

# THE STORY OF A SCHOOL

## By Len Eastgate



Dorney School and Village Hall in 1936 (approx.)

### INTRODUCTION

Len Eastgate came to Dorney School in January 1958 when the school was in the Village. He moved the children into the new building in Harcourt Close in 1958 and, from those modest beginnings, the school has grown to the establishment we have now. He left Dorney School in 1969. John Price was then appointed Headteacher, followed by Chris Luckin in 1985, and then by Margaret Wright in April 1985.

Even though Len Eastgate moved to Great Missenden School in 1969, he continued to live in Dorney and played an active part in many local organisations. On his retirement he researched and wrote these chapters about the history of education as it affected the Village. They were published month after month in the Dorney Parish News from September 1988 until his untimely death early in 1991. The reader will wonder what would have followed in this story if Len had been allowed more time to continue with his writings.

Miss Eleanor Catherine Bennett came to Dorney School in 1919 and continued as the Headteacher until her retirement in 1952. She was a pillar of the local community and served on many committees throughout the years. She first wrote the articles, which are introduced in Len's text, for the Dorney Parish News in 1966-67. She died in May 1972 at the age of 84.

Margaret Wright  
Headteacher  
June 2000

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL – PART I

Although, as a nation, we are proud of our old Universities, ancient grammar schools and the various foundations of King Edward VI, Henry VIII, and Queen Elizabeth, it is a fact that in the early days of Queen Victoria we were lagging behind the German and other continental peoples in the provision of schooling for the poorer classes. This had been left to the Churches: the Church of England with its National Schools, the Nonconformists' British Schools, the Roman Catholics with their schools, and a variety of Dame schools.

In Dorney, the Lord of the Manor, the Revd Sir Henry Palmer had set up a school in Dorney Cottage, quite a fair-sized building with a large iron gate at the entrance to the drive, as one can see to this day when standing at the bus-stop at Dents Corner. Since the 1830's these schools had been subject to a certain amount of inspection by the state, and we know that the 1,300,000 children in voluntary schools were outnumbered by those who did not go to school at all, namely the chimney sweep boys, the crossing boys, the crow-scarers, the stone-pickers and the thousands of children who had to work in the factories and on the land to help support their families.

However, in 1870 Forster's Education Act, laid the foundations of a national network of schools. "Our object," he said, "is to complete the present voluntary system and to fill in the gaps." W. E. Forster was a wealthy Quaker who had married the daughter of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous Headmaster of Rugby School, and was one of the ablest of Gladstone's Ministers.

Although Forster's Act appeared to be very complicated to administer, it laid the foundations of our Elementary School System and some of us in our 60's and 70's remember with gratitude the 3 R's and also the fairly broad curriculum we were taught in those same Elementary Schools which lasted into the 1930's. His idea was that wherever the voluntary schools could not provide enough school places for all local children, a School Board was to be elected by the rate-payers to provide school premises, and enforce attendance if it thought fit. Then in 1880 education was made compulsory for all children under twelve and in 1891 it was made free - previously there had been a maximum fee of a few pence a week.

In Dorney and Boveney (one must realise that there was virtually no Eton Wick then) children were accepted from three years of age, and the poor mites had to walk to school across the Common from New Boveney, which later came to be part of the New Town of Eton Wick by 1889.

Compared with the paper-work involved in the organising and running of schools nowadays the system really was not all that complicated.

There were just over 2,500 School Boards, supporting their schools from the rates as well as from government grants. The School Managers for each voluntary school were supported by government grant and Church subscriptions.

Wouldn't it be interesting to be transported back in time to hear in the actual words of the people of those days what was actually happening in Dorney as the people faced up to this tremendous challenge of the Education Act of 1870.

So now we can step back in time and listen to the words of Mr. C.F. Dean, Clerk to the School Board of the United District of Dorney and Boveney in the County of Bucks as he records the minutes of the First Meeting on the 1st day of April 1875.

We have the actual copy of that meeting, taken word for word, from Minute Book No. 1 of the Board. Read on and enjoy the machinations, secret pacts, arguments and pompousness that appear to be part of local government, as it was, is now, and (I suppose) ever shall be.

Thanks to Mrs. Joy Richmond and Mr. Chris Luckin, Headmaster, we have been able to link the Minute Books with the Accounts Books. Mrs. Richmond recently found the Accounts Book in the Parish Chest in the Church Tower, and Mr. Luckin tracked down the Minute Books for me.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART II

At the first Meeting of the School Board for the United School District of Dorney and Boveney in the County of Bucks held at the School Room, Dorney on the 1st day of April 1875.

Present

Part of time

The Revd. E.V.Mason  
Mrs.S.J.Mason  
Mr.Thomas White

Capt. F.G.D. Watson

R.H.Barrett, Returning Officer

The Returning Officer reported that the Revd. E.V.Mason, Mrs.S.J.Mason and Mr.Thos.White all of Dorney had been duly elected members of the Board and the notice convening the meeting was read.

On the proposition of Mr.Thomas White, seconded by Mrs.Mason, the Revd E.V.Mason was elected Chairman of that meeting.

Proposed by Mr.Thomas White, seconded .by the Revd E.V.Mason and carried unanimously that Sir Charles James Palmer, Bart. of Dorney Court be and he was thereby elected a Member of the Board.

Proposed by the Revd E.V.Mason and seconded by Mrs.S.J.Mason that Captain Francis Gordon Degge-Watson be elected a Member of the Board.

for the proposer and seconder

against none

Proposed by Mr.T.White that Mr.G.T.White be elected a Member of the Board.

Sir Charles James Palmer, Bart. and Capt. Francis Gordon Degge-Watson were then declared duly elected as Members of the Board to make up the full number thereof in accordance with the Education Acts Rules and Regulations, and Captain Watson took his seat at the Board.

Proposed by the Revd. E.V.Mason, seconded by Mr.T.White and carried unanimously that Sir C.J.Palmer, Bart. be and he was thereby appointed Chairman of the Board until the next triennial election. Proposed by Capt. F.G.D.Watson, seconded by Mr.T.White and carried unanimously that Mr.Charles Frederick Dean of Slough Bucks be and he was thereby appointed Clerk to the Board for one year at a remuneration to be thereafter agreed upon.

Resolved that the next meeting of the Board be held at the School Room, Dorney, on Thursday the 29th day of April instant at 12 o'clock at noon and that the Clerk should give due notice thereof to each member.

(Signed) Charles James Palmer Chairman.

Some of the names mentioned in these minutes will be familiar, such as Sir Charles James Palmer, of Dorney Court. Mr. Thomas White was a tenant farmer living at Manor Farm; Mr.G.F.White was a tenant farmer at Court Farm, the Revd. E.V.Mason was the Vicar of Dorney, and Captain F.G.D.Watson a gentlemen of private means who was later to come into conflict with the other members of the Board, as we shall see.

Mr.Charles Frederick Dean was the junior partner in the old established legal firm of Barrett and Dean, solicitors of Upton-cum-Chalvey, later Slough.

### THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART III

The five members of the School Board did not waste time. In fact just four weeks after their first meeting they met again in the Old School Room on the 29th of April, 1875, eager and ready to proceed.

The Revd. E. V. Mason and Mrs. Mason offered to prepare a Register of children in the United District of Dorney and Boveney, and it was proposed by Captain Watson that a plot of land, part of Dorney Common, be acquired and the Clerk was instructed to get in touch with Mr George Henry Young, the solicitor to Sir Charles Palmer.

By the next meeting, on the 10th of May, the Board had appointed Messrs. Edgington and Summerbell, Architects of Windsor, to prepare plans for a school on the lines laid down by the Board of Education. On the 1st of June these plans and a descriptive report were handed in and the Board passed them on to the Education Department for approval.

Realising that they were now in business, the Board Members instructed the Clerk to open an account at the London and County Bank in Slough and they issued Rating Precepts upon the Overseers for £39.19s.4d. in the case of Dorney Parish and just £11.0s.8d. for Boveney Parish to raise.

It must be remembered that in those days there were no Parish Councils or District Councils, and the administration of a parish was carried out by two unpaid officials named Overseers of the Poor and two Surveyors of the Roads, also unpaid. These men were parishioners elected at the same time as the Parish Constable and the Churchwardens at the Annual Easter Vestry Meeting. The Lord of the Manor was usually elected as one of the Surveyors as most of the stones and gravel for repairing the roads had to come from his land and each parish was responsible for the upkeep of its own roads.

Each parish was also responsible for the relief of its own poor, and that is where the Overseers of the Poor came in; they were empowered to collect and distribute the rates that had been assessed. In actual fact in the rural areas these rates were mainly paid by landowners, tenant farmers, shop-keepers, craftsmen and professional gentlemen. But most of the householders in Dorney and Boveney were agricultural labourers living in cottages owned by the Lord of the Manor, and they paid no taxes nor had they any vote until much later.

It is interesting to note that around that time there were several brick-makers living in Dorney and a steeplechase jockey.

The Lord of the Manor, Sir Charles Palmer, met the Commoners and held his Court Leet at Dorney Court, where the affairs of Dorney Common and Lake End Common were discussed, and rules made as to how many cows were to be put on the Commons and all this was administered by his Steward and the Haywarden. The two Churchwardens also played a very important part in village affairs besides looking after the fabric of the church and keeping the parish registers and records up to date.

But now the Overseers had another duty thrust upon them; they had to accept the precept from the School Board. Fortunately the Overseers of Dorney Parish paid up promptly, but the Boveney Overseers were a little tardy and had to be reminded twice.

By now the members of the School Board were becoming quite enthusiastic and instructed the Clerk to fill in the appropriate form and apply to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan of £1,200, although the Architect's estimate of the cost of the school was only £750.

In the meantime tenders had been received from various builders and these ranged from £1,540 to £885, the lowest, which came from Mr. George Almond of Burnham. Naturally he got the contract, but he had to give a bond of £250 and produce two sureties before the contract could be signed and sealed. His two sureties were Mr. Reginald James Rogers, the Relieving Officer of Burnham, and Mr. John Merry Roberts, Grocer, also of Burnham.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART IV

By now the site had been settled; Sir Charles Palmer had offered a quarter of an acre of land, part of Bunce's Garden as it was generally known, together with six perches of Dorney Common needed to give access to the site and provide a footpath, for the sum of £69. Sir Charles Palmer also suggested that the sum of £6 .10s. be paid to the tenant as compensation for disturbance and crops lost. This was agreed and the Seal of the Board was affixed to the contract with Sir Charles and the Contract with Mr. G. Almond.

The Public Works Loan Board had by this time, 25th January 1876, agreed to the loan of £1200 repayable by fifty equal instalments of Principal and Interest paid annually.

