

An Academy for Young Gentlemen: John Naish and his School in Bath¹

William Evans

Education in Bath at the start of the nineteenth century

Few traces remain of what Bath offered by way of education in the early nineteenth century, but there were certainly many children: it can be inferred from the census that at the turn of the century there must have been some 3,000 children aged 5 to 10 living in the four inner parishes of the city. Neither the affluent visitors (numbers declining) nor the genteel permanent residents (numbers rising) will have concerned themselves much about local schools. At the other end of the social spectrum, amongst those struggling for survival (numbers rising), education will not have been valued or affordable. But there must have been many families, respectable but not fashionable, whose activities serviced the visitors and the permanent residents and each other, who will have perceived education as an advantage in social or economic advancement.

At the start of the nineteenth century, demand for education will have been met in a number of ways.² Children from families who could afford it were most likely to be taught at home by a relation, tutor or governess. Bath newspapers carried advertisements for home tutors, some specializing in subjects like drawing, embroidery, dancing and music, as well as more traditional academic subjects like mathematics and, for the forward-looking, modern foreign languages. Few parents could afford, or might wish, to send their children to one of the small number of major public schools like Eton or Winchester.

For parents who wanted their children to have a classical education and could pay the fees there were grammar schools: at the turn of the century King Edward's prospered under Nathanael Morgan in buildings designed by Thomas Jelley and erected in 1754 in Broad Street. Here Thomas de Quincey had been a day pupil from 1796 to 1799, and was a dab hand at Latin verse. Between 70 and 80 pupils were taught by Morgan (a former fellow of King's College, Cambridge), assisted by an usher, two assistant masters (one of whom was Morgan's brother-in-law Thomas Wilkins, rector of Weston with Charlecombe), and a senior boy waiting to go to university. The two terms were divided by holidays, a

month at Christmas and six weeks during June and July. Fees were about £26 a half-year, of which 2 guineas went to the Master, 5 shillings to the usher, 4 guineas for tuition, 4 shillings for a seat in church and 8 shillings for repairing shoes and stockings; 18 guineas was for bed and board. For half a guinea a pupil could be taught writing and accounts; and for a guinea a quarter, fencing, dancing and other social skills, but newspaper advertisements emphasized mainly the school's classical education. The boarders were mostly sons of neighbouring county families: some came from Cornwall.³ According to the Charity Commissioners' report of 1820, by which time Wilkins had succeeded Morgan, the school had never received any boys 'on the foundation', that is sons of freemen nominated by the Corporation, though Wilkins said he was ready at all times to instruct the sons of freemen gratuitously if properly connected.

Children from poorer families might attend the Bluecoats charity school, founded in 1711 by Robert Nelson with help from the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, on a site donated by the Corporation. Bluecoats was for 'the education of poor children in the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion as professed and taught in the Church of England.' Pupils were nominated by subscribers. They came from honest, industrious and respectable Church of England working-class families in city parishes. 100 pupils, half of them girls, were taught basic literacy and numeracy, the bible and the catechism, and sang in the Abbey choir. Girls were also taught sewing, knitting and housewifery. Pupils could join at any age between 7 and 12; at 14 they were apprenticed or put out to service.⁴

Distinctions between King Edward's and Bluecoats were highlighted on mayor-making day, when a grammar school boy made a Latin speech to the Corporation, which local newspapers glowingly reported, sometimes with quotation and naming the speaker; and a Bluecoat boy (never a girl), whom the press did not normally name or quote, made a speech of thanks in English. The grammar school orator in 1807, called Kilvert, later became Morgan's assistant master, and went on to found his own private school at Claverton Lodge.⁵

At the turn of the century Bluecoats faced no sectarian competition. From 1785 Bath had about 30 Sunday schools, many with an Anglican flavour, some of which had a workshop or industrial school attached. Whilst the Corporation will have valued the influence of the grammar school and Bluecoats as part of its armoury of social control, different ideologies competing for control of the education of children from poor families had not yet emerged, and did not do so until about 1810.⁶ From

then on children from poor families might have received elementary education, if at all, at one of the early monitorial schools following the rigorous rote methods of Andrew Bell of the National Society (for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church) or Joseph Lancaster, the 4th edition of whose *Improvements in education as it respects the industrious classes* was being advertised in Bath in 1806.⁷

In 1810 a group which the following year affiliated into the National Society opened a school in St John Street, moving to Kingsmead Square in 1814. It offered free elementary education in reading, writing and arithmetic, with compulsory church attendance and religious education according to the established church. It also ran a mixed Sunday school, an industrial school and a library.⁸ Another school, appealing to Nonconformists, was sponsored by the Royal Lancasterian Society (renamed in 1814 as the British and Foreign Schools Society). Founded in Corn Street in May 1810 by voluntary subscription, and later moving to Walcot Street as the Bath and Bathforum school, it taught by the monitorial method up to 400 boys in reading, writing and arithmetic, with religious knowledge undenominational and optional.⁹ A corresponding school for girls did not appear until 1814, in Grove Street, later moving to Morford Street. Subscribers nominated the pupils. Some children will have attended dame schools, many of which delivered no more than incompetent childminding.

