

BRANSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

C.E. C controlled)

(from the School Log Books)

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1966

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Branston is a village four miles from Lincoln, the old part is built in a hollow by a stream, the houses in this part are built entirely of stone, with stone walled gardens.

The Parish Church, All Saints, was built in Saxon times, only the tower of this Church now remains, the Church being rebuilt many times.

Restoration was finished this year 1966 after a disastrous fire in 1962.

The Curtois family were Rectors for 211 years.

Nearby is Branston Hall, now a hospital, the first Hall built in 1735, rebuilt after a fire in 1903. The Melville family lived at this Hall and were great benefactors in the Village.

The Hon. Mrs. L. Melville had built and supported a school for girls near the Hall known as Branston Hall C. of E. School, this is now two houses.

In 1830 Rev. Peregrine Curtois had built an annexe to the chancel of the Church as a school for boys and girls, the infants going to Miss Melville's School at the Hall.

In 1870 a new education act was passed, part of which said that the existing schools in the County should be subject to three conditions for receiving public aid. They must be efficient, must be open to undenominational inspection and a conscience clause must be attached.

In districts where there was a deficiency, time would be granted for voluntary agencies to supply the need. After a period of grace any gaps would be filled by means of School Boards, in the case of rural areas by the vestries. So in Branston after this Act was passed a Parish Meeting was called to examine ways and means of raising money to augment grants from various bodies, the Rector provided a site and Branston School was started as it is known today.

The Primary School was opened on 9th June 1873. The managers and their families met the children at the school gate and they entered school singing a processional hymn, the Rector opened with Prayers and the Hon. Mr. L. Melville gave an address and a hymn was sung.

The headmaster provided accommodation in the school house for Pupil teachers at 7/- a week; the school and house cost £1,266.

The first schoolmaster was Mr. Greenlaw who came from Redditch; his wife helped him and taught sewing to the girls. There were two pupil teachers, Alice Chambers and Bessie Buick, the first in Branston; their salaries were £10 a year raised annually by £2 to £18.

Another part of the 1870 Education Act stated that school fees would be retained. Parents unable to pay could apply for a free ticket.

In Branston pupils paid 1/- for the first child in the family and 1/- for all the others, so not more than 2/- per family was paid.

Attendance was not good, children often away gleaning and working in the fields, and to encourage better attendance a scheme was introduced: 3d. weekly was charged for education; this was reduced to 2d.; every child who made 250 attendances was presented to the Inspector and had a 1d. a week returned each week of attendance; any child away for exams or did not make enough attendances had no money returned, except in case of illness. When a Doctor or Parson's certificate was required, 1/- was given to each child attending 300 times and a further 1/- given by a friend if 400 times was reached.

The school was divided into three sections and five standards for general work.

June 18th, 1873 was the birthday of the Hon. Mr. L. Melville and the christening of the son of Mr. & Mrs. A. Melville; the

children were each given a bun and a half day holiday.

Mrs. Curtois and Miss Melville took a great interest in the school and helped with sewing lessons and singing and the teaching of 'manners'.

On Shrove Tuesdays school finished at 11 a.m. and on Ash Wednesdays a service was held in Church at 11 a.m., afterwards a halfday holiday being given.

The average weekly attendance in 1873 was 94.

Branston had some half time pupils attending.

Sir James Graham's Factory Act of 1844 entirely abandoned the idea of aiding the provision of schools. Part of the Act obliged children between the ages of 8 and 13 years to spend either 3 whole days or 6 half days at school. The employer had to obtain a certificate from a school master testifying that the child had attended school the right number of hours during the preceding week. 2d. a week might be deducted from the child's wages to pay for his schooling.

These regulations were extended to other factories and workshops in 1864 and 1867. This was how the system of half-timers began, to continue until 1922 when it was abolished.

In February 1875 the Inspector's report states that the infants' department was in good order and attainment but the grant to the mixed school would be reduced by 1/10th for faults of instruction especially in arithmetic.

The average attendance in the mixed school was 92 and 46 in the infants; the grant was £105. 10. 6. reduced by 1/10th to £99. 11. 8. The following is an example of a Government Report 1888 March 22nd.

"Mixed School. The children have passed a very good exam in spelling, arithmetic and class subjects. Reading is still only fair in

quality and handwriting has not had sufficient attention. The needlework of the Fourth Standard was only fair, the rest of it was good.