So far we have read of the actions of the School Board members as written down in the Minute Book by their Secretary or Clerk. But now let us turn to the official correspondence kept in the Public Records Office, File Ed. 2/18 and see what really happened. The Inspector's return of 28<sup>th</sup> February 1872 had reported that the population of Dorney was 374 and that school accommodation should be provided for 60 children. There was at that time efficient school accommodation, in the National School that the Revd. Sir Henry Palmer had provided, for 45 children, so extra room was required for another 15 children. The Revd. Bellairs recommended "combining with Boveney and a reconstructed class-room at Dorney". The Liberty of Boveney was reported as having 80 inhabitants requiring school accommodation for 14 children who at present had no efficient school.

So Dorney and Boveney were formed into a United District on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1872. A Final Notice was issued on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1874. Six children were to be accommodated at St Anne's National School, Dropmore, but further accommodation was required for 75 children at Dorney. It was pointed out that this could be provided by the appointment of a certificated teacher and by enlarging it for 75 children altogether.

On 21st January 1875 a Notice to the Rev. Pickard (Her Majesty's Inspector) from Mr. Hodgson of the Education Department pointed out that the time (six months) limited by the Final Notice had expired. The Revd. Pickard noted: "When I was at Dorney in September the Managers of the School told me that they intended to do nothing and that they expected a Board to be formed". Mr. Hodgson replied, "It will be better to enquire again." (26.1.1875). The Revd. Pickard did so: "I have heard this morning that nothing has been done and nothing will be done till a Board is formed." (10.2.1875).

On 6th May 1875 a letter to Sir F. Sandford from the Revd. E.V. Mason, Vicar of Dorney, vice-chairman of the School Board, informed him that a School Board had been elected and a site for school Buildings fixed upon. It also revealed that the present uncertificated mistress would be giving up her post on 21st June and asked if the Board could engage a certificated mistress from that date to carry on school in the present premises which the proprietor was willing to lend until the completion of the new buildings, the mistress to be paid out of the school pence. The Revd. E.V. Mason's letter went on: "I take the liberty of troubling you with this query on account of my inability to procure sufficient funds from voluntary contributions to carry on the work of elementary education in the interim".

Mr Hodgson replied on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1875, "Their Lordships will not object to the School being carried on in the old building until a new School is built. If you would inform my Lords when a certificated Teacher is appointed we will communicate with you on the subject of an Annual Grant."

By the end of 1875 the Clerk to the Board was able to report that matters were proceeding satisfactorily. The Public Works Loan had been approved, repayable by fifty equal yearly instalments of principal and interest. The Accounts of the Board to Michaelmas last had been duly audited by George Barnes, Esq., District Auditor, and found correct, but the amount due from the Overseers of the Parish of Boveney had not yet been paid, so the Chairman undertook to communicate with the overseers upon the subject.

By the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1876 the Seal of the Board had been affixed to the contract with Mr. Almond and work on the new School buildings commenced.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART V

By the summer of 1837 a good solid building made up of a School-room, a Board-room and a School-house had been erected by Mr. G. Almond, the builder from Burnham. From an old plan, kindly supplied by Colonel Victor Wildish, the present owner of the School and School-house, we can see that there was also a playground with a fence down the middle to separate the Boys from the Girls and Infants. The school doors opened straight out on to the Common but on the opposite side of the road there was a large pond where the Memorial Ground now stands. Of course the roads in those days were only muddy cart-tracks as proved by an item in the Minute Book recording the provision of "3 common scrapers".

There was an old well in the Girls' Playground and at the bottom of both playgrounds were some things quite new to most of the children, for Dorney School was one of the first village schools to be provided with this new invention. Mr. Almond had built a cess-pool and a Mr. Edmund Perfect had been appointed, at a salary of £1 per annum, to pump the water twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays and flush the toilets. This was a great improvement on the old earth closets the children were using in their own homes. Most of them lived in the old brick and timber Tudor cottages grouped around Court Farm and Manor Farm in the north-west corner of the Common, or in the old cottages along the side of Village Road and Boveney Road, or in the similar old Tudor cottages facing on to Lake End Green, as it was then called. There was a large ditch running alongside Village Road, emptying itself into a large pond near Pond House and Lodge Farm, in fact Dorney itself was still an island intersected by a network of ditches, small streams and ponds or lakes, especially when the floods came, which were quite frequent. The roads had to be built up and maintained by the two Parish Surveyors, elected annually at the Easter Vestry Meeting, but as the Lord of the Manor was usually one of these he supplied most of the gravel needed as in the past. Later on the County Council took over this responsibility.

Lake End Road was only a cart-track, it turned sharp left when it reached the Pineapple Inn and followed the bridle path down Ashford Lane, which was then called the Back Lane, skirted the "Auld Field" and finished up at West Town Farm where Mr. Trumper, a farmer and substantial land-owner, lived. There had been another Common called West Town Common which lay just behind the farm but the cottages and inhabitants of this little hamlet had disappeared by 1876. There was another exit from Lake End Green, however, by means of a bridge over Roundmoor Ditch and this led to Burnham Abbey and Huntercombe Manor. That was as far as the catchment area of the new school extended.

Miss J.A. Clark a Certificated Teacher, had been appointed on 9th July, 1876 at a salary of £70 per annum with furnished residence in the School House, and on 18th October a Miss Bessie Perrin was appointed as a Pupil Teacher at a salary of £10 per annum. Under a Bye-law sanctioned by the Queen on 14th September, 1876, (No. 2202) the Managers were empowered to notify employers and parents that it was their duty "to cause every child not less than 5 and not more than 12 years old to attend school unless reasonable excuse for non-attendance could be produced." Large copies of this Notice were put up in the Church porches, and smaller notices, were distributed from house to house.

So the new school began with approximately 75 children paying 2d. per week in School Fees and the inhabitants of Dorney and Boveney paying a School Rate of 10d in the £.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART VI

During the autumn of 1876 the Schoolmistress, Miss J .A. Clark, the Pupil-teacher, Miss Bessie Perrin, and their pupils gradually settled themselves down in their new school and, bit by bit, the new furniture arrived. In the main this consisted of a school cupboard, made by Mr. Kelly at a cost of £2.0s.0d. and one six-foot desk and two nine-foot desks costing £5.12s.8d., also made by Mr. Kelly. These would probably have been for the older pupils as the infants and younger children would have sat on the steps of the gallery built around the class-room. It must be remembered that at that time the other room was reserved for the meetings of the School Board members and their Clerk. So, if you had been able to peep into the school-room in those days, you would have found 75 children of all ages from 3 to 12 years grouped around the room, being taught by Miss Clark, Miss Bessie Perrin and a monitress, for it was the monitorial system that was used then.

Miss Clark must have been an exceptional teacher, however, for at the Annual Inspection in December, 1877, she obtained the highest Grant from the Education Department in the history of the school. The Duke of Newcastle's Commission, which was set up in 1858, had instituted a Revised Code in 1862 which recommended that every child in a school should be examined by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who should then draft a detailed report at the conclusion of his visit and submit it to the Education Department at Whitehall. The amount of Grant for each school was to be assessed in accordance with the character of this report.

This system of individual examination and payment by results was entirely uneducational and became very unpopular with teachers. It was nevertheless continued for many years until it finally disappeared in the early years of this present century.

Children in Standard I (age 6) had to be able to write on a slate figures up to 20, name figures up to 20, and add and subtract numbers up to 20 orally. They also had to be able to write on a slate from dictation letters, small, capital and manuscript, and to read a narrative involving mono-syllabic words.

By the age of 11 (Standard VI) they were required to write down on paper sums involving compound rules of money, weights and measures including bills of parcels. They had to be able to read an ordinary paragraph in a newspaper or similar journal or book, and they were expected to be able to write out another paragraph, slowly dictated once, a few words at a time.

The Inspectors had to adhere to their own regulations and instructions that had been laid down in the Revised Code, and they went as follows:

"You will begin with writing and arithmetic, and you will direct the teachers to see all who are to be examined under Standard I have before them a slate and a pencil; under Standards II and III, a slate, pencil and a reading book; all under Standards IV - VI, a half-sheet of folio paper, a pen, ink and the appropriate reading book. You are then to call, 'Standard I, stand up throughout the school' When the children had been checked according to the Register, the Inspector then had to call out, 'Standard I, sit down and write on your slate as I dictate.' And so it went on, exactly the same in every school.

Later on other subjects like needle-work for girls and drawing for boys were examined for extra Grant but in the beginning the emphasis was on the three 'R's'.

Naturally Miss Clark asked for a share of the Grant and the Board agreed to give her one fifth, but she did not think that was sufficient so she gave in her notice.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART VII

At their meeting on 30th September, 1878 the members of the School Board received quite a shock when their Clerk read out the letter from Miss Clark, the Schoolmistress, giving three months notice, but that was not all. Miss Bessie Perrin, the pupil-teacher, also handed in her notice of resignation. This galvanised them into action and they advertised immediately for a Schoolmistress at a salary of £45 per annum plus half the Grant (far more than Miss Clark had asked for) - also for a pupil-teacher, at a salary of £10 per annum. Both were to reside in the School House which was partially furnished by the School Board.

In addition to all these troubles they had lost the services of Captain Watson and Mrs. Mason, both experienced members. They had been replaced at the Triennial Elections in March by Mr. William Trumper, a local land-owner and Mr. George White, a tenant-farmer who was the brother of Mr. Thomas White. Captain Watson must have had some fear of losing his seat for he had persuaded the Board to put up extra notice of the Election on the School Door besides the usual church doors in order to "give rate-payers a more reasonable chance of seeing the Notices" as he put it. He had been running a Sunday School in the School-room for the past year or so at an annual rental of £4. However, this is not the end of Captain Watson as we hear of him later (promoted to Major) in connection with a dispute about school attendances. The new Board acted in haste and by the end of November they had agreed to the appointment of a Mrs. Barker, of Halesworth, Suffolk, as Schoolmistress, together with the appointment of Mr. Barker, her husband, as Stipendiary Monitor. This appointment they were to regret bitterly later on.

Barker, totally unqualified, was a rogue; we would call him a con-man nowadays. His first move in January 1879 was to get his wife to put in a request for more household furniture and materials for the school. He also offered to undertake the cleaning and to supervise the state of repair of the school for the sum of £1.5s.0d. per quarter. The next request in February was for a Pupil-teacher but the Board countered this by saying that they did not consider an appointment necessary until there was an average attendance of 100 children. So what did the resourceful Mr. Barker do?

He volunteered to undertake the duties of Attendance Officer providing a form of agreement was drawn up which allowed him to claim remuneration if his efforts in this field did not result in the employment of a Pupil-teacher. By this time the Education Department had doubts about Mr. Barker's qualifications and refused to allow him to be employed as a Stipendiary Monitor at £2.10s.0d. per quarter but only as a Temporary Monitor at 1s.0d. per week.

