The History of Education in Clophill

Ian Gordon

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Introduction

Clophill is a village in the heart of Bedfordshire, just to the east of the A6, approximately halfway between Luton and Bedford. It lies just within the Danelaw, and its name comes from the Danish word Klop, meaning a stump of wood. It has certainly existed since the 11th century as it is listed in the Domesday Book, but Roman remains found in the area suggest that there may well have been a community several hundred years before the Conquest. There is evidence of Saxon and Dane habitation.

1. The Early Days and Pre- School Board Period

The first mention of formal education in the village is in a deed of Mr Richard Read dated 1630 which concerns the gift of a plot of land "*given on trust that they build a convenient schoolhouse for the education and religious upbringing of the children of Clophill in virtue and learning, and for the habitation and dwelling of a schoolmaster, he being a discreet, well learned man of honest life, civil carriage and good behaviour*". There appears to be no evidence as to whether such a schoolhouse was actually built, other than an entry in the Parish Records over 150 years later that Edward Lancaster, village schoolmaster, died on 12th July 1790.

The first definite evidence of organised education is to be found in the Sunday School records at the end of the 18th century. In her book 'The Clophill Story' Mary Phillips states "*Education was very much in the air in the early 19th century. There had been some attempt at Clophill to start a Sunday School for 30 girls at the beginning of 1794, but the plan does not seem to have got far off the ground under the worldly absentee rector, the Rev. Ezekiel Rouse, jun. It was the Rev. Nethersole who was the moving spirit behind the Sunday School, and its first Anniversary Service was held in 1799, the year in which he was given the living of Clophill by Lady Lucas."* The Parish Notes of 1799 state that "*a Sunday School for 30 girls was instituted, of whom twelve were to be annually clothed." In 1809 "a Sunday School for 30 boys was set up by private contributions"* and in 1812 it is noted that a second Sunday School for girls was started to teach a further 20. The population of Clophill at the time was about 800. There is no information in the notes as to what was taught at these Sunday Schools, but it can probably be safely assumed that to be mainly religious teaching and reading, in common with other such schools around the country. However there is a doll in St Mary's Church possibly dating from the early 19th century, which is said to have been clothed by the girls of the Sunday Schools. There was also a door in the church on which was carved a list of preachers of the sermon at the Sunday School Anniversary Service, with the amount of money collected for the upkeep of the schools, with dates from 1800 to 1868. Sadly no-one seems to know what has happened to this door. Much later, in 1862, a Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in the village and a Sunday School was started there just for religious teaching.

The rector who set up the Sunday Schools, the Rev Nethersole, was involved in the further development of schooling in the village in 1836. His name appears with others on the conveyance of a piece of land, which may possibly have been the same plot mentioned in the 1630 deed. The

conveyance is for the sale of land for the sum of 10/- (10 shillings) by the Rt Hon Thomas Philip, Earl de Grey of Wrest Park to the Rev William Pierce Nethersole (Rector), the Rev Mendham (curate), Crouch (farmer), Harton (miller), and Burrows (carpenter) and states that "*a piece of land ..... on trust that they shall suffer such schoolhouse and other buildings to be erected thereon ..... for the purpose of educating boys, being children of the poorer classes of the inhabitants in Clophill and neighbourhood in the principles of the United Church of England and Ireland upon such a system as the patron, rector and curate shall appoint.*" A Boys' National Schoolroom was therefore built and opened in 1836. There is a copy of the plan of the school building in the appendix. Pigot's Directory of 1839 states that "*in the village is a good school in which 130 boys are instructed on Dr Bell's system.*" (i.e. the monitorial system) It also states that "*there is a separate school for 60 girls.*" but it is not clear where this was. The teaching in the schools would have been carried out by monitors, who were older pupils of the school, under the instruction and direction of the Head Teacher, who was probably the only teacher in the school.

