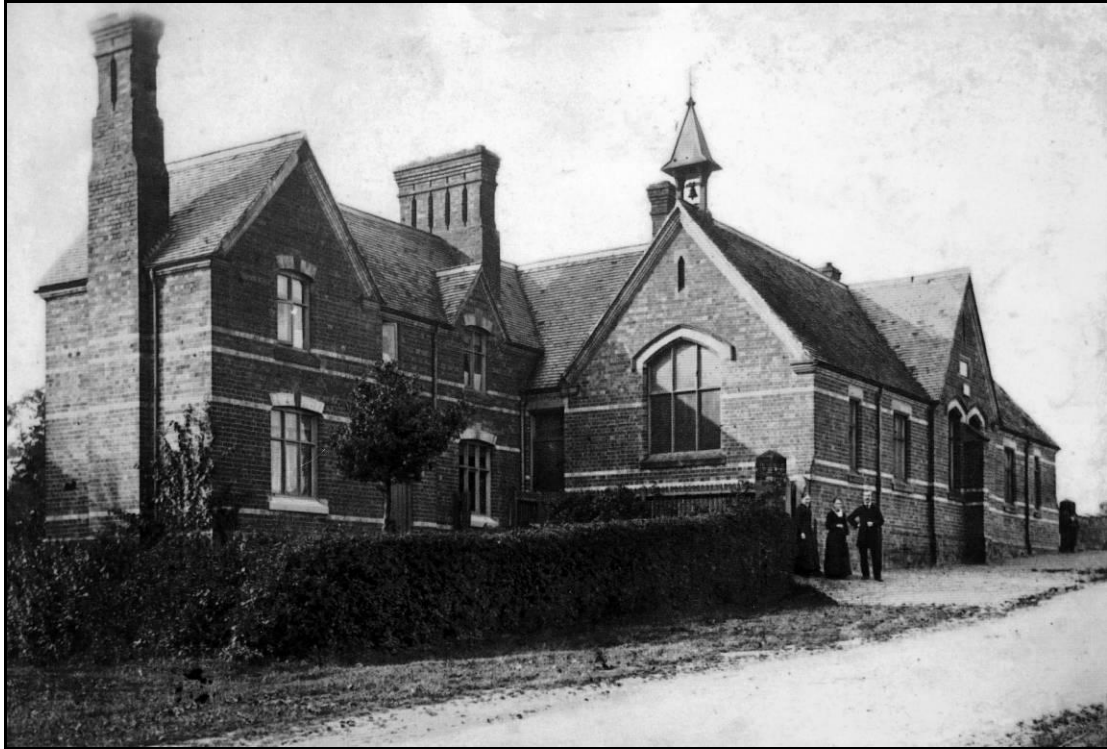


NEWBOLD CHURCH of ENGLAND SCHOOL
(plus supplementary information)



Newbold C of E School in the early 1900s with Reuben Sissons, the headmaster and his wife Clara outside and possibly an assistant school teacher Elizabeth Stevens. The master's house is on the left

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - updated April 2023 / March 2025
/Oct 2026

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Numerous social and industrial history publications relating to the local area appear on the author's website. Further information and particularly old photographs relating to Newbold C of E School would be gratefully received from any of the readers which can then be inserted in the publication. The author can be contacted via the contact page on his website samuelstewart.com

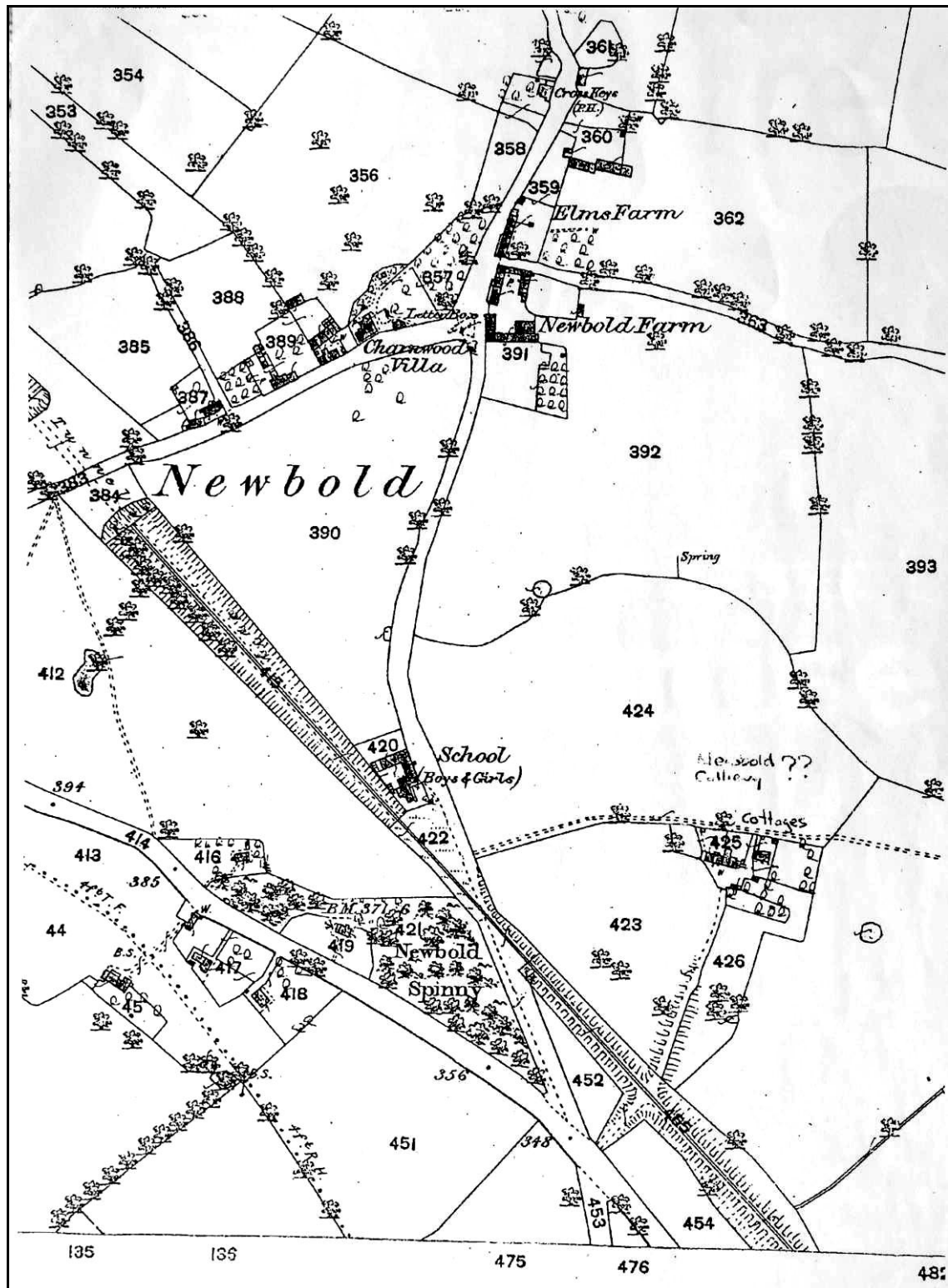


CHILDREN WALKING TO SCHOOL IN THE 1960s

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SCHOOL LOCATION MAP



**1882 SURVEYED O/S MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF
NEWBOLD C of E SCHOOL**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HAMLET OF NEWBOLD

The history / evolution of the hamlet of Newbold is extremely complex and the following is an attempt to bring some clarity to this.

The name Newbold apparently derives from the Olde English, pre 7th Century "neowe" meaning "new", plus the Anglo Saxon "bold", meaning a dwelling house or homestead.

From the mid 1700s, Worthington was described in various ways - a Chapelry, Township and manor within Breedon ecclesiastical parish, and Newbold was described as being a liberty of Worthington.

The enclosure of land in Worthington, Newbold and Griffydam took place in 1806, and at this time, the hamlets of Newbold, Griffydam and Gelsmoor were part of the Chapelry and township of Worthington prior to it becoming a civil parish c.1873 when they then became hamlets within the parish of Worthington.

William White in his respected 1863 directory records Newbold as Newbold Saucey and that it comprised approximately 500 acres (2.0 km²) in the ownership of Earl Ferrers and Sir G H Beaumont Bart; also that it had a colliery. Newbold was adjacent to the Manor of Orton Saucey, which was part of the ecclesiastical parish of Coleorton at that time and is presumably why William White describe Newbold as Newbold Saucey. Sir George Beaumont became the owner of the land within Orton Saucey and evidently part of the land in Newbold as well. An extract from the 1835 first edition O/S map below shows Orton Saucey and Newbold, but does not define a boundary. Newbold has for many years been referred to as Newbold, Coleorton even though it is in the parish of Worthington adding even further confusion for the researcher.



EXTRACT FROM THE 1835 FIRST EDITION O/S MAP

A HISTORY OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

The Church has been involved in education for many centuries, however, most Church schools came about through the drive to provide mass provision of Christian education for the poor in the early and middle years of the 19th century. 'The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church,' now known as The National Society (Church of England) for Promoting Religious Education (or more often simply the National Society) was created in 1811 with the mission of founding a Church school in every parish in England and Wales.

By the time of the national census of 1851, forty years later, the Church had established 17,000 schools. State provision for public education came with the 1870 Education Act by supplementing the churches' provision. This Act demonstrated the partnership between the state and the churches in education, which has continued to the present day. At the beginning of the 20th century there were over 14,000 voluntary schools of which rather more than 1,000 were Roman Catholic, and a similar number provided by the Wesleyans and others and the majority of the rest were Church of England.

From the earliest days, the purpose of Church schools was to enable children to flourish by providing a basic education and by developing their moral character. It was always intended that Church schools should be open to all of the children of the parish. The schools were not 'faith schools' in the sense of presuming that children are practising Christians or attempting to make converts of them. However, the ethos of the schools was based on distinctively Christian values and they offered children an experience of faith through collective worship and links with the parish church.

At the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, after seventy years of state provision, the churches were still providing schools for nearly a third of the children of school age. The Church was facing difficulty maintaining the quality of premises and equipment of these schools, but they were needed by the State to maintain provision across the country.

The 1944 Education Act gave Church schools the option of increased State funding and control as 'Voluntary Controlled schools' or lesser State support and greater independence as 'Voluntary Aided schools'. This Act also required all schools to have a daily act of collective worship and religious instruction. By the 1950s and 1960s the Roman Catholic Church expanded its school provision vigorously, especially at the secondary level. By comparison, the expansion in Anglican secondary schools was modest and the number of its primary schools declined.

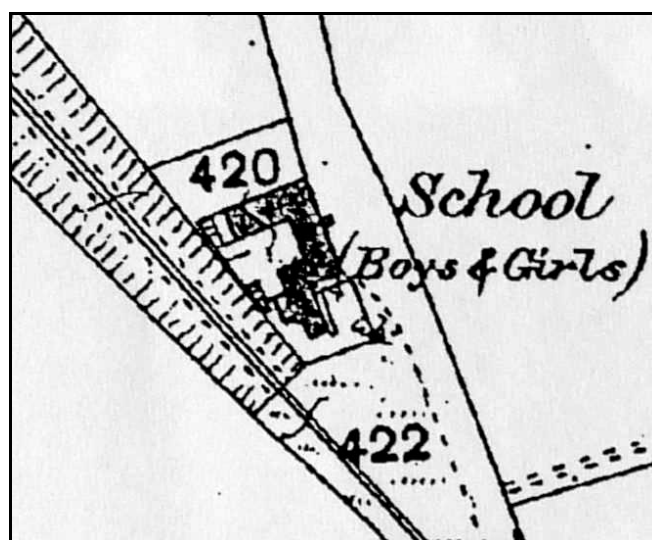
THE REV. J . O. BROOK & A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD C of E BOYS AND GIRLS SCHOOL

In March 1887, the Rev. J. O. Brook (*John Oatway*) resigned the living at Worthington after being Vicar there for nineteen years. On the 21st of March, a presentation was made to him by the parishioners of a valuable silver inkstand as a slight token of the esteem with which they regarded Mr. Brook. He was described as being an eloquent preacher, and active and energetic in all parish matters and had been responsible for carrying out many valuable improvements in the village, including being the driving force behind the re-building of Newbold School in 1872.

