Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield(1865-1946)

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1. Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield

Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield was born in Kirkby, Ravensworth, Yorkshire in 1865, the son of Frederick (1829-1904)and Sarah Whitfield(1835-1866) who had married in 1861 in Birkenhead. Charles' mother, formerly Sarah Garforth, was the eldest daughter of Captain William Garforth, a soldier, who died in India in 1856.[1] He had previously served in Canada in the 97thFoot, where Sarah Garforth was born. In the 1861 census before her marriage, Sarah aged twenty six years, was living in Birkenhead as the head of household with her married sister, Agnes Paul, aged twenty two years, also born in Canada, her nephew, William Paul, Agnes' son, aged six years, born in India, and her sister Charlotte Garforth, aged eighteen years, born in Leeds, with one servant. All three sisters were described in the census as 'Lady.' Frederick, Charles' father, was living at the time of the marriage in Otley as one of two lodgers of a

[1] http://www.threapwoodhistory.org/people.html

plasterer, James Laycock, who had five employees. Sadly, Sarah died in 1866 when Charles was under a year, and was buried in Otley, West Yorkshire.

The 1871 census shows Charles, aged six years, living with his father, then vicar of St John's, Bexley Heath, London, and his brothers, Frederick William Garforth Whitfield (1863-1937), aged eight years, and John George James Whitfield (1864-1932), aged seven years and two domestic servants. Later in 1871, Charles had a step-mother, when his father, by then the vicar of St Mary's-in-the-Castle, Hastings, and aged forty two years, married Sophia Butler (1844-1883), aged twenty six years, of Upper Clapton, Middlesex. A step-brother, Ernest Salisbury Butler Whitfield (1873-1943), was born in 1873 in Wimbledon. A step-sister, Emily Banks Butler Whitfield (1874-1927) was born in 1874 also at Wimbledon and another step-sister, Rosa Sophia Butler Whitfield (1877-?) was born in 1877 at Hastings. In the 1881 census Charles' father and step-mother were still in Hastings with his step-brother, aged eight years, and the two step-sisters, aged six and four years. They had a visitor staying with them then and three servants, a nurse, a cook and a housemaid.

Grammar School Lodge, Cranbrook, 1896.[2]

[2] http://theweald.org/P2.asp?Pld=Ck.Gschool

Charles was sixteen years old in 1881, and his brothers, seventeen and eighteen years. They were not at home at the census, as they were boarders at a Grammar School, Glebe House and Church House, Cranbrook, Kent, a large school with over a hundred boarders along with day boys. Sadly, Charles' step-mother, Sophia, died at Lawn Park, Bournemouth, when he was eighteen years old.

Charles studied at Trinity College, Dublin, gaining his BA in 1889 at the age of twenty four years, his MA in 1892 aged twenty seven years and a further MA at Durham in 1896, aged thirty one years. In 1889-92 Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield was a curate of St Patrick's Church, Ballinakill, Waterford and in 1892-95 he was at All Saints, Hatcham Park, New Cross, London. In 1894-1900 he was chaplain to the South Eastern Hospital, New Cross, London, and in 1900-1908 chaplain at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

On 1 September 1900, Charles, then thirty five years old, married Florence Margaret Ford (1876-1964), then twenty four years old, who was born in Bridgwater. Their residence at the time of marriage was 7 Manor Place, Paddington and they married at St Mary's Church, Paddington Green. In the 1901 census Rev Whitfield, aged thirty six years, was still living at 7 Manor Place, Paddington, London with his wife, Florence and no servants, and was listed as a Church of England Clergyman. In 1901 they had a daughter, Violet Emily Ford Whitfield (1901-1983), and in 1902, a son, Lancelot Patrick Edward Whitfield (1902-1990), both born in Paddington. In 1908, they were at Portsdown Road, Maida Vale.

In the 1911 census, Rev Whitfield was forty six years old and living at 123,Sandford Road, Moseley, Birmingham, where he ran a private school, St Hilda's, in his home. Charles' wife, Florence, was then aged thirty five years, their daughter, Violet,nine years old, and son, Lancelot, aged eight years. The census form records that one child had died. Their one general servant, Maud Taylor, was aged twenty one years and came from Small Heath in Birmingham. Living in the house previously in July 1907 was W. B. Featherstone, F.C.S., a pharmacist for many years with Southall & Co., Bull Street, Birmingham, and the parent of Councillor W. B. Featherstone, M.D, Erdington.[3] W. B. Featherstone senior died in 1911 and the house then fell vacant.

