

1. The King's School in 1914

The King's School in the early twentieth century was very small compared to today. In the Trinity (Summer) Term of 1914, there were 148 boys in the Senior School. There were also 48 boys in the Junior School making a total of 196. The bulk of the pupils were boarders. (At the time of the May 1913 inspection, 153 of the 192 boys were boarders and just 39 dayboys.¹) The School had grown since the late nineteenth century. When Arthur Galpin took over in January 1897, there were 143 boys in the school, of whom 86 were boarders. From 1903 to 1910 the total remained on average between 230 and 250 and boarding numbers had more than doubled.² In the immediate pre-war years, however, numbers were falling, from 243 in 1909 to 208 in 1912.³ They would not reach 200 again until after the war.



The Mint Yard c1900

For the senior school, the Mint Yard was “the centre of all things”.⁴ The Yard itself was not yet grassed, but it did contain two large trees. On the Northgate side were the laboratories, the Parry Library with classrooms underneath, the fives courts, and the

¹ Board of Education, Report of Inspection of King's School, Canterbury, Kent... 1913, p. 3.

² KSC Governors Minutes 17 May 1910, where there is a summary of Galpin's achievements. On Galpin, see Timothy Hands, 'I Hold no Brief for Idleness': The Life and Times of Arthur John Galpin.

³ School lists: 1909: 243; 1910: 230; 1911: 211; 1912: 208.

⁴ Pullan, *Schola Mea*, p. 10.

gymnasium, which was used for concerts and other entertainments. School House had studies on the ground floor with dormitories above. The dining hall was in the north-eastern corner: its fine window can be seen from the garden. The Headmaster lived in the future Galpin's House. The Schoolroom was the venue for morning assembly as well as teaching. Noticeboards were in 'the Arches' (under the Schoolroom) with the tuck shop in what later became the Memorial Chapel. The Sixth Form classroom which also housed the School museum was over the Green Court gateway. The Seneschal's House occupied what is now Lattergate and was not to be part of the school until the 1920s. The Grange contained dormitories, as well as masters' accommodation and more classrooms, some in the recently opened West Wing.



The Schoolroom

The Junior School was in today's Walpole House. It had its own classrooms next to it, and a new classroom block (now the 'J' block) was opened in 1914. The recently rebuilt Archbishop's Palace overlooked the Junior School tennis courts and playground, and the annual Archiepiscopal Visitation was appreciated by the boys particularly for the traditional granting of an additional holiday. Hodgson's Hall (25 The Precincts) was the school sanatorium. The 'school chapel' was in the south transept of the Cathedral and was used by the school for its services on Saturday and Sunday. The Chapter House was the venue for Speeches.

The majority of the boarders (92 in Trinity Term 1914) were in School House, with some of them living in the Grange.⁵ All these boys were the responsibility of the Headmaster, though several assistant masters also lived in the Mint Yard. There were two houses in the

⁵ School House list, 2nd term 1914. In the Michaelmas Term numbers dropped to 82.

Old Dover Road: 14 boys were in Langley House (Mr Reay's house) and 18 in Holme House (Mr Poole's house). Holme House had a particularly strong sense of identity, exemplified in its house magazine. The dayboys had their own hall in the Mint Yard. There was no house system at King's, as at so many boarding schools. Instead each boy was allocated, by lot, to one of six members of staff who acted as his tutor. These 'tutor sets' were originally called after the masters, but then re-named Choughs, Gryphons, Hawks, Herons, Martlets and Swallows. (The Junior School were known as 'Parrots'.) Inter-tutor set matches (known as 'tuggers') were organised on a competitive basis, as was Sports Day.

