learning about Robert Peel and his Corn Laws in there, along with the signing of Treaty of Versailles, the Battle of Hastings and the March on Washington led by Martin Luther King amongst other historical events. I could certainly never forget the distinct pleasure of a bird flying into a GCSE History lesson in P2, taking great interest in a poster of Joseph Stalin, flapping its wings everywhere and generally being a little bit disruptive. It was up to my excellent History teacher (this school's then-headmaster, Roger Hale) to figure out what to do with this intruder, interrupting one of his lessons on something as varied as the place of the Åland Islands in the history of the League of Nations. Luckily it flew out on its own accord. P2 may have been cold and creaky (perhaps the most diplomatic terms would be 'cosy' and 'rustic') but it was definitely a place where my love of history was nurtured, as well as a place where you felt years of school history all around you.

In fact, P2 was a place where you could feasibly feel almost a whole century of school history, as the very first temporary building on the school site appeared around 1920. Surplus to requirements after the First World War, this building was less of a portacabin and more of an army hut. Whilst that may not have meant it was any more glamorous than the later portacabins, this hut was seemingly larger, providing three classrooms and stretching much of the length of the present-day Old Building, as shown by the comparison photos below, taken from the Casterby stairs.



The view from the Casterby House
(School House) stairs, c. 1925

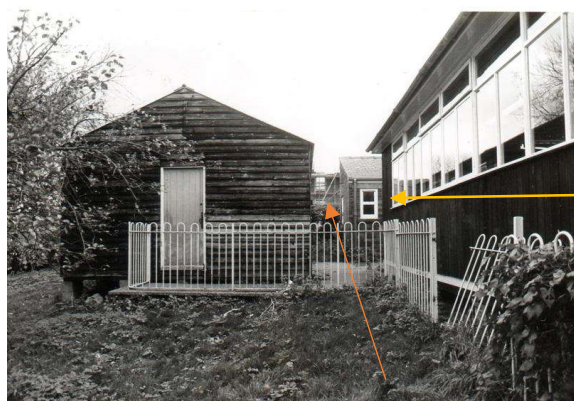


The very same view in 2022.

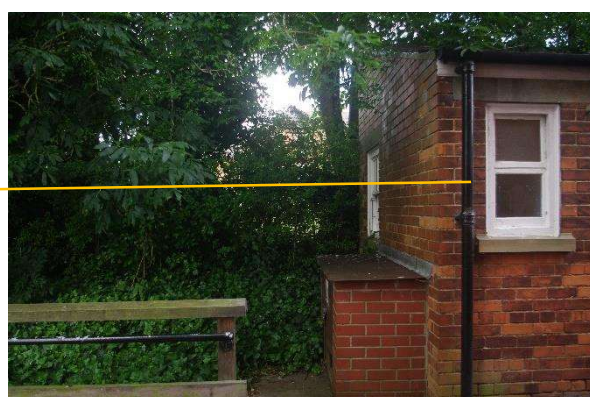


In 1921, the school acquired Red House (the large house on the corner of Bank Lane and Chapel Street as additional boys' boarding accommodation, likely to supplement those boys placed in School House (present-day Casterby). To help cater (quite literally) for these boy boarders, as well as the girl boarders living in Grove House, another temporary building was used as a dining hall (and may have existed before 1921).

It seems that there was a bit of a lull before the next temporary buildings were built at CGS. In 1954 the school constructed a Biology lab which became affectionately known as the 'Bug Hut'. In around 1958, this was supplemented by a Physics lab known as 'the Spooner' (after the manufacturers of the building). On the first of the below photographs, the former is on the left whilst the latter is on the right. The current Chemistry lab is roughly where these buildings were.



