

John Kendrick (1573-1624)

Merchant and Benefactor

At the usual age of 16, in October 1589, Kendrick left our School and went to the usual College for Reading Boys, St John's, Oxford. which had been founded a few decades before by Sir Thomas White. John's contemporary, William Laud, became President of St John's during his own glittering career.



John Kendrick was a merchant prince having made his fortune, like Sir Thomas White, as a clothier.

He left in 1624, the staggering sum of over £30,000, much of it carefully directed to the benefit of Reading's inhabitants provided his directions were properly carried out by the Borough Authorities. (The original Oracle was one benefit intended for the poor of Reading). In the event of mishandling a secondary legatee (in London) was to receive the monies instead and mishandling, it seems, did occur, indeed conversion partly for the use of some of those same Borough authorities – prominent Aldermen, etc. Several times over the next two centuries representations were made on behalf of the secondary legatee and in 1849 they finally succeeded and the bulk of the money was lost to Reading.

A small part was retained and diverted to educational uses. The Kendrick Boys' and Girls' Schools were set up, and fittingly, these buildings also benefited from the endowment. When in 1915 the Kendrick Boys' School was absorbed into Reading School it effectively carried its share of the endowment to our own ancient institution.