The gap in the middle of the education market was filled by small private academies teaching children from families who paid fees. In 1805 Bath had at least 24 boarding schools, of which 11 were for boys; of those, one was preparatory only, one was a grammar school in the strict sense, and two were run by clergymen.¹⁰ Some had talented teachers: in 1809 the mathematician William Horner left Kingswood School (not yet in Bath) to set up his own academy in Grosvenor Place.¹¹ Those for girls were in effect finishing schools for the fashionable world, but some may have trained for housekeeping. Some, for boys, offered a predominantly commercial or military curriculum; others classical and commercial, like Mr Durban's in Guinea Street. They advertised in the *Chronicle* and the *Journal*, with varying degrees of specificity, offering a choice of location, subjects, times, age ranges, day or boarding options, and fees. In 1806 Miss Rundall advertised her 'seminary' at Cumberwell House (some 6 miles out of Bath) but did not say exactly what she taught. Mrs Turmeau at 21 Westgate Buildings taught French, English, writing and arithmetic to young ladies, with evening classes in French only. On Combe Down Mrs Bonner ran an 'initiating academy' for 'young gentlemen from the

age of 4 to 8 years', boarding.¹² The Revd Dr Keith's at Summer Hill, Upper Bath Road, also advertised, as did two dancing academies. At Bloomfield Place, Miss Aldritt ran a boarding seminary for ladies, and for boys aged 4 to 7; she charged 20 guineas a year plus extra for washing, and also extra for teaching reading, orthography, English grammar and geography, needlecraft ('for ladies'), writing and arithmetic, French, music and dancing. Contrast Miss Thomas at 2 Lower James Street, who taught writing and arithmetic at half a guinea a year, and for another half-guinea, plain and ornamental needlework. At West Hall, a mile from Bath, Mr Masters offered military, naval and commercial studies and classical literature, as did Mr Barber at Grosvenor Place, but without the literature.¹³ At 6 Lansdown Road, Mr Hunt offered French, Latin, Italian and geography with globes, with an evening school 'for young ladies and gentlemen 5 to 8'. The overall picture is of small businesses in private houses, offering to different sectors of the market different packages, some fixed, others optional, some limited by the skills of the proprietor, others employing part-time teachers as required when parents were prepared to pay an extra charge for a particular subject.

Even with this array of educational opportunity, for Quakers the selection of a school was difficult. They valued education, both in itself and as a means of advancement. Many will not have wished their children to attend Church of England schools, especially ones like Bluecoats where the catechism was taught; and from many Anglican schools they would have been barred in any event. Military academies were ruled out on grounds of conscience. Private commercial schools might have lacked the moral and religious ethos and content a Quaker demanded of a school and its curriculum. As a result, some Quakers sent their children to boarding schools founded by Quaker meetings explicitly for children from Quaker families: one was at Ackworth in Yorkshire, and another at Sidcot in Somerset. Other Quakers formed their own schools, and ran them as businesses. One such was John Naish, who opened a school in Bath in 1806.

John Naish's ledger

The main surviving trace of John Naish and his school is a thick, narrow, stumpy ledger, bound in white vellum, unadorned, unlabelled, untitled. It found its way into the account books of Bristol College, a school which opened in 1831, whose documents were deposited in Bristol Central Reference Library.¹⁴ The book contains no explicit indication of what or whose it was, but it offers five clues: entries for payments to a

Lancasterian school: so the proprietor was not an Anglican or Roman Catholic, but probably a Nonconformist; all dates are in the format 1 Mo 1, so the proprietor was almost certainly a Quaker: consistent with that is an account headed 'Tithes' but completely blank; entries for payments to 'Bath monthly meeting' and 'Quarterly meeting', so the proprietor was a member of the Society of Friends in or near Bath; an entry for a payment to Sidcot School (opened 1 September 1808): so the school to which the Ledger relates was not Sidcot; and fifthly, an entry for rent for 1 Hatfield Place in 1813.

There is a Hatfield Place in Bath: it is a house in Hatfield Road, which runs from Wellsway to Bloomfield Road at its junction with Englishcombe Lane, high up and at that time out of town: the temptations of the sulphurous pit would have been at some distance, albeit downhill all the way. Browne's *New Bath Directory* for 1809 lists Mr John Naish at Hatfield Place, without attributing any occupation. But the *New Bath Directory* for 1812 has an entry for 'Naish J, academy for young gentlemen, 1 Hatfield Place, Wells-road.'

So the Ledger is that of John Naish of Bath, Friend, and proprietor of a school for boys at 1 Hatfield Place, Bath.



View of 1 Hatfield Place, Bath, now arranged as two houses known as Hatfield Place and Hatfield House. (Photograph by the author)

John Naish

John Naish the schoolmaster was the son of Francis, a silversmith (1752-1785), and Susannah Naish (1756-1822) of Bath. Susannah Naish, daughter of William and Susannah Evill, was brought up a Baptist, married Francis Naish in 1778, but was left a widow in 1785 with four young children.¹⁵ She joined the Friends and wielded much influence.¹⁶ Her circumstances enabled her to arrange for her sons John and William Naish to attend Ackworth School in Yorkshire from 1793 to 1796; William is recorded as having come from [Flax] Bourton in Somerset and he stayed at Ackworth until 1799.¹⁷ From 1796 to 1803 John Naish was an apprentice schoolmaster at Ackworth.¹⁸ He then went to Sheffield and there taught as a schoolmaster: he is so described when on 16 January 1806 he married Catharine Trickett at Sheffield Friends' meeting. Catharine was the daughter of Robert, a cutler, and Catherine Trickett of Hill-foot in Yorkshire.¹⁹ The North Somerset Monthly Meeting on 28 April 1806 received a certificate of removal for John and Catharine Naish from Balby Meeting, Yorkshire. Young Sturge the land surveyor was detailed to get the measure of them, with friends approved by the women's meeting.²⁰

John and Catharine Naish were to have four children while they were at Hatfield Place: Francis (31 March 1808); Robert (11 April 1809); Phebe (18 August 1811); and Thomas (14 May 1813).²¹ That John Naish was made of stern stuff is suggested by his own report about sufferings to the North Somerset Monthly Meeting at Sidcot on 30 October 1809. He had been fined £20 by Bath magistrates for refusing to do militia duty. He had not paid the fine, but distress had not been levied.²² The same meeting investigated with disapproval the conduct of Joseph Sewell, who had been fined £10, but had acquiesced in his employer paying the fine for him.²³

John Naish the schoolmaster is often referred to in Monthly and Quarterly Meeting minutes as John Naish of Bath, to distinguish him from two others of that name:

(1) John Naish of Congresbury. He is mentioned in the North Somerset Quarterly Meeting minutes, but does not feature in this story. The son of Joseph and Betty Naish (*née* Willmott) of Flax Bourton, born 1786, he married Lydia Eddington in 1810 and became a shopkeeper at Congresbury; he died in 1875, aged 88.²⁴

