

The Lenox-Conyngham Scholarship

Funded by The Anton E. B. Schefer Foundation, for post-graduate exchanges between Trinity College, Cambridge University and McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia.



Information about the family background that inspires and underpins this Anglo-American philanthropic endeavour.

Introduction

The Lenox-Conyngham Scholarship programme has been created and is funded by The Anton E. B. Schefer Foundation, which was established under the terms of the Will of Anton Schefer, an alumnus of the University of Virginia and grandson and cousin of many Cambridge alumni and academics. Anton's mother was born Eileen Lenox-Conyngham and her father and mother's family have had long-standing connections with Cambridge, which have continued into the modern day, a particularly close link with Trinity College being formed.

Anton wished to leave a legacy of charitable philanthropy as a tribute to his parents and their service in the field of education and to honour the great Anglo-American friendship and exchange, which their marriage represented, and which has been so valued in his wider family over many generations. The Foundation has been set up and is led by one of Anton's oldest friends from his days at the University of Virginia, fellow Virginian Mr Okla Basil Meade Jr, whom Anton shortly before his death, entrusted to fulfil this wish.

The Scholarships are for graduates from McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia and Trinity College, Cambridge University, to fund a year's exchange with the purpose of achieving a post-graduate Masters Degree. Applicants will be selected only on the basis of merit. The intention is for graduates from Trinity, preferably from the Arts or Humanities, to benefit from the addition of learning and exposure to the field of commerce and for McIntire graduates to gain the value of exposure to the wisdom and learning of the Arts or Humanities, whilst each experiencing culture and life across the other side of the Atlantic.

The Foundation believes that those with an academic education, mixed with commerciality make better, more well-rounded leaders in whatever field. The world will always have a great need for better leaders. One quality that is not 'taught' or evaluated with reference to the actual word is 'wisdom'. Intelligence, knowledge, experience - all these are in abundance and we see it in leaders as they grapple with global or local challenges; but what may often hinder solutions to the most insurmountable problems is a lack of wisdom, and the genuine desire and commitment to act wisely in concert with others. There are two other qualities of leaders that the Foundation sees as among the keys to success, but not taught per se and these are 'curiosity' and 'tenaciousness'. The Lenox-Conyngham family has a strong tradition of public service and has provided leaders in many fields. This heritage still influences the activity of members of the family today – a sense of higher purpose in the service of others, and it is the Foundation's wish to nurture the development of exceptional and wise future leaders, whatever arena they operate in.

The Mission of the Foundation is to provide scholarships to enhance the creation of leaders in the fields of both commerce and service, including government. Further, the intent would be to enable the scholar to be well rounded and versed in globalization, able to understand how capitalism works best in a democracy, in the context of knowing their history; and sufficiently knowledgeable to have the potential of becoming a true renaissance person. The Foundation hopes that many future, successful and respected leaders of the world's most admired democracies, international organisations, corporations, academic institutions, NGOs, medical facilities, faith communities, and other organisations, will have been Lenox-Conyngham Scholars.

It is intended that the Lenox-Conyngham Scholarship programme will foster and help perpetuate continuing warm trans-Atlantic relationships between the United States and the United Kingdom, and that alumni of the programme will, over time, meet and form friendships between themselves.

The Lenox-Conyngham motto 'Over Fork Over', their royal unicorn crest and the 'shake fork' on their shield allude to when they hid the future King Malcolm III of Scotland in a haystack, as he was being pursued by those who had overthrown his father. 'Over Fork Over' was the cry heard as they used their pitch-forks to throw the hay over him. It is a call to action, hard work, wise and quick thinking, loyalty and higher service – these attributes chime well with the intent of the Lenox-Conyngham Scholarships.

The Lenox-Conyngham connection with Cambridge and Trinity College

The Lenox-Conynghams are a distinguished Ulster Scots and Anglo-Irish family from Springhill House near Moneymore, Co. Londonderry. They bequeathed their historic home, Springhill, along with its contents, to The National Trust, which has enabled it, and its unique heritage to be preserved for public interest and enjoyment.

In the late nineteenth century, the family started an association with Cambridge University that, so far, has lasted six generations. It began with George Lenox-Conyngham who was admitted to Trinity College in 1852. His father George was Chief Clerk at the Foreign Office.

The Reverend George H. Lenox-Conyngham, Anton's maternal grandfather, was the second member of the family at Cambridge. He and his six brothers were educated in Edinburgh, where their mother's father, banker George Arbuthnot of Elderslie, had been born and brought up; for about seventeen years their parents Sir William & Lady Laura Lenox-Conyngham rented a house or flat there as a second home during term-time. His mother's unmarried sister was interested in education, and was available not only to manage the household when both parents had to be in Ireland, but also to supervise the education of George's sisters. The boys went to the Edinburgh Academy and Fettes. The girls studied at home as well as being taken to concerts where they heard Rubinstein, Joachim, Hallé, Madame Norman Neruda and many others; to lectures, many given by men who were or became University Professors; to hear good preachers in St. Mary's Cathedral and other Edinburgh churches.