Due to failing health he decided to leave the midlands for the south of England. The reverend gentleman held his farewell services at St. Matthews Parish Church, Worthington in the afternoon where communion was administered, *and the evening service, as had been the customary practice for a number of years, was held in the Newbold Schoolrooms (Newbold C of E School).*

Worthington Church of England School, originally named as Newbold School was reported as being a commodious buildings having been entirely **re-built** in 1872 at a cost of £1,500 with the school and school master's house being well adapted for their purpose. The school was enlarged in 1899 to take 263 children, although apparently no more than 200 children were ever registered. *Miss Grace Bulstrode, spinster daughter of John Mynors Bulstrode, by her Will dated October 20th, 1860 devised £1,600 to trustees ; of the dividends arising from its investment by the Charity Commisioners, £23 14s. is applied to the Church of England schools (Newbold), £14 16s. 2d. to the clothing club, and £8 17s. 8d. is given to the poor.* Evidence suggests that a school in some form existed before 1872, but the author has not been able to find any information to confirm this. The school is not a listed building, which is rather surprising. There is no building shown on the 1835 O/S map so presumably the original school was built between that date and 1872 when it was re-built.

Mr. Brook had also had built a new vicarage in Newbold as a residence for the incumbent at Worthington Church.



EXTRACT FROM THE 1882 SURVEYED O/S MAP SHOWING THE SCHOOL AFTER BEING RE-BUILT IN 1872 AND PRIOR TO ITS ENLARGEMENT IN 1899

The enlargement of Newbold C of E School was commenced on Tuesday 15th of February 1898 on land generously given by Sir George Howland Beaumont of Coleorton Hall who owned a large portion of land in the parish of Worthington. This, with a liberal subscription towards the building fund, and the subscriptions of other landed proprietors, viz, N.C. Curzon esq., of Etwall Hall, Derbyshire and the Right Honourable Earl Ferrers of Staunton Harold, provided more than one third of the whole cost. Messrs Joseph Lilley and son, of Old Parks, Ashby - de - la - Zouch were the builders, whose tender for £1005 was accepted by the committee.

The three people in the front cover photograph of the school are the school master Reuben Sisson, with his wife Clara and Hilda Daisy Statham, an assistant teacher. Reuben and Clara were born in 1864 and 1856 respectively, Reuben in Ilkeston, Derbys and Clara in Wolverhampton, Staffs. Reuben Sissons was the schoolmaster for 25 years and organist and choirmaster at Worthington church for 18 years. Hilda Daisy Statham was born at Worthington in 1892. The 1911 census lists her as an assistant teacher, aged 19. She was the daughter of James and Elizabeth Statham. The 1921 census gives her as a teacher, aged 30, at Griffydam School. She is still single and living with her mother and father who is still a boot maker, and they are given a postal address of Newbold now.

The 1891 Worthington census lists Elizabeth Stevens as a schoolmistress, born in Worthington. It is possible that she also taught at Newbold School.

Ralph Walker, a resident of Worthington, who was born in 1918, related that, there was no central heating in Newbold School. In those days, open fires welcomed us on winter mornings and in the big room, a huge cast iron fire grate kept us all warm throughout. Paraffin lamps swung from the ceiling and although these were not often used in school times, [they were always glowing every other Sunday for the Church Service.](#)

In November 1919, it was recorded in the Leicester Journal that 56 children were walking from Worthington to Newbold for their education. It was not until 1926 that the village of Worthington had its own school.

Following the resignation of the Vicar, Rev. Brooks, another important chapter in Worthington's religious history evolved with his replacement's arrival, that being the Rev. Robert Arthur Parsons, who had been curate of "All Saints", Loughborough. Until his arrival, the church services were split between the Rev. W. B. Beaumont of Coleorton and the Rev. G. Crossley of Breedon-on-the-Hill, [the former at the Newbold Schoolrooms](#) for the Sunday evening service, and the latter at the parish church each Sunday morning.

The Rev. R. A. Parsons held his first service on Sunday at the start of June 1877 in the morning at the parish church, where lessons were read by Mr. T. M. Heward of Worthington and Mr, Capp of Loughborough. [This was followed by a shortened service in the afternoon in the Newbold schoolrooms.](#)

On the following Wednesday, a public tea followed by a concert, was held in the Newbold schoolroom. Remarkably, 140 people sat down for tea which must have been a sight to behold. The concert began at half past seven by which time the schoolroom was packed to overflowing. The description of the concert was very colourful and the author never ceases to be amazed at the wealth of musical talent there was to support these local concerts around the locality.

In his address to the gathering, the vicar announced that Divine services at the parish church in the afternoon and evening would alternate with a service in the Newbold schoolrooms. He said that when the living was first offered to him, he had grave doubts about accepting it, but on the offer being repeated, and after having taken counsel with the Bishop, he had accepted it. The change from town (Loughborough) to country life would be great, and he trusted the parishioners would be as lenient as possible to him, but at the same time, speak as plainly to him as he intended to speak to them. Newbold was now established officially as having its own remote Anglican place of worship, in conjunction with St. Matthew's, the mother church, *although the Rev. Dane when much later writing about the history of the church, did record that a license for "Divine Worship" in the schoolrooms was issued at the time restoration of the church took place in 1890.*

To be strictly correct, the dedicated schoolroom should probably have been referred to as a "Mission Room", where in Christianity, organized efforts for the propagation of a particular faith were made away from the mother church. In fact, that description was used later in relation to **A Mission Room at Griffydam**. A former resident of Newbold who is a member of the Griffydam History group also recalls services still taking place at the school when she was a little girl which was at the time when the Rev. Henry A. Dane was the Vicar from 1949 to 1971. He lived at the old vicarage in Newbold, built by Rev. Brook, which unfortunately was demolished and replaced by modern housing.....a familiar story sadly.

By Christmas 1888, the dedicated schoolroom contained a pulpit, reading desk and lectern, and for the Christmas evening service, these were described as being very tastefully decorated (principally in white wool and holly), the pulpit now bearing the text, "Emmanuel", in red letters. Another text spanned the end of the room, "Jesus the Son of the Highest". The lamp standards and walls had not been forgotten, and the school presented a very pretty appearance. The Vicar officiated at the service preaching upon the word "Emmanuel".

The schoolrooms were used to hold numerous and varied functions besides parochial matters such as the Temperance Society and British and Foreign bible Society meetings for example.

In the first week in March 1889 a CRICKET CLUB CONCERT was held in the schoolrooms but it didn't seem to be much related to cricket. - The concert was described as being most successful with the different items of the programme being much appreciated by the crowded audience. A pianoforte solo was played by Miss Cuthbert of Coleorton, and duets by Miss Cuthbert and Mr. Cuthbert. Songs were sung by Miss Garratt (Melbourne) and by the Misses Cutler and Godby and Messrs. Brown and Peplow, of Coalville, Mr. S. Brown ably officiating as accompanist. Violin solos were freely executed by Mr. Williscroft, of Ashby, and a quartette party, consisting of Mrs. Palmer, Miss Cutler, and Messrs. Nunley and Peplow, contributed to the evening's enjoyment. An attractive feature of the concert was the appearance, for the first time in Worthington, of Messrs. Price and Bellward, the well known character vocalists, whose performances "brought down the house". At the close of the concert a vote of thanks was proposed by the Vicar (the Rev. R. A. Parsons) to Mr. Nunley and the members of the Coalville Choral Union, and to the other performers. This was very heartily accorded, and the audience joined in singing "God save the Queen".

Two bazaars in aid of the restoration of Worthington Church were held at the schoolrooms in July 1899. During the course of the first bazaar, the Rev. R. A. Parsons made a statement as to the objects of the bazaar. He said that although the

parish of Worthington was a secluded and distant one they did not feel altogether neglected, for in every work they had attempted they had always found a great many ready and willing helpers. It was one of the few parishes where there did not happen to be a resident land owner, and yet they had nothing to complain of on that ground, because those who owned land in the parish were amongst their most ready and foremost supporters. The parish was split up into four parts, and that constituted one of the difficulties with which they had to contend, the four parts being widely separated. The church stood in the village of Worthington proper, and unfortunately it seemed to be in the spot where the smallest part of the parish lived.

At Newbold, the schoolrooms provided an Anglican place of worship for local people on Sundays, **but at Griffydam (a mile and a half distant) there was no such place, and they very much hoped, that by the time the church was restored, to erect a "Mission Room" in that part of the parish.** (See the publication entitled ["Promoting the Anglican Faith in the Parish of Worthington"](#) on the authors website under Griffydam & Peggs Green; sub-section religion)

FROM THE LEICESTER ADVERTISER, JUNE 1958

The county primary school at Worthington is already faced with overcrowding. There are plans for additional class rooms, but in the meantime, the overflow goes to the school at Newbold, a school that was due to be closed two years ago, but has had to be given a reprieve. It is a better looking school than Worthington's, although it is older.

67 years later IN 2025, Newbold C of E school still survives.

The following was transcribed from the Burton Chronicle - 17 Feb 1898

ANNUAL SCHOOL CONCERT - 1898

Note the references to Niggers, darkies and Coons in the details of the songs at the end.

On Tuesday evening, the annual children's concert was given in the National School. The room was crowded to excess, and many were unable to gain admission. Mr. R. Sisson, the headmaster, and those who assisted him are to be congratulated upon the results of their efforts.

The whole of the programme was exceedingly well rendered. The Action Song - *Sneezers, Yawners and Laughters* caused an immense amount of amusement, and was vociferously encored. The song *Swiss toy girl* was well sung by Mary Sharpe and was thoroughly appreciated by the audience. The infants recieved a well deserved encore for the excellent way they gave the recitation *It's no joke to be a baby* and the boys deserved special praise for the way they rendered the action songs *Paddy Blake* and *The liittle Grenadiers*, as do also the girls for *The little gipsies* and *The fan girl*. Every item on the programme was thoroughly enjoyed and in the humorous cantatas *The fun of the fair* (which formed the second part of the programme), the waxwork figures and the darkies songs recieved special praise.

The proceeds are devoted to the purchasing of school prizes for attending school regularly and punctually.

Full programme :- song - ' Union Jack'; School children - action song 'Family Lines'; Girls - action song ' Sneezers, Yawners, and Laughters'; Boys and Girls - Kindergarten song 'Railway train' Infants - Gavotte and song 'see us dance our stately measures'; Girls - song 'My uncles farm'; Boys and girls - recitation ' it's no joke to be a baby'; Infants - song and chorus - 'Swiss toy girl' Mary Sharpe; Boys - action song 'Paddy Blake'; Girls - action song Japanese fan Girls; Boys - action song and drill 'Little Grenadiers'; Girls - action song 'Little gipsies; Girls - action song ' Kilkenny cats'; Boys - humerous cantatas entitled ' the fun of the fair' - opening chorus ' Come children play; song and chorus 'In for a lark'; song and chorus - 'You'll all see the niggers; chorus 'Ho; Boys and Girls; song and chorus '- Showman's song'; chorus 'You may talk of the menagerie'; chorus 'The waxwork figure'; song 'Jill's song'- recitation 'The safety cycle; chorus - ' Come darkies all'; song and chorus - ' Dat little coon in pants; song and chorus - 'Little coons song'; chorus - ' Good old Aunt Eliza; finale - ' God save the Queen'.