(2) John Naish of Bathwick. Bath directories list a John Naish who was a horsedealer at 19 Bathwick Street, though by 1812 he had moved to 35 Bathwick Street (or Bathwick Street had been renumbered). He is not John Naish the school proprietor, but the Ledger of John

Naish's school does refer to him: towards the end of the Ledger is an account headed '1813 Estate of John Naish', to which another hand has added 'Bathwick'. The account opens with an entry dated 26 April 1813 for £24 cash found in the deceased's pocket (a horse sold or to be bought?); there are items for horses, the cost of the funeral, and payments 'to Sarah' (his daughter or widow?). The burial was at Flax Bourton on 27 April 1813.²⁵ The register records that he was a horse dealer from Bath, but 'not a member of our Society,' which is consistent with an entry in the estate account in the Naish school Ledger for the payment of tithes. The *Bath Chronicle* 29 April 1813 and the *Bath & Cheltenham Gazette* of the previous day report the death on 23 April 1813 of John Naish, 'formerly an eminent tanner in Lambridge, a man much respected by an extensive circle of friends.' The corresponding entry in the *Bath Journal*²⁶ calls him John Nash, gives his address as Sydney Place, and describes him as formerly proprietor of the tan-yard at Lambridge.

Why should this estate account have been written in the school Ledger? The accounts in the Ledger are not confined to the school: some deal with other trades, for example the sale of porter, and some deal with Meeting expenses. One possibility is that John Naish the schoolmaster wound up the estate of John Naish the tanner and horsedealer; perhaps they were related.

What sort of school?

John Naish does not appear to have advertised his school in the Bath newspapers: that suggests that it was intended for children from a wider area; but he does not appear to have advertised in regional papers either, such as the *Exeter Flying Post*, which suggests his school may have been intended for Quaker families only. Before moving back to Bath from Yorkshire, he issued a prospectus:²⁷

John Naish respectfully informs his Friends, that he intends to open a Boarding school at No 1 Hatfield Place, three quarters of a mile from Bath.

For Thirty boys at 35 guineas per annum.*

The situation is pleasant and healthy, and the premises are large and commodious. The school is intended to be opened the 1st of the 2nd Month, 1806. Applications are requested to be made either to SUSANNAH NAISH, Kingsmead Terrace, Bath; or to JOHN NAISH, No 17, Allen-Street, Sheffield.

* This number will not be exceeded – The Languages and Drawing to be paid for extra, each 3 guineas per annum – Entrance money 2 guineas.

In contrast to the control over the establishment of new businesses exercised by the Leeds Meetings,²⁸ the minutes of the North Somerset Monthly Meeting do not contain any resolution authorising John Naish to set up the school. That may reflect different practice, or Susannah Naish senior's clout.

Curriculum and staff

Naish's prospectus set out both his proposed curriculum and his principles of education, with much that modern educators would applaud:

The children will be instructed in Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetick, Book-Keeping, the Mathematicks, Geography, History, and such of the Languages as their parents may desire, in Drawing, if required, and in some other branches of Learning.

For the effectual accomplishment of the important designs of Education, it seems necessary that the teacher be well acquainted with the minds of his pupils; JN will therefore endeavour to establish a free and familiar intercourse between him and his scholars. When by this means he has obtained an easy access to their minds, and acquired over them that influence which he trusts will result from their confidence in his endeavours to promote their welfare, he hopes it will be easy to direct and guide their exertions, and to establish such principles and habits in their minds as will qualify them for useful and honourable stations in future life.

With respect to his mode of teaching, it may be proper to observe, that he will always endeavour to make his pupils acquainted with the elementary principles of those Sciences which they profess to study, and to adapt his instruction to their peculiar habits of thinking.

Spelling and Reading claim great attention; they will in some measure be considered as the groundwork of Literary Education.

Writing will be taught in its various branches, and regard had both to elegance and usefulness.

In the study of Grammar, their attention will first be directed to the radical principles of language, the teacher having invariably found a familiar explanation of these the best introduction to a well-grounded knowledge of the particular rules. They will frequently be exercised in Composition on easy and familiar subjects; and attention will be paid to their style of conversation.

In Arithmetick, besides the proper management of figures, they will be instructed in the general properties of numbers, and will mostly be exercised with such questions as are the likeliest to occur in real business, and it will be deemed highly useful to make them conversant with the most approved methods of Book-keeping.

The Mathematicks it is hoped may be made to expand and strengthen the intellectual powers.

The study of Geography will be preceded by that of the simple parts of Astronomy, because the children must be acquainted with the nature of latitude, longitude, the meridians, equator, &c, before they can make a right use of maps and globes.

Their Historical and Biographical Reading, the teacher hopes, will furnish him with opportunities of instilling just and generous sentiments into their minds.

The Languages will be taught by approved masters.

Such parts of Natural Philosophy as are adapted to their capacities will be explained to them in familiar lectures, illustrated by a suitable philosophical apparatus.

For their further Improvement, a proper assortment of books will be provided, to the reading of which they will be encouraged to allot a part of their leisure time.

J NAISH is aware that the most punctual performance of what he has now mentioned does not comprise the whole of his business. His oversight of the children will not cease with their regular hours of study, because he well knows that at other times there will be frequent opportunities of giving them general and miscellaneous information, of teaching them to act well, and think correctly. It will be his duty to attend to every circumstance that is likely to affect the forming of their minds, and to encourage their applications for advice and information.

Though the children will be taught to consider a strict attention to their studies as a serious and indispensable duty, yet the teacher hopes he shall be able to render the performance of it pleasing, and to impress them with a just sense of the usefulness of learning.

It will be regarded as an object of considerable importance to make suitable provision for their amusement, and in all other respects to study their comfort and accommodation. This it is considered will tend to produce in them a disposition favourable to the purpose of education.