The Green Court, with the grass surrounded by iron railings and (in 1908) by eighteen lime trees, had been the school's 'playground' since the seventeenth century (and maybe earlier) and was still used for cricket practice and other small scale activities.⁶ Tennis courts were behind the Grange. Major sports took place elsewhere. Blore's Piece was the main rugby ground, but the School also used 'Cullen's', a field in nearby St Stephen's. Cricket was also played on Blore's and Cullen's, but the 1st XI used 'the Beverley', as the boys continued to describe the Kent cricket ground generally known as St Lawrence. Sports Day had also moved there from the Green Court in 1902. Rowing was at Fordwich.⁷

The Governing Body was the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral. Their role had been modified under the Scheme of 1878, but they were still very powerful, not least because of their proximity to the school. The Headmaster was the Revd Charles McDowall, who had taken over from Arthur Galpin in 1910. He was typical of HMC Headmasters in being from Oxford University, a classicist and a clergyman.⁸ He was also responsible for teaching the Sixth Form, albeit alongside other members of staff. At Midsummer 1914 there were sixteen assistant masters, including the music and drawing masters. Six had been to Oxford, four to Cambridge, three to London, and one each to Durham, Dublin and South Kensington. Only one, Herbert Poole, was a clergyman. Also recorded in the School Lists were a teacher of shorthand and handwriting, a teacher of violin, an instructor of the OTC contingent, a gymnastic instructor and his two assistants, and a workshop instructor.⁹ The first woman on the staff was Miss D. Bellars, who taught in the Junior School. She appeared in the 'rotulus' from Trinity 1914, but was not recorded in the School List until 1916.

Analysis of the entry book for the school year 1913-14 provides some information on the boys' background. 50 boys joined the school: 26 in the Michaelmas Term 1913, 13 in Lent and 11 in Summer 1914.¹⁰ Only one boy was born in Canterbury. Another eight were born in Kent and twelve in London or its suburbs. Most of the rest came from across England: four from Essex, three from Surrey, two from Cheshire, two from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and others from a variety of places including Stoke-on-Trent, Nottingham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Leigh in Worcestershire and Osborne in Dorset. Seven were born overseas: three in South Africa; the others in Argentina, Australia, Uganda and the United States. Of course

⁶ On the trees, see Woodruff and Cape, *Schola Regia Cantuariensis*, p. 154.

⁷ See Woodruff and Cape, *Schola Regia Cantuariensis*, ch. XIII: 'Forty Years of King's School Games' for a useful summary.

⁸ Seldon and Walsh, p. 15.

⁹ School List, Midsummer 1914, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ King's School entry book. The pattern is typical of this period. Compare 1911-12: 54: Michaelmas 27, Lent 14, Summer 13; and 1912-13: 45: Michaelmas 23, Lent 12, Summer 10.

place of birth does not indicate current residence, but the address book, although it does not record all these boys, gives a very similar geographical distribution.¹¹

The bulk of the boys were sons of the professional and business classes. In the entry book listings for 1913-14, three fathers were described as ‘gentleman’ (and one as gentleman farmer); there were eight clergymen, five engineers, four doctors (and one surgeon), and four solicitors. The rest of the occupations were very varied and include an architect, a publisher, a fish merchant, an estate agent, and a professor at Wye College. It is worth noting that there were no army officers, unless one counts a bandmaster in the 9th Lancers. There had only been one in 1912-13, but rather more in some earlier years.

Future careers – at least in the short term – can be examined by looking at the 33 boys who left in the summer of 1910. Fourteen went to university: six to Oxford, four to Cambridge, three to London (including two to medical schools) and one to Reading. Two more went to City and Guilds and Crystal Palace School of Engineering, three to farming, three to banking, two to the law and one to another school (he left there in 1915). The rest went into a variety of crafts and professions. Only one went into the armed forces, going to RMA Woolwich, though another was briefly a law student before joining the Buffs in 1911. Twenty eight are known to have served in the war in some capacity; nine were to be killed.

“The object of the School is to give a first-rate education at the most reasonable cost” pronounced the Prospectus.¹² The King’s School was indeed relatively inexpensive. In 1914, boarding fees were £84 3s 0d. p.a., comprising £23 5s 0d for tuition and £60 18s 0d for boarding. There was a separate charge for science and a complicated structure of extra fees for additional subjects and for activities such as shorthand, art, music, etc., as well as an obligatory subscription (7/6 per term in the Upper School) for games. Many scholarships were available – in theory 50, but just 47 were taken up in 1913: 8 senior, 19 junior and 20 probationers. These were awarded on the basis of examinations in June and December and could bring a significant reduction in fees. As the prospectus pointed out, it was possible for a boy with an entrance scholarship (£40) and a senior scholarship (£21) to pay just £23 3s 0d p.a. Furthermore there were ten leaving exhibitions mostly of £50 p.a. available for those going to Oxford and Cambridge, as well as several leaving gifts.¹³