By this time the Board had spent £10.8s.9d. on Household Furniture, £11.4s.5d. on School Furniture, £10.16.0d. on Books and Stationery and £4.8s.0d. on materials and found itself overdrawn at the Bank by the amount of £36. Coming to its senses the Board resolved to check the amount of stock and put a stop to the Barkers' free spending. Their first act was to call the Schoolmaster's attention to the large amount of blotting paper in stock. It is interesting to note that by this time he was being called the Schoolmaster! But they were beginning to question his activities and they directed him to furnish a list of School Fees in arrears. They also ordered him to payout of his own pocket, for a Toilet Service he had ordered in the name of the Board. We shall come back to Mr. Barker and his activities later on. Another problem was exercising the minds of the members of the Board, that of attendance.

They had been rather lax in enforcing regular attendance and Captain Watson had sent a letter to the Education Department pointing this out. Other schools in the area were awarding medals and certificates for good attendance, but not Dorney.



## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART VIII

According to a file in the Public Records Office (ref. Ed. 2/18) a letter dated October 20th, 1879, was received from Major Watson of Dorney House complaining about the School Board's lack of diligence in securing the attendance of children at school. He claimed that during the last year there had been 28 children who had attended the school very irregularly, some had been absent 19 and a half weeks out of the 40 weeks the school was open and some had even been absent as much as 33 and a half weeks. He pointed out that this poor attendance would jeopardize the Schoolmistress' Certificate and seriously reduce the Annual Grant. He also pointed out that 6 of the absentees had been occasionally employed by two members of the Board, Mr. Thomas White and Mr. George White – furthermore the Board had failed to appoint a proper attendance officer.

The School Board, in reply to the Education Department, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1879, pointed out that the district was a poor agricultural one and the Education Act pressed very heavily on rate-payers: the school rate was upwards of 10d in the £1. The low school attendance had been chiefly caused by the singularly trying season to all engaged in agricultural pursuits. The Chairman of the Board, Sir Charles Palmer, had gone round to parents impressing on them the necessity for regular attendance. In actual fact Major Watson had been asked if he would like to take on the post of Attendance Officer! However, by February 1880 Mr. Martin, the Eton Attendance Officer, had been appointed to include Dorney and Boveney in his area at a salary of £5 per annum. The Clerk to the Board, Mr. Charles Dean, promised to be more diligent and the matter appeared to have been settled. But a further letter of complaint was sent by Major Watson on 7th August, 1880, saying that the Attendance Officer appointed by the Board in February had not been seen in the district since 5th April, the attendance at the school in the previous week was 20 instead of 80, and one member of the Board was still employing children contrary to Statute.

The Clerk to the Board replied that an outbreak of scarlatina had forced them to close the school for the greater part of the summer, and when the school was re-opened they were reluctant to compel the children to attend. So the Department asked the H.M.I., Mr. Kenney Herbert, to make a special report on the case "which seems to be a very serious case of neglect of duty" - adding "you had perhaps better see Major Watson and ascertain from him whether, if we declare the School Board to be in default, he could find five persons willing to act upon appointment by the Department."

Kenney Herbert's report on 6th December, 1880, stated:"Until quite recently there can be no doubt that no attempt has been made to make the children attend school." The Board failed to see that the Attendance Officer, Mr. Barker, appointed in February 1879, did his work. But things changed after a meeting in September, 1880, when the members of the Board seemed to recognise their responsibilities; they had carried out two prosecutions and had three more pending, and, in fact, attendance was better. Furthermore, a new Attendance Officer, Mr. Jones, of Burnham, was to be appointed in December, 1880. The Board had acted foolishly but had had a lot to contend with and much feeling was aroused by Major Watson's sudden attack on them.

Mr. Kenney Herbert went on "I believe that Mr. Barker has tried to make matters as bad as they could be so as to strengthen the Major's hand and he has succeeded!

I have the meanest opinion of Mr. Barker and believe that he has been trying to make his own position secure when the Major gets into power. Had he extended himself at all or tried to aid instead of hinder the position would have been much different. The School Board said Mr. Barker didn't give the Attendance Officer lists of children absent from school. The Board is now determined to do its duty, I should therefore strongly advise that it should have the chance, but that it should be severely reprimanded and warned.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART IX

Shortly after the School Board had received the severe reprimand and warning from the Education Department the Vice-Chairman, the Rev. E.V. Mason, felt compelled to resign his seat on the Board. Major Watson must have known, for at the same meeting the Board received a letter from him asking them to co-opt him. The members, however, decided to ask Mr. E. Groves, the village postmaster, to fill the vacancy. All this took place in December, 1880, and with the close of the old year the members hoped that they could put their troubles behind them. But this was not to be, there was more trouble ahead, once again involving the Barkers.

Complaints against Mr. Barker had been lodged on 27th February, 1880, by Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Perfect, stating that their children had been punished by "The Master" and sent away from school. The Board directed their Clerk to inform "The Schoolmaster" that the punishment of the Girls must be left to the Schoolmistress, and that children were not to be suspended without the order of the Board. On 25th June Mrs. Bunce attended the Board Meeting and complained of the ill-treatment of her children by Mr. Barker.

Mr. Barker's response to this was that he was thinking of leaving such a school as this and it might be at any time that he thought fit. The Clerk reminded him of the terms of his Agreement, but by December, 1880, the Board had had enough of Mr. and Mrs. Barker and it was decided unanimously to terminate their engagement and advertise for a Schoolmistress and a Pupil Teacher.

Twenty-three applications were received and a short list of six was drawn up. At the meeting Mr. and Mrs. Barker were interviewed about the claims they were making on the Board, but Mr. Barker became so abusive and impertinent that he was ultimately required to withdraw. This he did with very bad grace, saying that Mrs. Barker was ill and upset and he would not allow her to come into the school again. This was no idle threat because on the 4th day of March, 1881, the Monday after the previous Friday's meeting, the pupils arrived at the school only to find the gates and the doors locked, and Mr. and Mrs. Barker nowhere to be seen - they had done "a moonlight flit" and taken the keys with them. Too add insult to injury, Mr. Barker had left a note for the Clerk saying that as Mrs. Barker was unable to continue her duties any longer she requested payment of £25 in respect of loss of Government Grant!

The Clerk was directed to report the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Barker to the Education Department and a locksmith, Mr. Graveney, of Slough was contacted. It was not until the following day, however, that he was able to gain access to the school, and it cost the Board £4.8s.11d. To make matters worse, the keys were sent back with the School House keys in a parcel containing a very cheeky letter from Mr. Barker. This arrived the next day and in it the Barkers claimed a week's salary. Board members were incensed at this but their fury had no bounds when the Clerk told them that the Barkers had retained some of the pupils' School Fees. But they got their revenge when a Revd. A.H. Rodgers wrote to them asking for a Testimonial or Reference on the Barkers. The Clerk was instructed to write a very detailed letter back which in no way could be called a Reference or Testimonial.

The Board members were greatly relieved when Miss Clara Greenhough and her sister Miss Emmeline Greenhough accepted the positions of Schoolmistress and Pupil Teacher and set about re-organising the school. Their first act was to get the Board to appoint Miss R. Quarterman as Monitress at 1s.0d. per week, then they got the permission of the Board to order new furniture, needlework materials, and various items of equipment. They also persuaded the Board to appoint a cleaner, a Mrs. Ann Ilsey. This lady's duties were to sweep the school once a week and scrub and clean it once a quarter at a salary of £3 per quarter, and out of this money she had to provide her own cleaning materials. Fortunately for her, Mr. Perfect was still pumping the water to the closets twice a week for 10s.0d. Later on this became a part of the cleaner's duties.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART X

From 1880 onwards, with the progressive Miss Clara Greenhough in charge ably assisted by her sister Miss Emmeline Greenhough as Pupil Teacher together with the Monitress Rosie Quarterman, the school was run very well. There were only one or two complaints for the Board Members to deal with.

In November 1883, their attention was called to the remarks made by Her Majesty's Inspector at the recent Inspection that the Education Department intended, for the future, strictly to enforce the Regulation that Registers should be checked by surprise visits paid by a Member of the Board to the School at least once a month.

In December 1883, the District Auditor, G. E. Darrock, Esq., called attention to the imperfect manner in which the School Fees Account and Stock and Stores Account had been kept by the Schoolmistress.

In March 1884, the subject of the deficient school accommodation was discussed by H. M. Inspector in his Report and a list of the children in attendance was called for by the Board Members. This was submitted by the Schoolmistress and it appeared that, after deducting the number of children residing without the District and also those under five years of age, the accommodation would, by making use of the Board Room for teaching purposes, be ample.

On 10th May the Education Department sanctioned the use of the Board Room as a Classroom to accommodate 20 children. It is not clear whether this original Board Room was the small room on the west side of the School Buildings or whether it was in fact the large room in the front of the School House, this was the case in several schools in Buckinghamshire.

A letter dated 6th. March 1885, from the Education Department stated that the Auditor had called attention, in his Report, to the accumulation of arrears of School Fees since the year 1877 and that there would appear to be no advantage in retaining such irrecoverable fees upon the books of the Board and it was Resolved that all arrears standing on the books on 30th. September 1884 should be struck off.

Unfortunately at the end of that month Miss Clara Greenhough fell ill and it was necessary for both her and her sister to resign their positions. The Clerk to the Board advertised the posts in "The Schoolmistress", "The Guardian" and "The School Board Chronicle", and received 30 applications.

NOTE- Even as recently as 1948 when I was a probationer teacher Registers were most important, almost the Holy of Holies, and woe betide any teacher who could not keep them accurately and get the numbers to tally when he added them vertically and horizontally at the end of the term. Most teachers kept that magic little cardboard box in their desks or their brief-cases. In it were two small phials of chemicals, which when used in the right order, could erase without a trace any blue or red ink. I can also well remember the un-announced visits by the Managers who came each month to inspect the Class Registers and then sign in the correct space. The Register Summary Books were the first to disappear, these were kept by the Head-Teacher, then the number of attendances out of a possible total disappeared from the Termly Pupil's Report Sheet. Likewise these statistics on the pupil's Official Record Card were left off together with lots of other important details. I see there is now a trend to get back to keeping fuller records but I doubt if we will ever get back to keeping those really detailed Stock and Stores Books. There was one for Consumable Items and this meant counting all the pencils, rubbers, rulers, crayons, exercise books, paper etc. on the 31st March. Strangely enough scissors were entered on the Permanent Stock and Stores Book, these were called "desirable" articles and I must admit they did seem to disappear for no reason at all, and not just wear out.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL- PART XI

The new Headmistress, Miss Emma Edwards, took over in July, 1885, and brought with her a friend, Miss Jane Roseveare, as Assistant Teacher. Miss Lily Moore was appointed Monitress but soon found herself promoted to Pupil Teacher when Miss Roseveare resigned after a few months. Miss Jane Todman was then brought in as a Monitress.