It is not stated what the 'suitable provision for their amusement' was; it is not clear whether games were played, but in the Ledger Richard Davis' account is debited with a sum for '2 skins for covering balls.' What that resulted in is suggested by several entries for 'cash, boys, for damage;' an account headed 'Glazier' might explain of what sort.

How John Naish delivered his curriculum can be gleaned from the Ledger entries. He employed as schoolmaster Richard Davis. Although the Ledger begins at the start of 1809, it includes an account for Davis, copied from a loose paper account tucked into the Ledger, which acknowledges that he was employed from 5 September 1806, some seven months after the opening date given in John Naish's prospectus. Davis' salary was £63 a year, and from the books credited to him he seems to have taught French as well as English. Davis was absent ill from December 1808 to March 1809, and got no pay. In the accounts for 1811 Daniel Deboudry is employed as teacher at £63 a year. As he is credited with a copy of Weekes' *Rhetorical Grammar* and Cicero's orations, perhaps he taught Latin. In 1812 there appear to be other teachers, John Rae, and R. Wallis, the latter being paid 'for 3 boys extra,' so presumably he taught an optional subject such as French or Latin. In 1813 there is a teacher called Thomas Jones.

Of particular note (as it may explain what happened to the Ledger) is the account of John Sanders. That for 1810 includes £17 2s 6d for his bill for drawing, implying that he was not at that time John Naish's employee. His account also includes £10 for a telescope and £3 13s 6d for a microscope: obtained, perhaps, from Darton & Co, whose account includes an item for newspapers as well as instruments and unspecified goods, which may have included some of the 'philosophical apparatus' referred to in the prospectus. In 1811 Sanders is employed as drawing master, on a salary of £40 15s. It is tempting to speculate whether John Sanders might be:

(1) John Sanders or Saunders (1750-1825), who studied and exhibited at the Royal Academy 1769-1773.²⁹ He was living in Bath in 1792; taught painting and drawing at 9 Lansdown Place in 1793,³⁰ where he was a tenant of the Sharples and did damage by nailing pictures to the stucco walls;³¹ moved to Beach's studio at 2 Westgate Buildings in 1799; and enjoyed some success there as a portrait painter. He painted Judith Countess of Radnor in 1821, and Fanny D'Arblay mentions him as having painted Princess Charlotte.³² He appears to have moved in 1802 into his son's premises at 4 Green Park and then 3 Westgate Buildings. Late in 1824 he moved to Clifton, Bristol, to a relation's house at 1a Clifton Place, and died there early in 1825.³³ Or,

(2) His son John Arnold Sanders, born probably before 1789³⁴ in London, who had a drawing academy at 4 Green Park, Bath in 1802;³⁵ offered landscape and perspective at 19 Kingsmead Street in Bath and 1 Clifton Place, Bristol in 1815;³⁶ and married Fanny Hippisley at Shepton Mallet on 21 October 1815.³⁷ He taught drawing at the Bristol Hotwell in 1816 and possibly later,³⁸ but is said to have got involved with a pupil. He emigrated to Canada in 1832-33.³⁹

John Naish had other employees. In 1809 he employed three female servants (explained in the 1810 summary account as a cook, housemaid and nursemaid), two at 9 guineas and one at 6 guineas a year; a man (Moses?) employed for 40 weeks (term time only?), at 8s a week 'allowing 20% as given him.' There was also a Charlotte Hart employed at 18 guineas a year (governess/matron?), who also got one and three quarter yards of cassimere at 10s.⁴⁰

Lowest paid of all was George Robinson, credited 5s a quarter, later increased to 6s, but to whom £8 was debited for clothing. He was John Naish's apprentice, presumably an apprentice schoolmaster. His account includes a debit for 'a horse cloth lost, 4s 6d.' Whether that was the occasion of a quarrel between them the accounts do not say, but there was a serious rift: John Naish reported to the North Somerset Monthly Meeting on 28 January 1811 that there was a dispute. The background to the disagreement is not clear. In October 1799 Brighouse Monthly Meeting in Yorkshire had disowned George Robinson's father (of the same name) for not paying his debts. He must have asked to be reinstated, because on 19 May 1809 the Brighouse meeting asked the Rochester Monthly Meeting in Kent to visit him and enquire, which the Rochester Friends did, but not with much hope. In September 1809 the Bath Meeting asked the Rochester Meeting for a certificate for George Robinson junior, which was agreed on 11 October 1809. The Rochester Meeting on 6 March 1811 received from the North Somerset Monthly Meeting a note of dissatisfaction, not about George Robinson junior, but about his father's conduct 'in relation to something unpleasant between his son & a member of that Monthly Meeting to whom his son is apprenticed.' The committee appointed at Rochester reported on 7 March 1811 that it did not think George senior should be advised to take his son away, but that John Naish should have got the overseers of his own local meeting to help sort it out. Consideration was adjourned in the hope that an accommodation could be reached.⁴¹ Evidently it was: the dispute, which the North Somerset minutes referred to as a misunderstanding, ended on 26 August 1811

with the issue of a clear certificate of removal for George Robinson to Rochester, so presumably the apprenticeship was discharged and George went home to this father.

In 1809 John Naish billed fees for just over 30 pupils at 35 guineas each per year. Such a fee implies claims to quality, but it was not as expensive as King Edward's. Some parents paid extra for Latin and French. Robert Fox's outstanding debt from 1808 implies that young Joshua was taught Spanish, but that appears to have been a one-off: the prospectus said languages would be taught as a parent might require. There are items for English readers, an English dictionary, '48 copies of exercises on histories of England', 6 Payne's *Geographies*,⁴² and a year's subscription to Upham's library: John Upham was a bookseller in Lower Walks, Bath.⁴³ In 1810 Naish appears to have sold some books to Sidcot school. There is also a payment of 11s to R. Smith of Ackworth, which might be another school-connected payment. French required the purchase of *Gil Blas* and *Les Jardins*. Other works purchased included Douce's *Illustrations*⁴⁴ and Malcolm's *Anecdotes*.⁴⁵ The accounts include items for quills, drawing paper, and a sheet of parchment (6s 6d: for a legal agreement? for teaching handwriting? for binding the Ledger itself?)