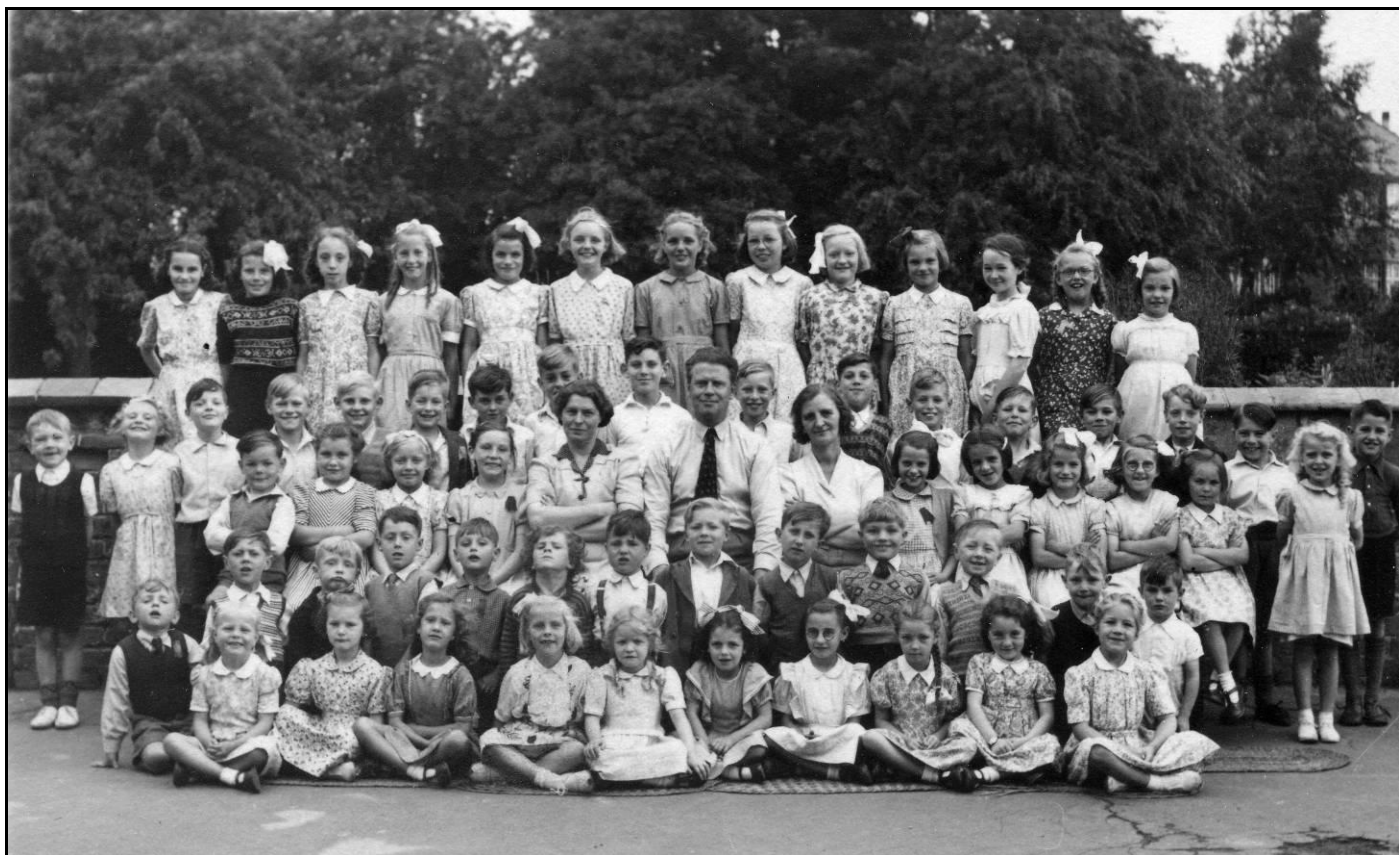
NEWBOLD SCHOOL CLASS PHOTOGRAPHS



**A SCHOOL CLASS OF c.1901 WITH HEADMASTER REUBEN SISSONS
(AGED 37) AND AN UNKNOWN ASSISTANT TEACHER**



SCHOOL CLASS c. 1955



SCHOOL GROUP PHOTOGRAPH - DATE UNKNOWN

FRONT ROW -

JENNIFER HOLMES, HAZEL COWIE, ANN WALKER, JOAN GRIFFIN, CHRISTINA DANE, RITA ARMSTRONG, BARBARA McEwan, JENNIFER PRICE, BRENDA SIMPKINS, WENDY SADDINGTON

SECOND ROW -

??, GEOFFREY BROWN, PETER STANLEY, KEITH PALMER, DAVID GARNER, DAVID DAVIS, JOHN SMITH, JOHN DANDO, JOHN ORTON, RODNEY WILLIAMS, MICHAEL RICHARDS, DAVID HAYWOOD, ROY LYONS

THIRD ROW -

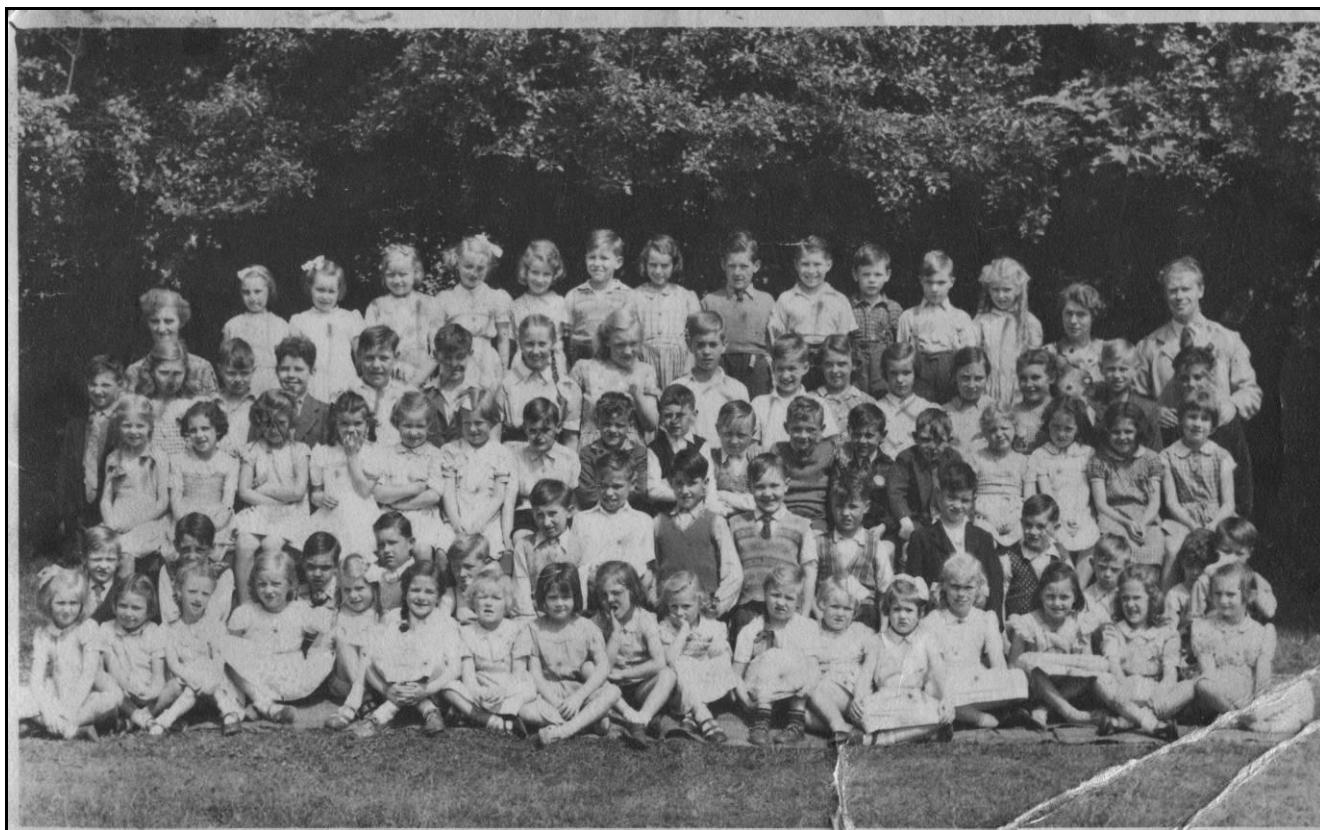
DAVID BUCKLEY, VERONICA HODGES, ANITA MARLOW, CAROL HAYWOOD, - MRS. MARION FOWKES, MR. JOHN STACEY, FANNY SMITH - CHRISTINE HODGES, ELAINE PHILIPS, PAT LYONS, BARBARA McEwan, ANN HARRISON, KATHLEEN PERRY

FORTH ROW

KENNETH HAYWOOD, BARBARA HODGES, ??, TERRY WARD, TERRY HINDS, NIGEL LOWE, BRIAN CROSON, VALANCE RICHARDS, HENRY MENZIES,??, ??, KEITH RICHARDS, JOHN WATKINS, CLIFFORD HILL, RAYMOND BLOOD, PETER SADDINGTON, WILLIAM JOHNSON

TOP ROW

MARGARET McEwan, GLENYS DAVIS, MARJORIE SIMPKINS, VALERIE MARTIN, ? WILLIAMS, PAT LEESON, FRANCES LYONS, ANN BUCKLEY, ? LEESON, CYNTHIA WILLIAMS, JOYCE RICHARDS, CATHERINE RICHARDSON, JENNIFER WILLIAMS.



SCHOOL GROUP PHOTOGRAPH - DATE UNKNOWN

BOTTOM ROW -

FIRST 13 NOT KNOWN, THEN - JOAN GRIFFIN, MARGARET LAVERTY, ANN WALKER, HAZEL COWIE

SECOND ROW -

PETER STANLEY, KEITH PALMER, CLIFFORD HILL, JOHN SMITH, JOHN DANDO, JOHN ORTON, TERRY HILL, WILLIAM JOHNSON, KENNETH HAYWOOD, MICHAEL LYONS, KEITH FREER, ??, ??, ??, ??

THIRD ROW -

JENNIFER HOLMES, RITA ARMSTRONG, JENNIFER PRICE, ROSALIND CROSON, ANN HARRISON, CAROL SMITH, DAVID GARNER, DAVID DAVIES, ARTHUR MOORE, MICHAEL RICHARDS, GRAHAM AUSTIN, GEOFFREY BROWN, DAVID HAYWOOD, CHRISTINA DANE, BRENDA SIMPKINS, DESRINE WESLEY, WENDY SADDINGTON

FORTH ROW -

JOHNNY SQUIRES, ??, ? HILL, ? WESLEY, ? RICHARDS, BRIAN CROSON, VALERIE MARTIN, PAT LEESON, VALANCE RICHARDS, NIGEL LOWE, ??, JENNIFER WILLIAMS, CAROL HAYWOOD, VERONICA HODGES, ??, ??, ??