In 1887 Dr. Waters was elected Manager in place of Mr. Thomas White and about the same time a famous name appeared in the Minute Book.

He was the Master of the Eton Union Workhouse, Mr. Sinkins, who raised the well-known Mrs. Sinkins Pink. It was the practice in those days to set the tramps, vagrants or "casuals" as they were known to chopping wood into small sticks which were called faggots and Mr. Sinkins supplied these to Dorney School for use in the stoves.

Round about this time the development of the district known then as Boveney New Town had begun on the Eton wick side of Dorney Common on the North side of Eton Wick Road or Tilston Lane as it was then known. H.M. Inspectors were worried about the growth of the child population there. Should the United District School Board of Dorney and Boveney be responsible for the education of these children or should they go to the nearer Church School of Eton Wick?

However the problem was solved temporarily when the inhabitants of Eton Wick decided to raise a voluntary subscription of £1100 for a new school that would cater for the Girls and Infants and still remain a Church School. The site was given by the Crown and building commenced in the summer and by March 1899, the school was completed and the problem was solved for a time. Most of the boys over the age of seven went to the Porney School in Eton. The Dorney Board of Managers had got themselves into a lot of expense because of the Barkers and in 1887 had to issue two Rating Precepts on the Overseers of Dorney and Boveney. This was unusual as they normally issued just the one Precept each year, but this time the demand was for £66 both in March and August from Dorney and £34 from Boveney in the same months. One rate-payer, the Revd. R.F. Ramsey who lived in Boveney did not take too kindly to this increased expenditure, as we shall see later on. Thinking she could help matters the Headmistress drew attention to the fact that very young children were being brought to the school so the Managers wrote to the Department of Education inquiring whether the Board would be justified in refusing admission to children under 5 years of age.

Here is the Department's reply:-

Sir,

Adverting to your letter of the 28th ultimo, I am directed to state that the admission or rejection of children under 3 years of age rests with the Board who should however consider that, if such little ones are kept at home, elder children must often be kept to look after them. A refusal to admit children between 5 and 3 years would be held by their Lordships to be an infraction of Article 89 of the Code.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servant.

"S. Hodgson"

C.F. Dean, Esq.. Clerk to the School Board of Dorney School. Slough Bucks.

The Managers understood the message and resolved that after the next Examination had taken place no children would be admitted into the school under the age of 3 years.

In April, 1887, the School lost a good friend when Sir. C.J. Palmer. The Chairman of the Board since its formation felt it necessary to resign because of ill-health.

Dr. Waters took over the Chairmanship with Mr. William Trumper as Vice Chairman.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL – PART XII

At the meeting of the School Board on the 10th October, 1887, Miss Emma Edwards gave notice of her intended resignation and a letter of application for the post of Head Teacher was received from Miss H.M. page. It was agreed that Miss Page should commence duties at the beginning of the next term, which she did, but in March 1888, a further letter was received from Miss Page informing the Board that she had failed to pass the examinations that would have qualified her to take charge of the school. The Board were bound to ensure that a fully qualified teacher was in charge of the school otherwise they would lose the Grant and recognition, so an advertisement was immediately placed in the educational papers. This advertisement attracted 98 applications and the result was that Miss S. Askew was appointed Head Teacher as from 24th March, 1888, and life proceeded smoothly at the school once again, in fact a qualified Assistant Teacher, Miss Lyne, was appointed in the place of Miss Todman, the Monitress.

But at the Meeting of the School Board on the 5th June 1889, the members received a shock when the Clerk reported that:-

"An Inspector of the Local Government Board had been deputed to hold a Government Inquiry at the Eton Union Workhouse, Slough, upon an application under the Divided Parishes Act to take away that portion of the School Board District now known as New Town Eton Wick and to attach the same to the parish of Eton and as it was considered that the effect of such order, if made, would be injurious to the interests of this Board, Mr. Dean, the Clerk, was specially instructed to act as Solicitor for the Board at the usual professional remuneration and to obtain evidence in opposition to the application and to attend the Inquiry and use every effort to oppose the order being granted."

It must be remembered that in the middle of the Nineteenth Century the areas of many parishes and townships were of a chaotic complexity. They had detached parts in the middle of other parishes and many of them were ridiculously small in area and population. For instance Dorney had a detached portion in Burnham known as Dorney Wood and so had Boveney, its outlying portion being known as Boveney Wood. No doubt in Mediaeval Times this enabled the riverside dwellers to obtain their fuel and many of the South Buckinghamshire parishes were long and narrow stretching from the River Thames to the Burnham Beeches. More intriguing still was the fact that Boveney itself consisted of two parts down in the river valley, Upper Boveney and Lower Boveney. What is now known as the hamlet of Lake End was then marked on the maps as Upper Boveney. But things were more complex than that, for Boveney itself was known as the Liberty of Boveney within the Parish of Burnham. No wonder the Government with the Divided Parishes Acts of 1876, 1879 and 1882 were trying to bring some order into this chaos. Between 1883 and 1889 one thousand, nine hundred and four detached parts of parishes had been eliminated, one hundred and eighty four parishes absorbed and twenty three new parishes created.

The Board succeeded in fighting off this challenge from the township of Eton but the problem arose again in 1899 as we shall see.

In the meantime the Members of the Board had to deal with problems nearer home. One of the reasons for Miss Edwards' resignation was that she did not relish the fact that she had to light the school fires, even for the extra remuneration of 3d. per week. So when Miss Page took over the running of the school the Board appointed a new school cleaner whose duties included the lighting of the fires. This was a Mrs. Binfield, but unfortunately her work did not come up to the expectations of the Head Teacher or the Members of the Board. So the Board looked around for the perfect person to look after the school and their efforts resulted in the appointment of Mrs. A. Oxlade as School Cleaner. A link between this old Dorney family and the school has lasted for over 100 years to the obvious advantage of the school.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XIII

Under Miss Askew's leadership the school grew in numbers and in stature and even began to draw an extra grant for the teaching of Drawing, and attracted comments like "Excellent" from Her Majesty's Inspector.

In 1891 school fees payable by the parents were dropped and the Board received a grant from the Government instead. But the expenditure on books and materials continued to rise and the Annual Precept on the combined district of Dorney and Boveney rose to £100 or more. In November 1891 Mr. George Francis White died and his place on the School Board was taken by the Revd. James Archer. The next month Miss Lyne and Miss Wright, Assistant Teachers, resigned and Miss Daisy Lillywhite was engaged as Pupil Teacher, but in March 1892 Miss Askew left. In April Miss Jane Trotter and her sister Miss Annie Trotter took up the posts of Head Teacher and Assistant Teacher, and the school looked set for another period of steady progress.

However for the next four years the members of the Board had to conduct a running battle with the owners of what was then called Dorney Sewage Farm. It is interesting to note that under various names and titles this sewage works has figured prominently in the Agenda of the Dorney Parish Council ever since. But in those days it was difficult for the Board to complain directly to the owners, for it was under the control of the Eton Union Sanitary Board [or some years and then it came under the Slough Urban Authority, but all correspondence had to be sent to the Local Government Board in London. The School Board members persisted in making their complaints, and on 25th September 1892 one of the Local Government Board's Inspectors reported that "there was improper disposition of sewage on the land." It must be remembered that in those days there was no industrial effluent such as lead, zinc or cadmium in the sewage, and it was just the natural sewage that was scattered on the fields around Manor Farm. The result was that the Board instructed that the sewage should be ploughed in immediately and that fields at a further distance from the school should be used in future. But to add to the difficulties of the Head Teacher a pig-sty was built next to the school fence, so she decided to send the children on to the Common for their play, saying it was more healthy, and she gave the school cleaner's husband permission to dig up the play-ground and use it as an allotment. This action, of course, brought the School Inspector into the fight, and he ordered that the pig-sty should be removed and that the play-ground should be levelled and gravelled. It cost 6s.0d. for the levelling and £1 for the gravel, but the problem was solved for the time being.

About this time the School Room became very popular as a centre for Evening Entertainments. The first letter, dated 28th October 1892, was received from Mr. Lewis Lowman, Secretary of the Eton Wick Minstrel Troupe, applying for the use of the School Room on 4th November. Application was granted upon a payment of 2s.6d.

A month later the Revd James Archer paid 5s.0d. for the use of the School Room for Entertainment, and in February 1893 Mr. Palmer applied for its use on three consecutive evenings, and later we hear of a Club in Burnham applying.

On 5th February 1893 a Circular was received from the Education Department informing the Board of the Elementary Education Act which provided for the age of exemption from school attendance to be 11 and not 10, as previously existed. This was to be enforced as from 1st January 1894. This was the year that the Local Government Act of 1894, popularly known as the Parish Councils Act, came into operation and an important meeting was held at the School to discuss this. The result was that Boveney with its growing population in New Town and a population of over 300 was allowed to form a Parish Council, and Dorney with a smaller population was not; it had to wait until 1928.

The inhabitants of Boveney New Town now began to play a more important part in the running of the School for a few years. In the Triennial Election for the School Board in 1896, a New Town man topped the poll as shown:

|                          |                     |         |            |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|------------|
| Mr. Charles Ayres        | 1 Shakespeare Place | Boveney | Labourer   |
| Mr. John Robert Lane     | Fern Cottage        | Boveney | Carpenter  |
| John William Moore, Esq. | Primrose Villa      | Boveney | Gentleman  |
| Mr. Edward Groves        | Post Office         | Dorney  | Postmaster |
| Dr. J. H. Waters         |                     | Dorney  | Physician  |

Truly one could say that the old order changeth, yielding place to new.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XIV

At the meeting of the School Board on the 22nd February, 1897, Mr. Ayres reported that about 12 children resident in Boveney New Town were attending the Eton Wick and Eton Schools and that it was rumoured the Managers of those schools were intending to refuse admission to these children. In view of this information the Clerk to the Board was instructed to advise the members, at their next meeting, as to the exact position.

At the next meeting he produced a letter from the Education Department stating that in the event of the Boveney New Town children being refused admission to the Eton and Eton Wick Schools it would devolve upon the Board of the United District of Dorney and Boveney to provide the necessary accommodation. So the members decided to let the matter stand until something of a definite nature arose.

At the meeting of the 27th September 1897, the Clerk reported that he had supplied Mr. G.L. Vaughan, Chairman of the Eton Wick Parish Council, with information as to the formation of the United District and the Board etc., in connection with the proposed union of Boveney and Eton Wick. His action was approved.