Pupils

Not all pupils were local: the Ledger confirms the prospectus's description of the venture as a boarding school. With the help of the *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* in Friends House Library it is possible to identify some of the 37 fee-payers and hence some of the pupils, but only tentatively, because few addresses are given; mutual aid, charity and the practice of set-off of one debt against another, mean that the person billed was not necessarily the parent of the pupil; and some items are so large as to imply more than one pupil.

Information has been assembled on the following fee-payers: George Eaton was probably the ironmonger in Bristol, whose son Joseph (1792-1858) later established the *Bristol Temperance Herald*; Luke Evill is almost certainly John Naish's cousin, an attorney who practised at Green Street in Bath;⁴⁶ Edward Fox (1749-1817) was probably the merchant of Wadebridge whose son Francis was born in 1797; the family were related to the Weres of Wellington in Somerset; Dor[othy] Fox (1766-1842) *née* Hingston, the widow of Robert Were Fox, merchant of Wadebridge was one of two Dorothy Foxes in the 1809 list of Friends ordered to be drawn up by the West Devon Monthly Meeting;⁴⁷ John Grace (1771-1851), merchant of

Gloucester, Lodway (near Pill in North Somerset) and Bristol, had four children including James (born 1797) and Josiah (1799); Walter Prideaux (1779-1832), the banker from Plymouth, who appears in the 1809 West Devon list under Kingsbridge/Modbury, had a son Charles (1809-1893) who rose from apprentice to inspector to general manager to chairman in the family firm; William Shorthouse (1768-1838), a Birmingham chemist, had a son Joseph, born 1797; John Southall (1763-1828), a Leominster mercer, had sons Samuel (1793), Thomas (1794) and William (1797); John Thomas (1752-1827) is likely to have been the grocer at Bristol Bridge who later interested himself in the Somerset Coal Canal and the Kennet and Avon Canal; in 1812 he retired to Prior Park, so was a comparatively near neighbour of John Naish; his sons included Edward (1794) and Joseph (1797); John Tuckett (1758-1845) may have been the merchant from Bristol who moved to Plymouth and had children including Edward (1798); Thomas Were (1771-1833), a Bristol merchant, had a son Thomas (1800); Dev[ereux] Bowly was a banker from Cirencester.⁴⁸

Other fee-payers are not so easily identifiable. Was Edmund Barritt from Purleigh in Essex? Who was Frank Cookworthy? Rachel Fox? Was David Cox of Essex or Gloucester? Was Geo Fisher the one from Lancaster? Was Stephen George from Rochester, or the Bristol sugar trader of that name? Was David Coe the father of Joseph Coe the Bath haberdasher? Was Josh Gibbins from Aston near Birmingham or Stourbridge? Was John Hinton the grocer from Plymouth Dock (Devonport) who married at a Friends' meeting in 1784?⁴⁹ Was James Leman the Bristol attorney of that name? And who were William Boulton, George Arthur, B. Chorley, William Tay, Josh Young?

As might be expected from the location of the school, the list has a strong westcountry flavour, but the prominence of Cornwall and Plymouth names suggests there may have been no comparable school at that time for the sons of affluent Friends in the far southwest.

One pupil had a separate account of his own. In just five lines of accountancy Wm Boulton was charged for Alfred Boulton's tuition to Christmas 1808; then for board only; 2 guineas for a physician; £3 9s for an apothecary (William White); and £16 6s for the undertaker's bill.

John Naish and Sidcot

One local event which may have had some implications for John Naish's school was the opening of Sidcot School, about 24 miles from Hatfield Place. F.A. Knight has told⁵⁰ how Sidcot came to be founded.

In 1779 the Friends' Yearly Meeting purchased the premises of the former foundling hospital at Ackworth in Yorkshire, and opened a boarding school there. In 1784 John Benwell, who had a school at Yatton, and whose brother Joseph Benwell had a school at Longfield, moved to Sidcot and opened a school there for 45 boys. At the Yearly Meeting in 1807 unnamed Friends from the West of England discussed opening an Ackworth-type school near Bristol, agreed on the need, and decided to raise it at the Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting. Held at Glastonbury in June 1807,⁵¹ the Quarterly Meeting approved of founding in one of the western counties 'an Institution somewhat similar to that at Ackworth, for the education of a smaller number of the children of Friends in low circumstances.' The Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee to move the matter forward which included John Benwell, Joseph Naish and 'John Naish (of Bath).' The three men appointed superintendents of the school included John Benwell and Joseph (but not John) Naish. Joseph Naish (1750-1822) was the son of John and Elizabeth Naish of Flax Bourton. He was placed with a Bath tradesman, returned to Flax Bourton as a tanner (so was his father John Naish of Lambridge?), married Betty Willmott of Claverham in 1771, and moved in 1789 to Congresbury, where he met John Benwell.⁵²

The provisional or general committee, appointed by the Quarterly Meeting, met at Bridgwater on 15 September 1807 and decided to raise £7000 to establish a school within reach of Bristol. When the committee met in Bristol on 15 December 1807, with £4000 subscribed, it agreed to buy John Benwell's house and 14 acres at Sidcot, Benwell and his wife Martha to act as unpaid superintendents but with free board and lodging until permanent staff were recruited. This was agreed by the Yearly Meeting in 1808.

The possibility of competition with other schools, including private schools owned or run by Friends as individuals as distinct from Friends' Meetings, was noted: Sidcot was intended for

the offspring of poor Friends, or of those who cannot well afford to send them to other boarding schools. They are not to encourage the sending of those whose parents or guardians can conveniently send them to other boarding schools.