In 1844, the year in which he died, the Rev Nethersole made one further contribution to education in the village by buying a plot of land and building a school for the girls. In his will, Nethersole bequeathed "*my copyhold Schoolhouse with appurtenances at Clophill to the Lord of the Manor whereby same are held in trust by the same and the Rector of Clophill and the Rural Dean of Fleet being for the purposes of a Sunday School and according to such regulations as I shall by written paper of instructions direct and for want, of such paper as the trustees shall see fit to make.*" Added to this will is a declaration by William Dickenson of Lambeth, an executor, that he had searched for the paper of instructions and not found it. The school building still exists and is opposite the new church of St Mary. It has been converted into a house called Taylor's Cottage. The Parish Notes of 1844, lists the following schools in the village :-

Boys' Sunday School	100 boys	Mr Chapman, Headmaster.
Girls' Sunday School	80 girls	Mrs Neal, Headmistress.
Boys' Reading and Writing School	130 boys	Headteacher not listed
(National School) held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturday mornings.		
Girls' School for Reading and Sewing	20 girls	Miss Spicer, Headmistress

The Sunday School registers of this time list the day school, if any, that the child also attended, and it is surprising that a large majority of children who attended Sunday School also attended a day school at least some of the time. The pupils involved in the above schools were mostly under the age of 11 years. In addition to the schools listed above, there are also listed some 'Dame' schools run by Hannah Bosworth, Widow Palmer, and Sarah King. It is likely that these were really for child-minding of younger children and that little formal teaching took place.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the mid-Bedfordshire area was very involved in straw plaiting for the local hat industry. It appears that many adults and children in Clophill worked with straw. It was quite common for plaiting to take place in so-called straw plaiting schools, and it is likely that several such schools existed in the area. As late as 1851 there is a straw plaiting school listed in Clophill in the census. It was run by Lucy Ashby in a house in Little Lane. The Ampthill Deanery Magazine in 'Recollections of 1829' mentions a school in Clophill with "*plaiting classes, where a little reading is taught."* The probability is that the emphasis was very much on straw plaiting and very little on reading. The conditions in which the children worked were often primitive and insanitary. Joyce Godber writes from a document in Bedford County Records Office concerning the conditions in a straw plaiting school in the village of Clifton, just five miles from Clophill at the surprisingly late date of 1871, *"I saw 51 children sitting in one room 10 feet square and seven feet high. The window was shut, the door open .... but it opened into a small kitchen, and this into a yard with a filthy drain close to the door and a pigsty and privy close by. It was impossible for anyone coming from outside to stay in the plaiting room for a minute without a*

feeling of nausea."

In 1853 the first day school was started in the Boys' National Schoolroom, which was built on land almost adjoining the new St Mary's Church. The ruins were demolished in 2004 as being unsafe. The Parish notes of 1853 state that "*A daily school was established at Clophill, and Mr Austin, a young man from Campton, was engaged at £40 per annum.*" The school was for boys and girls above seven years old. The schools listed in 1860 were :-

National School	Headmaster	Mr Austin
Girls' School	Headmistress	Miss Martha Spicer (probably the same as in 1844)
3 Infant Schools (probably developments of the 'Dame' schools)		
	Headteachers	1. Ann Whittamore
		2. Mary Langley
		3. Ruth Hart.

The Sunday Schools set up at the beginning of the century continued and concentrated almost exclusively on religious education. Details of the schools attended by the children of the village are shown in the Sunday School Registers. In addition to these schools there were two private schools in the village. The census of 1851 lists a school run by William Daniels near the Flying Horse public house, and Kelly's Directory of 1864 includes Ivy House (opposite the Post Office and Village Shop) as "*a ladies' boarding school.*"

2. From the School Boards to the 2nd World War

The Education Act of 1870 required every town and village to provide schools for all children between the ages of 5 and 10 years. It was quickly established that the existing day schools in Clophill were not sufficient to accommodate all the children of the area (approximately 200 children were attending Sunday Schools at the time). In order to prevent a School Board being set up to 'fill the gap' it was agreed that, with the help of the National Society, a new school should be built. In the Bedford C.R.O. archives there is a conveyance dated 1871 relating to a piece of land for the erection of a school *"for the education of children of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes in Clophill, and for the purpose of religious and other meetings*." The land was close to the Rev Nethersole's building for the girls' Sunday School. Plans were drawn up and the school was built in 1871. (There is a copy of the plans in the appendix.) The school was opened on 5th January 1872.

The school was built to house 185 pupils as a National Mixed School and an Infant School. The two parts were run quite separately with the infants (about 40 on opening) in the large room with the gallery, and the Mixed School with 148 on roll in the first year in the remainder of the building. A School House was attached. The cost of building the school was £1,078, and this was provided as follows :-

Public subscriptions	£906
S.P.C.K.	47
Diocesan Board	25
National Society	100
	£1078

The National Society agreed to give a grant each year to assist with the running of the school.

