

Review

This Noble Foundation. A History of the Sir John Moore School of Appleby Magna in Leicestershire by Richard Dunmore.

Ashby de la Zouch: Sir John Moore Foundation, 1992. 163pp; 23 plates. £13.95. ISBN 0 951 1385 0 4 hbk ISBN 0 951 8385 1 2 pbk

Sir John Moore's Free School, for the education of children of the male sex, opened in 1697 in the hamlet of Appleby Parva, in a splendid schoolhouse following a design by Christopher Wren; although this was amended and the building supervised by the Leicestershire architect William Wilson. It is still used, and suitably if unusually, for a local primary school for both sexes, opened in 1959 by Sir Robert Martin whose forebears attended the school as boarders from 1790; a ceremony presided over by the lifesize statue of the founder, still standing in the school hall. The book recording its history, by a trustee and governor of the school and dedicated to its pupils, has several appendices recording information about building, statutes, the succession of teachers, accounts. It was commissioned by the Sir John Moore Foundation which holds the endowment of what is now a voluntary aided school under local education authority, required largely to maintain the building.

John Moore, the second son of a local family, made a fortune in trade in London, becoming Lord Mayor in 1681 when he was also elected president of Christ's Hospital. He provided, at a cost of £10,000, buildings for this foundation's writing and mathematical schools, the latter a particular interest of Charles II who Moore came to serve after an early radical reputation; indeed, as mayor, he very nearly sacrificed the rights of the city to the crown. But the school for his home county was built under the supervision of a nephew and he never saw it. The statutes were only approved in 1706, four years after his death.

Drawing on his own experience Moore provided an English School and a Writing School, or master, in addition to the standard Latin, or grammar, school to prepare for church and professions. The foundation operated to plan during the eighteenth century when Samuel Johnson was one to apply for the headmastership, without success. In 1818 a response to the enquiry of the antiquary Nicholas Carlisle described the English school as occupying the whole of the left wing of the building, with two first floor rooms reserved to the Writing School. The grammar school, the headmaster's boarders included, occupied the other wing.

Fifty years on there was a rigid separation, in tune with official policy to denigrate 'elementary' provision and steer endowments towards financing a system of grammar schools, despite objections from the founder's descendant, the squire of Appleby. Not only was there a separate entrance, staircase and playground for village children attending the English School but a specially built exclusion wall.

It is overlooked that the Mr Green reporting on the school for the Schools Inquiry Commission in 1866 was T. H. Green, in due course to become Oxford's first professor of philosophy and a liberal, aged 30 at the time. He made no objection to the set-up at Appleby, returning a favourable report of a headmaster endeavouring to gain control of the whole endowment and freeze out local boys. But the majority of governors were for maintaining the school for the latter, for a time at least, though it proved a lost cause, and a 'national school' supervened. Nonetheless the grammar

school died first, in 1905. As the building did not sell it was occupied up to 1933 by the remains of the English School and an overflow from the church school, then closed for some years. During this time a fund accumulated for the residuary Foundation so that in the 1950s the 1697 schoolhouse could be reopened for a mixed Appleby Magna Church of England Primary School, launched with the assistance of the local education authority.

Leicester

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