The orange arrow points to the present School Library (ex-Congregational Chapel)

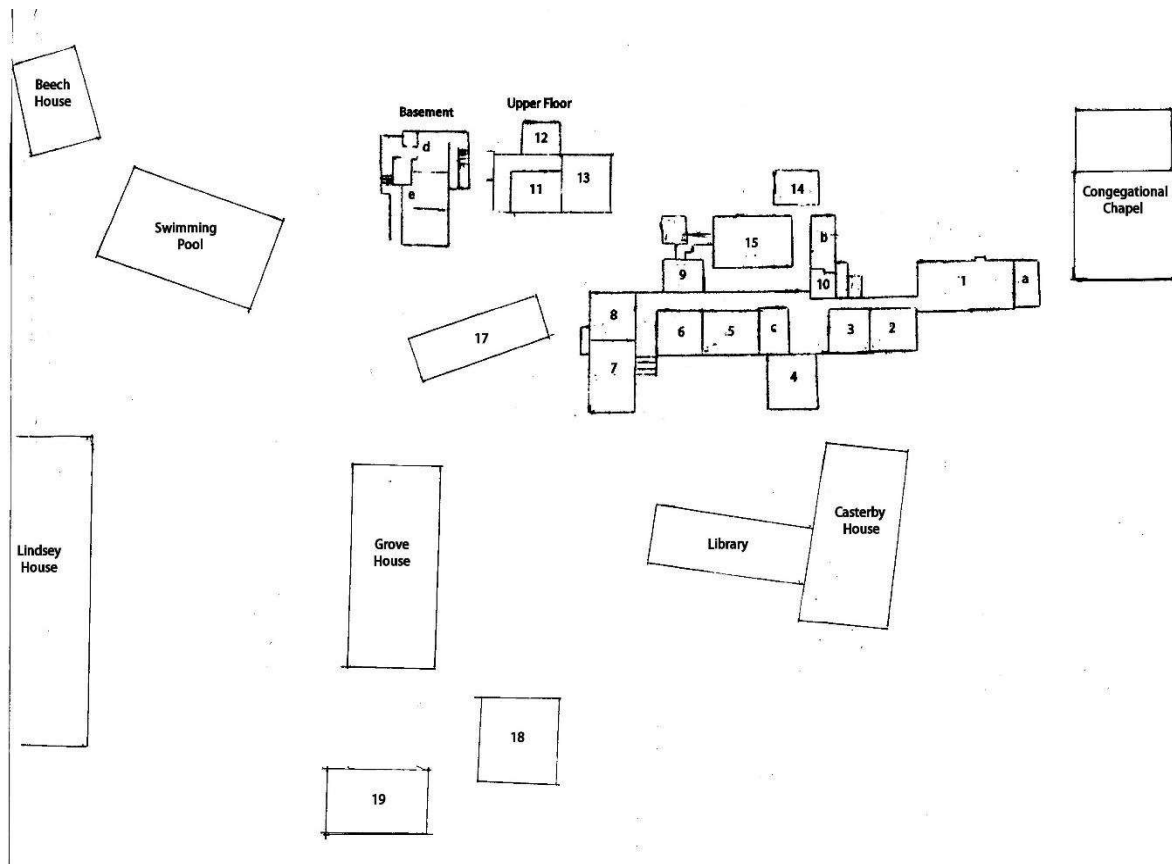


The window is that of the present-day Old Building girls' toilets, shown by the yellow arrow on the earlier photo.

In 1955, another temporary building was built north of Grove House, known as 'the Medway' (again after the manufacturers), adjacent to the present-day Staff Room. This was used as a Biology lab and was demolished sometime in the 1980s. The below photographs (the first from the Michel family collection, dating from 1959; the second originally from the Hull Daily Mail and part of the Charlotte Linsell collection, dating from around 1961) provide a tiny glimpse of the building.