The first Head Teacher appointed to the school was Mr James Figg and, besides his wife who taught sewing, he had two pupil teachers and two monitors to help him, with two further teachers in charge of running the Infants School. The curriculum as stated in the Log Book was arithmetic, reading, writing, dictation, scripture (often taken by the Rector) and sewing for the girls. About 50 of the older pupils were 'part-timers' due to the plait, horticultural and agricultural work, and many pupils

went missing during the summer terms because they were working on the harvest. Despite this the school had a very good start, and the Inspectors' Report of 1874 said "*This is a well-conducted school in every way.*"

During the early years of the school a number of additions were made to the curriculum. From 1874 the timetable was adjusted to allow the introduction of history and geography for those above Standard 2. Also drill was introduced for the boys, knitting for the girls and composition for both. Shortly afterwards music, probably mainly singing, was started. The school Log Books contain interesting extracts from the annual 'payment by results' Inspectors' Reports as well as some from the Diocesan Inspectors. The reports contain phrases such as "*very good*", "*very creditable*", *"attainments good", "excellent*", with the only adverse comments being made by the Headmaster concerning attendance which was frequently poor due to harvest, gleaning, potato planting and digging, and other seasonal activities. Up to the end of the century the roll in the main school stayed at about 140, with only a slight increase in 1880 when education became compulsory. This indicates that almost all the children were attending school in any case, at least some of the time. Drawing was introduced in 1876, a 6th Standard in 1880, and an extra-6th Standard in 1882. This indicates a significant improvement in the level of work of the pupils and that an increasing number were staying on beyond the statutory leaving age of 10 years.

In 1885 there was the first change of Headteacher. This seems to have happened suddenly and without explanation other than a note in the school Log Book at the end of the summer term in 1885 which stated very succinctly "*Mr Figg gave up the school.*" Mr Legg took over as Headmaster but stayed only a few years during which the school seemed to change very little. He too left without warning and Mr Humphrey Cunnington was appointed Headmaster in 1890. There was then a period of stability as he stayed for the next 34 years.

At the turn of the century an Inspectors' Report criticises the school because of overcrowding. There were then 108 infants (in an area built for 75) and 150 pupils in the rest of the school built for 110. The managers were asked to take steps to prevent such overcrowding. In fact nothing of significance was done and it was 10 years before the number of pupils fell appreciably. Although most of the report was positive, *the boys' offices* (toilets) were described as "*offensive*", and were criticised for "*indecent writing*".

Under the provisions of the 1902 Education Act, the school boards were abolished and local education authorities were formed. St Mary's School became a non-provided voluntary Church of England school within the Bedfordshire LEA. In the same year the boys' drill lessons were dropped in favour of physical exercises for girls and boys, and science was introduced but not continued, as an Inspectors' Report in 1926 recommends that science should be introduced. In 1903 there is an entry in the Log Book which comments on how well the infants were writing now that they were using paper and pencils rather than slates and sand trays. In 1904 nature study lessons began, and in 1905 gardening for the boys in Standards V to VII. This clearly became an important part of the curriculum with the time spent on it soon doubled. With mid-Bedfordshire being a market gardening area it was an obvious subject to introduce, and gardening was mentioned more than any other subject in Log Books between 1905 and the beginning of the 2nd World War when the gardens were taken over for sugar beet production as part of the war effort. Prizes were frequently won by the boys in local horticultural shows including Ampthill, Silsoe and beyond. Other introductions into the timetable were games (cricket, football, netball and country dancing), health and hygiene, housewifery (for the older girls) and rural science during the period 1920 to 1930.

Mr Cunnington retired in 1924 and was replaced as Headmaster by Mr Harry Russell who was the first person to be officially appointed as overall Head of the school, both Infant and Elementary sections. An Inspectors' Report of 1928 describes the school as "*a good progressive school"*, and in 1930 extra senior admissions (pupils over 11 years of age) were taken from Haynes C of E School.

They were bussed each day to and from Clophill, and they were given a mug of cocoa at mid-day to keep them going. This reorganisation was along the lines of that proposed in the 1926 Hadow Report "*The Education of the Adolescent*" which suggested that separate schools for senior pupils should be established if possible. Where this could not be done then senior departments in certain elementary schools should be set up, and this is what happened at St Mary's. However this only lasted for a few years as a further stage in the reorganisation took place in 1938 when Shefford Secondary School (now Robert Bloomfield Middle School) was opened and took 11+ pupils from the area. As a result of this the number of pupils on roll at St Mary's dropped suddenly by about one third.