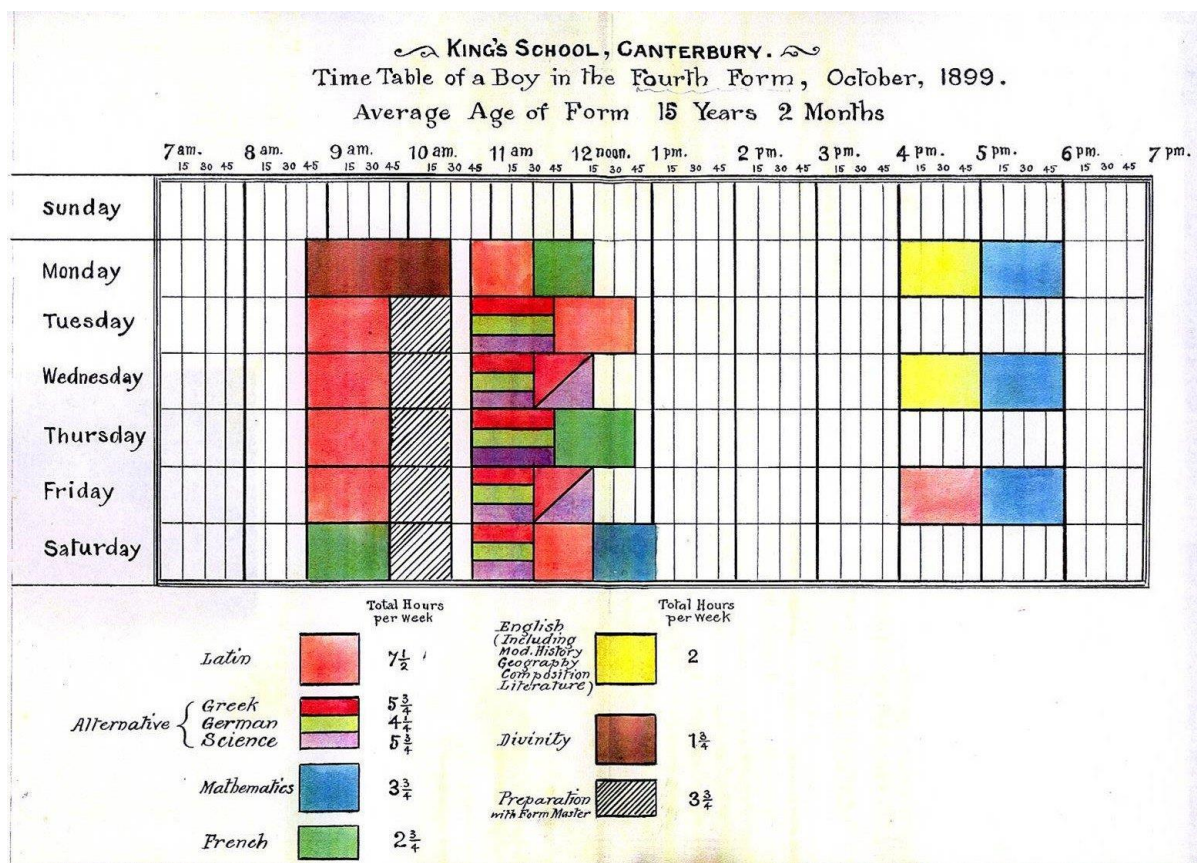
Galpin had made a major effort to improve academic standards. The fourth form timetable shows the structure of the school week, as well as the dominance of the Classics in the curriculum.¹⁴

¹¹ King’s School Entry Book 1866-1956; King’s School Address Book 1895-1923.

¹² School Prospectus, 1898, p.10. The phrase is still there in the 1914 prospectus.

¹³ School Prospectus, 1914, pp. 6-10 and 27-30. Harry Townend (KSC 1905-10) noted that a term’s bill in September 1905 came to £20 17s and that “the last years at School cost my father less than £40”. The Cantuarian, December 1967, p. 45.

¹⁴ KSC Archives box S5. The English Education Exhibition was reported in The Cantuarian, February 1900, p. 178. For those doing Latin and Greek, over half their time was spent on those subjects.