The members hoped that this was the end of the matter but two years later on 25th September 1899, they heard from the Education Department that Her Majesty's Inspector, Mr. Kenney Herbert had drawn their attention to the problem, which was "Should the United School Board of Dorney and Boveney be responsible for the children living on the other side of the Common, to all intents and purposes in Eton Wick?" Correspondence in the Public Records Office, Ref. Ed2/18 shows that in a letter addressed to the Education Department, dated 6th August 1899, Mr. Kenney Herbert had drawn their attention to an outlying portion of Burnham Parish called New Town Boveney which was adjacent to the parish of Eton Wick. He goes on to say that the school at Eton Wick is only large enough to take the girls of New Town but not the Infants. He points out that 20-30 infants are running about New Town who would be at school if places could be found for them. Enlargement of the Infant School at Eton Wick would settle the matter but the Managers of that school are not prepared to go to the expense which they thought ought to be borne by the United District of Dorney and Boveney.

To be fair to the Managers of Dorney School they, in their correspondence with the Education Department, stated that there was sufficient accommodation for these infants in their school. But obviously the Education Department was thinking about the distance these infants would have to walk, for in their reply to the R.M.I. they asked, "Is there any person who you can name as likely to give information about the prospect of voluntary provision in New Town before we issue any notice?"

Mr. Kenney Herbert replied that the Vicar of Burnham, the Rev. R.F. Ramsay, should be approached. This is the Rev. Ramsey's reply: - "I have to remark that this district of New Town, just outside the parish of Eton is not in the civil parish of Burnham. Several inhabitants of Eton are in the habit of calling it New Town, Burnham, but it is in fact in the parish of Boveney and as a ratepayer of Boveney I happen to know that Boveney is included in the School Board District of Dorney. This has been the case, to my knowledge, for 21 years. If the school at Dorney has not room for the superfluous children it will be for that School Board to consider..... Difficulties may be alleged as to the infants walking across Dorney Common to school. But I submit that this difficulty should have been foreseen when the Boveney ratepayers were made to contribute to the expense of Dorney School. Not less than 2 of the 5 members of the Dorney School Board actually reside in New Town.... the parishioners of Burnham have made considerable efforts and sacrifices to supply adequate accommodation and good schooling by voluntary effort and we should respectfully claim the fullest consideration before any order were made for the formation of a School Board for us." 8th September 1899. The next step the Education Dept took was to ask for a census to be taken of all the children aged between 3 and 7 years and where they were living.

Final completed figures were:-

December 1899

Dorney 13

Boveney 8

New Town 44

After Dorney School Board had said that there was plenty of accommodation for the infants of Boveney New Town and that the road across the Dorney Common had been much improved in the last two years the matter was dropped. However, on close examination of the Minutes of the Board it was noticeable that the number of proceedings taken against parents living in New Town for the irregularity in attendance of their children increased in the following two or three years.

In the meantime the children had been presented with Diamond Jubilee Cards of Congratulation to Her Majesty the Queen on her record reign as Sovereign. This was by courtesy of Messrs. Raphael Tuck, the card and book manufacturers. On the 25th June, 1897, the children were conveyed to the Home Park, Windsor to the Diamond Jubilee Treat. The carts were supplied by Mr. Allen of Manor Farm, Mr. Simco of Lodge Farm and Mr. Montague of Dorney.

Miss Jane Trotter and her sister left in June 1897, and the school went through a bad patch. A Miss Greenly was appointed as Headmistress but she was very difficult to get on with and two Assistant Mistresses left in a hurry. Finally the managers summarily dismissed Miss Greenly in December. The school remained closed until 8th February, 1898, when the managers were very relieved to welcome back the two Misses Trotter at an increased salary for Miss Jane Trotter.



## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XV

At the Triennial Elections in March, 1899, the Revd J. Archer of Dorney was elected in the place of Mr. J.L. Moore of Boveney so the Dorney representatives were once again forming the majority on the Board. Shortly afterwards we find that the Rates precepts made upon the Overseers were reversed and the Boveney Overseers found themselves obliged to pay more than the Dorney Overseers, presumably this was because of the greatly increased population in Boveney New Town, £54 as against Dorney's £51.

It gives one sane idea of the value of money in those days when one reads that a Tortoise stove was installed in the Infant class-room for the sum of £2.6s.1d by Messrs. Wellman Bros. The year 1901 found the Clerk to the Board writing two letters of condolence, one was to the Home Secretary asking him to convey the sympathy of the Board to His Majesty King Edward VII on the death of his mother, Queen Victoria. The other letter was to Sir Charles Palmer expressing condolence on the death of the Dowager Lady Palmer who had been a great friend to the school and to the children. Also in 1901 the Board of Education was asking teachers to teach children how to help their parents in filling in the Census Forms. Miss Trotter confirmed to the Board that she had duly given lessons on this subject to the children. Another circular letter from the Board of Education reminds one of the poor artificial light there was available in the cottages during the dark evenings if one wanted to read or fill in forms. This letter reminded teachers of the serious accidents caused by petroleum (paraffin) lamps and suggested that object lessons upon the proper treatment and care of lamps should be given to the older children. Miss Trotter duly carried out this instruction and gave out 50 copies of a list of suggestions which had been supplied to her.

Great changes were in the offing however and at the Meeting of the Board on the 27th April a Notice was received from the Buckinghamshire County Council stating that September 30th next had been fixed for the Appointed Day for Part III (Elementary Education) of the Education Act, 1902. This Education Act came into operation in March 1903. It had the effect of making education an integral part of the work of Local Government. Nearly 3,000 School Boards were swept away, and direct access to Whitehall of over 14,000 bodies of management of voluntary schools was abolished. Now the Board of Education was to deal with 328 Local Education Authorities, a tremendous advantage for purposes of administration and for bringing about uniform educational standards.

In July the Board was asked to nominate four Managers to the governing body of the County Council School, which had been given the Number C21. The nominations were:- Dr. J.H. Waters and Mr. E. Groves for Dorney and Mr. R.J. Lane and Mr. C. Ayres for Boveney, the remaining two vacancies were filled by appointees of the Buckinghamshire County Council Education Committee and these were the Revd. J. Archer and Mrs. Louise Nottage.

Finally a letter of the 27th August from the Buckinghamshire County Education Committee requested that all liabilities of the Board to 29th September, 1903 should be paid. The last Meeting of the School Board for the United School District of Dorney and Boveney was held on the 28th Day of September, 1903. The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Board to Mr. Jones, the Attendance Officer, for his good work and regretted his enforced severance. In letters to each other the Headmistress and the Chairman congratulated each other on the good works they had performed and expressed their good wishes for the future. The Chairman tendered the Thanks of the Board to its Clerk, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Webb made a suitable reply. Finally the Chairman, Dr. Waters, expressed his gratitude to his fellow Members for their hearty co-operation in the work of the Board, and on the proposition of Mr. E. Groves a Vote of Thanks was passed to Dr. Waters for the able way in which he had carried out the duties of Chairman for so many years.

After this brief interlude of mutual congratulations the Board returned to the practical business of winding up their existence as the biggest spender of the rates in the area.

The Clerk was instructed to inform Mr. A J Heald, the Assistant Overseer of Dorney and Boveney, that the Rates of the two Parishes should be credited by the County Committee by the Grants which would shortly fall due in respect of the School.

Finally the letter was read from the Buckinghamshire County Education Committee asking for all Deeds belonging to the Board to be sent to them. .The Clerk was instructed to send these Deeds without delay - and so ended the final meeting of the Board ,and incidentally we have come to the end of Minute Book 2 of the Dorney Boveney School Board. For the rest of the history of the School we have to rely on rough notes made by the Clerk which take us up to 1915, a School Log Book which commences in 1927, a Minute Book of the Managers commencing 1931, and some accounts of various happenings that were committed to paper by Miss Bennett who was Headmistress from 1919.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XVI

By the time the County Councils took over the running of the Board Schools, buildings and furniture which had been acceptable in the 19th Century were beginning to be called in question.

The high galleries, often thrown together by the village carpenter, had continued for many years to confine the infants to their weary seats. In 1904 the County Council had obtained some of the new folding desks, and these were available for inspection by Managers. By the next year the Managers of Dorney School were proposing that the gallery should be done away with and by 1906 three Infant desks had been purchased for the cost of £1. 1s. 7d.

The school was enlarged about that time to take a maximum number of 104 children, and it is likely that the cloakrooms were built also.

In an Education Committee Report of 1904 we find that "Sanction was asked for the Expenditure of a sum not exceeding one farthing in the pound for Higher Education in the following year". In the same year the total estimate for Elementary Education was £100,000, of which £72,000 went in teachers' salaries. These were the days of "half-timers" for boys over 12 engaged in agriculture and it must be admitted many farmers looked on children as a source of cheap labour. Epidemics, too, tended to neutralize the efforts of the School Attendance Officer. Measles, Whooping cough and scarlet fever, spread by nature's provision for the cleaning of slates (spit and a piece of rag), were regarded and treated as trifles.

There were no school meals as such in those days, and any child who came from a distance had to eat his sandwiches in the playground and was very lucky if his teacher was able to warm his drink on the top of the tortoise stove.

However, Buckinghamshire can be proud of the pioneer work which began in 1900 at Lillingstone Dayrell C.B. School in the north of the County. This school was situated in a large private estate and served a very scattered area. This prompted the Hon. Mrs. Robarts, wife of the owner of the estate, to provide a school canteen at which substantial meals were prepared at a cost of a penny a day to the children, the deficit being borne by the Robarts family. Old inhabitants remember well the estate gamekeeper calling in on a Monday morning with his catch of rabbits to be skinned and prepared for Tuesday's lunch. In other schools head teachers attempted to make packed lunches brought by their pupils into a palatable if rudimentary meal by providing a hot drink. This work was well in advance of action nationally, for it was not until 1906 that by the Education (Provision of Meals) Act Local Education Authorities were empowered to provide food for necessitous children by helping voluntary associations and expending up to the product of a halfpenny rate.

One of the first results of the Education Act of 1902 was a scholarship system giving to elementary pupils access to Secondary Schools. In 1904, for the whole county 10 Minor Scholarships were awarded, each of the annual value of £20. For entry, candidates had to be under 13 on the 1st July. On 25<sup>th</sup> September 1911 the Managers of Dorney School received a letter from Sir William Borlase's School in Marlow asking if they had any candidate to recommend for the Examination. They consulted Miss Trotter but unfortunately she had to say no. A typical Arithmetical question of these times was: If a boy runs at the rate of 2.6822 metres in a second, how many miles will he run in an hour if one mile is taken to equal 1609.32 metres?