Considering the irregular attendance, the results are very satisfactory.

I.J. Davies H.M.I. "

1887-8 School Staff.

Edwin Beevers, certified 2nd class, First Division, York.

Edith Beevers, P.T. 2nd year.

Anne Beevers, Sewing Mistress.

signed P. Curtois.

Manager.

Passed reading 44

" writing 42

" arithmetic 41

October 19th 1875 was the Golden Wedding of Hon. Mr. & Mrs. L. Melville so a day's holiday was given.

In 1876 there was a change of teachers in the Infant School. A report states that "Singing and Marching rather too noisy"; the grant for that year being £102. 17. 6.

The Diocesan Inspector made regular visits to the school and examined the children in their Religious knowledge which was very satisfactory. The following is an example of a Diocesan Report.

"Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education.

Religious Inspection of Schools.

Branston National School. Mixed Department.

Inspection February 13th 1905. Report.

It was a great pleasure to inspect this School; great pains are so evidently taken with the instruction and the children are a

credit to their teachers both in knowledge and intelligence.

They are being taught on the right lines and are forming a foundation for the future.

The repetition was excellent throughout.

All divisions did well; the understanding of the catechism division I and of the seasons in division II calls for special praise.

The infants answered accurately and brightly; it would however be well that they should take less Old Testament and learn the facts of the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Blessed Lord.

The written work was well done.

J. Edward Standen

Feb. 17 1905.

Diocesan Inspector in Chief. "

Mr. Greenlaw left on June 8th 1876 and was presented with a silver teapot by teachers and scholars. The new headmaster was called Mr. Handscomb; he was assisted by his wife.

The School was in a very backward state when the new headmaster took over and he was informed that considerable improvement was necessary to secure a grant for the following year, it being given that year 1876 almost entirely for good quality needlework.

A new pupil teacher was taken on in November.

March 1878 children on reaching the age of 7 years were transferred from the infant school at the Hall to the National School; the standard of work improved under the new headmaster. The Rev. P. Curtois continued to make regular visits to the School to take scripture.

The children had frequent days off for Lincoln Fair, Branston Feast and Sunday School treats.

To be able to work in the fields it was necessary to get a labour certificate and the police called at the school to see if these were in order.

Other causes for poor attendances were for example

" 1874 May 17th. Gala in the Arboretum and Lincoln Hirings were causes for the poor attendance that day."

Hirings took place once a year, this was when farm workers went into Town to get new work for the year.

Nov. 1st. "Many children absent due to clothing club year terminating." The school had a clothing club and the headmaster had to make up the returns for the school. Probably to help the families save money to clothe their school children.

April 19th. "Lincoln Fair Week, poor attendance."

1875 August 9th. "Many children stayed off school to help in the fields."

Corn harvest and gleaning, potato picking and turnip topping and in May beet singling.

1881. "Poor weather kept children away as many or most live several miles away from school."

In April 1880 many children were away with 'Blister Pox'; could this mean chicken pox? The school was often closed for outbreaks of fevers, diphtheria and scarlet fever being very bad; in the summer months lessons were taken in the playground to lessen the spread of disease.

The following is a selection of songs learnt in 1880.

" One True Heart to know and Love me.
Catch the Sunshine.
The Squirrel has his Work to do.
Softly Sighs the Breezes.
Canadian Boat Song.
Oh May we Ne'er forget the Hours.
Home Sweet Home. "

The number of children on the books in 1880 was 129.

Mr. Handscombe the headmaster died on April 10th 1881; on May 16th Mr. Smith became headmaster, he apparently was too fond of the 'stick'. Rev. P. Curtois visited him to say he had heard complaints about his severity with the stick. Mr. Smith writes - "I won't be the cause of any further annoyance in that respect and have put the stick out of school and determined to give marks to the upper children and manage the two lower classes without the cane if possible."

The children were still buying their own exercise and copy books.

October 1881 the school Attendance Officer had to visit the school and tell the children that if they didn't attend regularly their parents would be summoned.

One afternoon in October 1883 the school was closed half an hour early on account of the room being required for an entertainment by two freed slaves.

Mr. Smith left the school in June 1884 to take charge of a school at Sleaford and Mr. Beevers took over.

In the Autumn of 1885 several children died of diphtheria.