That stipulation may have been made to protect the interests of proprietors like Naish, and might even have been made at his instigation: his school at Hatfield Place was already running. When Ackworth opened it had caused the closure of several schools that had been established by Meetings.⁵³

At the first meeting of the General Committee of Sidcot School on 15 July 1808, the fees were fixed at £14 a year plus 4s 4d pocket money. John Naish was charging two and a half times that. The curriculum was to be Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic and Geography. The girls were to learn sewing and knitting as well. All were to undertake domestic work; the girls were to mend the boys' linen, and the senior boys were to work on the land and in the gardens. In 1808 the Committee included Joseph Naish, but neither John Naish nor John Benwell. However, in 1811, the North Somerset Monthly Meeting gave John Naish permission to attend the Sidcot School Committee (28 January 1811); he had attended the Ackworth general meeting on 29 July 1807.⁵⁴

Sidcot opened on 1 September 1808 with six boys and three girls. Numbers rose to 32 in 1809, 67 in 1812, 75 in 1815, and 85 in 1820. During its early years there were staffing difficulties. The first schoolmaster, on £40 a year, left after two months. A husband and wife team appointed in 1810 on £120 a year left after 18 months. Joseph Naish, filling in as unpaid superintendent in 1817, gave notice of his intention to resign within a year because of friction between his predecessor's widow and another woman member of staff who left in 1818; Joseph himself resigned in 1820, by which date John Naish's school at Hatfield Place, and the Ledger entries, had ceased.

What other business connections did John Naish have?

There was an S. Naish at 7 Kingsmead Terrace in 1809: she must be the Susannah Naish who is named in John Naish's school prospectus as one to whom applications might be made. The Ledger mentions two Susannah Naishes: senior (John Naish's mother) and junior (his sister-in-law). Susannah Naish senior is recorded as having lent some £75 for 3 years at 5%, the rate of interest on all borrowings in the Ledger but one. Susannah Naish junior's account has several entries, including meat, cash advanced to C. Naish (John Naish's wife Catharine), 'pictures of orchard', a bed, a lye but[t], a swing and 6 sheets of drawing paper.

William and Susannah Naish were advertising themselves as selling general groceries, teas and British wines at 21 New Bond Street in 1809,⁵⁵ and they were still there in 1812.⁵⁶ It is clear from the Ledger that John Naish traded with them: they supplied meat and groceries. William Naish features prominently in the accounts, on occasion as the funder of Meeting expenses, as John Naish's debtor and creditor, and as one who paid some of the pupils' fees. Perhaps not too much should be made of

that, as one of the striking features of the Ledger is the way in which balances were struck after setting debts off against each other, often with many parties involved. Not all cases were as simple as that of Robert Fox of Falmouth, whose 9s debt for a Spanish grammar for Joshua and 30 yards of cord was 'discharged by gift of a hat to Francis.'

The *Bath Journal* for 3 February 1812 carried an announcement that Swetman & Co's Brown Stout Porter business would be removing from Broad Street to 21 New Bond Street (William & Susannah Naish's shop), where it would be carried on under the name of Naish & Co. The Ledger shows that some time before 1812 Josiah Swetman helped not William but John Naish to open a trade in London porter in Bath. There are entries for carriage of samples to Bristol and Sheffield, which implies that the business was seeking to use the Naish family's local connections there. Amidst entries for bottles and corks is one for a payment of £10 to Josiah Swetman 'for his services before the opening of the trade.' Josiah Swetman then gets a salary of £60. After sales totaling just over £40, John Naish appears to have sold the stock to William and Susannah Naish, for a price left with them, but on which they would pay interest. On 24 February 1812 the Bath & North Somerset Monthly Meeting authorised Josiah Swetman's removal to Bristol.⁵⁷ Commencing September 1812, the Ledger records, William and Susannah agreed to allow John Naish 3% 'on all the London porter sold in Bath.'

There is also an account with James White, under which John Naish paid a cash dividend of 6% on a sum of about £100, plus some £14 'profit and loss', possibly as part of the terms of a business loan. John Naish borrowed other money at simple interest, all at 5%. The lenders were: Susannah Naish senior: £74 15s 6d; Thomas Sanders: £300; Samuel Smith: £100, increased in 1812 to £400; Robert Trickett (Catharine's father, presumably): £200. These evidently were the providers of working capital for John Naish's school. At least two, possibly three, were relations of John Naish.

Some accounting aspects of The Ledger

Five pages of the Ledger have been cut out. The index implies the missing accounts were for R. Wallis (one of the schoolmasters), A. Pye, T. Witton, John Thomas (who had a school fees account), a Meeting (presumably North Somerset), Glazier and Butcher; and the debit side of the bank account. The document contains both business and household items, and also entries for expenses of Friends' Meetings, which appear in

various individuals' accounts. It is not possible to reconcile these with the accounts of the Meetings, which have suffered fire damage and are largely illegible.⁵⁸

The Ledger is kept in conventional double entry. As some of the items are difficult to reconcile with the annual summary accounts, and some of the contra items are not in the accounts where you might expect them to be, it is possible that John Naish may not have grasped the principles fully, or accounting conventions may have changed. Set-off is frequent, as is satisfaction in kind. Many accounts are paid by bill of exchange. There are transactions with a bank, not named. Prescott's is mentioned in a note to one of the estate accounts, but that may be because John Naish the horsedealer banked with them.

The 1809 figures include an account headed 'Taxes'. This includes not only the expected items for window tax, poor rate, highway rate and property tax (including property tax on interest on loans), but also items for house, servant, carriage, horse and dog, the last 3s 6d. This might suggest that John Naish treated as a tax all outgoings, whether or not they were strictly taxes: thus the 1811 summary account includes under the heading Taxes, his subscriptions to Sidcot School and a Lancasterian school (begun in Bath in 1810 and referred to earlier), and two subscriptions to the Bath Meeting. But he has a separate account for house contents insurance (£800 in 1809, reduced to £500 later), the debit entry being to cash, not taxes.

One outgoing which had a separate account was John Naish's horse. Again, a mini-saga in a few lines. It cost him £37 16s; there were bills for hay, corn, the saddler, medicine, shoeing, and the blacksmith. Running costs totalled £16 15s. 5½d. Twice, John Baker was paid 1s 6d for mending a whip (though this is not in the Horse account, so it may have been used in the school). The horse was sold for £20. Mileage is not recorded.

