

= Herbert Armitage James =

Herbert Armitage James , CH (3 August 1844 ? 15 November 1931) was a Welsh cleric and headmaster of three leading public schools , who ended his " remarkable scholastic career " , as it was later described by Austen Chamberlain , by becoming President of St John 's College , Oxford . After an Oxford education and early teaching career at Marlborough College , he was headmaster of Rossall School from 1875 to 1886 . It was said that he raised the school " to a pitch of all @-@ round excellence which it had not known before " . After suffering from health problems at Rossall , he served as Dean of St Asaph from 1886 to 1889 . He returned to teaching in 1889 , becoming headmaster of Cheltenham College and remaining in this post until 1895 , despite being offered the position of headmaster of Clifton College . He then became headmaster of Rugby School and served there to great acclaim . His Rugby School nickname of " The Bodger " is still in use at the school . He left Rugby School in 1909 to become President of St John 's College , Oxford , a position he held until his death 22 years later .

He was a highly respected teacher and preacher , being described as one of the best preachers of his day . He was widely praised for his work at Rossall , Cheltenham , Rugby and St John 's . He was made a member of the Order of the Companions of Honour by King George V in 1926 . At a dinner in his honour held to mark this award , attended by over 200 friends and former students , he was described by Austen Chamberlain (the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) as " one of the greatest and most forceful characters who had ever devoted himself to education " . The Lord Chancellor , Viscount Cave , also spoke at the dinner to praise James 's directness in his opinions and decisions , his weighty judgment , his high character and his kindly nature .

= = Early life and education = =

James was born in Kirkdale , Liverpool , the son of the Rev. Dr. David James , who was rector of Panteg , Monmouthshire , from 1856 to 1871 . Herbert James was educated at King Henry VIII Grammar School , Abergavenny , and then studied at two Oxford colleges . He matriculated at Jesus College in 1863 , before winning a scholarship and moving along Turl Street to Lincoln College in 1864 , obtaining a first @-@ class degree in Literae Humaniores in 1867 . He was appointed a Fellow of St John 's College in 1869 and was President of the Oxford Union Society in 1871 (where he nominated H. H. Asquith to the Standing Committee) . He was then ordained , and received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1874 . Later , on 31 May 1895 , he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity , having previously been excused by the University from satisfying the requirements normally set for the award of the degree .

= = Teaching career = =

He was Assistant Master at Marlborough College from 1872 to 1875 before being appointed Headmaster of Rossall School in 1875 . On the last day of his first year as headmaster , the whole school (with the exception of a couple of students) gathered outside the school to hiss and boo at James . Despite this , he held this position until 1886 and was regarded as having been " brilliantly successful , raising the school in the 11 years of his reign to a pitch of all @-@ round excellence which it had not known before " . His students at Rossall included Henry Stuart @-@ Jones , who became a distinguished classical scholar . One of Stuart @-@ Jones 's contemporaries later gave James the credit for making Stuart @-@ Jones an " accurate and industrious scholar " .

The strain of his position at Rossall School having affected his health , he was appointed Dean of St Asaph in 1886 . In 1889 , his health restored , he left St Asaph to become Principal of Cheltenham College (1889 ? 95) . He was again successful in this post , and was offered the position of Headmaster of Clifton College , but was prevailed upon to stay . He made participation in games a compulsory part of the boys ' education in 1889 . He also started the building of a new chapel to mark the college 's centenary in 1891 . When Dr Percival was appointed Bishop of Hereford , James succeeded him in 1895 as Headmaster of Rugby School . He was headmaster for

14 years and was very well regarded : it was said that the school had " seldom stood higher since Arnold 's day " than under his leadership (in reference to Thomas Arnold , who was headmaster from 1828 to 1841) . He was also described in his obituary in The Times as having " once more showed himself a complete master of his profession , equally effective and esteemed in the class @-@ room and the pulpit , in the School House of Dr. Arnold , and on the playing fields . " He was nicknamed " The Bodger " , and this term is still part of Rugby School slang . King Edward VII visited Rugby School towards the end of James 's time as headmaster on 3 July 1909 , the first royal visit to the School .

= = St John 's College = =

He returned to Oxford in 1909 as President of St John 's College (having been made an honorary fellow in 1895) and held this position until his death in 1931 . He was regarded during this time as a leader for the causes of the church and the Conservative Party , and was described as " winning all hearts with his geniality , his good sense , and his readiness to help all with whom he was brought into contact . " In 1918 , during his time as college President , his photograph was taken for inclusion in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery .

He was made a Companion of Honour by King George V in the Birthday Honours List of 1926 . On 15 October 1926 , over two hundred friends and former students attended a dinner held in his honour at the Hotel Victoria to celebrate the award , with Viscount Cave (who was Lord Chancellor and also Chancellor of Oxford University) presiding . Other guests included Viscount Lee , Sir Maurice Hankey (the Cabinet Secretary) , the sculptor Sir George Frampton , the civil servant Ernest Gowers (who had been educated at Rugby when James was headmaster) and the MP Sir James Agg @-@ Gardner . Austen Chamberlain (the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and a governor of Rugby School) spoke , along with representatives of the other schools with which he had been associated . Lord Cave praised James 's directness in his opinions and decisions , his weighty judgment , his high character and his kindly nature . He said that membership of the Companionship of Honour had been given only to a few who had rendered " special social service " to the country , and he rejoiced that James had been " enrolled " in this " select band " . He added that St John 's College and Oxford University owed James a " debt of gratitude " for his " wise advice and guidance " . James , he said , " had never dealt in the fine shades , or in the analysis of tendencies , or the exploration of avenues . Whatever was right had to be done . Whatever was wrong he fought with all his might . "

Marlborough School paid tribute to James through a poem by Charles Larcom Graves . One stanza was later quoted in the obituary of James published by The Times :

Chamberlain said that James had had a " remarkable scholastic career " and had exercised a " great and powerful influence " in the schools that he had served , leaving behind " a memory dear to all who had known him " . He said that James was regarded as " one of the greatest and most forceful characters who had ever devoted himself to education . " The dinner itself was reported as a news item in The Times on the following day , with a list of the principal attendees and summaries of the main speeches , and of James 's response , in which he said that he regarded the honour he had received as one bestowed on teaching .

= = Works and interests = =

His publications included an edition with English notes of Cicero 's Pro Plancio (1871) and a collection of sermons from his time at Rossall School , published as School Ideals (1887) . He was very highly regarded as a preacher , being appointed as Select Preacher for Oxford University in 1894 , 1897 and 1900 ; he was said to be " undoubtedly one of the best preachers of his day , at school and elsewhere " . He was a keen cricketer and golfer , and had been captain of the Lincoln College XI when a student there . He was also said to have been a useful member of the St John 's College XI , both for his batting and his slow bowling . The story was told at the 1926 dinner in his honour that he had taught A G Steel how to bowl a " twister " , and that Steel had gone on to take

many wickets in test matches against the Australians as a result . He was devoted to philately and had what was regarded as one of the best stamp collections in England . On his death , it was estimated as being worth between £ 5 @, @ 000 and £ 6 @, @ 000 (approximately £ 310 @, @ 000 to £ 370 @, @ 000 as of 2016) , despite the fact that he had dispersed much of his collection before his death .

= = Death and memorials = =

James died at St John 's College on 15 November 1931 at the age of 87 . After a funeral service at St Giles 's Church , Oxford , he was buried in Wolvercote Cemetery . In his will , he left £ 2 @, @ 000 to the Church in Wales and £ 200 to the Rector of St Mary 's Church , Panteg , to maintain the graves of his parents and for church work in the parish . He also left money to his old school in Abergavenny , Lincoln College , St John 's College and the schools at which he had been headmaster . He also left a sum to the Royal Philatelic Society . After other various bequests , he left the residue of his estate to his brother for life ? as James had never married , his brother was his next of kin . After his brother 's death , his estate was to pass to St John 's College to assist undergraduates and to support the work of the choir .

James had been presented with a gold watch and chain when leaving his position as headmaster of Rossall School in 1886 . These were sold after his death , and were donated back to Rossall School by the purchaser (a former student of the school) for the use of future headmasters . A memorial tablet to James was erected in 1933 in the chapel of Rossall School ; it was unveiled by Lord Derby , president of the Rossall School Corporation . A oak chancel screen was also erected as a memorial to James in St Mary 's Church , Panteg , with the unveiling in 1935 being carried out by Lord Trevethin , a friend of James since childhood . Rugby School erected the James Pavilion in his memory , which was opened in 1937 with Sir Pelham Warner , an Old Rugbeian , paying tribute to James 's love of cricket .