In 1910 Dorney girls were given the opportunity to attend Cookery Lessons in the Institute at Eton Wick. They had to walk all the way across Dorney Common, but there was usually only horse drawn traffic to avoid. Although, by then, the odd motor car did come through Dorney and one girl was knocked down near the school. School signs were put up shortly afterwards.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XVII

On the 16th December 1907 the Managers of Dorney Elementary School received a letter from the Buckinghamshire Association for the use of the National Flag in Elementary Schools in the County. It expressed the hope that the Managers would consider the case for the erection of a pole and flag and hinted at the possibility of some financial help. On 30th March 1908, a circular from the Buckinghamshire County Council arrived bearing the news that all school-children would be granted a half-day's holiday on the 24th May, Empire Day. The Managers lost no time in obtaining an estimate of 6s. 6d. for a flag and £2 for the supply and erection of the pole. The Association provided £1. 10s. towards the cost and the Managers made personal subscriptions to cover the rest of the account. This flag-pole was erected in the garden in front of the School and at 11.00 a.m. on Empire Day the children were paraded in front of it to salute the flag. Patriotic songs were sung and these were followed by country dances and games, with more patriotic songs in the evening for adults. This was the pattern followed for many years. As well as the treats provided by Mrs. Palmer of Dorney Court and Mrs. Boyle of Huntercombe Manor the children still benefited from the frequent holidays granted for Royal occasions. No doubt many played truant when Buffalo Bill brought his circus to town in July, 1904 and also when Mr. Sopwith brought his aeroplane to Datchet in February 1911.

In March 1910, the Managers purchased a map of the local district to be hung on the school wall together with a map of Palestine, New Testament. At that time the County Council also had a scheme for supplying pictures to be hung on school walls, some of our older readers will remember them, no doubt. They will also remember this name, Miss E.C. Bennett. Eleanor Catherine Bennett was the longest serving Head Teacher that the school has ever had, 1919 - 1952.

This rosy cheeked young lady came from Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire and she arrived like a breath of fresh air and she transformed the school. Her soldier fiancé had been killed in the Great War. She founded the Red Cross Cadets, the Mothers' Clinic, ran the Village Library and was instrumental, with Mr. T. Quarterman, in obtaining the first Village Hall, an old wood and corrugated iron Army type hut transported from the grounds of the Windsor Hospital. But let us hear the story of her arrival in Dorney and how she found the village in 1919, just as she wrote it down for the Parish Magazine twenty four years ago.

"I came to Dorney March 1st, 1919, three months after the end of World War I.

How different the old village was then. The water supply only wells and pumps. No street lighting, only oil lamps and candles in houses and church. No public transport, so it was bicycle or walk to shop in Windsor.

Motor cars were still a novelty and horses were used on the farms and by tradesmen delivering goods. There was a village smithy where horses were shod, and one of the sights I liked best was the return of teams of horses ambling up the village after a hard days ploughing, their weary teamsters sitting side saddle on their backs.

The roads were in poor repair after the war years.

We could never have competed in a tidy village competition for the wooden garden fences were old and untidy. There were no proper side paths and no curbs.

Drainage was very primitive so water lay about in the gutters. The entrance to the village from the Common was spoilt by a rubbish dump on the piece of ground now used as a War Memorial, and the field on which the (Old) Post Office now stands was often a camping place for gipsy caravans.

In spite of these drawbacks Dorney was then as now a delightful village in which to live."

E.C.B.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XVIII

We continue this story with more excerpts from Miss Bennett's Reminiscences:

### DORNEY SCHOOL 1919

"On Sunday, March 2nd, I had a look at the school. I was not impressed by the drab walls covered by ancient maps. There were high windows, which prevented the children or teachers seeing anything outside, a swinging lamp far out of reach, a tortoise stove with a hole in the side, and worst of all, plain wood desks to seat five or six pupils with no back or foot-rests. There was no water supply and there were no wash-bowls or towels. The playground was covered with very coarse gravel.

Next morning I was in good time to meet the children. There were over forty between four and fourteen years old. During the War years the schoolboys had been allowed to work on the farms, and when they returned, were very difficult to manage. At first, also, the school had had no Head Teacher for six months, and had had irregular supply teachers so there was very little law and order. The children seemed to think I was their enemy and a target for their jokes. On the Wednesday of my first week a boy brought some mice to school, and while I was marking the register put one of them on the floor. I finished my job and stood in front of the class. Someone said, 'Oh, look, there is a mouse.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'The boy who brought it please catch it and put it out again into the field.' At the same time I was looking at the culprit. At last he got up and caught the frightened mouse in the corner. Then a small girl said, 'Aren't you afraid of mice, Miss?' 'Certainly not,' I said. 'I have always lived in the country. I like all creatures.' There was a chorus of 'But our last teacher climbed on a chair, and we thought you would too.' I laughed and so did they; then we were better friends.

I was keen on country dancing, and another thing which helped was the formation of a sword dance team, for which they had praise and pleasure. I found that the parents were ready to help when they understood that I wanted to help them and the children. I was greatly helped by my young assistant, Miss Harrison, who soon was affectionately known as the little teacher."

Miss Bennett goes on to describe some of the well-known Dorney characters of that period:

### Old Dorney Characters

There are in all villages one or two characters who are remembered for many years. Dorney had several of these when I came here in 1919.

Mr. Tugwood, the keeper of the Common gate, was one of the old school, who dressed in the Sunday clothes worn fifty or sixty years before: a black cut-away coat, much washed, tight-fitting corduroy breeches, cloth gaiters, with red handkerchief and billycock hat. Every day he stood at the Common gate, which he opened and shut for the traffic. He got a small wage augmented by tips. If a pedestrian went through with only a polite 'thank-you', the old man replied, 'I've had a pocketful of them today. 'He had a tiny hut for wet days. He continued his job until he could no longer walk up to the gate, even with two sticks.

Another well known character who lived in one of two cottages where Pond House now stands was an old lady called Granny Burrows. It was the custom for villagers of Eton Wick and Dorney to do washing for Eton College in their own homes. Mrs. Burrows had a donkey and cart to collect and deliver the washing. I remember her as the old lady with the black bonnet and shawl, sitting on a cross seat of the donkey cart, surrounded by bundles of laundry, which she took to the college two or three times a week.

Mr. Climo, the village blacksmith, carried on his trade under a spreading yew tree until horses and wagons were no longer in use on the farms. Casual workers often came to Dorney for farm work; some of them were quaint characters, who worked hard and lived rough. One easily remembered was Old Tom, who, when he had one over the eight, preached to the Common gate post. Another was Jed, who lived for several years in a caravan where the (Old) Post Office now stands, and was visited for a few days in spring and autumn by friends with a small fair, which they used to set up in the field, to the delight of the children. "

E.C.B.

As Miss Bennett writes about the boys working on the farms during the Great War I have looked up a few facts and these make interesting reading. For instance, do you realise that more than 600,000 children were withdrawn prematurely from schools to work on munitions, on the farms and down the mines.

Under the Fisher Education Act of 1918 exemptions from school attendance under the age of 14 years were at last abolished, but it wasn't until 1922 that full-time schooling to the end of the term when the child had its 14th birthday became universal and compulsory.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XIX

About the same time as Miss Bennett came to Dorney, 1st March, 1919, another stranger was being welcomed into the village by the Matron of the Dorney Children's Home, Miss M.K. Ferguson. She described him as a puny little thing, "only three weeks old and suffering from jaundice." He survived and went on to become a pupil at Dorney School during the years 1924 to 1927 when Miss Wince was the teacher in charge of the Infant Class. She must have given him a good grounding in the 3 R's because he later became a prosperous farmer in Australia. He is now retired but the story of his adventurous life has been featured in the Australian newspapers and television. A recent documentary film shown on our own television service called "The Lost Children of the Empire" told the story of orphan children like him who were sent out to Canada, South Africa and Australia by charitable organisations in the early part of this century.

But let us hear what the State newspaper has to say about our Dorney emigrant: "Bob - or is it Bertie? - Powell, who fought with the AIF in the Middle East and New Guinea, does not know who he is. For most of his 68 years, the silver-haired former Fairbridge Farm boy has lived in a sort of personal limbo, wondering who his parents are, or were, and hoping one day to find out.

A retired farmer, Bob Powell, - his Fairbridge papers called him Bertie - has gone through life without a birth certificate, which has often been a source of anguish to him. He and his eldest daughter, Mrs. Barbara Botterill, declare that they will not rest till they find out his ancestry and give him an identity in his autumn years. Mr Powell's story reads like pages from a gothic novel. He is believed to be the illegitimate son of a housemaid who worked for Sir Cuthbert and Lady Headlam in London in 1919.

"We have been told that my mother disappeared and that my father was never known," said the fit-looking man at his comfortable retirement cottage. "I have been trying since 1944 when I was in the Army to find out who my parents were by writing to the archives at the Liverpool University where the Fairbridge Society's records are held. But it was not till recently that records that had been closed for 100 years were released to me. But unfortunately they did not shed any light on my parents."

When Bertie Powell's mother disappeared Lady Headlam became his guardian and she put him in an orphanage called the Dorney Children's Home at Dorney, near Windsor.

"We have ascertained that I stayed in the orphanage till I was eight years old, though I have only vague memories of the place," he said. Beatrice Headlam authorised my emigration, to Western Australia under the Kingsley Fairbridge Child Emigration Scheme in 1927. Before I left she spent five pounds to buy me an overcoat, a suit and a hairbrush and comb."

With 13 other orphans Bertie sailed for Fremantle in the steamer Barrabool on December 22nd of that year and arrived via the Cape of Good Hope on January 30th, 1928.

"I remember the voyage quite well," he recalled. "I was seasick for much of the way. We were met by Mrs. McLaren, a house-mother at Fairbridge Farm, and we left for the farm by horse and buggy almost immediately." The West Australian which reported the boys' arrival said: "The boys, who were either orphaned or in poor circumstances, came from parts of England as far apart as Liverpool and London. Well spoken, polite and full of healthy energy, they made a good impression on the Ship."

He spent six years at Fairbridge Farm School and then he was chosen with another boy and two girls to work on the farm of Dr. F.A. Hadley on the Frankland River, near Cranbrook, the boys as farmhands the girls as housemaids. He had to work very hard and at the age of fourteen he was considered to be good enough to cook three meals a day for three others and himself, besides doing the milking and other labouring jobs.

"When Mrs. Hadley asked my name and I told her Bertie, she said, "Well, from now on it's going to be Bob," and I've been Bob ever since except to the people of Fairbridge," he reflected.