TOP ROW -

FANNY SMITH, ??, ANN HARRISON, ??, BARBARA HODGES, PAT LYONS, JOHN WATKINS, ??, JOHN SMITH, PETER SADDINGTON, ??, RODNEY WILLIAMS, KATHLEEN PERRY, MARION FOWKES, MR. JOHN STACEY..... **JOHN STACEY BECAME THE HEADMASTER OF THE SCHOOL ON THE 3rd OF MAY 1949 AND LEFT TWENTY THREE AND A HALF YEARS LATER AFTER ACHIEVING GREAT THINGS THERE.**



c. 1950

**FRONT ROW -
PETER STANLEY, ROY LYONS**

**SECOND ROW -
CHRISTINA DANE, BARBARA MCEWAN, KEITH PALMER, - MRS. MARION FOWKES -
RITA ARMSTRONG, JENNIFER HOLMES, BRENDA SIMPKINS**

**THIRD ROW -
ANN WALKER, HAZEL COWIE, WENDY SADDINGTON, KATHLEEN PERRY, JOAN
GRIFFIN, JENNIFER PRICE**

**TOP ROW -
GRAHAM AUSTIN, GEOFFREY BROWN, DAVID GARNER, DAVID DAVIS, MICHAEL
LYONS, MICHAEL RICHARDS, KENNETH HAYWOOD**



1950 / 1

BOTTOM ROW -

**JOHN DANDO, KATHLEEN PERRY, VERONICA HODGES, CAROL HAYWOOD, ??,
BARBARA HODGES, ELAINE PHILIPS, BARBARA McEwan**

MIDDLE ROW -

**KENNETH HAYWOOD, RODNEY WILLIAMS, PETER SADDINGTON, BRIAN CROSON, -
MR. JOHN STACEY - NIGEL LOWE, JOHN WATKINS, DAVID BUCKLEY, JOHN ORTON**

TOP ROW -

**WILLIAM JOHNSON, CLIFFORD HILL, LIONEL WESLEY, JIMMY DEDMAN, JOE SMITH,
JOHNNY SQUIRES**



1952

FRONT ROW -

BARBARA MCEWAN, DAVID DAVIS, MARGARET LAVERTY

SECOND ROW -

**HAZEL COWIE, ANN WALKER, WENDY SADDINGTON, SADIE LAVERTY, MAVIS
WARD, PAT LYONS, BARBAR HODGES, KATHLEEN PERRY, JENNIFER HOLMES**

THIRD ROW -

ALAN WARD, JOE SMITH, - FANNY SMITH - LIONEL WESLEY, ? JOHNSON

TOP ROW -

**MICHAEL RICHARDS, JOHN DANDO, RODNEY WILLIAMS, DAVID BUCKLEY,
KENNETH HAYWOOD, JOHN ORTON**



1952 / 3

FIRST ROW -

CHRISTINA DANE, ANN CAPENOR, SYLVIA ELSE, PETER STANLEY,

SECOND ROW -

ANN WILLIAMS, RITA ARMSTRONG, CAROL SMITH, JENNIFER PRICE, ROSALIND CROSON, JOAN GRIFFIN, BRENDA SIMPKINS, DESRINE WESLEY

THIRD ROW -

DAVID HAYWOOD, GEOFFREY BROWN, ARTHUR MOORE, GRAHAM AUSTIN, JOHN SMITH, ROY LYONS

TOP ROW -

DAVID GARNER, MICHAEL LYONS, KEITH PALMER, MRS. MARION FOWKES, KEITH FREER, DAVID THORPE, ALAN WARD



c.1953

BOTTOM ROW -

DAVID HAYWOOD, ARTHUR MOORE, MICHAEL LYONS, RITA ARMSTRONG, GRAHAM AUSTIN, MICHAEL RICHARDS, GEOFFREY BROWN

MIDDLE ROW -

MARGARET LAVERTY, JENNIFER PRICE, JOAN GRIFFIN, - FANNY SMITH - WENDY SADDINGTON, ANN WALKER, HAZEL COWIE

TOP ROW -

BRENDA SIMPKINS, DESRINE WESLEY, JENNIFER HOLMES, ROSELINE CROSON, CHRISTINE DANE, CAROL SMITH



1954

FRONT ROW -

CAROL SMITH, HAZEL COWIE, JENNIFER PRICE, ANN HARRISON, BRENDA SIMPKINS, ROSELINE CROSON.

SECOND ROW -

DESRINE WESLEY, MARGARET LAVERTY, ANN WALKER, WENDY SADDINGTON, - FANNY SMITH - JOAN GRIFFIN, JENNY HOLMES, CHRISTINA DANE, RITA ARMSTRONG

TOP ROW -

KENNETH HAYWOOD, GRAHAM AUSTIN, ARTHUR MOORE, JOHN SQUIRES, JIMMY DEDMAN, MICHAEL LYONS, DAVID GARNER, DAVID DAVIS, MICHAEL RICHARDS, GEOFFREY BROWN



1955

BOTTOM ROW -

GEOFFREY BROWN, CAROL SMITH, ARTUR MOORE, BRENDA SIMPKINS. MICHAEL RICHARDS

MIDDLE ROW -

JENNIFER HOLMES, KATHLEEN PERRY, WENDY SADDINGTON, PAT LYONS, MARGARET LAVERTY, ANN WALKER, BARBARA MCEWAN.

TOP ROW -

KENNETH HAYWOOD, RODNEY WILLIAMS, DAVID BUCKLEY, - MR. JOHN STACEY - JOE SMITH, JOHN DANDO, JOHN ORTON



1955

BOTTOM ROW -

**CHRISTINA DANE, RITA ARMSTRONG, GRAHAM AUSTIN, DESRINE WESLEY,
JENNIFER PRICE, ROSLYN CROSON**

MIDDLE ROW -

**BRENDA SIMPKINS, JENNIFER HOLMES, JOAN GRIFFIN, WENDY SADDINGTON,
JOHN STACEY, ANN WALKER, KATHLEEN PERRY, BARBARA McEwan, CAROL
SMITH**

TOP ROW -

**DAVID HAYWOOD, ARTHUR MOORE, DAVID GARNER, KEITH FREER, KEITH PALMER,
MICHAEL LYONS, MICHAEL RICHARDS, GEOFFREY BROWN**



1956

BOTTOM ROW -

**MARY JACKSON, PAUL SPARE, PETER, STANLEY, GRAHAM AUSTIN, ROY LYONS,
JOHN SMITH, ANN WILLIAMS**

MIDDLE ROW -

**RITA ARMSTRONG, ??, BRENDA SIMPKINS, WENDY SADDINGTON, - MR. JOHN
STACEY - JENNIFER PRICE, DESRINE WESLEY, CHRISTINA DANE**

TOP ROW -

**DAVID HAYWOOD, ARTHUR MOORE, MICHAEL LYONS, KEITH FREER, KEITH PALMER,
DAVID GARNER, GEOFFREY BROWN**



1957 SCHOOL LEAVING PHOTOGRAPH

FRONT ROW -

RITA ARMSTRONG, BRENDA SIMPKINS, DESRINE WESLEY, DAVID GARNER, DAVID HAYWOOD, CHRISTINA DANE, GEOFFREY BROWN

BACK ROW -

WENDY SADDINGTON, JENNIFER PRICE, KEITH PALMER, MICHAEL LYONS, ARTHUR MOORE, KEITH FREER

7 CHILDREN ON THE ABOVE PHOTOGRAPH PASSED THEIR GRAMMAR SCHOOL 11 + ENTRANCE EXAMINATION :-

**RITA ARMSTRONG
BRENDA SIMPKINS
DAVID GARNER
CHRISTINA DANE
WENDY SADDINGTON
GEOFFREY BROWN
ARTHUR MOORE**



DATE NOT KNOWN

**GIRL AT FRONT -
??**

**FIRST ROW -
JOHNNY SQUIRES, JOHN WATKINS, WILLIAM JOHNSON, CLIFFORD HILL, PETER
SADDINGTON**

**TOP ROW -
VERONICA HODGES, ? WESLEY, MR. JOHN STACEY, JIMMY DEDMOND, BRIAN
CROSON, ANTHONY LOWE, CAROL HAYWOOD**



DATE NOT KNOWN

**FRONT TWO -
BRIAN CROSON, ??**

**TWO BOYS ON LEFT -
??, ??**

**FIRST ROW -
JOYCE RICHARDS, ELAINE STANLEY, JENNIFER WILLIAMS, ? RICHARDSON, ??,
NITA MARLOW, VALANCE RICHARDS, ??, TERRY HINES, ??, ??, ??, ??**

**SECOND ROW -
??, ??, ??, ??, PAT LEESON, ??, ??, VALERIE MARTIN, ANN BUCKLEY, SHEILA
LEESON, ??**



DATE 1951

NAMES OF ARTISTS - LEFT TO RIGHT

**JOYCE RICHARDS; CYNTHIA WILLIAMS; KATHLEEN JOHNSON; GLENYS DAVIES;
VALERIE MARTIN; MARJORIE SIMPKINS**



DATE - c.1950

**FRONT TWO GIRLS -
LEFT - ANN BUCKLEY
RIGHT - MARJORIE SIMPKINS**

**OTHERS IN PHOTOGRAPH -
CYNTHIA WILLIAMS AND JOYCE RICHARDS**



DATE 1954/5

**FRONT ROW - L TO R
CYNTHIA WILLIAMS; WINIFRED BENNET**

**MIDDLE ROW -
JOYCE RICHARDS; JUNE TUGBY; LINDA ORTON; JOHN STACEY; ELAINE STANLEY;
KATHLEEN BLOOD; ANN BUCKLEY**

**TOP ROW -
MICHAEL WALKER; SHEILA LEESON; ANN McEwan; HENRY MENZIES**

MARJORIE SIMPKINS IS MISSING FROM PHOTOGRAPH.



DATE c.1963 - Leaving photograph

BOTTOM ROW -

JANICE SKWAWSKI, GLYNIS FOWKES, JANET MENZIES, KATHERINE SPARE

MIDDLE ROW -

HAZEL BOTTERRILL, ANN DANDO, JAQUELINE NICKLINSON, ?, CAROL HODGES

TOP ROW -

PETER CLIFF, MICHAEL AUSTIN, PETER WALKER



DATE -

BOTTOM ROW -

MARGARET WILLIAMS, LILLIAN LAVERTY, CAROL HODGES, ANN CAPENOR, GLYNIS FOWKES, RENAL LAVERTY, KATHERINE SPARE, ANN DANDO, JENNIFER HARRIS

SECOND ROW -

PETER LAY, CAROL BLOOD, SYLVIA ELSE, JANET MENZIES, ?, MRS. MARION FOWKES, MARY JACKSON, ANN WILLIAMS, JANICE SKWAWSKI, AUDREY WALKER, PHILIP SPERRY

TOP ROW -

PETER SMITH, ?, PETER WALKER, PETER STANLEY, KEITH PALMER, KEITH FREER, ?, JOHN SMITH, ?, PAUL SPARE



DATE -

BOTTON ROW -

KATHERINE SPARE, ANN DANDO, MARY JACKSON, GLYNIS FOWKES, JANICE SKWAWSKI, ANN WILLIAMS, JANET MENZIES, HAZEL BOTTERRILL, CAROL BLOOD

MIDDLE ROW -

LILLIAN LAVERTY, CAROL HODGES, JAQUELINE NICKLINSON, LYN WOULDs, MR. JOHN STACEY, PAMELA CLAYFIELD, ?, ROSALIND CROSON, ?

TOP ROW -

PAUL SPARE, JOHN SMITH, PETER STANLEY, ROY LYONS, GRAHAM AUSTIN, MICHAEL AUSTIN, PETER WALKER, ?, PETER JACKSON



DATE -

BOTTOM ROW -

?, ?, AUDREY WALKER, ANN DANDO JANICE SKAWSKI, HAZEL BOTTERRILL, ?