In 1932 Rev Charles Whitfield, aged 67 years, is shown still at St Hilda's School, Sandford Road, Moseley, Birmingham. On the 1939 Register, Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield, aged 74 years, was described as a Clerk in Holy Orders and a retired School Master and still living at 123,Sandford Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13, with his wife Florence. The National Probate Calendar gives his date of death as 12 July 1946. He was eighty one years old and he died at Westfield House, 37 Stoke Hill, Bristol, leaving £1 549 4s. 1d.[4]

Westfield House today.[5]

[3] https://archive.org/stream/b19974760M2084/b19974760M2084_djvu.txt
[4] Westfield House is now a Guest House.
[5] www.westfieldhouse.net

To date we have no primary evidence that indicates why he came to Birmingham and opened a school.

123,Sandford Road, Moseley, Birmingham

2. Violet Emily Ford Whitfield (1901-1983), the daughter of Rev Charles Whitfield

Violet was born on 11 August, 1901 and baptised on 20 November, 1901, in Penge, Surrey. In 1928,aged twenty seven years, she married Leslie D Alexander, in South Birmingham. The 1939 Register records that Violet was undertaking 'unpaid domestic duties,' meaning she was a housewife. Her husband Leslie was a 'Travelling Director and Sales Manager of a Manufacturing Company, Bitumen Road Products.' They had a paid domestic help. Violet died in 1983, aged eighty two years at Sedgemoor, Somerset.

3. Lancelot Patrick Edward Whitfield (1902-1990), the son of Rev Whitfield

In the Electoral Registers for 1932, Lancelot is listed as living at South Wales House, Acland Road, Dorchester. He married Evelyn Mclewer in 1936 in Doncaster, Yorkshire when aged 34 years old. On the 1939 Register, he was living at 14 Milverton Road, Winchester. He was an 'organiser of Physical Training. 'Evelyn is recorded as undertaking, 'unpaid domestic duties,' meaning she too was a housewife.

4. Frederick Whitfield(1829-1904), the father of Rev Charles Whitfield

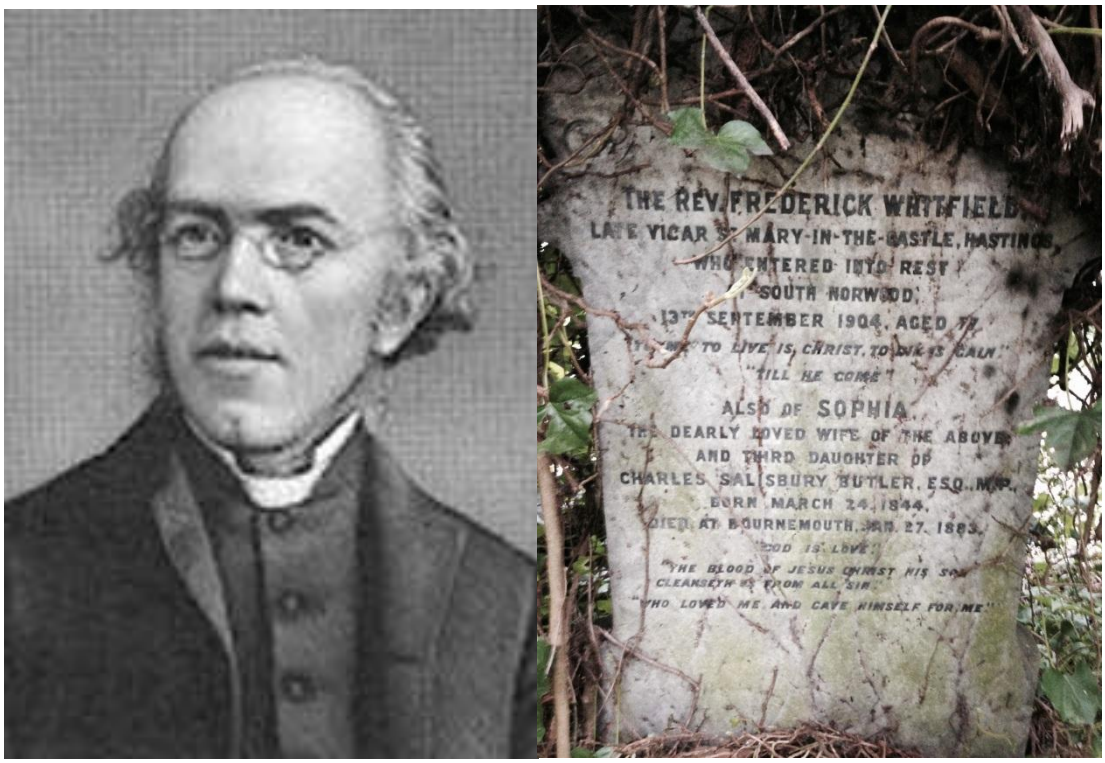
Charles' father was born at Threapwood, Shropshire, the second son of Thomas Whitfield, a gaoler, no doubt at the recently opened 'Overton House of Correction' and Jane Whitfield.[6] In his youth in the 1840s he was supposedly