The first electrical audio-visual aid in the form of a 'wireless' was bought for the school in 1927, although BBC Schools Broadcasts were not used regularly until 1936. Mr Russell resigned as Headteacher in 1932 to move to Arlesey School, and Mr Holden was appointed in his place. A new school playing field was opened in 1935 near what used to be The Compasses public house on the opposite side of the High Street to the school. As the threat of war increased, gas masks were distributed in school in 1938, and regular practices were held under the direction of Mr Holden.

This period was one of considerable development since the opening of the school in 1871. By 1938 the number of pupils on roll had dropped to about 100 pupils, but there were the same number of classes and much better qualified staff. The curriculum had widened, but there was still a strong link with St Mary's Church with Religious Instruction continuing to be a very important subject taught at the beginning of every day, including catechism and bible study. Towards the end of this period with more subjects on the curriculum there was less time for subjects like arithmetic and English, which now had about three quarters of an hour daily rather than one and a half hours. School terms were punctuated with unplanned closures from two to six weeks because of illness in the village. Particularly in the 1900 to 1920 period it was closed for whooping cough, measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever and diphtheria almost in rotation.

Shortly after the new school first opened, an Evening School started in the same building. There are records of its running from 1873 until 1927 for both boys and girls above the then school leaving age of 10 years. English, history, geography and reading were taught. The boys could also do drawing, citizenship, and woodcarving, and the girls needlework and domestic economy. The number on roll seemed to average 20 to 30 students but later the numbers declined and the school presumably closed.

There were two other schools in Clophill in the early nineteenth century. There was a private day school for about a dozen pupils aged 5 to 11 years. This was run by Miss Burrows from about 1900 to 1926 in a building in the High Street which later became a butcher's shop and is now a private house. The school closed when she died. The other was a small boarding school for girls which was an off-shoot of a school in London run in Oakley House in the High Street almost opposite Miss Burrows' school. An advertisement for the school appeared in the Bedfordshire Standard newspaper in 1912, and a villager has a postcard of Oakley House labelled '*Biltris High School, Clophill*'. There seems to be no other information about this school.

3. War and post-war

Following the declaration of a state of emergency in the summer of 1939, the reopening of St Mary's School after the summer holidays was delayed by two weeks. When it did reopen, not only did it have its 5 to 11 year olds, but in addition all the older Clophill children who had previously transferred to Shefford, plus a number of evacuees with two teachers from London and from St Leonards in Sussex. In total there were 228 pupils on roll. Not only was the school itself used to accommodate them, but also the old Boys' National Schoolroom, which for some time had only

been used as a Men's Reading Room, and the Parish Room (or Tithe Barn), which was in front of the Rectory Stables but was burnt down in 1966. However the number of pupils declined as the war progressed as the evacuees returned home and the number of village children declined, so that in 1945 there were 120 pupils. In 1946 the children of 11 and over moved again to Shefford leaving the school as a 5 to 11 school called St Mary's Primary School with just 80 pupils on roll. Mr Holden left the school in 1950 due to illness and Mrs Kent was appointed as the first Headmistress as, according to a note in the Managers' minutes, *'the school is too small for a Headmaster'*.

As St Mary's became a primary school, a number of subjects that had been taught to the older pupils disappeared from the timetable, for example gardening, housewifery and rural science. Under Mrs Kent the school had a rigid timetable with definite schemes of work in each subject. The close relationship with St Mary's Church remained. RE was taught every morning and the school took part in Diocesan Examinations, often performing well. Under the provisions of the 1944 Education Act, the managers had applied for voluntary aided status, and this was granted, but there was clearly some indecision about this later. The Managers' minutes of January 1953 show a decision to surrender aided status in favour of controlled status. However the minutes of the June meeting show that this decision was reversed and the application for controlled status was withdrawn. In 1958 the Log Book records the temporary appointment of a part-time specialist instructor to teach music, and she remained at the school for over twenty years.

In 1958 another school opened in the village in a house in Great Lane. It was a private Kindergarten run by Mrs Denvir for pupils up to the age of 7 years initially with 15 pupils. This later increased to about 35 pupils, though few came from the village. This school continued until 1992 when the then owner, Mrs Rae Hughes became ill, and the pupils were transferred to Warmsley House School in Bedford.