John Naish rented 1 Hatfield Place. The rent was £67 a year in 1809 and 1810, paid to John Hensley, possibly of Bathwick Street;⁵⁹ but in the year of his death, £100 was paid to Richard Bailey or Bayly (who is not named in Bath directories). John Naish rented a field to Thomas Wright, later to Captain Thornhill;⁶⁰ and a cellar to Hester Bishop, who in 1805 and 1812 had an ironmongery and brazier's business at 25 Broad Street.⁶¹

The school was profitable. In 1809, on a turnover of £1,213, John Naish made £251, a profit of 20% on turnover and 26% on outlay. The summary figures for 1810 are not totalled, which suggests he had not put all the expenses in, but on the figures listed he made £547 net on a turnover of £1,250, a profit of 43% on turnover and 77% on outlay.

Unlike a modern educational establishment or even its grammar school contemporary, the business was not, in money terms, labour-intensive: of the expenditure for 1809, 65% went on food (more than half on meat and bread) and drink; 18% on domestic expenses (including food as well as soap, candles, brushes and starch); 7% on rent; giving a total of 90% plus 10% on staffing costs. Compare King Edward's, where food and domestic expenses accounted for nearly 75% of the bill, teaching for 25%.

Some of the accounts do not tally. In particular, the totals of the individual accounts for beer and wine are lower than the amounts for those items stated in the annual summaries. Some of the entries are puzzling, for example in 1813, '3 shares of engraving J T Adams's profile.' John Till Adams had an account for books, so could have been a bookseller or publisher, but the subject was perhaps John Till Adams (1748-1786), a doctor in Bristol who married Ann Fry in 1777 and had 'a large connection among the Quakers of Bristol'.⁶² He was 'a talented man whose early death was greatly lamented'.⁶³ Perhaps John Naish thought him a good role model. John Sturton the mason got paid £9 11s 6d 'for putting up the steamer': some sort of boiler?

The annual summary for 1810 is incomplete. There are no annual summaries for later years, though there are entries in individual accounts. Perhaps there were other account books, now lost. Perhaps John Naish tired of accounting: he will not have been the first. Perhaps the school folded. It looks very much as if John Naish the schoolmaster took his leave about the same time as John Naish the horsedealing tanner. The *Bath Chronicle* for 6 May 1813 carried an advertisement:

TO SCHOOLMASTERS

To be let, very pleasantly situated within a mile of Bath, a HOUSE, and extensive Premises, conveniently fitted up for a genteel establishment, and the School Business, which business has been carried on there for several years. The School Furniture, in good condition, to be sold – applications (post paid) to be made to WN, 21 New Bond Street, Bath.

Evidently William Naish was selling his brother's former premises and business stock; the school was being sold as a going concern. Perhaps John Naish had died. There was no report or notice in local newspapers, and no mention in the relevant quarterly or monthly meeting minutes. There is no entry for any Naish in Gye's *Bath Directory* of January 1819.

John Naish after the Ledger

After John Naish died, Catharine Naish appears to have returned to Sheffield. The youngest three of their four children were pupils at Ackworth School between 1819 and 1827, and are all described as of Sheffield: Robert from 1819 to 1823; Phebe from 1823 to 1825; and Thomas from 1824 to 1827.⁶⁴ Their mother Catharine was principal mistress (that is, governess) at Ackworth from 1827 to 1830.⁶⁵ Thomas, like his father, stayed on at Ackworth as an apprentice schoolmaster from 1827 to 1832, in which year he died at the school.⁶⁶ The others died in the 1830s and 1840s, two of them at Sheffield: the *Annual Monitor* also records the death of a Catharine Naish at Sheffield in 1840, describing her as the widow of John Naish of Bath.

Hatfield Place still stands. Built in 1804 on the site or foundations and cellars of a much older (possibly fifteenth-century) farmhouse, it was one of four large houses (the others were Bloomfield House, Westfield House and Devonshire Cottage) in an area then known as The Gore. Some time after 1864 the building was divided into two, and there are internal signs of extensive structural alteration. Half retained the name Hatfield Place, the other half was called Hatfield House.⁶⁷ The cellars, of early date, which John Naish sublet to Hester Bishop the ironmonger, include traces of ovens and flues.

Notes

- 1 This article is based on an account that first appeared in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Volume 58, No.3 (1999).
- 2 For examples from the eighteenth century see T. Fawcett, *Voices of Eighteenth-Century Bath* (Ruton, Bath, 1995) under *Education*.
- 3 J. Wroughton, *King Edward's School at Bath 1552-1982* (King Edward's School, Bath, 1982), pp.52, 61ff.
- 4 R.B. Hope, 'Educational development in the city of Bath 1830-1902, with special reference to its interrelations with social and economic changes' (unpublished thesis, University of Bristol, 1970), p.45.
- 5 K.E. Symons, *The grammar school of King Edward VI. Bath* (Bath, 1930), p.271. From parish records this was probably John Kilvert.
- 6 J. Haddon, *Bath* (Batsford, 1973), pp.161-162.
- 7 *Bath Journal*, 15 September 1806.
- 8 *Original Bath Guide*, 1830, pp.93-95; Hope, 'Educational development', p.47.
- 9 Hope, *Educational development*, p.46.
- 10 *Holden's Triennial Bath Directory*, 1805-1807 (Holden, TBD).
- 11 G.M. Best, *Continuity and change: a history of Kingswood School 1748-1998* (Bath, n.d.), p.51.