MIDDLE ROW -

JANET MENZIES, GLYNIS FOWKES, DENISE CLAYTON, JAQUELINE NICKLINSON, ?, MR. JOHN STACEY, CAROL HODGES, ANN WILLIAMS, ?, RENA LAVERTY, KATHERINE SPARE

TOP ROW -

?, ?, ?, ?, MICHAEL AUSTIN, PETER WALKER, PETER CLIFF, DAVID RICHARDS, JOHN RUSH



DATE -

**BOTTOM ROW -
NO NAMES KNOWN**

**MIDDLE ROW -
?, ?, ?, MRS. ELIZABETH MENZIES, JAQUI PEPPER, ?, ?**

**TOP ROW -
?, STEPHEN RUSH, ?, RICHARD DRAYCOTT, TONY MENSOR, ?, ?, ?**



DATE -

**BOTTOM ROW -
NO NAMES KNOWN**

**MIDDLE ROW -
ONLY TEACHER MRS. MARION FOWKES KNOWN**

**TOP ROW -
MOYRA DRAYCOTT 5TH FROM LEFT**



DATE -

**BOTTOM ROW -
NO NAMES KNOWN**

**MIDDLE ROW -
?, LESLIE HALL, JANE GRIFFIN, ?, ?, MRS. MARION FOWKES, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?**

**TOP ROW -
NO NAMES KNOWN**



DATE -

**BOTTOM ROW -
NO NAMES KNOWN**

**MIDDLE ROW -
ANN SMITH, ?, MOYRA DRAYCOTT, MR. JOHN STACEY, JANE BULL, ?, HAZEL GRIFFIN**

**TOP ROW -
?, ?, ?, ?, ROBERT BAXTER, ?**



**Mrs. Elizabeth Menzies is the class teacher
but children's names and date not known**



c. 1962

FRONT ROW - L TO R

RENA EARP, LYNN COOPER, KAREN WALKER, HELEN SCANLON, DIANNE HUNT, JAYNE BAMFORD, JULIE BILLINGS

MIDDLE ROW -

??, JANE GRIFFIN, JOANNE WILLIAMS, MRS. ELIZABETH MENZIES, JILL ROBINSON, PATSY WILLIAMS, JACKIE PEPPER

TOP ROW -

LESLIE HALL, RICHARD BOOTH, RICHARD DRAYCOTT, BRIAN PEPPER, MICHAEL NICKLINSON, GRAHAM SMITH, PAUL ORTON

SUPPLEMENTARY NEWSPAPER REPORT

The following has been transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 31st May 1957

MAC CHERRY TAKES YOU TO A COUNTRY SCHOOL WHERE "MOBY DICK" IS THE PRIDE OF THE CLASSROOM



While children of the upper junior form in a Church of England controlled school near Coalville (Newbold, Coleorton) sit at their lessons, a gleaming pike glides and gazes in a glass tank at the back of their classroom.

In one corner, two grass snakes stretch their slack coils, and nearby in a small aquarium a red-breasted stickle back dives paternally amongst is 40-odd motherless and almost transparent young.

The school where tribute is paid to nature, not just by a few vases of summer blossoms or a bean growing on blotting paper, but through living creatures and the season's best wild flowers, is at Newbold, Coleorton.

A search for the one true country school of the country could very well end in this 85 year old building of the conventional school architecture of Queen Victoria, but still by any standards a light roomy, and workable school. It is ideally situated in beautiful countryside.

The headmaster, is Mr. John Stacey of Coalville, himself an expert naturalist.

He said the staff believe in teaching the youngsters respect for nature by keeping under close focus observations the things that happen in the hedgerows, fields and ponds that lie around.

Because the pageant of the year can be reflected but not compressed in a classroom, organised parties expand their nature love by going on country expeditions.

THE PIKE

When I sort him out amid his plants, specimens and fish tanks, he showed me "Moby Dick", the pike which is the particular pride of the 11 year old boys.

In the adjoining tank, separated by a glass partition, was a darkly brooding tench, acquired when part of the old Ashby Canal was drained at Measham. The family affairs of the sticklebacks provided a lesson in themselves.

Before the female laid the eggs, the father first built a small and delicate house of water weeds to receive them.

He tried each piece of material, making sure it was not too buoyant before weaving it into the gossamer walls of his underwater nursery.

After 10 days, the first baby fish appeared, and the not too fond mother was immediately banished to another tank to forestall a piece of plactorial cannibalism

THE SNAKES

Meanwhile, the lazy grass snakes, awakened by the strengthening sun, hissed and darted the forked lightening of their tongues.

Among the children there is not one who would confuse a dangerous Adder with a harmless Grass Snake or a Blind Worm.

Nor would they ever be tempted to eat the black cherry-like fruits of the deadly night - shade. The nature tables have taught them to know their wayside plants, both friends and enemies. At a moments notice during my visit an 11 year old Rosalinda Croson set out and returned breathless and triumphant with a Jack-by-the-Hedge, just coming into bud, to complete the nature display.

Youngsters start bringing their first damp handfuls of wayside flowering plants to Mrs. Marion Fowkes for her infant department nature table.

Later, as lower juniors, they hand their offerings to Mrs. F. Ursula Smith, and when they finally leave at the age of eleven, they have had a chance to learn much more than the average child about the world of birds, animals and flowers.

They have made a school garden from a scrub wilderness, and by the green hut where they keep their trowels and spades in a grassy playground of smooth lawn, which any school would envy.



JOHN STACEY

**MEMOIRS OF JOHN STACEY - HEADMASTER OF NEWBOLD
SCHOOL FOR TWENTY THREE AND A HALF YEARS**
Unfortunately pages 12 and 13 are missing

MEMOIRS OF A VILLAGE SCHOOL HEADMASTER

3rd May 1949. It is my first day as headmaster of this village primary school. I am determined to make a good start. So, in consultation with the infants' teacher, who is the pianist, I have prepared what I think will be a very nice service for my first assembly.

I face seventy or so expectant faces and realise I am under critical inspection. Alas, my voice has gone, and I croak through my carefully prepared service and it is left to the infants' teacher to explain to the children that this is not the true "me". The children, unsophisticated as they are, accept this, but I notice one or two barely concealed grins from the older girls.

Seven days later comes the 11+ examination. Several children have been omitted from this by the previous head. I am concerned about this, as I feel it is every child's right to take part, unless mentally incapable. The parents of these children have been to see me, and they are in angry mood. Can't I do something about it? I explain I am helpless, but the parents are still upset as they go away along the village street.

Comes exam. day. I am upset to see the children excited and expectant. I notice sadly that many, especially the girls, have their "Sunday clothes" on. I am sad too, because, in the few days I have known them, I have realised that they have not the slightest chance of doing well. How ill-prepared they are! I give them the first paper. I see the puzzled expressions on their faces, and notice how little they do. There are a few tears of frustration. The records show that in the past sixteen years, one child only has qualified for the grammar school, and that in an interview.

So on this occasion, one girl only is called for an interview. She has natural talent, and does well in her interview, and eventually she goes to the grammar school.

The children are writing on slates. I fear there is a shortage of paper because of the war. But in the copboards I find stacks of paper, so old and mouldy that it has grown to the wall with mildew. I give the slates to the children when I have obtained supplies of paper. The Education Committee give me an emergency allowance, and I begin to stock up with essential materials, of which there is a shortage.

I look at the text books. Many are a dog-eared survival of when the school was a senior school, not so long ago before the older children were transferred to larger and senior schools in the district. We pile most of the useless books into a heap in the middle of the floor. Next day, I let the children take their pick of what they want, to take away. The rest are taken to the local colliery to be burned. In the meantime, a school manager finds the heap on the floor, and I am gently censured for being untidy!

There is no vicar at this time, so I have to make all reports both to my managers and to the office. Shortly after starting at the school, I am summoned to Leicester to explain why all school lettings have been free. There is a scale of charges for lettings. I go to Leicester and am told that charges must be made. Moreover, they must be retrospective, and the lessees owe a lot of money. I plead that the parish is small and poor, and eventually the office agrees that the slate should be wiped clean, but from now on, charges must be made. These, on the whole, apply to various meetings which are connected with the church. I feel pleased to have gained this reprieve, and report with satisfaction to the managers. This is a church school, remember, and most of the managers are church stalwarts. I sense that they feel that I have let them down, and that I am responsible for the charges being made. They do not

appreciate the fact that I have got them out of a hole and they are suspicious of me.

As an aftermath of the war, in the canteen we are still on food coupons. We also send food to another school. This is collected and carried in containers by the local garage owner. This brings problems and complaints. The cook makes one meal very well and very often, and this is a kind of stew. There is a cook and an assistant, and they do very well considering all. The caretaker is a middle-aged lady from the village. At least she makes roaring fires. Much of the school garden is covered with a vast heap of fuel, coal and coke. The fireplaces are open, and effective only for a short distance around. I decide to ask for an alternative and more efficient form of heating. This takes a long time to come to fruition. The managers are supportive in requests I make, but I still sense a degree of caution. Not suspicion as time goes on, but every move I make is closely watched. I understand this, as they are protecting their investment in a new head.

To introduce myself to the villagers, I call an evening meeting, in which I propose to give them an idea of what I have in mind for the school. I have a grass snake, a crayfish and an assortment of nature slides. The projector and screen are set up, and the people are filling up the chairs. I notice that on the back row, a small group of youths are inclined to be noisy and troublesome. I go to them and quietly give them an ultimatum - behave yourselves or out you go! They settle down. I explain my interest in natural history. I handle the snake and take it round the audience. Some dare to touch it. I have prepared a drawing on the blackboard, of the crayfish, and I talk about this. Then I show the slides. The people seem to be enjoying it, and a small group and I have an interesting chat afterwards. I have brought an aquarium and a vivarium to school, and the snake and crayfish and some sticklebacks are now in residence. I propose to make larger and more ambitious aquaria, and to have specimens of local fish on view. A day or two later, a very small boy staggers to school with a very large shopping bag in which is a hedgehog. We release it in the classroom, and it finds refuge underneath a cupboard. This is not the only four-legged resident in our school, as mice are seen and an occasional sighting of a rat is reported by evening visitors. I have the pest control officer in, to deal with these, and after a spell of treatment, he more or less clears the place.

For a few weeks, some parents are trying me out. Aggressive fathers come along with an assortment of charges. Mothers complain their children are being bullied or ostracised by their classmates. I am accused of favouring one against another. This is completely untrue. Parents complain of petty thieving. I am aware of some of this and am tackling it. One vast and objectionable woman with arms like my legs accuses me of saying her children have "scabies in their hair." She doesn't know what scabies are. I became aware of them in the wartime evacuees from London. Village men walk by the school on their way from the pit, and we exchange pleasantries. Their lives down this mine are dreadfully rough, hard and coarse. Yet many have much pride in their gardens, and their children bring me flowers.

Our school garden is a wilderness. At one time it was laid out in small individual plots, but they have almost disappeared. A clergyman lives in the school house with his wife and daughter (who is at the school). They are a neurotic family, and quarrel much and violently. Father has a small part of the garden for his vegetables. A dozen or so Brussels which look as if locusts have been at them, are situated beneath a great Bramley Seedling. The American blight from the infested tree drifts down on to his plants. He complains indignantly to me about the destruction of this crop. So now I'm responsible even for this!!

The "toilet" arrangements are absolutely revolting. A small brick building in the back yard holds a two-seater ground closet for the use of the staff. I can hardly imagine two teachers sitting side by side! This is how it has been since the eighteen seventies. The boys have a one-seater ground closet, and a small several feet long trough for a urinal. To think that at one time this school had over 300 pupils. The girls' place is even worse. Another derelict brick building contains a number of stalls, each with a ground closet, and no door. Not exactly ground closets but a kind of pan beneath a crude wooden seat. The girls, on the whole, refuse to use this place, so there is danger of a kind of "industrial constipation." Most of the houses in the village have soak-aways in their gardens, and these are really good individual houses. It takes a long time to get water-closets at school, but this does eventually come to pass.