4. The 60s, 70s and 80s.

Although the number of pupils on roll soon after the war was low, the local council planned for a large number of houses to be built in the village and so plans were drawn up to extend the school building. These were never implemented because it was decided that the building was not suitable for extension and would have to be replaced. The need for this became more urgent with the building of the Warren View Estate of private houses (the Cainhoe Road area) in the late 1960s, and so plans for a new school to be built behind the National School building were drawn up. In the meantime part of the old building was converted to be a kitchen and indoor toilets were provided for the first time. For a short time during these alterations the school was under such pressure for space that the Reading Room was again used, and even a room in the Rectory. With the new housing the number of pupils rose steadily to about 180 by 1970. In April of that year the Log Book mentions that one evening in school Mrs Kent would be 'at home' to parents. Perhaps this was the first ever Parents' Evening held at the school. Unfortunately by then Mrs Kent was seriously ill and this forced her to retire in 1971. During her time at the school there had been significant developments in the teaching of mathematics, compared with the arithmetic of Mr Holden's time, and in reading. Reading corners were set up in all classrooms. A small training swimming pool was opened in 1965 and swimming lessons were introduced during the summer months. The pool was extensively used by pupils after school and during the summer holidays.

Just as the first stage of the new building was opened in 1971, Mr Keith Stanley was appointed as Headmaster to succeed Mrs Kent. He stayed for only three years before moving on to a larger primary school in Hertfordshire, and during his time parts of the new building were brought into use. The building provided 5 classrooms and a hall. Mr Stanley introduced more flexible timetabling and more art and craft. There was less emphasis on formal religious education and contact with the church diminished. Individual instrumental lessons on the violin were provided for

pupils who required them, while music lessons continued to be taught by a specialist instructor. The library was developed considerably. French was taught to pupils of Junior School age, the first time that a foreign language had been on the curriculum. It was during Mr Stanley's headship that there is the first mention of a Parent Teacher Association. In 1973 the school roll dropped from about 180 to 150 as the 10+ children transferred to Robert Bloomfield School in Shefford as the first stage of its development as a middle school.

Mr Stanley was replaced in 1975 by Mrs Marion Roberts, who was the first person in charge of the school to be called the Headteacher, rather than Headmaster or Headmistress. The remaining phases of the new building were completed the following year and it was dedicated and officially opened by the Bishop of Hertford in 1976. The old National School building was considered to be becoming increasingly unsafe and beyond repair, and so, to the regret of many people in the village, it was demolished in 1977. Some of its bricks were used to complete the wall in front of the school, and, at the suggestion of Mrs Roberts, the bell tower was saved and refurbished to become a feature at the front of the school. A drawing of it became the school logo, appearing on signs, notepaper and documents.

Mrs Roberts was the Headteacher for 20 years. She was very committed to the development of the Christian ethos of the school and sought to develop the school as a Christian community, not just through formal religious education lessons and contact with St Mary's Church, but in a number of other ways. Examples of these are the raising of money during Lent for a wide variety of charities in ways that were planned and executed by the pupils, and the introduction of citizenship awards for pupils who helped the school community or individuals within it. Contact with the church was maintained by a regular weekly visit by the Rector, including the taking of assembly, and by the whole school attending church twice each term, with one of the services being a communion service. This was a somewhat controversial development when it started with the celebration of All Saints Day on 1st November 1978, but it quickly became a regular and accepted feature of school life.

During Mrs Roberts' time there were a number of developments in the curriculum. This particularly involved the more practical areas of technology, art and music. The school played its part in the national TVEI (Technical and Vocational Education Initiative) of the 1980s, and the first computers were used in school. Interest in the environment was also encouraged through SMEEE, St Mary's Enjoyable Educational Environment, with the development of a pond and wild life area. Individual music lessons were encouraged, and the school choir made good progress under her direction. School productions became an important part of school life in the village. There were various developments in other curriculum areas notably in maths and humanities, and French continued to be taught until the end of the 80s.