Queen Victoria's Jubilee was celebrated in June 1887 by giving the scholars one and a half days holiday and Mrs. Melville presented the school with a large framed portrait of the Queen.

Mr. Beevers applied for an increase of salary and received £12 making £20 per year.

The School Staff in 1887 was 4; the headmaster and his wife, an assistant teacher and a pupil teacher.

The School improved under Mr. Beevers and had excellent reports, they now had a Standard VI and VII. Poor attendance worried the Head; he continues to report the offenders to the School Attendance Officer and is annoyed no one gets punished.

In December 1888 a concert was held to encourage better attendance, the proceeds to buy prizes for those children who attended most times. Every year a scholarship examination was held and the school usually had several pupils pass each year.

For example in 1888 ten passed.

" Heighington School Foundation Scholarship Award

	Scholarship Fees.	£	s.	d.
George W. Gills	£2 + 7/2	2	7	2
George Baker not attended		-	-	-
R.T. Sharp half year		1	0	0
Charles Applewhite	£2 + 7/4	2	7	4
Herbert Ingall	£2 + 7/-	2	7	0
Alice Taylor	£2 + 7/4	2	7	4
George Wilson	£2 + 7/2	2	7	2
Ernest Taylor	£2 + 7/4	2	7	4
Arthur Marshall	£2 + 6/2	2	6	2
Emily Nixon	£2 + 7/4	2	7	4
Thomas Tindall	£2 + 6/8	2	6	8
Total		22	3	6

Signed P. Curtois
Manager. "

A very bad epidemic of measles closed the school for a month in the Spring of 1889.

A new Bye-law was passed and no half-timers were allowed.

March 8th 1890 Mr. Beevers was taken ill and on May 9th he died aged 29. The School closed for two days. He had been a very popular Headmaster. He was followed in July 1890 by Mr. John Sharp.

The Rev. Peregrine Curtois died aged 85 on May 24th 1891; he had taken a great interest in the School and was one of the Donors; he also gave an annual subscription. The teacher and scholars attended the funeral.

The school managers decided to provide all copy and exercise books free of cost and abolish fees from September 1st 1891.

In 1891 parents were given the right to demand free education for their children, with the result that the majority of schools became free; fees in elementary schools were not entirely abolished until 1918.

A whole day's holiday, free tea and sports was given on July 6th 1893 for King George V and Queen Marys Wedding.

The school library was started in December 1895. A concert was given by the scholars and £4 raised to buy books. 100 volumes were bought; the school managers provided a bookcase.

Mr. Drayton, an innkeeper, presented a large clock which had been in possession of the Curtois family for over 200 years; this was hung on the wall of the main class room. X

The girls learnt knitting, patch making, mat making, herring-boning, tucking and the making of paper flowers; the boys did fret-work and made clay models.

A day's holiday was given for the relief of Ladysmith and also for the Relief of Mafeking.

At the end of the school year in 1900 there was a debit balance, the two schools were not paying their way.

Mr. L. Melville gave £40, and Mr. Eustace Able Smith gave £20 to help relieve the debt. The managers decided to reduce the expenditure by closing the Infant School and adding to the National school building to accommodate the infants; this meant the infants could go to school with their brothers and sisters and come under the training of the headmaster and be taught by an assistant mistress, thus saving the expense of the Head Mistress. }

The plans were prepared by Mr. H.H. Dunn A.R.I.B.A. Mr. Cook was the contractor. The accommodation provided for 65 infants and 115 in the mixed department; the cost of this was about £500, the contract was £483. 15. 1, architect's fee £34. The managers appealed to the parents, Landlords and tenants to subscribe to the

building fund; the alterations were started in November and finished in December 1900; the infants used the new class-room.

Empire Day was celebrated on May 24th 1907 by lessons on the Union Jack, Growth of the Empire, Duties as a Citizen, the meaning and origin of Empire Day. 'Lest We Forget' by Rudyard Kipling was sung, also the National Anthem, three cheers given for the King, each child was given an orange and the afternoon off.

To enable the boys to have gardening lessons, a rood of land was bought and Mr. J. Ridsdale engaged to instruct the boys. Mr. Ridsdale had been head gardener to the Marquis of Ripon at Nocton, 4 miles away.

The Medical Officer attended twice a year and inspected children under 6 and those leaving in the next 6 months; parents were able to attend with their children.

Every week the children were taken in classes for Nature Walks round the lanes and fields; specimens of wild flowers and plants were collected.

