

INTRODUCTION

In 1956, celebrations were held to mark the centenary of the foundation of *Bangor Grammar School*. But just when can a school be said to have been founded? Robert Ward's bequest of £1,000 for the endowment of a school in Bangor dates from 1828. In 1852 a Scheme was approved by which a sum of £200 was to be spent on repairing and improving the '*Old Schoolhouse*', and the power of appointment and removal of the Master was vested in Lord Bangor and R.E.Ward. By an Indenture dated 1854, of which no trace has been found, Lord Bangor and R.E.Ward, granted a plot of land and the '*Old Schoolhouse*' to be used for the purpose of a school for the education of boys in Mathematics, Astronomy and Navigation.

By a similarly worded Indenture, dated 17 April 1856, which has survived, those same gentlemen granted land measuring '*on the north seventy feet, on the west eighty feet, on the east one hundred and twelve feet and on the south seventy eight feet*', to Henry Kennedy of Cultra and Robert Steele Nicholson of Ballow, as Trustees. The dimensions of this plot are exactly the same as those given in the 1893 Scheme of Management of *Bangor Endowed School*, which refers to the 1854 Indenture. There can be little doubt that the two indentures refer to the same piece of land.

Until the autumn of 2014, it was believed that the first recorded Headmaster was Robert Gowdy. He did not appear to have taken up his post until c.1860. However, local historian Sandra Millsopp has discovered an advertisement, dated 17 October 1859, in which W.Hanly Ball is named as Master. Nevertheless, the plaque above the door of '*the Old Schoolhouse*', in both Mr.Gowdy's advertisement and in the artist's impression, reads '*Bangor Endowed School 1856*', it seems reasonable to date the foundation of *Bangor Grammar School* in 1856.¹

¹ Details of the documents referred to in this Introduction can be found in Chapter One.