

The Rev. Thomas Carpendale AM

by Andrew Dawson

A monument to the Reverend Thomas Carpendale, Headmaster of the Royal School Armagh 1786 – 1817, is situated in the south aisle of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh (fig1). The elegantly phrased Latin inscription may be translated into English as follows:-

A written memorial

*Of the Reverend Thomas Carpendale Master of Arts
For more than thirty years of the Royal School Armagh*

Headmaster

He had the greatest abundance of natural ability

Penetrating and trained judgment

Wide and distinguished learning

There were added to these gifts for his entire life

True Christian faith – Uprightness – Modesty

The duties of his office were heavy and indeed troublesome

Nevertheless he performed these so successfully

That those whom he had instructed as teacher

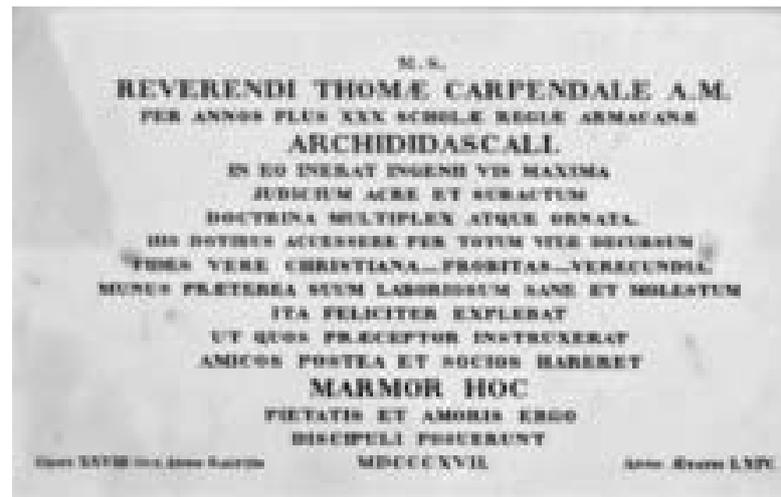
He could later count as friends and comrades

This marble

Therefore out of love and piety

His pupils have set in place

He passed away on the 28th October in the year 1817 aged 64



Reference to the Reverend Carpendale's piety and learning would not be unexpected, nor would the information that his duties had been onerous, but to say that his occupation had been troublesome does, at first sight, seem decidedly odd. I originally attributed this to some wry humour on the part of his pupils who, as we read, set the monument up. However, I have recently come to suspect that the inscription may have a hidden meaning.

Mr Tom Duncan has written an excellent history of the Royal School Armagh to celebrate the 400th anniversary of its foundation this year.¹ Included in this history is an account of the Barring Out of 1788/89 when senior boys barricaded themselves into a dormitory and a veritable state of siege existed for several days. The stairs, leading to the dormitory, were demolished with axes and volleys of pistol shots were fired at the Reverend Carpen-

dale and also into his house. He was said to have been in a state 'little short of frenzy' and had to be carried away from the scene.

On reading the inscription with the knowledge of the Barring Out it seems likely that it was the boys who had taken part in the Barring Out who were responsible for setting up the monument. It would appear they had come to feel remorse for their violent action, and had indeed come to regard the Reverend Carpendale with sympathy and affection.

Endnotes

¹ The 1608 Royal Schools; Duncan, T., Bardon, J., McCreehy, D., Edgar, L., Bennet, R., and Crooks, D., p44 (2007); Premier Print and Design Ltd.



M. A.
REVERENDI THOMÆ CARPENDALE A.M.
 PER ANNOS PLUS XXX ACHOLÆ ABOLÆ ARMAGANÆ
ARCHIDIDASCALLI.
 IN EO UERAT INGENI VIS MAXIMA
 IUDICII ACRI ET SUBACTUM
 DOCTRINA MULTIFLEX ATQUE SENATA.
 IHO SUAVIS ACCESSARE PER TUTUM VIBI SECURUM
 VIDUA VERE CHRISTIANA—PROBITAS—VERECUNDIA
 MUNUS PRÆTEREA SEUM LABORIOSUM SANÆ ET MURATUM
 VITA FELICITER EXPLEBAT
 ET QUIS PRÆCEPTOR INDOCTERAT
 AMICOR PŒTERA ET SOCIOR HABERET
MARMOR HOC
 PIETATIS ET AMORIS ERGO
 DISCIPULI POSUERUNT
 MDCCCXVII ANNO BRITANÆ LXXV

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