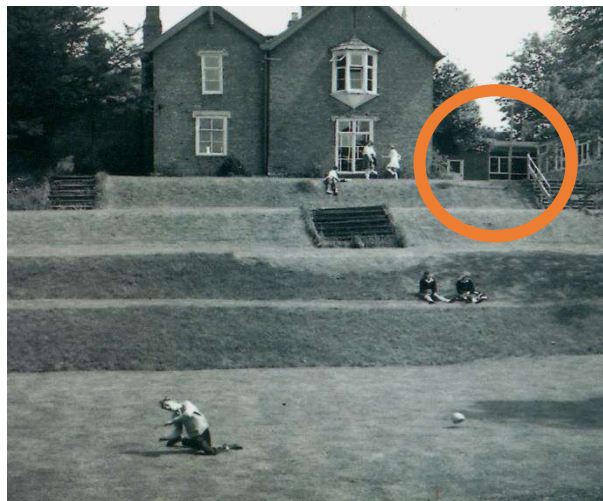
Between 1961 and 1963 'the Spooner' was joined at the school by a younger model, imaginatively christened 'the New Spooner' and initially used as a music classroom. This would eventually become known as P2 and served as a History classroom from around 1997 to 2022. In 1965, Room 19 (the future P3) was placed right next to the future P2 to first serve as a needlework room. It later became a Geography classroom. Both these portacabins can be glimpsed on a 1973 map of the school site drawn by Caistorian Paul Reddington:



We can see P2 (18) and P3 (19), along with other portacabins dotted around the school site: the Medway (17), the Bug Hut (14) and the Spooner (15). The Library next to Casterby House was simply a conversion of the boarders' dining room. This can be seen by judging the position of the dining room in the below photographs from the Michel family collection, the first of which shows Casterby in the background. Both date from 1958.

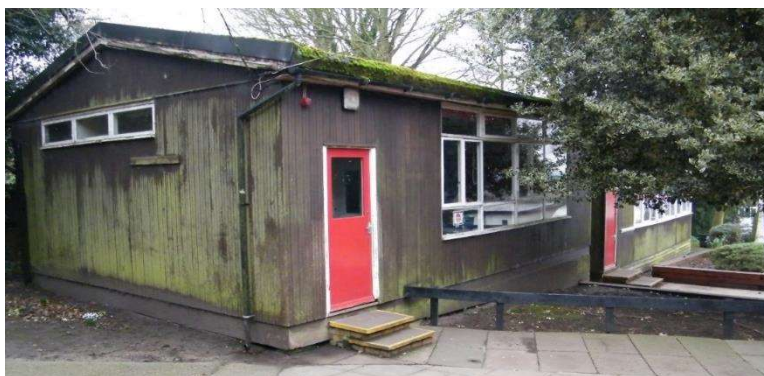


Sometime after Paul drew his useful map, P2 was moved south and rotated by ninety degrees to be directly adjacent to P3, wedged in by the south wall of the school site. Here it is in its original position, along with Caistorian Harvey Roberts dynamically posing at the bottom of the Terraces:



Photograph taken c. 1970

Here P2 and P3 are in their final positions, the weathering of the rooms by moss and age alike a clear sign of their (unexpectedly) long lifespan:



P2 (foreground and P3 (background)



P2 (left) and P3 (right)

From this point on, this history of portacabins at CGS becomes much more murky, at least from this historian's spinning office chair. Below we have two undated photographs in our archive which we have assumed were originally paired together, meaning that the second photograph shows the building of the portacabins on Middle Court. This likely makes more sense than the material being sent up the Terraces to build portacabins adjacent to Grove House. Judging by the fact we have both Lindsey and the swimming pool on the photograph, and we have no evidence of portacabins were being built, the photos are likely later than the 1960s.



Likely, these cabins were in place in around 1983/1984, during what Charlotte Linsell termed the 'chaos' that occurred when Manning was being built. At this time, the science extension to the Old Building was also being put in place, meaning that the Spooner was demolished, as the photograph below shows. This meant that the cabins from the upper school site were gone, and (along with the building of Manning) likely provides the explanation why these cabins were built in the first place.



This might also explain the photographs below which show a cabin being moved off the Old Yard probably sometime in the 1980s. Perhaps this cabin was placed in the Old Yard to further cater for the 'crisis' of 1983/1984? Or perhaps the cabin was placed there to cater for the demolition of Grove House, in 1988?



