

To follow 'Schools'

NOTES FROM A F DEVERILL

In most rural areas in the mid 1800's, schools were only just beginning to be built. It was the church which became concerned in the need for education of country children and began the first school.

Up to 1870 there was no school in the village as we know them today.

In 1836, Peregrine Curtois, the fourth Rector of that wonderful family name, built the annexe to the chancel of the church now used as a choir vestry to serve as a school for boys and girls.

The Hon Mr Melville established a school for infants in a large house, ~~now 2 dwellings~~ in Hall Lane.

The passing of the new Education Law made it necessary to make new provision for schools.

In 1870 a Parish Meeting was called to examine ways and means to establish a new school to accommodate children of all ages under one roof.

A site was provided by the Rector, a committee was formed, subscriptions were invited from parishioners to augment grants from various bodies and the Primary School was opened on 9th June 1873.

The Managers and their families met the children at the school gate. The children entered the school singing a processional hymn. The Rector opened the proceedings with prayers and the Hon Mr Melville gave a short address and another hymn concluded the day's events.

The schoolmaster was to provide accommodation in the school house for pupil teachers at seven shillings per week.

The school and the school house cost about £1,266.

The first schoolmaster was Mr John Greenlaw, who came from Redditch, and was assisted by his wife who taught sewing to the girls.

Pupil teachers were appointed by the School Managers, and to assist the headmaster. Alice Chambers and Bessie Buick were the first in Branston. Their salaries were £10 per year to be raised annually by £2 a year to £18.

Pupils paid five money at the rate of 1/- for the first child in the family and 1/- for all others so that no more than 2/- per family was paid.

Attendance at school was not a great point in those days and to encourage better attendance a novel scheme was introduced.

3d per week was the charge made for education. This was reduced to 2d. Every child who made 250 attendances was presented to the school Inspector and had 1d per week returned for each week of attendance. No child who had an insufficient number of attendances or was absent from the examinations had pennies returned except in case of illness when a doctor's or parson's certificate was produced. A shilling was given to each child who attended 300 times with a further 1/- given by a friend of the school if 400 was reached.

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Three pence