



### **Darwin Wilmot**

Darwin Wilmot, headmaster of Macclesfield Grammar School between 1876 and 1910, had a great deal of influence on education in Macclesfield, during that time.

Darwin Wilmot was born in 1845 at Worksop, Derbyshire the son of Edward Woollett Wilmot and Emma Elizabeth Darwin. In 1851 he was living at Hulme Walfield, near Congleton with his father, a land agent, mother and three sisters. He was educated at Winchester College and Magdalen College, Oxford and was ordained as a priest in 1870. He was awarded an M.A. in 1871.

Before coming to Macclesfield Darwin was an assistant master at Rossall School, Fleetwood (in Victorian times it was known as the Eton of the north) and then he became assistant master at Marlborough College.

On 14th January 1876 Rev Darwin Wilmot was appointed headmaster of the Grammar School, Macclesfield. When he started at the school the number of pupils was low, 2 new pupils entering shortly after making the number up to thirty.

Darwin Wilmot married Louisa Lilla Bickmore, daughter of Reverend Charles Bickmore, on 3 October 1876 at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. Darwin and Louisa had two unmarried daughters, Dorothy born in 1878 who died in 1945 and Cicely born in 1880 who died in 1958, and two sons, Edward Darwin who died on 11 November 1908 aged 26, shortly after becoming a Bachelor of Medicine, and Sacheverell Darwin, born in 1885, who died on 14 October 1918 on active service. He was a Captain in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He had married Annie Dudley Strover in 1912 and they had a daughter and two sons.

During his time at Macclesfield Grammar school many changes took place, including a change in the governing body to include three members nominated by the town council, and one each nominated by the school board, the Lord Lieutenant and the Bishop of the diocese. The curriculum was also changed to include chemistry. The teaching of modern languages and natural sciences was extended. The provision of sport was also increased and in 1890 a gymnasium was built.

In 1891 Darwin was at Westbrook House, Prestbury Road, Macclesfield with his wife and daughters. There were also thirteen boarders, who were scholars at the school, and four servants.

Upon his retirement in 1910 Mr & Mrs Wilmot were presented with an antique Queen Anne china cupboard and a vellum scroll bound in the school colours, along with a purse of one hundred guineas.

Darwin Wilmot wrote 'A Short History of the Grammar School Macclesfield 1503 to 1910 with Lists of Masters, Exhibitioners, Copy of Admissions Register, Sir John Percyvale's Will and the Charter of King Edward VI' published in 1910.

Darwin died at his home in Leamington, Warwickshire on 5th September 1935 and was buried in the family vault at Kenilworth, Warwickshire. In his will he left £100 in trust to Macclesfield Grammar School.