On top of this, as seen at the top of the next page, we have other mystery cabins appearing around this time that steadily encroach on the back of Grove House. The photograph on the left is certainly from before the building of Manning, perhaps from around 1980. The second photograph shows cabins much closer to the back of Grove House and judging by the windows and blue colour might not be the same cabins as the one on the left. In fact, they look far more like the cabins seen on Middle Court at the top of the page. How do we explain this?

My best guess is that the set of cabins (the c. 1980 ones) were demolished, and that the second cabins were originally placed on Middle Court around 1983/1984. They were then moved up to behind Grove House afterwards, as seen in the right-hand photograph below. This might mean the photo showing wood being sent down the Terraces might in fact be the other way around, showing wood being sent up, but that might be reading too much into these annoyingly hard-to-read photographs. Maybe the cabins were placed there in preparation for the demolishing of Grove House? Maybe the cabins were demolished in around 1988 as they were too close to Grove House and its impending doom?



We have a slightly clearer picture of perhaps the last portacabins placed on the school site, those which housed the English department until 2000/2001 (when English moved to Lindsey). It seems that these were probably built around 1989 after Grove House was demolished. They certainly look a wee bit past their best in this rainy photograph:



Yet frustratingly, despite the fact the 1980s are far closer in time to the 1930s, we have a much clearer picture of what the school site was in that decade than we do merely forty-or-so years ago. If anyone has any concrete answers about (or against) these musings and any memories of what these portacabins were like (or even memories of portacabins I've missed), please do email me. I'd really love to hear from you to try and solve this exciting mystery. I might be overselling it a little bit, but any history is still history in my opinion. Put simply, it would be really nice to add more to our collective knowledge of the literal (if temporary) foundations of the school's recent past.

From Charles I To Charles III by Adam Pountney (2011 – 2018)

The recent death of Queen Elizabeth II and the ascension of King Charles III is a historical event that can be seen through many lenses: as a significant loss to the nation as a whole; as an equally significant personal loss to an individual family; as an inflection point in the past one hundred years of national history. Yet it also reminds us of a fact which it is important to bear in mind. The monarch is not to be conflated with the crown, both a literal object and a metaphorical role placed on the head of whosoever sits on the throne. The monarch is ever-changing, something which is all the more evident when assessing three-hundred and ninety-two years of school history. Whilst we may only know one or two monarchs during our lifetimes, the ironstone walls of the Old Hall have seen a grand total of eighteen monarchs (and two Lord Protectors) throughout that long period of national history:

- Charles I (1625 – 1649)
- Oliver Cromwell (1653 – 1658)
- Richard Cromwell (1658 – 1659)
- Charles II (1660 – 1685)
- James II (1685 – 1688)
- Mary II (1689 – 1694)
- William III (1689 – 1702)

- Anne (1702 – 1714)
- George I (1714 – 1727)
- George II (1727 – 1760)
- George III (1760 – 1820)
- George IV (1820 – 1830)
- William IV (1830 – 1837)
- Victoria (1837 – 1901)
- Edward VII (1901 – 1910)
- George V (1910 – 1936)
- Edward VIII (1936)
- George VI (1936 – 1952)
- Elizabeth II (1952 – 2022)
- Charles III (2022 – present)

Within this somewhat dry chronology, there are interesting questions about what was happening in the school's history. Take for instance the English Civil War between 1642 and 1645. How did Caistor's staff and pupils react to these events?

Lincolnshire was a Parliamentary stronghold, yet Lincoln was a Royalist base until a siege in 1644 and Sir William Brocklesby was a Royalist supporter. How did the school adapt?

Similarly, how did the school react to the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707? Did this even matter to pupils? The answers to many of these questions – questions about how the school reacted to the death and ascension of monarchs - are seemingly lost to time. All we can perhaps do is assume that pupils and staff reacted with the same complex and personal feelings through which we all process this moment in history, happening before our very eyes.