

# **SCHOOL PERSONALITIES**

## **The Revd Dr W Bonavia Hunt (1874-1952)**

Mr W Bonavia Hunt came to KGS in the year 1903, from that date until his resignation from the post of Headmaster in 1925. Mr Hunt was a leading figure at Kilburn Grammar School. So great was the school's affection for him that many members of the school tried to persuade him to stay on at KGS when he intimated his intention of resigning. However, Mr Hunt kept to his original decision to retire.

Mr Hunt was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1874, and he was educated at Westminster School. Proceeding to Keble College, Oxford, he graduated with a BA in 1892 and an MA in 1900. However, before going to Oxford, he had some experience of teaching at Little St John's, Ditchling, where he stayed for about a year. Having obtained his BA, he re-entered the teaching profession and secured an appointment at The Beacon, Bexhill. In 1900 he left Bexhill for Melville Hall, Hampstead, but after three years there he took up an appointment at Belsize School. He did not, however, remain there for long, and in the same year he came to Kilburn, where he stayed for twenty-two years.

At Kilburn, Mr Bonavia Hunt taught English and Classics. Quickly rising to the post of Second Master, he was deeply respected by both the staff and boys. When in 1909 the announcement was made that the immensely popular Second Master, the son of the Founder of the school, was to become Headmaster on the approaching resignation of Mr Evan Evans, the whole school became delirious. Everyone was pleased at the choice of the Governing Body, for as well as being a master respected in the form-room, he was likewise popular on the sports field, being very interested in both football and cricket.

During the first few years of Mr Bonavia Hunt's tenure of office the prefect system as we know it now took root. According to the scanty information contained in the magazines of this period, nobody seemed particularly to resent this step. In fact, the editorial of one of the magazines claims that the system was working well.

It is difficult to say why Mr Bonavia Hunt was so successful as a Headmaster. Various small points in his fine character, his quiet word of advice, his smile of praise, his phrase of encouragement, and his gentle sentence of displeasure – these are the qualities for which he is remembered and which made him so successful and revered as Headmaster.

Educated by fine parents, by a fine school, and by a fine university, he was to be a determined disciple of worthwhile things in life. Influenced by rich traditions of religion, music, athletics and humane letters, Mr Bonavia Hunt became, as Headmaster, the apostle of this culture. It was deepened by the philosophy of the practised angler. Fishing was his favourite pastime, as was well emphasized in a rather original cartoon that appeared in the "*Kilburnian*" in which his resignation was announced. The cartoon was given the title of "*Bona Via – Decipere et calamo salientes ducere pisces*' Ovid". Underneath, the cartoonist, Mr George Ayling, remarked, "We are sorry our Headmaster has left us, but won't those fishes get a fine education now, and they won't miss the point, either!"

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