The school itself has two big rooms, each one divided equally by a sliding wood and glass partition. The larger room holds my class, and class two. The infants are in the other large room. I ask the managers to have the partition in the infants' room moved along one bay. This makes a very nice large room, and a smaller area behind the partition. This area is crammed with miscellaneous "junk". I am determined to get this moved as soon as possible.

The furniture is very old and out of date. Through a period of time, I manage to get new chairs and individual desks, blackboards and easels and cupboards.

The ceilings are very high and beamed. The walls are brick and painted. Everything is painted a depressing brown and dirty cream. When I decide to have the walls decorated in pastel colours, it is looked upon by some die-hards as almost sacrilege. I explain my actions by pointing out that small children see things from a much lower view point than adults, and it's bound to be more cheerful for them to see pretty colours. But bright colours in a church building, tut, tut!

The floor is of wooden floor boards. In many places there are holes, some quite large, which are a hazard. So we have to think about a new floor. Eventually we get concrete floors and tiles.

The high ceiling is spattered with dark blotches, and it takes some time for me to decide what they are. They turn out to have been made by children chewing paper into convenient missiles, which are fired from snapping wooden rulers.

There is a wooden steeple at one end of the roof which holds a hefty bell. The rope comes down into class two room, and is pulled every morning to bring the children to school. I am concerned about the condition of this wooden structure, and I have it examined by a builder. He thinks it could be unsafe. I suppose it has been there for a great number of years. I ask the managers to have it taken down before the bell crashes through the roof and ceiling and injures someone.

The main school playground is smallish. A five feet high wall separates it from the garden, with one opening to the garden, not a gate. I enquire if I might pull the wall down, to extend our horizons as it were. I am told no, but if the wall should fall down it would not be rebuilt. Oddly, it does fall down (with a little assistance). I set to work in the garden. I dig and clear the area where the individual plots were. The children help by removing weeds and rubbish and so on. For this area, I make a nice lawn with flower borders all round, and come the autumn I plant rose trees and dozens of bulbs. I cannot dig the whole garden, it is too big. But we clear it and rake it thoroughly. We sow it with grass seed given by a farmer, who is also a manager. We do not have great hopes but surprisingly, as time passes by, we have an extensive grassy area on which the children play.

The hedge on the roadside is a great high tangle of hawthorn, holly, privet and elder. My father and I spend evenings tackling this, and by cutting and weaving and layering, we create what turns out to be a shapely, neat, thick hedge, about five feet high. Where the fuel heap was (I have sold the fuel) I make a wide flower border, and plant shrubs, lavender and michaelmas daisies and so on.

From the stone quarry, I obtain several loads of magnesium limestone, stones of a nice size. My father and I build a rockery wall at the end of our flower bed and lawn. It is curved in shape, about two feet high and two feet wide, a double wall. We fill it with soil and plant mixed wallflowers for next spring. Later, when it is established, it is planted with perennials and rock plants.

Our nature study is thriving. Inside school are nature tables which always are loaded with specimens, mostly in summer, with common wild flowers. All sorts of things find their way there, from fungi to dead beetles, hedgerow fruits to feathers, even a dead badger, a road victim. I use a small glass fronted cupboard as a museum in which we are to put uninteresting things. The cupboard is always empty, as the children discover that everything, however mundane, is interesting. We try to encourage birds in the garden by feeding them. I erect a wooden frame on which we hang food, such as peanut containers and half coconuts. We do hang bones and suet on, but dogs find them, drag the whole thing down and take their booty away. Two attractive birds we have are great spotted woodpecker and nuthatch. Grey squirrels frequent the tall trees on the other side of the garden, by the disused "Stephenson" railway line. A little owl occupies a vent in the end wall of the school. We take nature walks and come back with our specimens. A girl discovers a pond in which she finds 'devils toe nails'. These, of course, come to the nature table. Dead birds are brought in, looked at, sometimes drawn. A dead grey squirrel also comes, and we are surprised how big it is. A dead grass snake is brought in. A tall boy holds it by the tail, and it is so long that its head touches the floor. I do a post mortem on it, and it contains 32 eggs. Comes a dead tawny owl, a road casualty. It is very rough and bedraggled. I put it in the fork of the apple tree and, although it is almost unrecognisable, all the smaller birds in the parish seem to find it, and show their alarm in a multitude of scolding notes. Some even attack it, and make the feathers fly. We have a dead rook. We measure it. It is eighteen inches from beak to tail, and its wing span is three feet.

Below the school is a long disused railway bank, where the "Stephenson" railway came along our way. One could see the old railway lines, buried in the surface as they crossed the road, and came behind the school. I mention this because blindworms or slowworms are found on this bank, and the boys bring them in for the vivarium.

Meanwhile inside school, we are making progress in the children's education. I find that the main deficiency is in reading, both oral and silent. Some children read reasonably well but they lack comprehension of the matter read. My main thrust is to improve the all-round reading ability. I get more interesting books, both individual and group readers. We work in groups, I create competitions and I hear all children read to me as often as possible. Writing itself is crude, and we learn to write nicely. Self expression is the theme of our writing. I provide books which ask for objective answers to be written into the books.

Arithmetic is another subject which needs tackling. I'm old fashioned, but I believe most intensely in a knowledge of tables. Children love repeating them (parrot wise). This fluency in tables pays dividends in the 11+, as does the ability to read well and quickly and with comprehension.

All relevant subjects are tackled, history, geography, music, literature, dancing, natural history and art. I buy large stocks of sugar paper and newsprint, and unlimited supplies of art materials. I don't think the children have used colour before. They are timid to let themselves go at first, and several girls shyly put their arms round their work, to stop me seeing it. One girl actually retreats under her desk when I stop by her to look at her work. We learn design, pattern making and we illustrate our stories. I have had big pin boards fixed to the walls, and all pictures are pinned on them. All sorts of papers are put on them, maps, graphs and essays. They can look quite colourful and are always interesting. On one wall blackboard I have painted an outline map of the world in white lines. We can illustrate many locations on this in coloured chalk.

We are lucky to have a brilliant infant teacher. She started at the school when I did, and thinks the same as I do. Before long her 7-year-olds know all tables up to 12, and the square table. They can say them backwards too. Old fashioned? By no means, as the 11+ proved. She also teaches reading well. This is all continued in the second class by an industrious and experienced lady teacher. When the children reach me, they are fertile soil as it were. The infants have a news period each morning and each child reports something interesting to the teacher. One girl reports a dead man in a ditch. Of course I have to investigate. But it's the girl's imagination running riot. We keep this up but in a modified form. I like the children to write reports in their diaries. These diaries are illustrated too. We make our own books for this, of plain paper and quite large and substantial with pastel coloured covers. The covers are sometimes decorated with potato prints. We also have similar books for each child to write on the favourite subject of their choice. Not surprising how often monsters turn up, and the illustrations to the stories are weird.

We are building up our equipment in school. I go along in the evenings, and some children turn up to help me and keep me company. Much of what I construct is for the infant room. I build a roomy Wendy house with a window and a door. It is collapsible and can be stored. Older girls sell saving stamps from it. It serves as a "pretend" shop and, of course, a house with mothers and fathers. I build a substantial sand pit from a large packing case. I buy large deep plastic containers for water games and measuring. We buy measures for liquids, scales for weighing, tapes and long rulers and a chain. I make extensive book shelves for each room. A girl paints the abacus in pretty colours.

For art work, I construct a dozen double-sided easels, with fixed pin-board surfaces, about five square feet, and troughs to hold the painting materials. I buy large hogs hair brushes to encourage big works. The children take happily to these, and as time goes on and they become more confident, they produce interesting paintings. The infants are provided with plastic aprons and don't they need them!

The girls do needlework, not too well I'm afraid. We gradually improve the quality of this. Like many other subjects, a too low standard has been accepted. As the children's horizons expand with experience they go ahead with pleasure and a sense of achievement.

We are short of money. So I buy white tee-shirts and we dye them, red, green, yellow and blue. We divide the children into four houses for competition in P.E., games and school work. I order P.E. apparatus, gym mats, balancing bars and so on, and individual mats for lying on. As the lawn comes into use the children use the bricks from the demolished wall to lay out houses.

So the term moves slowly along. The children are well-behaved, and we have few disciplinary problems. The village sleeps in the sunlit air and the gardens

are full of colour. Each afternoon parents come along to school to fetch the infants home. We have chats about this and that. On the sunny days we carry our desks and chairs outside. I take out a blackboard and easel and we have lessons there. I photograph many events in our school life. I also photograph the three classes separately, and the whole school and staff group, in colour. I put the proofs outside for the parents to order copies, and we sell quite a large number. Soon the eldest children will be leaving us, and I am not looking forward to this at all. I've known the children but a short time, but long enough to become very fond of them. We talk, and I try to prepare them for the drastic change from a small village school to a large secondary school. I take the leavers along to the senior school one afternoon to have a look round. They'll take some time to settle in and find their way about. But they'll not be alone in this. Besides, older children from the village school are already there. I notice an increasing sophistication in the children who will leave us, especially the girls.

Inevitably the term ends. The last week is traumatic. The children pack their belongings, exercise books, note books, art books and all their bits and bobs. The last day is terribly sad for us all. I watch the leavers walk up the village street and realise with a pang, this is the last time I shall see them go.

A new term. Several 5-year-olds with shining faces and bright eyes are to start school this morning. Some are looking forward to it, some are tearful. So are some of the mothers. I meet them at the school gate, and greet the little ones with a smile and encouragement. Some respond, but one little lad kicks my shins repeatedly. His mother doesn't chide him, that is left to me when I get him in school. The infants' teacher knows how to deal with entrants and this sort of behaviour. I don't - it is my first experience of it. I marvel at the thought that these little ones will settle in and, under the kindly guidance of the infant teacher, will soon be happy and beginning to learn. It's a long day for the beginners, and they begin to flag after lunch. So they lie down and relax. Some snooze. When the mothers fetch them at 3 o'clock, they are anxious to know how they've got on. Will the little ones want to come tomorrow?

Next year's 11+ is on my mind. In the group of half a dozen candidates, I see two girls who should make the grade. They read well, calculate well, write nice essays and are intelligent. It is said rightly, that intelligence is innate, and that the standard is fixed in the child. All right, but one must release it and develop it and practice it. As I've said, the basic is to read well with comprehension, and react quickly to what is asked of them. So with this in mind, we set aside a period a day to give the children speed of reaction. Much mental arithmetic is done. A period of spelling comes, and "intelligence" exercises are given. I buy more books which ask these types of questions, mental and mechanical arithmetic, puzzles, crosswords and so on. No other class subject is neglected for this. As the time for the exam draws near, I shall intensify our work. Coaching? No! just good old-fashioned teaching. I am determined, so far as I am able, to prepare them for this most vital experience of their lives, and one which has such a bearing on their future. I see no difference between "coaching" and thoughtful intensive teaching. The aim is to get the children to use their brains to the best of their ability.

At about this time we acquire a vicar and a chairman of managers. Into school bursts a large gentleman with the physique of a wrestler, and the head of an archbishop. He is casually dressed, open necked shirt and flannel trousers. I wonder who he is, and what is his business in the school. Full of smiles, he introduces himself as the new vicar. What a relief it is to have him, to take some responsibility from me, and to have someone to discuss

affairs with. Very soon he begins to fit into the school programme. For some time, however, there is much sparring between us, to settle our relative positions of authority. Remember, this is a church school, and there is a sniff of Church and State. Once a week he comes in to take assembly and to have the children for a period of religious tuition. His two children, a boy and a girl, join the school and they prove to be good scholars. The vicar brings his wife to meet us.