A flower show was held yearly, the school being closed for the day; prizes were given for needlework, hand-writing, drawings and wild flower collections.

The children were also taken on outings to Lincoln Castle, Museum and Cathedral.

Each December a plum pudding was made by the teachers and distributed to the children.

After the outbreak of War 1914 the girls began sewing sandbags, knitting gloves, socks and scarves for the soldiers. A Belgian boy Refugee who spoke no English was admitted to the School.

Vegetables from the boys' garden were sold. Dark blinds to all windows had to be fitted.

The children were asked to bring fruit and vegetables for the sailors and candles for the soldiers in the trenches; these were sent to the 4th Lincolns.

A War Saving Association was formed and the children invited to become subscribers. There was a shortage of paper and standards I and II used slates; use was also made of cardboard from the local shops.

November 11th 1918 the Union Jack was hoisted, the National Anthem sung and a holiday given.

December 1920 the boys started to attend carpentry classes once a fortnight for the whole day at Potterhanworth school nearby, the girls also going to cookery and laundry classes.

In 1924 the County Council adopted the Libraries Act and the School was made one of the centres.

The Education Committee decided to pay the bus-fares of the children going to Potterhanworth cookery centre, but buses were not available for the return of the girls and on rainy days they got very wet and their parents were not very pleased about it; they were not keen on allowing them to attend.

On 30th December 1924 Mr. Sharp resigned as headmaster after 34½ years.

Mr. Williams became the new head on January 5th 1925. In December of that year they started the National School Savings Association.

To make two classes, the large room was divided by a large curtain.

An experiment was started in May 1928: all children of 12 and 13 who proved definitely backward were put in a special class under the supervision of the headmaster; the system worked well. At this time also an arrangement was made with a private bus company

to convey the boys and girls to Potterhanworth and meet them at 3.30 p.m.

It was on March 18th 1929 that the Horlicks Malted Milk Service started; children were supplied with $\frac{1}{4}$ pt. of milk for $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during morning break. This service proved very popular and 80 to 96 drinks daily were supplied.

September 1930 the classes were readjusted, the best pupils taught by the headmaster and called the scholarship class; the backward children from Standard II, III and IV to form a special group.

Electric light was installed in September 1933 and a wireless plug put in.

The teachers in the main room divided by the curtain were having difficulties; there were now 60 children in this room and it was difficult to avoid interference during lessons.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 brought 45 evacuees from Leeds, so the Chapel School room was taken over as an annexe. During the war the children were taken in school parties to collect rose hips to be sent to London to be made into Rose Hip Syrup.

The School was becoming overcrowded so in September 1949 all the children of 14 years were sent to H.O.R.S.A. accommodation at North Hykeham.

Mr. Williams retired as headmaster after 25 years in August 1950. Mr. Cook became the new Head in October; there were 152 children on the roll.

It was decided to partition the main class room to make two separate rooms and do away with the curtain.

150 gift parcels of food were received from the Lord Mayor of Sydney, New South Wales, under the Australian Gift Scheme; these were distributed to the children and staff.

Mr. Cook started School outings to places of interest in Lincoln and nearby, such as the Guildhall and Bardney Sugar Beet Factory, also a yearly outing of four or five days to different parts of the country; at Christmas the children went to the pantomime. He also started a sports day, held in the village recreation field; a shield was presented to the winning team and the children placed 1, 2 and 3 awarded certificates.

A carol service was held in Church and parents invited to attend; also the harvest festival, when children brought fruit, flowers and vegetables and helped the teachers decorate the Church.

In 1952 an annexe was built to house 16 wash-basins and 2 drinking fountains.

July 1953, open day was started, the parents were invited to the school to see the pupils' work and discuss their progress with the teachers; the girls gave a display of country dancing and the sports certificates awarded; progress reports were also sent out to parents.

September 1954 work started on a new drainage system in preparation for a new classroom block and conversion of earth closets to W.Cs. and the following April 2nd new classrooms were in use, also the new W.Cs. and washbasins.

A new Secondary Modern School was opened in January 1956 and all children over the age of 11 years transferred there, unless they passed the 11 + and went to the Grammar School at North Hykeham.

The school now caters for children from 5-11 years and has 180 pupils and 6 teachers arranged in 6 classes; 2 infant classes are accommodated in the new classroom block which has a spacious entrance cloakroom and its own sanitary facilities.