Example of a timetable, prepared for the English Education Exhibition at the Imperial Institute 1900

"The foundation of the work of the School is, of course, Classical" noted Charles Pullan, but Mathematics was also a strong subject, and Science was growing in importance.¹⁵ Reginald Hancock recalled: "The school curriculum was strongly classical, but there was a recent growth of heretics working at 'stinks' in the newly erected Harvey laboratory".¹⁶ The Harvey Laboratory (for chemistry) had been opened in 1905 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, alongside Sir Richard Douglas Powell, President of the Royal College of Physicians, and Professor Herbert Jackson of King's College, London. Yet in speaking at the ceremony, Jackson "impressed upon his hearers the great help which a classical education proved in acquiring a knowledge of science."¹⁷ Boys progressed up the school according to their academic achievement, so a clever fifteen year old could be in the Sixth Form, while some older boys might remain in the Fourth or Fifth Form until they left. An Army and Engineering Class was instituted in 1897. It was soon re-named Army, Navy and Engineering Class, but just Army and Engineering again from 1910.

Games played a prominent part in boys' lives. The major sports were football (i.e. rugby) and cricket, both of which had existed in some form for much of the nineteenth century, and rowing which had started tentatively in 1862 and then been revived more

¹⁵ Pullan, *Schola Mea*, p. 20. Cf. Seldon and Walsh, p15.

¹⁶ R. Hancock, *Memoirs of a Veterinary Surgeon*, p. 55.

¹⁷ *The Cantuarian*, December 1905, pp. 459-60. Cf. *The Cantuarian*, August 1905, pp. 415-23 for a full account of the laying of the foundation stone, taken from the *Kentish Gazette*, and a (reprinted) account of Harvey.

formally in the 1890s.¹⁸ The main school opponents at rugby were Dover College, Sutton Valence, Merchant Taylors' and Eastbourne; at cricket, they were St Edmund's, Dover College, Highgate, Sutton Valence, Eastbourne and Felsted.¹⁹ Many of the matches in both sports – often well over half – were against club sides. Thus in 1913-14 the XV played the Royal Engineers, Wye College and United Services, Sheerness – all twice – and Tonbridge Town, Blackheath 'A', Hampstead Wanderers, Mr Latter's XV and Mr Levisur's XV [= Guy's Hospital] as well as the OKS. The 1914 cricket side played Mr Latter's and Evans's XIs, Chartham Asylum, St Lawrence CC (twice), RMLI Walmer, Wye College, the MCC and the OKS. It was not so easy to secure opponents for the Boat Club. In 1914, they rowed against the Royal Engineers, Tonbridge School, Chatham RC, Old Williamsons and the OKS. The 1st IV also went to the Marlow Regatta.



Sports Day at the St Lawrence Ground 1910

Other sports were played with varying degrees of seriousness. Athletics had a long tradition, with Sports Day and the triangular match with St Edmund's and Dover College the highlights of the season. Fives, gymnastics, tennis and swimming were also popular, as were paper chases. (On 30 September 1913 the paper chase hares were Godfrey Haward and Eric Bing, both of whom were to die in the war.²⁰) 'Games' covered a wide range of activities, from the matches of the 1st XV and 1st XI via tutor set matches, which involved many more boys, to the informal, such as the ever-popular stump cricket in the Mint Yard.²¹

¹⁸ On rowing in particular, see Michael Dover, *A History of Rowing at the King's School, Canterbury*, Part 1: 1862-1972.

¹⁹ For a list of inter-school opponents at rugby and cricket, with a table of results, see 'A Summary of the School's Athletic Records' in *The Cantuarian*, December 1931, pp. 423-24.

²⁰ *The Cantuarian*, November 1913, p. 501.

²¹ Woodruff and Cape, *Schola Regia Cantuariensis*, ch. XIII: 'Forty Years of King's School Games' provides full details. The 'stumps' can be seen chalked on the walls by the Schoolroom in photographs of the period.