[6] http://www.threapwoodhistory.org/people.html

attracted for twelve years to the teachings of the Quakers and spent a short time at Cambridge.[7] He studied theology at Trinity College, Dublin, attaining his BA in 1859/60. He was appointed curate of Otley in 1859, ordained priest in 1860 and vicar of Kirkby Ravensworth between 1861 and 1865, where Charles and his brothers were born. He was senior curate of Greenwich, 1865-1870, and vicar of St John Bexley, 1870-1873. In 1881 Frederick senior was living at 22 Cornwallis Gardens, Hastings, and was vicar of Holy Trinity, Hastings. In 1885 he was at St Mary's-in-the-Castle, Hastings. In 1899 his health began to fail, so he retired to spend his closing days in Norwood and was cared for by his daughter, Emily.[8]In 1901 he was still in Croydon and he died in 1904 at Lower Norwood, aged seventy five years, and is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery.[9]He produced a considerable amount of religious prose and poetry, upwards of thirty pamphlets, which seem to have an Evangelical tone, all published by Nesbit & Co. Curiously, many of these are available as 'Print on Demand' from publishing houses in India (Put 'Frederick Whitfield' into Abe Books). One is available as a PDF. He wrote several hymns, the first while still a student. The ones for which he is most widely known are 'I need Thee, precious Jesus'and 'There is a Name we love to hear.' His first wife died after five years leaving him with three young children and his second wife died after twelve years of married life again leaving him with three young children. The weight he felt at this was reflected in his writing:

'Oh lighten, Lord, this darkened life,
Lord, shine upon my way!
A broken heart, a darkened home,
Oh God, is this Thy way?'

[7] http://www.threapwoodhistory.org/people.html
[8] Library Home>A. Roach>The Little Flock Hymn Book: Its History and Hymn Writers>Frederick Whitfield (1827-1904), by:Adrian Roach; http://www.threapwoodhistory.org/people.html
[9] http://www.threapwoodhistory.org/people.html



Frederick Whitfield, Charles Whitfield's Father and his gravestone.[10]

5. Rev Frederick William Garforth Whitfield (1863-1937), the eldest brother of Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield

Charles' eldest brother, Frederick William Garforth Whitfield, also became a member of the clergy, studying at Trinity College, Dublin for his BA which he achieved in 1885 and his MA attained in 1896. In 1885-87 he was at the Church of St John the Evangelist in Walton-on-the-Hill, Liverpool, in 1889-90, at Christchurch, Macclesfield and in 1891-93, at St Mary-in-the-Castle, Hastings. His father died in 1906 aged seventy five years, so possibly Frederick had taken over from his father. In 1893-95 Frederick was the Associate Secretary of the CCC Society for the South West District. From 1895 to 1904 he was vicar of Abergavenny, 1904-6 at Llantilio-Crossenny with Llanfair Chapel and from 1906

[10] Photograph of Frederick Whitfield's gravestone courtesy of L. Whitfield, his descendent.