A school meals service began in May 1958, a cook and assistant were appointed for the canteen and a supervisor for the meals;

51 children stayed to dinner.

A parents' Committee was formed in 1960; they arranged socials, jumble sales, coffee evenings etc. to provide funds to buy instruments for the percussion band and recorder group and reference books for the library.

Parents' evenings were held and different speakers gave interesting talks. In 1961 they agreed to the children wearing a simple uniform: blue caps, pullovers and blazers and grey shorts for the boys, and blue berets, blue pullovers and grey skirts for the girls; the hat and blazer has a simple badge B.P.S.

The children take part in the Lincoln Music Festival and do well with their Choir.

During the summer holidays in 1963 central heating was installed, the playground resurfaced and the high wire replaced round the playground.

Last year, 1965, jumble sales raised enough money to buy a T.V. set. A staff room is now being built and telephone installed.

Apart from the day school there was an evening school, which has been going almost as long; evening classes are now held in the Secondary Modern School in the Village as there are more facilities.

An Inspector also reported on the progress of the evening school.

Branston National Evening School
May 18th 1881.

Summary of the Report

"The order is good and the examinations on the whole fairly successful.

The scholar no. 8 on the exam. Schedule is disqualified under Article 29.

Presented for examination 16

PASSES in reading	15
" " writing	12
" " arithmetic	6
Total	33

Grant on average attendance

£.	s.	d.
3	8	0

Passes

4	2	6
7	10	6

Deduct 5/- overpaid last year for the scholar No. 4 on examination schedule (Art 296)

£ 7 5 6 "

Today the school is run on much less formal lines than it used to be, with the introduction of music and movement, free activity with sand, clay, painting and other equipment.

Although Branston is a C. of E. school, less stress is placed on going to Church on religious festivals; the Rector still visits and takes an interest in the School.

A very high standard of teaching is maintained, 13 out of 22 passed the 11 + this year; they will go to the North Kesteven Grammar School at North Hykeham, 8 miles away.

Children who live 3 miles or more away are taken to and from school by bus.

The school is happy and well organised with nearly 100 years of history behind it. The teachers are enthusiastic and keep abreast of modern methods of teaching.

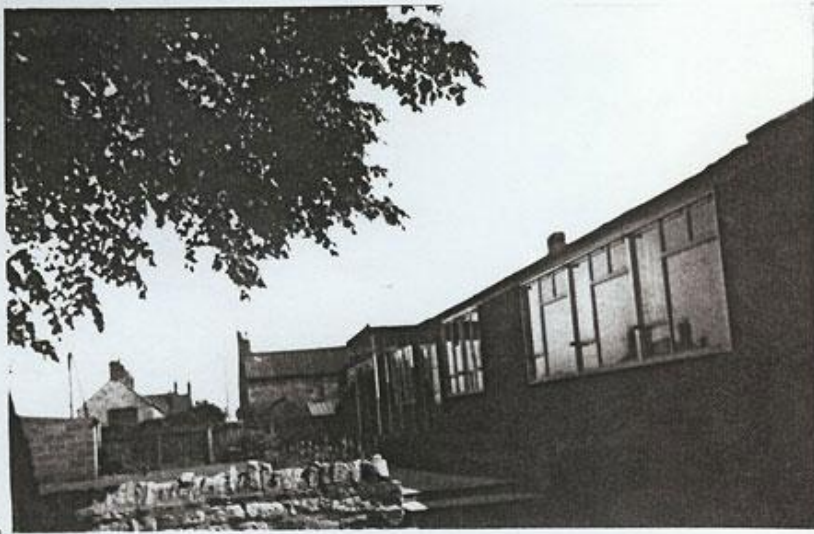


Branston school, old & new buildings.

On the left are part of the kitchens, where the school dinners are cooked. On the right are the new toilets & washing facilities. Behind this block is a small playground, now being used as a car-park for the teachers.

The church-style windows, were designed as they are, to provide the maximum amount of light, yet were high enough in the walls, so the pupils would not be distracted by looking out of the windows.

Behind the tree is a garden and cages for pets which the school children look after.



This photograph shows the two new classrooms with its own cloakroom.

These classrooms are equipped for the reception class and 6 year to 7 year olds.

One of the rooms serves as a dining room, as the kitchen is attached.

View of the school building in 1960

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