From Fettes, George went to Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge, where he studied Classics. He introduced his Cambridge friends to his family, and one, James D. Duff, a member and later a Fellow of Trinity College, married George's sister Laura. As mentioned in Margaret Keynes, 'A House on the River', for a few years the young couple rented a flat from the Darwins in the Old Granary, now part of Darwin College, before they moved to Strathaird, a house that is now part of Lucy Cavendish College.

Having graduated, and after a few years of teaching in schools in the south of England, George became the first pupil of Fettes to return as one of the masters. He was Housemaster of Kimmerghame, as well as a teacher, and became ordained as a priest in the Church of England. He married Barbara Josephine Turton, whose father, Edmund Turton of Upsall Castle in Yorkshire, was the son, grandson, and great-grandson of members of Cambridge colleges (Sidney Sussex and Clare).

With the coming of the Great War, George felt he could be more use in a different field. He left teaching and accepted from Caius the position of Rector of first Denver in Norfolk, and then Lavenham in Suffolk, one of England's greatest medieval 'wool' churches. By chance Anton Schefer was to be born years later in Denver, Colorado. Four of George's brothers joined the army and became Colonels; two died, one personally leading the 6th Connaught Rangers into the attack on Guillemont, which was memorably recorded by one of the battalion's young officers, author Stephen Gwynn. George died in 1933, aged 70, while staying with his sister in Strathaird, after a meeting in Cambridge.

Shortly after the end of World War I, Frank Newall, Professor of Astrophysics and a Fellow of Trinity, persuaded Cambridge University and his College, respectively, to create and fund the necessary position for the teaching and study of Geodesy. He first ensured that the person he felt to be most suitable for the position, Gerald, one of George's younger brothers, who was about to retire from his position in the Trigonometrical Survey of India, would be willing to take the job if offered. That Newall was making this arrangement in advance was not known to the various University and College bodies concerned; to avoid premature disclosure, correspondence between Newall and Gerald was sent through the Strathaird household. Gerald was a Fellow of Trinity until his death in 1956, aged 90. He had been knighted for his services. The Master of Trinity, G. M. Trevelyan wrote of him in *The Times* (29th Oct 1956): "He is a scholar, a soldier, and a great public servant, and he looks all three".

The brass plaques in the ante-chapel of Trinity College include memorials to James D. Duff and Gerald Lenox-Conyngham.

In the next generation, that of Anton's mother, her brother Denis followed his father to Gonville & Caius and Laura (Lenox-Conyngham) Duff's two daughters went to Girton. Four sons of George's siblings were at Trinity, another was at Magdalene, and another became a Fellow and Dean of Magdalene.

One of the four at Trinity, Laura's son Patrick, became the University's Regius Professor of Civil Law, and the College's Vice-Master; for a time, Laura had a husband, a brother and a son among the Fellows of Trinity. A brass memorial to Patrick Duff, who died in 1991, is also in the Trinity ante-chapel.

In Anton's own generation, one of his first cousins, another Gerald Lenox-Conyngham, went to Trinity; his brother, The Reverend Canon Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, was a post-graduate at Corpus Christi and later returned to Cambridge as Chaplain of Christ's and then Chaplain and Fellow at St Catharine's. Andrew was also a Supervisor and Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Theology, and Director of Studies in Theology for three Colleges. A third first cousin was at the London School of Economics when they were evacuated to Cambridge at the start of WW2, using University lecture rooms and the University Library. Anton's second cousins included two at Trinity and one at Magdalene.

In the generation below Anton's, three of the family went to Trinity, one to St John's, one to Girton and one to New Hall, now Murray Edwards College. From 1978 Trinity admitted both men and women as undergraduates. Two granddaughters and two grandsons of Anton's first cousins were at Trinity (including one of Anton's godsons), and one of each at Clare.

At least six marriages in the extended family resulted from its members' studying at Cambridge.

Anton Edward Bonner Schefer

Anton was born the 13th November 1943 in Denver, Colorado but lived his life in Falls Church, Virginia. He died in Washington DC on 18th February 2010, the very last member of his father's family, whose home had been near Frankfurt on the banks of the River Main at Sindlingen. On 6th June 1842 Anton's great grandfather Heinrich Schefer married heiress Clara Julie Doer, whose family were French Huguenots who left France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had protected the religious freedoms of French Protestants. Clara's mother was a relation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, writer, poet, philosopher, scientist, and statesman, cited as the greatest German literary figure of the modern era. Clara's brother Theodor served as an officer in the Austrian Imperial army, following his uncle, Field Marshal Lieutenant Jakob von Parrot, who had fought Napoleon as a young man. When Napoleon came to Frankfurt, the family recorded that some of the Rothschild's gold was secretly kept safe for a while in a cave cellar under the family's house at Sindlingen.

