

Dr Basil Harwood – Recollections of Walton Lodge Preparatory School, Clevedon

Dr Basil Harwood attended Walton Lodge briefly, from 1871-1872. He went on to become an organist and musician.

On the following page are typed extracts from his recollections* of his time at the school.

There then follow some handwritten notes* recording more of his memories of that time, some of which focus upon the choir and its contributions to services at St Mary's Church.

* In each case the wording implies that Dr Harwood's words were being documented by an interviewer (identity unknown).

A further point of interest for some may lie in the fact that in the handwritten notes Dr Harwood names as his greatest friends "*...the Pellew brothers – one later became Lord Exmouth – and the other Viscount Weymouth, later Marquess of Bath*¹." Readers of the 'Hornblower' novels by C S Forester will be familiar with the name of Edward Pellew (1757-1833), portrayed in the books as the mentor of the fictional character Horatio Hornblower. Pellew served in the Royal Navy at the time of the American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral. In 1814 he was made Baron Exmouth of Canonteign and in 1816 became 1st Viscount Exmouth. His great-grandson Charles Ernest Pellew (1863-1945) was the 7th Viscount Exmouth, and is listed on pages 6 and 35 of the "Walton Lodge (Clevedon) Register 1934", reproduced in PDF format and available from <https://laurencevlatham.wordpress.com>. Basil Harwood is similarly listed on pages 5 and 25 of the same document, and George Howard Pellew on pages 5 and 35.

¹ This statement from the handwritten notes would initially appear to be inaccurate, as the family name of the Viscounts Weymouth/Marquesses of Bath is Thynne, not Pellew. However, clarification is provided by referring to the second page of the typewritten notes, which clearly distinguish between the "two Pellew brothers – one of which became Lord Exmouth – and there was Viscount Weymouth, afterwards Marquess of Bath." In his handwritten notes Dr Harwood has inadvertently omitted the second dash after the words 'Lord Exmouth', thereby creating a misleading impression. (In the Register of 1934, in the pre-1877 list on pages 5-7, G Pellew is listed 65, B Harwood 75, C E Pellew 82 and Viscount Weymouth 85, indicating all four were contemporaries.)

Extract from Dr. Basil Harwood's notes, written in old age:

"A very different type of school" (he had previously been at a Quaker school at Montpelier, Weston-super-Mare) "was Walton Lodge, Clevedon, where I went in January 1871. It had moved from Compton Dando, a little village in Somerset, of which Walter Cornish's father was Vicar, not very long before. He was dead and his second son, Walter, was now the Master. I was rather in awe of him and thought him very stern and severe; he had a terrible way of slashing our exercise books with his pencil when our Latin was faulty, which was quite nerve-racking for a small boy! It was a relief when Stephen, his younger brother (then studying at Oriel, Oxford) sometimes took charge of us during his vacations. Walter Cornish died quite young and Stephen Cornish carried on the school.

"But after Weston, the atmosphere of the school was delightful and there was a really nice set of boys at the time I was there. I think there were about 20 at the beginning of 1871 but the numbers had gone up to 40 when I left at the end of 1872.

"At Clevedon I remember enjoying Virgil's Georgics particularly; also (a rather queer fancy) Horace's "Ars Poetica"...

"On Sunday mornings, we had to learn by heart bits of The Christian Year"; this was accomplished in bed! I remember

the authoress, Miss Yonge (Charlotte M. Yonge?) whose "Daisy Chain", "Heir of Radcliffe" and other books were so famous, coming to stay, but beyond seeing her at meal-times and thinking she looked nice I can say no more."

(Dr. Harwood goes on to mention friends he made: William (Bill) Foxley Norris (latterly Dean of Westminster), Mrs. Cornish's nephew; "Teddy" Mowbray (afterwards Rev. Sir Edmund George Lionel Mowbray, who represented Oxford University at Westminster); Edmund and Walter Hobhouse, ~~xxx~~ Johnny Gibbs, George and Harry Garth, Willie Lowndes, &c. In his last year he was put in charge of the bedroom in which he slept. Six boys were in it, among them two Pellew brothers - one became Lord Exmouth - and there was Viscount Weymouth, afterwards Marquess of Bath.)

"The Cornishes were such delightful people - we were more like a happy family than a school. My stepmother had known them before she married my father and that was how I came to be sent to Walton Lodge. The family consisted of Mrs. Cornish, Walter, Stephen and a younger brother, Theodore, who was always spoken of as "Olo". There were three daughters, Joy, Ella and Daisy. Every night we were all kissed before going to bed.

"Several boys used to sing in the Choir; we went to a short Morning Service at St. Mary's every morning of the week".

* The well known organist and musician,
Dr Paul Harwood (Mus. Doc.), who came to W.L. in 1871
writes thus about the school: "After Welton (he had
previously been at a Quaker School there), the atmosphere of
W.L. was delightful and there was a really nice set of
boys at the time I was there. My greatest friends were
the Fellow brothers - one later became Lord Exmouth and
the other Viscount Weymouth, officers of the Hampshire of Bath.
There were about 20 boys at the beginning of 1871 but
the number had gone up to 40 when I left at the
end of 1872.

At Clevedon, I remember enjoying Virgil's Georgics
particularly: also Horace's 'Ars Poetica'.

On Sunday mornings we had to learn by heart
bits of the Christian year: this was accomplished in
bed.

The Cornishes were such delightful people - we
were more like a happy family than a school. The family
consisted of Mrs Cornish, Stephen, Walter and a young
brother, Theodore, always known as 'Old' because of his
daughters Joy, Ella and Daisy. Every night we
went all dressed before going to bed!

Several boys used to sing in the Choir: we went to
a short morning service at St Mary's every morning of
the week."

* From the beginning there was a very close
connection between the school - St Mary's, the school
generally providing the choir for some of the Church
services. ~~Another~~ Another 'Old Boy', Sir Charles Vyner Brooke

who became H. H. Rajah of Sarawak, remembered
vividly, at a great age, many of the things that he
learned at W.L. ~~Having~~ Having no voice, he
was detailed to pump the organ, and being detailed
allowed it to run out of air at a critical moment
in the service.

Waltonian', reproduced here. In Sir Charles' defence, it would appear that the description 'distracted' used by Dr Harwood is something of a euphemism!

We had a most amusing letter from Sir Charles Vyner Brooke - who must be the oldest Old Boy of Walton Lodge still alive. He wrote sending along some of his memories of School life in his days here. His main memory seems to have been of the time that he was in church and was detailed to pump the organ. Apparently the boys in the choir persuaded him that it was the custom for the 'pumper' to follow immediately behind the choir into the church. The resulting lugubrious wail of the organ lives with him to this day.

With grateful thanks to Jane Lilly for providing the scans of the original documents re Dr Harwood.

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