In terms of size and reputation, the King's School was a very minor late Victorian and Edwardian public school. However, its long history provided ample scope for 'invented tradition'. There had been a series of articles in *The Cantuarian* on 'King's School Worthies', starting with Kit Marlowe, from 1889 to 1896. 1897, the year Arthur Galpin became Headmaster, was the 1300th anniversary of St Augustine's arrival and A.F. Leach was writing on 'the oldest school in England', decreeing that the honour belonged to Canterbury.²² Galpin took full advantage of this publicity. The Schoolroom windows were embellished with the coats of arms of notable OKS.²³ The School prospectus published in 1898 proclaimed 'The King's School Canterbury: The Oldest Public School in England' on its cover and the booklet opened with a section on 'History'.²⁴ An edition of Walter Pater's *Emerald Uthwart* ('privately published for the King's School, Canterbury') appeared in 1905 and, most importantly, Woodruff and Cape's *Schola Regia Cantuariensis* (1908) provided the School with a history in keeping with its pretensions.²⁵ A book of photographs of the school, two sets of prints by M.K. Hughes and S. O'Neill, and a series of postcards from Fisk-Moore all added to the sense of the school's importance.

This was the school that had to face the challenges of the First World War. Boys and old boys would volunteer, life at school would change, and when the War was over, there was the task of commemorating what had happened by honouring those who had fought and, especially, those who had died. Most boys in the Sixth Form in 1914 were to serve in the War and a quarter of them were to be killed. Such statistics cast a long shadow.

²² Leach's articles include: *The Fortnightly Review* (1892), pp. 638-50; *The Times* 12 September 1896 and 7 September 1897; and *The Guardian* 12 and 19 January 1898. See also *The Cantuarian* June 1897, pp. 328-9 and October 1897 pp. 367-9 (quoting *The Times* of 7 September).

²³ See articles in *The Cantuarian*, November 1898, pp. 570-74 and May 1899, pp. 35-40, with full notes on those commemorated. These articles were printed as a separate leaflet.

²⁴ The cover went on: 'Founded in the VIIth Century. Reconstituted by King Henry VIII in 1541.' After Galpin's time, the 'oldest public school' statement was dropped, but the rest remained for many years. The section on history was soon expanded for later editions. The image on the cover remained the Norman Staircase.

²⁵ Galpin told the Governors it was a book "which would in his opinion be of considerable advantage to the School". Governors minutes 20 March 1908.



1914 Sixth Form

BW Galpin, TR Jukes†, JAR Ferguson†
 GWH Burton†, GJ Eccles, LG Robertson, LWHD Best, A Lindsey, JE Witt
 FC Gentry, AGD West, RJ Routh, GLD Davidson, GH Crosse, RJ Mowll
 LW Goldsmith†, A Sargent, RSF Cooper, CRL McDowall, GEJ Gent, WJ Potts†, GA Purton.

Bernard Galpin: left July 1915; Royal Navy.

Roland Jukes: left July 1914; Royal Sussex Regiment. **Killed 9 May 1915.**

Ross Ferguson: left July 1914; Royal Sussex Regiment. **Killed 8 May 1915.**

Geoffrey Burton: left October 1914; The Buffs. **Killed 8 July 1916.**

George Eccles: left July 1914; Royal Sussex Regiment.

Lennox Robertson: left November 1914; Gordon Highlanders, MC.

Leslie Best: left December 1914; Royal Engineers; wounded, MC.

Archer Lindsey: left in December 1915; Royal Field Artillery; wounded.

John Witt: left July 1914; Royal Army Service Corps. MC.

Frederick Gentry: left July 1914; Jesus College, Cambridge.

Arthur West: left March 1916; Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Flying Corps, Royal Air Force.

Richard Routh: left March 1916; Trinity College, Oxford.

Gerald Davidson: Left October 1916; Royal Engineers.

George Crosse: left October 1914; Green Howards.

Robert Mowll: left July 1914; Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

Lewis Goldsmith: left July 1914; Yorkshire Regiment. **Killed 5 November 1916.**

Alec Sargent: left July 1914; St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

Roy Cooper: left July 1914; Cheshire Regiment; wounded, MC.

Revd Charles McDowall: Headmaster 1910-16.

Edward Gent: left July 1914; Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; wounded, MC, DSO.

William Janson Potts: left March 1915; Royal Field Artillery; Royal Flying Corps. **Killed 21 September 1917.**

Mr Gilbert Purton: left March 1916; Royal Regiment of Artillery.