at LLangattock-juxta-Caerleon Diocese, Monmouthshire and was still there in 1932. Frederick William Garforth Whitfield married Jessie Green (1867-1950) in 1890 in Hastings, Sussex and in 1892 they had a son, Frederick Ernest Banister Whitfield (1892-1940)at Silverdale, near Hastings. In 1894, they had another son, Arthur Charles Garforth Whitfield (1894-1912) at Clifton, Gloucestershire. Daughters, Mary Jessie Whitfield (1896-1976) and Ruth Hilda Whitfield (1897-1988) were born in 1896 and1897 and another son, John Yeldham Whitfield (1899-1971) was born in 1899. Frederick William Garforth Whitfield's address at his death in 1937 was 28 Rodway Road, Roehampton, Surrey. He died, aged 73 years, at 14 Fitzroy Square, St Pancras, London leaving £719. 16s. 3d.

Charles Whitfield's Brother, Frederick William Garforth Whitfield.[11]

6. Rev John George James Whitfield (1864-1932), the older brother of Rev Charles Whitfield

In 1891 John George James Whitfield was aged twenty seven years, single and living in Ince, Makerfield, Lancashire, with a thirty four year old housekeeper and a thirteen year old domestic help. He too was a clerk in Holy Orders, having taken his BA in 1886 and was at The Church of St Columba in Liverpool between 1887 and 1889 and at Ince-in-Makerfield from 1889-1891. There are

[11]Family photograph, courtesy L. Whitfield, a descendant.

no further entries in Crockford's Clerical Directories. The National Probate Calendar shows he died on 5 June 1932, aged sixty eight years at The Old Manor, Salisbury and left £317 4s. 3d. The Old Manor was an Asylum for 'wealthier' patients.[12]

Fisherton House Asylum in the 1840s, later known as The Old Manor Hospital.[13]

7. Rev Ernest Salisbury Butler Whitfield(1873-1943),the step-brother of Rev Charles Whitfield

Charles' stepbrother, Ernest Salisbury Butler Whitfield was also a clergyman. He took his BA at Cambridge in 1894 and his MA in 1904. In 1891, aged eighteen years, he was living as a scholar in St Leonard, Sussex. In 1898 he was

[12]Fisherton House Asylum opened as a private asylum in 1813, became Old Manor Hospital in 1923 and was taken over by the NHS in 1954. The asylum was run first by the Finch family and then the Chubb family until1923. Prior to being taken over by the NHS it was the largest private asylum in England with approximately 700 beds. By 1922 there were 291 patients there and in 1923 the first ex-servicemen arrived increasing numbers to 492; http://www.twilightshadowsparanormal.co.uk/convertedasylum.html
[13]Moody, Jeremy, www.timezonepublishing.com

Vicar of St Luke's Church, Deptford, London, and in this year he married, aged twenty five years, Mary Gunsley Ayerst (1873-) at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham. From 1897 to 1898 he was at Christ Church, Chelsea. Between 1898 and 1906 he was at Neasdon, Kingsbury and subsequently at Deptford, Southwark, Crouch End and Haverstock. In 1899, he and his wife had a daughter, Evelyn Mary Mercia Ayerst Whitfield (1899-1974) and in 1901 a son, Arthur Alfred Ernest Ayerst Whitfield (1901-1958), both born whilst the family lived in Willesden, Middlesex. In 1911, when aged thirty eight years, they lived at 261 Lewisham High Road, St Johns, Deptford, Evelyn by now aged twelve years and Arthur aged ten years. His mother-in-law, Eliza Mary Ayerst, aged seventy seven years, was living with them. Rev Ernest Salisbury Butler Whitfield died in 1943, aged seventy years, at Dartford, Kent.

8. Deaconess Emily Banks Butler Whitfield (1874-1927), the older step-sister of Rev Charles Whitfield

In 1891, Emily, aged seventeen years, was still living at home with her father at Holy Trinity, Hastings, Sussex. In 1911, aged thirty six years, however, she was living at 11, Marine Parade, Hastings. She was single and a Deaconess boarding with Harriette Elizabeth Augusta la Fargue, the household head, a single, 45 year old Boarding House Keeper. Also boarding there was another Deaconess, a married boarder with a three and a half year old child, a general servant and a companion. Emily died aged 53 years in Surrey in 1927.