After seven years on the farm Bertie Powell left and jumped a train to Melbourne. "I had five or six pounds in my pocket and when I got to Melbourne I had nothing so I decided to join the army," he said. The sergeant-major in the recruiting office asked me for my birth certificate and I asked, "What's that?" When he asked me who my mother and father were and I told him I didn't know he was amazed. But he said, "Sign here" and I was in the army. He served with the 21st Ordnance Company of the Seventh Division in Palestine, and after Singapore fell, he went to fight the Japanese in New Guinea, volunteering as a paratrooper. After the war he developed a War Service Land Settlement Farm in the south of the state and brought up five children of which he now has 10 grandchildren - what he missed out on with ancestors, he made up for with descendants!

Miss Bennett and Miss Wince would have been very proud of their former pupil.



## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XX

Truth is stranger than fiction! Bertie Powell, the hero of our last chapter, has had a telephone conversation with one of his childhood friends of the Dorney Children's Home and has heard from a teacher who was at the school during the First World War.

His daughter, Mrs. Barbara Botterill, has been doing a lot of research on his behalf and is appealing for further help - see letter in this month's Dorney Parish News. It may turn out that someone in Eton or Eton Wick may have a long lost uncle in Australia. Let's hope that this story has a happy ending.

Now here are some more excerpts from Miss Bennett's notes on life in the village during the Twenties.

### Some Vicars I have known

One of the first people to welcome me to Dorney was the Vicar, the Revd. Moriarty. His wife, too, was most friendly and helpful. They were always ready to join in the activities of the Parish. Mr. Moriarty had been a naval chaplain for many years, and everyone who knew him also knew of his loyalty and how he tried to express his loyalty to the children. He gave the School a large Union Jack, and this was flown on all royal occasions and historical anniversaries. He came every now and again to see if it had been flown properly. When he died, his coffin was draped with this flag.

After a short interval his successor was appointed, a much younger man; and although he was only here a few years, we shall always remember him as the person who held the first meetings and set the project of building a Village Hall in motion. Unfortunately, Mr. Ford was not strong, and his health helped to cause his resignation before the Hall had really got started.

### Unwelcome Visitors

The first arrived a few weeks after I came to Dorney, on Palm Sunday. We had gone to bed and were almost asleep, when we heard horrible noises coming from the garden. These got worse and worse until we could stand it no longer; and putting on warm coats we crept out the back way and went for help. We knew very few people, but Mr. Webb very kindly got up and came to our assistance. At first he was as puzzled as we were, but he traced the noises to a narrow flower-bed under my front room window. There behind a box hedge he found a young man wearing only one boot and in his shirt sleeves. He was very drunk, and when at last he was roused and stood up he protested that he meant no harm, and wanted to get to Windsor. He had no idea where his coat, tie, collar and other boot were. We found the coat hanging on a post in the playground, so he put it on and went limping off to Windsor with only one boot. The other, together with the collar and tie, were found in various parts of the village, but we never heard any more of the young man, so could not return his clothes.

Several years later we came back from our summer holidays to find a policeman waiting at the gate to tell us that a burglary had been committed. Thieves had ransacked every room in the house, turning out every drawer and cupboard, but taking very little, as all money and valuables had been put safely away before we left home. The thieves, three men and a woman, had used the schoolhouse as a resting place before visiting several large houses in the district. They were caught on their way back to London, tried and sentenced to several years' imprisonment, thanks to our local police.

Here are some interesting excerpts from the School Log Book:

February 10th, 1928 - School Dentist and Nurse Aldana visited this morning for the FIRST DENTAL INSPECTIONS under the new scheme.

March 16th, 1928 - RECORD OF PROGRESS EXAMINATIONS taken this morning from 9.30 to 12.00 noon. Mrs. Dickens and Mrs. Nason sat with the children while the papers were being worked for some time, and the Revd. Ford came in later to help as invigilator. The children were given a holiday in the afternoon while the teachers marked the papers.

March 25th, 1928 - The BURNHAM WATER COMPANY has installed a water system in the school and hand basins have been provided also.

During the previous year, 1927, the Summer Holidays had been extended to allow for alterations to be completed. The School had been thoroughly repaired, the Infants' Room enlarged, lighting and ventilation improved, new cloak-rooms made, and redecoration throughout. At that time there were 74 children on roll and three teachers.

July 11th, 1928 - Evelyn Annie Young has been successful in gaining a £50 scholarship offered by the Daily Sketch and Allied Newspapers. She is 14 years of age, in Standard VII, and has always been a good worker.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XXI

By November 29th, 1929, the number of children on roll at the school was down to 50, so when Miss Pring left she was not replaced and that left just Miss Bennett and Miss Waters. Previously there had been a long curtain in the big room dividing two classes so now it was taken down and Miss Bennett combined the Standards III to VII whilst Miss Waters took the Infants and Standards I and II in the smaller room. But children from the school continued to score successes in National Competitions and on December the 19th it was reported in the School Log Book that Peggie Quarterman had won a 10s.0d. prize in the Health Week Competition organized by the Royal Sanitary Institute and Winnie Barrett had received a Certificate.

So we come to 1930, a year in which Miss Bennett played an important role in securing for the village a much needed amenity. I am sure many inhabitants may not be aware that 1990 marks the Diamond Jubilee of the Village Hall Committee on which Miss Bennett served for more than 40 years right from the very beginning. This is what she wrote in her memoirs:-

"At the time we were thinking of a Village Hall Dorney Reach was being developed, and in Harcourt Road we found several people willing and ready to help with the plans. The most active of these were Mr. and Mrs. Moss. Both of them had theatrical experience and helped greatly with whist drives, dances, concerts and sales, which brought in quite a good sum of money. Among these was a Penny Sale at which Mr. Victor Climo exhibited a wireless set. We could listen in for a penny a minute. To many of us this was our first introduction to radio. Two large fetes were held, one at Dorney Court and the other at Dorney House.

As our money accumulated we began to think of what kind of building to have and a site for it. The late Colonel C. Palmer gave us a suitable piece of land near the School. A Subcommittee made several excursions to view possible buildings and at last selected one at Windsor Hospital. A disastrous fire had destroyed two wards and large temporary huts were used during the rebuilding. One of these we obtained for a reasonable price and Mr. Quarterman gave us an estimate for moving and rebuilding it. This was done piecemeal, but unfortunately there came a severe gale. The Hospital section was carried across to the gate of the Hospital. The section at Dorney was blown down, thus adding about £100 to the cost. At last everything was finished and paid for, and a Grand Opening was held on the 26th July, 1930."

Modest as ever, Miss Bennett does not tell us that she was the main driving force in this project, ably supported by Colonel C. Palmer and Mr. Quarterman. However, I have been able to unearth some facts and figures which fill in the background to this piece of village history.

On the evening of 13th April 1929, a small group of interested villagers met at Dorney Court. This group consisted of Colonel and Mrs. Palmer, Mr. and Mrs. Moss, Mr. Giddy, Miss Bennett, Mr. Barksfield, Mr. Hiscock and Mr. Doble. The Vicar, the Revd. F.K.B. Ford was unavoidably absent but was ably represented by the two Churchwardens, Colonel Palmer and Mr. Hiscock. They formed a small temporary Action Committee under the Chairmanship of Colonel Palmer with Mr. Moss as Honorary Secretary and the Revd. Ford as Honorary Treasurer, and immediately set about the business of obtaining estimates. Further meetings continued to be held at Dorney Court; Mrs. Quarterman was co-opted on to the Committee to maintain contact with her husband, the master-builder of the village. Thanks to donations, fetes, sales of postcards, raffles, sales of work and personal subscription cards the Village Hall Fund had reached £163 and Colonel Palmer had offered the gift of a piece of land close to the School.

By 5th March, 1930, the treasurer was able to announce that the Windsor Hospital Authority had been sent a cheque of £140 for one of their temporary buildings. Mr. Quarterman was asked to dismantle and re-erect the hut, to supply water pipes and taps, layout the drainage, paint the Hall, order and supply cupboards and fixtures and to supply and fit a stove. So the work went on in spite of the gale. Two Trustees, Mr. Dadson and Mr. Moss, were appointed to

act as underwriters, positions they willingly accepted. Mr. Quarterman had already spent £72 of his own money in the dismantling and re-erection of the Hall.

However money kept flowing into the Fund and the treasurer was able to pay Mr. Quarterman £60 on account. During the next four months work on the Hall continued until, at last, by 26th July everything was ready for the Opening Ceremony. This was performed by Lady Florence Duncombe at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The platform party, followed by the villagers, then proceeded to Mr. Dadson's field where the Garden Fete, was held.

The attractions included a Fortune Teller, Coconut Shies, Wheel of Fortune, Tug-of-War, Races, and Side Shows of all kinds supported by the Concert Party and Band. Last but not least was the Baby Show with Prizes presented by Mrs. Palmer. I wonder if any of those babies are still living in the village, there should be some of them around as it is only sixty years ago. It would be nice to hear from them, or from any of the older children of that generation who remember the Opening Ceremony and the Fete that followed it.

On Friday, 1st August, 1930, the temporary committee met for the last time and adopted a draft Trust Deed drawn up for them by Mr. Hogarth, Colonel Palmer's solicitor.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XXII

There was no electricity cable in Dorney in the early Thirties so the Village Hall lighting arrangements consisted of two paraffin lamps which had been provided by Mr Quarterman at the same time as he had installed the storm lantern which hung in the porch. This method of illumination was the same for the school and the residents in the village. But gas, electricity and mains water were all taken for granted in the urban areas and wages were higher there too. An engineering craftsman could earn more than £3 a week whilst an agricultural labourer would be lucky if he could bring home £2. A waitress could earn 17s.0d. a week, less 1s.0d. for uniform and 1s.3d. for Insurance stamp but there were free breakfast, lunch and tea if you were on early turn and supper instead of breakfast if you were on late duty. Cheap black stockings cost 9d. a pair and many of the country girls preferred a job like this to "going into service" as a maid in some Big House where they could only get 12s.0d. per week plus their keep.

In those days flour was 71b. for 6d. while jam was 5d. per lb. and sausages were 6d. a pound. If you preferred to have a cup of tea and a bun from a stall in the town it only cost you 2d. Newspapers only cost one penny each and postage costs were only a penny-halfpenny for a 2oz. letter and 1d. for a post-card.

By this time Miss Bennett had already started up a small Lending Library charging one penny per book on two weeks' loan and several village families were the proud possessors of battery radio sets. Many improvements had been made to the school, the Infant Room had been enlarged, new cloak-rooms had been provided with concrete floors, lighting and ventilation had been improved and the Burnham Water Company had installed a new system in place of the old pump together with new hand basins.

Nowadays we read in the newspapers about the increasing interest of the general public in the standards of education and the use of periodic tests. In Miss Bennett's time these standards were maintained by ensuring that the children worked through the Record of Progress Examinations in English and Arithmetic. These were usually tackled one morning in March and lasted from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon. Invigilators like the Vicar and one or two Managers came in to help the teachers and the children would be given a half-day holiday while the teachers marked the papers.