I feel these are the happiest days of my school life. I am my own master. I have extremely good relations with most parents and, of course, with all members of the staff and children. I arrive at school in the freshness of the morning, and walk around our developing garden. The lavender and michaelmas daisies are in bloom. The autumn air is fresh and clear and stimulating. The air is full of the scent of the countryside. The fields across the way form a tapestry of chequered colours, and the clouds are high. From the playground comes the sound of children gossiping and playing before school starts. At last, reluctantly, we have to go inside. Registers marked, number of dinners and milks taken, and into assembly. Sometimes a child reads the service, and I take the prayers. Hymns and sometimes prayers are sung.

A change has taken place in the canteen. The two original cooks have left, and two others have taken their places. The canteen itself is in a shocking condition. The floor is concrete, grey and pitted. The cooks clean it every day. An official from the office complains that it is dirty. I object strongly to this, and tell her that it's bound to look like a pigsty floor because it is a pigsty floor, however much it is scrubbed. Eventually we have a new red composition floor. The solid fuel cooker is old fashioned with a flue pipe into the chimney breast. The pipe is loose and tends to spring out with dire consequences, filling the place with dust and soot. We have this put right. Eventually we have a new electric cooker. Various apparatus is bought and fitted. The office responds well when they are made aware of our needs. The cook has much book work to do. Coupons disappear and the new menus set by the office are interesting, tasty and nourishing. No longer do we send meals to another school.

As I enter the village, to my right is a gated field, in which are several gypsy caravans. Gypsy? Well, I find it difficult to distinguish between gypsies and travellers. The population of the field changes frequently as caravans come and go. Some of our visitors I feel are true gypsies. An elderly couple live there permanently, and I often have a chat with them. We become quite friendly, so much so that they ask me to help them fill in various official forms. At week-ends there is an increase in the number of vans. I don't see them at week-ends but I understand there is quite a lot of arguing and rowdiness when a lot of folks are there, and when the drink flows. Usually they have gone by Monday mornings. Our couple frequently have youngsters staying with them, but what the relationships are I do not know.

One day I see a girl of ten or so leaning over the gate and watching our children passing by. I go down to the encampment to try to get the girl into school. I meet her mother and explain the advantages of coming to school. Yes, she'll bring her tomorrow, if I will promise not to hurt her. No, I won't hurt her. The next morning the mother brings her, and I have to promise again not to hurt her. These people are suspicious of authority. She half strips the girl to show me she's clean. The little one settles in my class and likes it. She enjoys her dinners. One morning as I drive by, I see her on all fours peering through a hedge into a front garden. She comes to school with a bunch of lovely roses. I thank her and explain to her that if I were living in a field like she is, I would bring the teacher wild flowers, which the other girls don't do. It works and our nature table is all the richer for it, as are the villagers front gardens. She's had no schooling, but I don't mind that. She likes to look at

picture books. She asks for coloured crepe paper, and she makes artificial flowers. I am sorry to see her go.

On another occasion, the matriarch comes along with two boys and asks me to take them in. I notice they have a suggestion of hairs on their top lips, incipient moustaches. I ask how old they are. The old fox says nine. Have you got their birth certificates? A foolish question. No, will you take them? I think they will do better in school than running wild in the village. I put them in my class. Again they have no education, but I keep them busy. As a follow-up to this story - at the end of the year I decide to pass them on to the senior school. Lady doesn't want them to go, says they are only nine! Again! However they have to go.

One day we hear the clatter of horses' hooves outside the school and the sound of many voices. I take the children outside to find the hunt there in pursuit of a fox which has taken refuge on the railway bank. No fox is found and the hunt moves up the village street. The magnificent hounds trot up the road, and now an amusing incident takes place. A decrepit old goat from the gypsy encampment, with broken rope a-trailing, as enthusiastic as anybody, suddenly joins the pack, and with horns at defiant angle and smirk on face, it frolics and bucks along in the midst of the haughty dogs. A gypsy lad, of black curly hair and olive skin, with bright red neckerchief, flashing white eyes and teeth, is in the middle of the pack in no time, trying to drag his reluctant goat away. We have a good laugh and I wish I had my camera with me.

The autumn term goes happily along. We enjoy the change of the season in our country village. Autumn colours, autumn mist, falling leaves, dark evenings, a brightly lit school, progress in our work. Half term break is over, so we begin to make plans for Christmas. We buy some material and dye it red. A parent in the village makes us a Santa Claus outfit. I make a beard and moustache. We begin to make and store decorations from coloured paper. Carols are learned and practised in the singing lessons. We begin to think about a programme of party games, mostly the old favourites, musical chairs, bursting balloons and so on. We practice dancing. The art class and I make a crib with stable and cut-out figures of people and animals. We fix a light in it, to give it a stage effect. All children make Christmas cards and calendars.

It seems to be the custom here for children to go round the villagers to collect gifts of money to buy presents. I don't like this begging and determine that this year shall be the last time. However, at present we need the money. I buy identical presents, for boys and girls, to save falling out as to who has what. We wrap these and name them. A large clean sack comes from our farmer manager, and into this go the presents. Another local farmer brings along masses of berried holly and we use this to decorate the rooms. A bunch of mistletoe comes from the orchard of a country cottage where a couple of our children live.

We spend the last week before the end of term in completing the decorating of the rooms. The screen in my room is drawn back and we have plenty of space. The frilled paper ribbons drape across from wall to wall. We make curtains of coloured paper and fasten them round the electric light shades. Using white sticky paper we cut out scores of six-sided snow flakes and stick them on the windows. Strings of flakes of cotton wool are suspended. Lots of many coloured balloons are blown up and hung in groups. Another farmer has given us a Christmas tree. Many little hands help to decorate it with baubles and lights and a fairy on the top. Preparations are going ahead in the canteen. The cooks enter into the spirit of the season and are enthusiastic in producing attractive food. We have a Christmas dinner on party day with all the customary fare, puddings, and sauce, and turkey and trimmings. Sixpences are given out with the helpings of pudding.

All this thrills us but the great climax is the Christmas party. For tea on that day we invite the managers and their wives, and other friends from the village, those who have helped us so much. A long table is erected down the middle of the room. Nine crisp tablecloths are laid with Christmas decorations down the table. The desks are placed round the room for the children with a paper serviette for each child as a tablecloth. Paper mugs and plates for each child, and for each the same helping of mince pie, cake, jelly and pop.

The children have been sent home to change, and now they begin to come in. The boys have their best clothes on, and the girls are beautiful in their party dresses. There is a buzz of excited chatter but soon they settle down in their seats. Staff and visitors take their places at the long table. The pianist accompanies the grace. Someone has produced paper hats from somewhere. The eating begins and the chatter is muted.

After tea, the middle table is cleared away and the party games begin. The dancing is furious and the piano goes mad. There is uproar of happy voices - and occasional tears of sheer excitement. Dancing, games, all swing along and I smile to see the wattle in use.

Parents begin to come in and stand at the end of the room to watch the celebrations. Suddenly the lights go out, and only the fairy lights illuminate the room. The sound of a bell is heard from outside and in expectant silence, Santa enters the room with his sack of toys. Santa is a sporting village parent. The cooks have made him up in the canteen. The children crowd around. I take the presents and hand them to Santa. He calls the name of the child and passes on the present. All over, with many good wishes for a happy Christmas, and Santa leaves to much applause.

To round off a lovely evening I invite the parents to join the children in singing a couple of carols. The vicar closes the evening with prayers. I drive home in the frosty night with warmth in my heart.

Spring term 1950. After the Christmas holidays, we are back at school. The roads are bad, snow-bound and icy. I find it difficult some days to get to school. My route is across country, and in these days there is little traffic on the country roads. However, we manage to get to school on time. I always pick up my two lady teachers. In a period of prolonged frost, the temperature in school drops to below forty, but we keep our coats on and do frequent activities to keep us warm.

The II* is to take place in a couple of months. I duplicate mock exam papers, one each week, to familiarise the children with a mass of paper work, mechanical and mental arithmetic, and intelligence paper and a problem paper. I mark them and work out the I.Q. of each child. As expected, the two girls do very well.

Comes the day of the exam. proper. I give out the papers, and no longer is there panic. The whole group does quite well, and the two girls make the grade. After the exam is over, we have time to relax in our more or less cultural activities, our gardening, nature walks, art and drama.

At the end of this term, my first year is completed. In my writing now, no longer will I follow the course of our progress, but write up various incidents and events, not necessarily in the order in which they take place. I can write more about the village and the villagers, and the development of our various projects. Some will be brief, some will extend over several days or weeks. As for example, our nature study and nature walks. Behind the school the disused railway line is overgrown, a riot of vegetation, shrubs, wild flowers and

weeds. We make this our nature reserve. One day, a boy brings in a matchbox containing "things" which his dad had found on the railway bank. They are glow-worms, and the greenish light from them in a dark room enables one to read a paper. This is the only occasion on which they are found. In a day in February, a workman brings in a slow-worm which he has disturbed from its hibernation. It has shed its tail, and on the stump of the body is a trace of blood. This is from the railway bank I have mentioned before. We are engaged in a study of the distribution of frogs, toads and newts. I prepare a large map of our area with a radius of a mile or so, and draw on it all the water locations, ponds, small reservoirs, streams and flooded ditches. We are to enter on this all the locations for the amphibians, density of population, and the dates relative to their breeding. This knowledge is to go to a local naturalists' club. It is a fascinating study. I have had the great aquarium made, and in it are a number of breeding frogs. The classroom is full of their croaking - and the tank is full of frog spawn. We send most of this away, and keep a little to study. A girl is excited to discover that the suction pads on the male's front feet are "inside" the feet like little thumbs. After the breeding is over and our lessons on frogs completed, we let the creatures go free, clean out the tank, and prepare it for its next occupants.

My lads and I meet one evening to visit a large deep local lake. We are to take photographs of the breeding colony of toads, with their strings of spawn. I photograph the boys at the pond. The strap on my 35mm camera breaks and the camera falls to the ground. Fortunately it is not damaged. There are grass snakes in this damp area, and occasionally a sloughed skin is found, almost entire, with everything inside out. Even the eye covers are there, concave instead of convex. One such skin hangs in the classroom.

I always seem to have grass snakes in my vivarium. On this occasion, I have three. I come to school one morning, and find the vivarium empty and the door open. How this happened I do not know. I have to launch a search and find operation. A squeal from the infants room tells me one has been found. It lies contentedly on a gym mat. That one goes back into the vivarium. Another one is found vertically in the crack of the partition where there is a small gap. The third one is more tricky. It is seen partly out of a ventilating brick in class two room. As I try to catch it, it withdraws. So I go outside and wait till it comes out of the brick when I grab it and restore it to the vivarium.

I catch a snake on a country road on a very hot day. It is truly wild and resists all attempts to tame it. It is in the vivarium. On a Sunday evening, when a church service is held in my room, a number of the congregation are very interested in it. They ask me to fetch it out of the vivarium. I warn them against it, and tell them why. If the snake is irritated, it will use its method of defence. That is, it will spurt out from a gland a thick yellow liquid which smells abominably. They persist, so I give in to them. As I lift it out, it resists and writhes violently. It acts true to form and floods the area with this dreadful stuff. The room is full of the stench. If it lands on one's clothes, it is ages before it can be cleaned off.

On another occasion, the members of the congregation are able to watch a snake actually sloughing its skin. It enters a tuft of grass, and the skin of the upper and lower jaws begins to peel back. As it writhes forward, the skin having a purchase on the grass stems, peels back like taking off a stocking. The sloughed skin is entire. Another snake I have lays a few eggs in the vivarium. They do not mature - the conditions are wrong. The eggs are sort of bean-shaped, and have a leathery skin, not a shell. A boy across the road from the school has a small grass snake. He brings it to school and lets the children play with it. In the evening, the mother rings me to tell me the snake has got free in the living room, and has disappeared under the skirting board. We allow one snake to swim in the big aquarium, and we can see its sinuous

movements above and below the surface of the water.