9. Rosa Sophia Butler Whitfield (1877-1944),the younger step-sister of Rev Charles Whitfield

In 1891, aged fourteen years, Rosa too was still living at home with her father at Holy Trinity, Hastings, Sussex. In 1901, aged twenty four years, she was resident in Croydon, Surrey with her father. In 1906, aged twenty nine years, she married Rev William Doveton Keith-Steele (1868-1958). Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield was the witness at their wedding, their father having died in 1904. She and her husband were at Kendal, 1894-96, St John the Evangelist, Carlisle, 1896-97, Bradford, 1897-1902, Christ Church, Bromley, Kent, 1902-1903, Acting CF, 1903-1905 and Vicar of St Jude's Mildmay Park, Islington, 1905-1918. In 1911, when she was aged thirty four years of age and her husband forty three years old, they had a daughter, Katherine Sophia Keith-Steele. From 1918 -1932 they were at All Saints Church, Sidmouth. Rosa died in 1944 aged sixty seven years in Devon and her husband died aged ninety years in 1958 also in Devon.

10.Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield and the Allotment Movement

The 1933-1942 Minutes Book of Moor Green Allotments, Moseley, Birmingham, shows that Rev Charles Edward Thomas Whitfield was chairperson of the Moseley and District Allotments Association during that period (See web article 2: 'The Minutes Book, 1933-1942'). This Minutes Book is the only surviving twentieth century documentation for Moor Green Allotments, so that it is possible that he was chairperson before then and subsequently until his death. It is also possible that he was instrumental in initiating the allotments given that his religious affiliations might have

generated concern for the poor and unemployed and he was heavily involved in the allotment movement from the 1920s on. For example, in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, Rev Whitfield was a significant presence in the Allotments Movement as President of the Birmingham and District Allotments Council and the Allotments Advisory Committee and a member of the National Executive of the Allotments Association.

Rev Whitfield's commitment to allotments is also shown in the many talks on allotments he gave and the meetings he attended. For example, he talked to Ashbourne Road Wesleyan School, Derby, on Wednesday 7 October, 1925, on 'The Allotment Question,' which suggests there was some debate around the subject.[14]In his capacity as President of the Midlands Advisory Committee, Rev Whitfield supported Mr J. E. Ducker, President of the Derby and District Allotments Council, who was presiding at the quarterly meeting of the Midlands Allotments Advisory Committee in July 1927.[15] The meeting considered the serious position created by the extinction of a quarter of a million allotments in the previous five years. The Ministry of Education and County Councils were urged to extend facilities for horticulture in elementary schools. As the President of the Birmingham and District Allotments Council Rev Whitfield distributed prizes at the 30th Annual Small Heath Allotment Show held at Marlborough Road Schools on Saturday 26 August, 1939. This association had 500 members and 1000 plots and most of the produce came from Yardley Road. 'The difficulties of the season prevented vegetables being

[14] Advert, *Derby Daily Telegraph*, Monday 5 October, 1925.
[15] *The Derby Telegraph*, Tuesday 19 July, 1927.

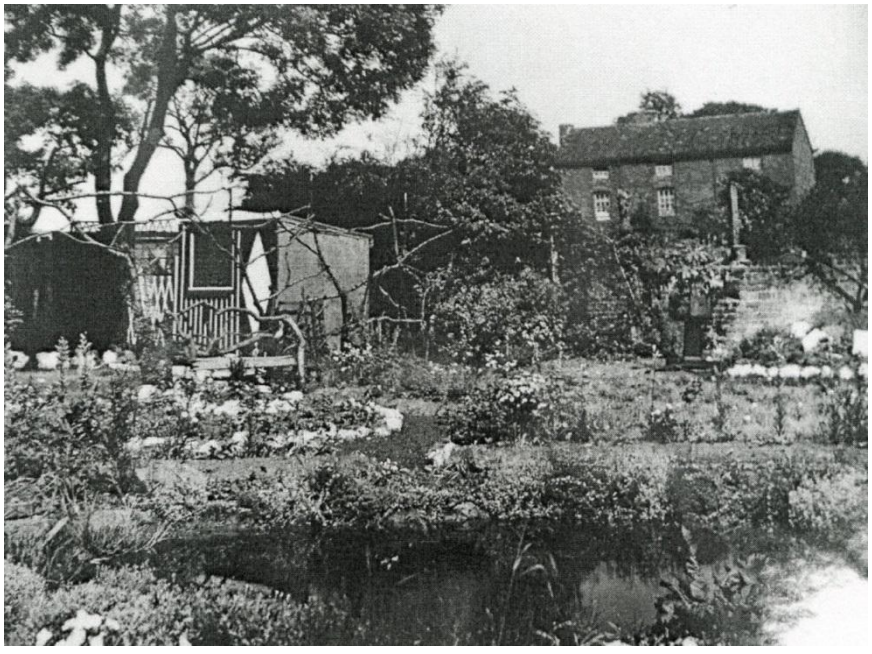
shown in quite such good quality as usual, but the flowers were exceptionally fine and there was a magnificent display of dahlias.'[16]