- 12 *Bath Journal*, 13 January 1806.
- 13 *Bath Journal*, 20 January 1806, 7 and 14 July 1806.
- 14 City of Bristol Reference Library (CBRL), B11644-11651.
- 15 For the Evill family, see T. Fawcett, *Bath Commercialis'd: shops, trades and market at the 18th century spa* (Ruton, Bath, 2002), pp.133-134.
- 16 Bristol & Somerset Quarterly Meeting 3/1823, Somerset County Record Office (SCRO), DD/SFR 2/2, 108.
- 17 Typescript of Ackworth School registers, Friends House Library (FHL).
- 18 Ackworth School register of trustees and officers, FHL, p.38.
- 19 Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting marriages digest, FHL.
- 20 Wilts County Record Office (WCRO), 1699/25.
- 21 Digest register of births for Bristol & Somerset Quarterly Meeting, 17th century to 1837, Bristol Record Office (BRO), FSCF/R1/1(a)4.
- 22 There is no entry in the Bristol and Somerset Sufferings Book 1794-1827, SCRO, DD/SFR 9/1.
- 23 WCRO, 1699/25.
- 24 *Dictionary of Quaker Biography (DQB)*, FHL.
- 25 North Somerset burial records, National Archives, RG6/39.
- 26 26 April 1813.
- 27 FHL Tract Vol. N/179A.
- 28 A. Prior & M. Kirby, *The Society of Friends and the Family Firm, 1700-1830*, Lancaster University Management School Discussion paper EC 11/93 (Lancaster University, 1993).
- 29 A. Graves, *Royal Academy of Arts: a Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904* (Henry Groves & Co. & George Bell and Sons, 1905).
- 30 *Bath Chronicle*, 14 November 1793, p.1.
- 31 T. Fawcett, manuscript notes on Sanders in Bath Victoria Art Gallery (Fawcett, VAG.).
- 32 E. Bénézit, *Dictionnaire Critique et Documentaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs* (Librairie Gründ, Paris, 1976); (Bénézit's *Dictionnaire*).
- 33 *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)*, XVII.747.
- 34 Not 1801 as per Bénézit's *Dictionnaire*, as he married 1815.
- 35 Fawcett, VAG.
- 36 *Bath Chronicle*, 2 February 1815, p.3.
- 37 Shepton Mallet parish registers, 1815, 85.
- 38 Anonymous notes in Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.
- 39 Bénézit's *Dictionnaire*, but no source is quoted.
- 40 Cassimere, a fine wool twill: *OED*; of medium weight, soft, patented by Francis Yerbury of Bradford, 1766; mentioned in an advertisement in the *Bath Chronicle*, 16 January 1806, for a young man desirous of learning the manufactory of cloth, cassimere and fancy articles. Information from Rachel Boak, Museum of Costume, Bath.
- 41 Rochester Monthly Meeting Minutes, Centre for Kentish Studies, N/FrM 1/1.
- 42 John Payne, *Geographical Extracts, forming a general view of Earth and Nature, with maps* (G.G. & J. Robinson, 1796).
- 43 Holden, *TBD*.
- 44 Probably Francis Douce, *Illustrations of Shakespeare and of ancient manners; with dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakespeare; and on the collection of popular tales, entitled Gesta Romanorum and on the English national drama* (Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807).

- 45 James Petter Malcolm: one of *Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London during the eighteenth century, with a review on the State of Society in 1807* (1808); or *Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London, from the Roman invasion to the year 1700* (Longman, 1811); or *Miscellaneous anecdotes, illustrative of the manners and history of England, during the reigns of Chas II, Jas II, Wm III and Q. Anne*, (1811).
- 46 Holden, *TBD*. For the Evills, see T Fawcett, *Bath Commercialis'd*, pp.133-134.
- 47 A.D. Selleck, 'Plymouth Friends', in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, vol.99, p.213-261. See p.248.
- 48 *Bath Chronicle*, 25 March 1813 reports the death of his second son: 'He was sitting at dinner, when he fell down and instantly expired.'
- 49 *Exeter Flying Post*, 17 June 1784, 3d.
- 50 F.A. Knight, *A History of Sidcot School*, (Dent, 1908). (Knight, *Sidcot*).
- 51 Knight, *Sidcot* says July, but the minute book in SCRO, DD/SFR 2/1 is clear.
- 52 *DQB*, FHL.
- 53 Knight, *Sidcot*.
- 54 Bristol & Somerset Q.M. minutes 17/6/1807, SCRO, DD/SFR 2/1.
- 55 *Bath Chronicle*, 3/8/1809.
- 56 Browne's *New Bath Directory*, 1812.
- 57 WCRO, 1699/25.
- 58 WCRO, 1699/54.
- 59 Holden, *TBD*. Hensley Road is close to Hatfield Place.
- 60 Thornhill felt it necessary to advertise in the local newspaper following litigation in the King's Bench: *Bath Chronicle*, 16, 23 and 30 January 1806.
- 61 Holden, *TBD*.
- 62 G. Munro Smith, *History of Bristol Royal Infirmary* (Arrowsmith, Bristol, 1917), p.474.
- 63 *DQB*, FHL.
- 64 Typescript of register of Ackworth pupils, FHL.
- 65 Register of Ackworth trustees and officers, FHL.
- 66 Ackworth register of trustees and officers, FHL.
- 67 Information from current owner of the present Hatfield Place, Dr Bruno Bubna-Casteliz.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Malcolm Thomas (Librarian, Friends House Library), Russell Mortimer of Leeds, and West Kent Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends, for information and permission to use documents; Roger Angerson and the late Kathleen Cottrell of Bristol for reading drafts of this note, and offering guidance; Dr Bruno Bubna-Casteliz and Mr and Mrs Chris Brigden, current owners of Hatfield Place and Hatfield House, for access to and information about the later history of the house, and for permission to inspect deeds and take photographs; Sheena Stoddard of Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, Sarah Kelly of the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, Dr Ann Sumner of the Holburne Museum, Bath, and Trevor Fawcett of the History of Bath Research Group, for information about John Sanders and John Arnold Sanders; and Rachel Boak at the Museum of Costume in Bath for information on fabrics.

I am grateful for the use of public facilities and the help of staff at the Bath and Bristol central reference libraries; the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter; the Centre for Kentish Studies; the Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire record offices; and the Bolland Library of the University of the West of England, Bristol.