The aquarium holds about sixty gallons, so it can take quite large fish. On several occasions I have pike, up to a foot long. No other fish is put in with those carnivorous monsters. I do not keep them long, as they need more freedom than the aquarium can provide. A fisherman friend in the village brings along an eel. But in the tank, the eel buries itself in the sand and gravel of the bed. We have a fish pond by this time. We put the eel on the lawn in different situations, and wherever it is, it makes unerringly for the water of the pond.

The pond is a gift from the W.I., an organisation which we have launched. The boys and I dig out the hole next to the rockery in which we fit the prefabricated pond. We lay crazy paving round it leaving gaps for plants like pampas grass and thyme. We go to the local ponds for water plants, such as marsh marigolds, hornwort and Canadian pondweed. Eventually we are to put goldfish into it. On a later occasion when we are cleaning the pond out, the debris is put on a garden border. The next day we see a flash of gold in the debris, and find that a goldfish has been there all night. It is alive and quite active when returned to the pond.

Two boys come along to school with a large plastic shopping bag in which is a huge fish. We put it in the aquarium, and find it is a mirror carp which they have caught from a local pond. This pond is fished by a local club, and the carp must be one of their most expensive trophies. After a while, it is returned to the pond.

One of our most exciting captives is a water spider which I have caught in a nearby canal. It builds a submarine diving bell by spinning a web in the plants, then fetching down air and releasing it under the web so creating an air-filled bell in which it lives. But the amazing thing is that it spins a number of threads four feet across the tank from one end to the other.

We find sticklebacks very interesting indeed. As the Spring season approaches, the males develop their breeding dress, greeny brown bodies, bright red breasts, and luminous turquoise eyes. Many battles are fought to establish supremacy, the defeated males losing their brilliant colours and sulking in corners. The victorious male builds a nest. He picks up a bit of vegetable debris from the water, takes it part way up and releases it. If it does not sink, it is discarded. If it sinks, it is woven into a tubular nest in the sand. He sticks this stuff together with a glutinous liquid from his body. Continually he pokes his head into it, to create a tube. All ready, and he persuades a pregnant female into it. She goes in head first, comes out at the other end with a deflated body. She has left her eggs in the nest. Nearly bursting with excitement, he follows her through to fertilize the eggs. Now he only leaves the nest to drive intruders away. He remains poised head first over the nesting tube and with waving fins he directs water through the tube to aerate the eggs. One day the nest is seen to be broken up in a tiny crater in the sand, and small thread-like baby fish lie about. If one strays, he picks it up in his mouth and returns it. I take all other sticklebacks out of the tank now, to prevent them eating the baby fish.

There are changes in school. Class two teacher retires, and a lady from a neighbouring village is appointed in her place. She fits in very well. Unhappily she does not enjoy good health, and does not stay with us long. A retired teacher from our own village takes her place. Her attitude to teaching is the same as ours, so she helps the good work along.

The caretaker retires, and a strong lass from the village is appointed in her place. At this time we have new heating, solid fuel stoves. But they are

fox swimming into the reeds on the far side of the water to retreat from the hunt who are active in the neighbourhood.

To leave our nature reserve on the railway, we climb steps cut into the bank. Unbeknown to us there is a wasps' nest nearby. We disturb them and they fly about. One girl receives a sting. Unhappily she is the last child who should have been stung. She is allergic, and by the time we get back to school she is ashen and quite ill. I send for her parents who come tardily. She is taken to a doctor, who prescribes a tablet she must carry with her at all times, just in case. Years later I see her when she is a student at the Technical College, and she still carries her tablet. Occasionally we have to treat bee stings, and much more rarely, other wasp stings.

All the school do their nature walks, and the children are inquisitive and happy. I have my group on the playing field. We have a small magnifying glass each and use them on such as frog-hoppers and small beetles and insects. We find several Devil's Coach-horse beetles, which raise their abdomens as a gesture of self defence. Demonstrating what this action means I am nipped by the creature's forceps and the girls squeal with delight as I hastily shake the creature off my finger. We have chimney sweep moths on our legs, disturbed as we walk through the long grasses.

We study the village. Armed with pencils and clip-boards, we line up on the nearby main road and take a census of the passing traffic in a limited time - cars, vans, motor cycles, cycles, horse traffic. Back at school we make graphs of what we have seen. The coloured graphs make attractive patterns.

We walk the village discovering what the road signs mean. A concrete pillar with a metal plate which reads 10/3 means that a 3 inch water main is 10 feet from this spot. We find the associated hydrant cover with its identifying letter H and note how this helps the fire service. Outside each house on the pavement is a small iron plate covering the tap which controls the water supply to the house. There are sign posts at each crossroads. We measure off a chain and a furlong and estimate one acre. We learn how to calculate the height of a tree or a building (if the sun is shining). At the dangerous crossroads, a system of staggered roads has been installed, and we sketch this and make measurements.

A farm sale is taking place in the village, and many farmers are present. I take the group along and we are allowed to stand on the front row to see what is happening. Cattle, sheep and pigs are put up for sale, as is a lot of farm machinery. The farmer and his family have been good to us, and we are sorry to see them go.

We go along to the pit head and see the cage come up to discharge its cargo of coal-dust-blackened miners. Their teeth and eyes gleam white in their black faces.

In our art I find that occasionally a rare talent crops up. I think of one year, when both a boy and a girl show unusual gifts. The girl is quite brilliant at imaginative writing also. I have a book of her work with me now. Her original stories might rival many fairy tales. A local store runs a competition for a painting and an original essay for boys and girls. At this time I am doing a weekly nature article with drawing for a newspaper. Sometimes the girl writes the article and I do the drawing. I mention this to show the quality of her work. She enters a painting and a story which to my mind is extraordinarily good. She wins the first prize for her painting, but no acknowledgement of her story. She wonders why she failed and asks me what I think. I don't know what to say, so I suggest that perhaps each competitor is

allowed only one prize, for art or for writing. The sequel of this is that a long time afterwards I am told by a committee member of the store that the judges decided that I myself had written the story. I am very upset by this scurrilous attack on my character. But I am unable to trace any judge to whom I can protest and express my anger and indignation. However the girl qualifies for the grammar school. I see her later on television singing to a guitar. She studies art at University and goes on to design and create silver jewellery professionally.

The boy too wins first prize with the painting. In the 11+ he qualifies for the grammar school, and is also offered a place at the College of Art. He chooses the grammar school. Much later, he becomes a manager at our own school.

In my nature wanderings I find an enormous plantation of giant hogweed, one hundred and fifty plants by the canal side. I dig up a root, and have to go very deep for it. I take it to school and plant it in the garden. Next summer we have a plant fifteen feet tall with an enormous flowering head. I photograph a group of children standing under it. A local Friday newspaper publishes an article and photograph about it. The next day, Saturday, I am told, many cars draw up for the people to look at it.

I go to school on Monday morning and find the plant vandalised and scattered all around. In a neighbouring village there is a fair, and I suspect that our plant was destroyed by some yobos on their way home from this.

Nature study in the school progresses very well. In the vivarium we have a wood mouse which was found in a dustbin by a refuse collector emptying the bin. We feed it and enjoy watching it. Very soon after its introduction to the vivarium, it settles to its surroundings and we are able to watch it without it taking fright. From hay we have supplied it makes a shelter or nest. Another wood mouse is brought to school, and what more natural than to put it with our resident mouse. What a mistake! Our original occupant goes mad - he's having no intruder on his patch. A terrific turmoil takes place. He's doing his best to exterminate the stranger. If I don't separate them quickly, and take out the new-comer, the battle will end in a death.

At another time we have blindworms in the glass case. Moving them, I find a number of young born alive at the bottom of the heap. They are the size of match sticks, coloured horizontally in black and white. These blindworms also cast their skins, but not entire as in the case of grass snakes. The skin comes off in rough patches. We learn that these creatures are not snakes although they look like them. They are lizards who over the ages have lost their legs. All that remains of these are two stumps where the back legs would have been. They are covered with small scales and, unlike snakes, they can blink their eyes. These little creatures all come from the railway bank. I take a couple home to put in my greenhouse.

We are able to see all three kinds of newt in our aquarium. The smooth newt is the commonest. The male has a frill along his back. His body is greeny brown and his orange belly is dark spotted. The male makes advances to the female by lying alongside her, head to tail and caressing her. When she comes to lay her eggs, we watch her to see how she does it. She goes to a water plant, lays an egg on a leaf and with her hind feet she folds the leaf over and around the egg. A girl says the egg looks like a tomato seed.

Great crested newts (now a protected species) are scarcer, and we are lucky to have specimens. Six inches long, they are little monsters. During a hot dry spell two boys move fourteen of these newts from a small drying up pool to a bigger water.

Several specimens of the third and smallest newt, the palmate, are given to me. They are quite rare, and are only found in specialised water. The back feet are semi-palmated on the male who also has a kind of spike on the end of his tail. These also breed in the aquarium. The tadpoles of all these newts are like those of the frog in the earliest stages, but when the development takes place, unlike the frogs, they retain their tails and look like tiny adults.

I like to watch the children at their games in the play-ground. The girls have a more varied repertoire than the boys. Possibly because the boys confine themselves to the seasonal games of cricket and football.

Skipping in groups is the most popular and regular activity with the girls. There are many varied styles of this. The skipping is accompanied by singing and chanting, of age old rhymes, each with its foundation in customs and lore of bygone days. In another game the girls form a circle with one player in the middle. They sing - The farmer picks a wife - and subsequent verses accompanied by back slapping of the unfortunate in the middle. They have a game in which the leader with her back to the players, calls a colour. Any girl wearing that colour advances to the winning line. When the caller quickly turns round, the advance has to stop. They also play a game, Pretty and Ugly. If Pretty is called, they adopt a pretty pose and expression and the caller chooses the winner. The same with Ugly, when the most horrific is declared the winner. Boys and girls like to play "O'Grady says". I give the command for them to do some activity, such as jump up. But I always have to precede the order with "O'Grady says". If I give an order omitting this, someone is sure to carry out the order, and so becomes disqualified. We have races, especially relay or team races. Plenty of ball games on the grass and in the play-ground, and rounders too. We play other schools at football and cricket and rounders. We play six aside football. On one occasion we are playing another school at football, and part way through the game we discover that unwittingly our opponents are fielding 12 men. We also go swimming. One of our boys becomes a schoolboy international.

We have a Punishment Book, in which entries for corporal punishment have to be made. I find it entertaining to read of some of the misdemeanours of bygone days. In many cases, the amount of punishment was excessive, but long ago, as elsewhere, this was a lawless district. In all my stay at the school, I only make four entries. Two are for assault on girls, one for cruelty to birds and one for rank insubordination.

The vicar often asks children to distribute letters for him. One budding financier charges the people for these letters. He is discovered and made to pay the money back. The same boy is in trouble out of school hours. His father asks me to punish him - this in cold blood. When I ask the father why he wouldn't give him the punishment, he replies, I don't want him to lose his respect for me. Needless to say, I refuse to do this. I'm afraid the lad became quite a handful later.

Our school work goes ahead pleasantly and satisfactorily. Our 11+ results mean that over seventy of our children go to the grammar school from our small village school. We have good reports of their work there. We count doctors and industrialists amongst our boys, teachers and secretaries amongst the girls. The children who go to the High School acquit themselves well, and are quite content so to find themselves.

So I come to the end of my twenty three and a half years as headmaster of our small village school. I retire unhappily. The parents present me with a Kodak Carousel projector, and I am given an inscribed tankard from the W.I.. In my retirement speech I thank everybody, and tell them I shall write a book about our school. This is it.