Methods were gradually changing too, the old-fashioned Drill became Physical Instruction and Miss Bennett started to take the children out on to the Common to play team games like "Captain Ball." She also taught them lots of Folk Dances and Sword Dances. The following excerpt from the Report made by the H.M.I. Sir R.C. Curtis on 5th November, 1931, gives an insight into the good work that went on in the school: "In this somewhat detached rural school the present Head Mistress has worked for twelve years, and her keenness and energy have not abated. She takes much interest in the welfare of her children and has not lost touch with modern educational ideas.

The children are quite alert and responsive; in general this small school has quite a vigorous life of its own. The Infants and Standard One are very well taught by an enterprising and resourceful Uncertificated Teacher who is also responsible for the Physical Training of the School, a task which she well performs. In fact she gives valuable assistance to the Head Teacher in many ways." That teacher was Miss Waters.

On March 1st, 1933, floods were preventing many of the children from getting to school but we read in the Log Book that the weather had changed dramatically by 7th July for several children were absent owing to the severe heat. On 30th September the children were invited by Mrs. Palmer to go to a performance at the Windsor Cinema and she kindly provided tea for them as well. On 14th December the children were invited to a Tea Party given by the Village Hall Committee and the R.A.O.B.

There are a couple of interesting items in the Log Book for June, 1934. The entry for 8th June states "There will be a half-holiday today as the older children are attending a dress rehearsal of the Historical Pageant at Runnymede. School will close at a quarter to twelve to allow children to get the bus to Windsor.' For 14th June we read "There will be a day's holiday tomorrow for a School outing to Bognor. The Village Dramatic Society has paid for most of the children's expenses; many of the parents are going also."

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XXIII

For the 30th April, 1935, the entry in the Log Book reads as follows: - "School will be closed on the 6th and 7th May for the King's Jubilee." Fortunately for us Miss Bennett did not restrict herself to this short statement; she kept some private notes which she allowed the Editor of the Dorney Parish News to print in the June issue of 1968. It was entitled:-

### A MEMORABLE OCCASION.

I have been asked several times lately which day I had enjoyed most during my years at Dorney and I immediately thought of the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary in 1935. We formed a Committee well in advance of the day and sub-divided it for food, sport and entertainment. The idea was to have something for everybody and for a full day's fun.

I was in charge of the food and had a sum of money given to me to plan with, to the best of my ability, and I am glad to say I managed to supply all the needs of the village and ended up with several pounds over, which we used to put the oak seat at Dent's Corner for waiting bus passengers. There were two 9 gallon barrels of beer from which drinks could be had at any time and this privilege was in no way abused. The Hall was gaily decorated both inside and outside. Sports were held on the Common intermitted with Maypole and Country Dances by the children. Tea with heaps of food was served in the Hall for all children in the Parish up to 16 years, at 4 o'clock. Each child had a Souvenir Cup to take away. Then the biggest scramble of the day started for at 6 o'clock people from the age of King George had a sit-down meal, so tea tables were cleared, relaid and gaily decorated, ham, beef and other meats cut, salad prepared and cold sweets such as trifles, jellies and creams added to the tables. About 40 people enjoyed this spread and as soon as the room was cleared it was prepared for a Whist Drive. Sandwiches were made, cakes arranged on plates, tables set out with score cards in place, while willing helpers were washing up in the kitchen. The Whist Drive began at 8 o'clock and this was my first rest of the day, for my helpers insisted I should play. This I did and was not too tired to win a very nice prize and enjoy a cup of tea and some cakes.

The day was drawing to a close and we all went to the Common at 10 o'clock for a bonfire and fireworks. So ended a busy and exciting never-to-be-forgotten day.

E.C. Bennett.

As an interesting footnote it is nice to know that the Village Hall Committee Members unanimously agreed that no charges should be made on the Jubilee Committee for the expenses incurred in connection with the use of the Hall on Jubilee.

Miss Bennett later records in the School Log Book that "The Jubilee Celebrations went off well and the children had a good time and they appear to be still tired at the end of the hot weekend."

On 24th May, Empire Day, the entry informs us that the children listened to the loyal speech of Earl Jellicoe at 11.00 a.m. on the wireless and gave a Display of Games and Country Dances in the afternoon. On 16th October the school was fitted with electric lights and the old paraffin lamps were taken down for the last time. A year later on 5th August Miss Bennett shows her pleasure and delight by recording that "The Playground has been entirely covered with 'tarmac' making it nice for Drill and Games."

On 11th May, 1937, the school was closed at 4.00 p.m. in preparation for the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and the Whitsun Holiday. The Dorney pupils joined the children from the Eton schools in lining the High Street to cheer the King and Queen on the occasion of their State Drive on 11th June.

There was a School Concert and Prizegiving Ceremony on 26th November, 1937. The prize-winners were:

Boys Prize R. Jacobs

Girls Prize M. Back

Class Prizes W. Poole, G. Green, B. Rhodes, R. Piggot, R. Miles.

Head Teacher's Prize for Helpfulness L Climo

Lifeboat Essay Certificate W. Poole

Attendance certificates I. Lake, M. Lake, M. Back, N. King, C. Jones, W. Poole.

The profit of 12s. 9d. was enough to purchase a set of "Shinty Sticks and Ball" so that the older children could play a 'vigorous' winter game, as Miss Bennett described it.

In those days the school was usually closed for one day towards the end of March when only those children who were qualified by age to sit the Scholarship Examination were called in for the morning only. In July the Record of Progress Examinations and the Term Examinations in Arithmetic and Composition were held.

During the Thirties the numbers on roll varied from 35 to 51 children between the ages of 5 and 14. Miss Bennett frequently mentions the name of a game the senior children played, it was called "Captain Ball" and I should be most grateful if anyone of our older residents could enlighten me as to how it was played.

Similarly, who remembers a Mr. Glover and his partner giving shows or recitals with their "Panatope" in the Village Hall? They were charged a hiring fee of 15s. 0d. and were allowed an extra 1 and a half hours for the erecting and dismantling of their apparatus.

## THE STORY OF A SCHOOL - PART XXIV

With reference to the mystery of the "Panatrope" which Mr. Glover and his partner used to bring to the old Village Hall to provide entertainment, nobody has yet come forward to enlighten me as to what it was. The definition given by the Concise Oxford Dictionary is "electrical apparatus for reproduction of gramophone records through a loudspeaker." By the late 1930's it had been superseded by the radiogram and amplifier and we read that Socials and Dances were being organized in the hall with the help of Mr. Jack Quarterman and his amplifying equipment.

In 1939 Miss Bennett went on a Red Cross Course and on 14th July she enrolled 17 children between the ages of 8 and 15 years in her Red Cross Link. The entry in the Log Book for 18th September reads as follows: "School re-opens today after two weeks extra closure for evacuation purposes. Three schools are visiting Dorney. Work has been arranged so that Dorney School works in the morning together with St. Michael's, Westminster, and Lowther School, Barnes, and Redcoat School of Stepney work together in the afternoon, Sessions are 9.00 to 12.30 and 1.00 to 4.30.

Timetables and the general routine have been adapted to suit the new requirements. There are 54 children evacuated under the School Scheme and 14 who are privately evacuated or came with their mothers making 68 children in all extra to Dorney School" Full time schooling was in operation again by 5th January, 1940. The Village Hall was used as an extra schoolroom for all the Infants and Lower Juniors with Miss King, a London teacher, in charge.

Miss Bennett was in charge of all the Upper Juniors and the Seniors who were taught in the School. During all this time the Dorney teachers and the London teachers took their holiday entitlement on a rota basis. Of this period Miss Bennett writes in her Memoirs:-

### DORNEY IN WARTIME.

"From 1930 to 1938 the new Village Hall was used regularly for many activities. Then the threat of war brought many alterations. Stores of beds, blankets and food arrived and preparations for receiving evacuees began.

Luckily there was a year of false hope of peace, but in August, 1939, everything started again. I cut short my holiday in Bournemouth and helped to get ready for the London children. The first batch arrived on September 1st, fearful and bewildered. They were soon handed over to their hostesses and we waited for more. This group consisted of 12 expectant mothers, all rather impudent and difficult, but at last they were settled. Our last lot arrived just after war had been declared. Through a mix-up at Windsor we received about ten teachers, helpers and children from different parts of London. Many of them remained with us to the end of the war.

A heavy battery had been placed on the Common. Trenches were dug and barbed-wire surrounded the camp. We soon became used to the soldiers and provided social entertainment for them in the Village Hall once a week. The R.A.F. had a place in Dorney, for they manned a decoy station on the Boveney Road.

Shelters in brick were provided at various points in the village. In spite of falling shells, shrapnel and "Jitter Bugs" we came through safely. We used our spare time to collect over two tons of waste paper as well as tins and other useful scrap material.

Many of our men joined the Forces and several were killed in action.

From time to time Dorney has had many well-known people staying for short periods in its quiet, peaceful surroundings and of course quite a few came to Dorney during the War. They found it convenient to get to work in London, while it was safer for their families and more restful than living in the city.



Miss Marie Lohr and her mother were at Half Way Cottage when I first came to Dorney. Mr. David Niven lived for several months at Flaxford. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Williams, the parents of Simon Williams, were at Dorney House where Simon was born. Mr. Wilfred Hyde-White lived at Priors Fowey. Next door lived Lambert Williamson, the composer and arranger of many film and television musical scores including "Genevieve." His wife, Con, was very active in the community and later became the W.V.S. Centre Organizer. Stanelli, the band-leader, lived for some time in the Flint Cottage in Court Lane.

Mr. and Mrs. Eaton were often away from Hither Dimmings, and their house was occupied by many well-known actresses, including Gertrude Lawrence, who came there to rest when her health was failing. Across the road Elspeth Marsh lived for some time.

Miss Cundell, the well-known artist, built Further Dimmings, and while there many inhabitants acted as her models and their pictures are still to be seen in London galleries as well as in America. Miss Cundell worked strenuously as an ambulance driver, and died in Dorney soon after the War. Later the house was occupied by Elga Morell, the novelist."

It was during the war years that the Dorney Concert Party was started by Mrs. Olive Stacey and her husband Roger, ably supported by Ivy and Fred Noble, Mrs. Back and Mary.

To be continued

Len Eastgate

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#### THE STORY OF A SCHOOL (Dorney Parish News - April 1991)

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Len Eastgate, for many years a faithful contributor to the Dorney Parish Magazine. He was a keen student of Dorney history, and his series on the story of Dorney School has aroused a lively interest among many of our readers. He will be sadly missed. The Editors.