1848 was a revolutionary year in Europe. Anton's family, being supporters of the liberal movement and against the influence of a militaristic Prussia, were friends of Carl Shurtz. When Shurtz was being pursued by political enemies, he sought refuge via Sindlingen where the family helped him make his escape down the river Main hiding under an upturned rowing boat. Shurtz eventually emigrated to the USA, where he became the first German-American to be elected to the United States Senate. The two families' friendship continued when the Schefers moved their business interests to New York at a time of growing Prussian political influence over Frankfurt.

Of Heinrich's three sons, Anton Jacob Schefer had already arrived in America c.1833; Carl, and then Ernest (grandfather of Anton E. B. Schefer) followed later. In New York Carl led the firm of Schefer Schraam & Vogel. His son Anton H. Schefer sold the company in 1930 after the great Wall Street Crash and resulting depression – the successor firm today is CIT Corporation. He became Assistant Vice President of the bank that became Manufacturers Hanover, merged later with Chemical Bank and then with Chase to become Chase Manhattan and now JP Morgan Chase. He was a popular and well connected person, combining his commercial activities with membership of 'Squadron A' of the 101st Cavalry, New York National Guard, where he was well regarded. He was a member of New York's Brook Club and also the Harvard Club, where a memorial was dedicated to him.

The family's old home in Sindlingen was sold to the von Meister family, founders of chemicals company Hoechst AG, now incorporated within Sanofi-Aventis. The old house was replaced, but the park remains as a riding center and the heraldically decorated old gates still remain by the stables.

Anton's grandfather, Ernest Schefer moved to live in Lyon where he studied the Silk trade, and later emigrated to New York like his brothers. Ernest was recorded as having been a popular clubman and horseman – he played polo at the Rockaway Hunting Club on Long Island and was a substitute in America's first international polo team that played England. He married Constance Bonner, daughter of American-Canadian Edward Bonner – hence Anton's middle names.

Anton's father Ernest Edward ('Ned') Schefer was a Harvard alumnus and also studied at Heidelberg University in Germany, and joined the State Department. His Aunt Beatrice Bonner had married a British Diplomat called Sir Basil Blackett, whose family were connected to Anton's grandmother Barbara Turton's family. Beatrice arranged for Eileen to come over to Washington, and later, when Ned was posted to the Philippines and was living in Manilla, chaperoned Eileen on a visit there; Eileen and Ned became engaged shortly after her arrival. They then moved to Java where Ned was posted and soon afterwards, on 7th December 1941, Pearl Harbour was attacked. They had to escape and they had an adventurous journey to Australia; as they were leaving one side of an island, the Japanese were invading on the other.

But Eileen had already had another unique experience on the seas – she was one of those fortunate people who travelled on the Titanic and lived to tell the tale; she went with her mother, Denis (one of her brothers) and her Aunt Alice Lenox-Conyngham, only as far as Cherbourg. A letter she wrote to a friend, with a wonderful description of the ship, was bequeathed by Anton to Springhill, his mother's family home. They finally made it back to Ned's family in New York, but a ban on marriage to foreigners had been brought in that covered people in roles such as Ned's. Not wanting to delay marrying Eileen, he resigned and they were married in a simple ceremony in May 1942, at his family's home on Staten Island. Ned took a job in the Interior Department and was posted to Denver, Colorado, which is how it became Anton's birthplace.

Anton was educated at St. Andrew's School, Middletown, Delaware, before attending the University of Virginia, where his academic achievements led him to be admitted as a member of The Raven Society, the university's oldest and most prestigious honorary society. He was also a member of Zeta Chapter of Kappa Sigma fraternity from whom he was honoured to receive an Alumnus Advisor of the Year Award, 2001. His father Ned died the year that Anton graduated. It was a huge blow and whatever plans he had, he put them on hold and went to help his wonderfully kind and gentle mother in running The Schefer School. She and Ned had set up the non-profit school to provide special tutorial services for children whose educational needs were not catered for within mainstream schools. Anton was its Headmaster and Principal after his mother retired from the role. Gradually during the 1980s, public schools increased their funding for special learning programs which lessened the need for the school and it closed in 1988. This was a career that Anton had never intended, but he stuck to it to ensure his parent's legacy was continued. Alongside this, his commercial skills and instinct was directed towards property and collecting art, antiques and other sometimes obscure items that interested him.

The financial legacy of his own enterprise, combined with generous family inheritance, has been the fount of his philanthropy, enabling the Anton E. B. Schefer Foundation to be established and the Lenox-Conyngham Scholarships to be funded.

Philip W. Beddows

- one of Anton Schefer's cousins working with the Foundation to support the Lenox-Conyngham Scholarship programme.