Also in 1939, Rev Whitfield, as President of the Birmingham and District Allotments Council, wrote to the *Birmingham Post* about the 'menace in the air' drawing attention to the vital necessity for increased food production and the vacant plots in Birmingham.[17]In 1941 Rev Whitfield attended the Annual Meeting of the Bridgwater and District Allotment Holders' Association as a member of the National Executive and paid tribute to the work of the Association in the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. The group had held meetings, distributed leaflets and canvassed house to house, gaining sixty eight new applications. They worked with the local council on acquiring a field for new allotments.[18]

In 1943, Rev Whitfield, aged 78 years, took part in the presentation of Certificates of Merit awarded by the Ministry of Agriculture to Birmingham Allotment holders. The Lord Mayor presented the certificates in the Council Chamber with Alderman T Hackett, Chairman of the City Council Allotments Committee presiding. Rev Whitfield, President of the Birmingham Allotments Council, said that the certificates represented 'hard work, determination, skills and patience.'[19]

[16]*The Birmingham Post*, Monday August 28, 1939.
[17]*Birmingham Post*, Friday 24 March, 1939.
[18]*Somerset County Herald*, Saturday, 11 January, 1941.
[19]*The Birmingham Post*, Monday 13 December, 1943.

We do have an indication that he had an allotment, presumably at Moor Green Allotment site. A reference occurs in a newspaper article of a speech he gave at a conference in Bristol in 1925 in which he was emphasising the social side of allotment holding. He described the relationship as 'the companionship of the spade.' He told of working on his allotment, presumably at Moor Green, one day when another worker shouted to him, 'I say, matey, lend me your barrow.' This was an example of allotment companionship which brought people together the better for the allotment movement and the individual and demonstrates the sense of humour of Rev Charles Whitfield.[20]



Moor Green Allotments, 1933.[21]

The Rev Whitfield was involved in other areas too. He took a prominent role in the Independent School Association for many years. His name comes up

[20] *Western Daily Press*, Bristol, Monday 14 September, 1925.
[21] BCLA, WK/M6/49; www.https://theironroomwordpress.com

several times in Bryan Maybee's book, *Pro Liberis: The Independent School Association, 1878-2010*.[22] For example, he notes that in 1919 Rev Whitfield was the Honorary Secretary of the Midland Area of the Private School Association as it was then called.[23] By 1924 he was already Honorary Secretary of the whole Association and gave a talk in Bournemouth on 'The work of the Association and its claim to support.'[24] An example of one of his letters from 1925 is given on p.50. In 1938 on the retirement of the Reverend S.Maxwell, who had been chairman since 1909 Maybee writes: 'In the Reverend C.Whitfield and Mr F.J.Whitehead, as honorary secretary and honorary treasurer, he had strength in depth. Both these men served the Association for many years and continued to do so after the Maxwell Era.'[25]

Janet and Mike Berry

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Information from www.ancestry.co.uk including 'The Whitfield Family Tree' by L Whitfield 173, with supporting or additional information from other sources footnoted.

[22]Maybee, B., *Pro Liberis: The Independent School Association, 1878-2010*, (Woodbridge, John Catt Educational Ltd, 2010).
[23]Maybee, B., *Pro Liberis: The Independent School Association, 1878-2010*, p.41.
[24]Maybee, B., *Pro Liberis: The Independent School Association, 1878-2010*, p.47.
[25]Maybee, B., *Pro Liberis: The Independent School Association, 1878-2010*, p.60