The school roll dropped again in 1979 to about 130 as the 9+ pupils moved to Robert Bloomfield as the Bedfordshire reorganisation to Lower, Middle and Upper Schools was completed, and the school became officially known as St Mary's Church of England VA Lower School, Clophill. The roll dropped further to around 100 in 1980 when the Bedfordshire policy of not admitting children before they were 5 years old was implemented. It was at this time that the classes in the school were named after trees, such as Oak and Birch, rather than after the teacher's name. Sadly in 1984, two boys who were pupils of the school were killed as a result of an accident while they were playing in the disused quarry off Back Street. To prevent a repetition, the quarry was smoothed and planted with trees. The old school bell was refurbished and kept as a memorial at the entrance of the school.

5. The 1990s

The 90s was a decade of considerable change for St Mary's School. There were changes in

governance, in leadership, in staffing (both teaching and non-teaching) and in curriculum. The governance and curriculum changes were mostly a result of government legislation. The Governors (previously the School Managers) were given much wider powers and responsibilities, especially over school finances. In order to cope with the additional work, the system of governors committees was extended and they were assigned very clear roles. As it is a voluntary aided school, St Mary's Governors have always had the responsibility of appointing and managing staff, but this had a regular system of staff appraisal added to it. During the 90s, for the first time a lay person was elected as Chair of Governors, rather than the Rector.

The National Curriculum was brought in by the 1996 Education Act and was in its early form very prescriptive regarding the teaching of English, maths, science, PE, technology, music, art, history and geography with SATs (Standard Assessment Tasks) for 7 year olds in the core subjects of English and maths This caused the curriculum of the school to be modified considerably. The National Curriculum soon went through a series of changes and simplifications. The core subjects were taught through a daily Literacy Hour and a Numeracy Hour according to national schemes, and there were guidelines for the teaching of other subjects. The carrying out of SATs and the publication of the pupils' performance soon became an important annual event.

At this time a new system of regular inspections of schools through Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) was introduced. Schools were to be inspected by a team of Ofsted inspectors at about five year intervals. As a voluntary aided school, at around the same time, St Mary's was required to have an inspection of the denominational aspects of the school, known as a Section 23 Inspection. The inspections carried out at the school produced largely positive reports, particularly regarding its Christian life. One inspection report stated that St Mary's '*is an example of a Church School at its best*'.

While all these changes were in progress, Mrs Roberts retired as Headteacher, and a new era in the life of the school began with the appointment of Mrs Christine Spurgeon as the new Headteacher in 1996. Over the next few years there was a complete change in the staffing, both teaching and non-teaching, with most of the previous staff retiring. This decade saw a large increase in the number of teaching assistants and other ancillary staff who supported the work of the teachers in and out of the classroom. The school roll remained fairly steady at around 100 pupils throughout this period, although the introduction of part time nursery education from the age of 4 years in 1998 started an upward trend.

6. Into the new millennium

The developments in the 90s continued to be important issues as the school moved into the 2000s. With more nursery children the roll rose to about 120 pupils, and so more classroom space was needed. This came from two sources in the early years of this century. Firstly the school kitchen was stripped and converted into a classroom ending a period of almost 50 years of school lunches being cooked on site. A new room for nursery children was built near the hall,and it was specially equipped for them. The school received a number of awards in recognition of its high performance in various areas including in 2001 an International School Award and a Department of Education and Science Achievement Award, and in 2004 an Investors in People Award. Also the school was chosen by the Guardian newspaper to be reported on for one year in the Education Guardian. The progress of one class was followed by reporters and an article with photos published each month, giving the school national publicity.

Over the years shortly before and into the new millennium the Parent Teacher Association were very active in helping to provide and in supporting developments in the school. These included a new school office and the redesigning of the existing offices and staff room, the covering of the

courtyard area to produce space for a computer suite, the development of the library, the removal of the old swimming pool and the laying out of its site as a quiet area, and the provision of a variety of outdoor play equipment. The school developed a very good reputation particularly for being open, friendly and supportive of the needs of every pupil, so that parents would buy houses in the village in order to live within its catchment area. There is no better recognition of the success of a school than this.

Headteachers of St Mary's school

1872 James Figg

1885 Mr Legg

1890 Mr Humphrey Cunnington

1924 Mr Harry Russell

1932 Frank Holden

1950 Mrs Dorothy Kent

1971 Mr Keith Stanley

1975 Mrs Marion Roberts

1996 Mrs Christine Spurgeon

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St Mary's Evening School Log Book 1905-1927

St Mary's School Manager's and Governors' Minute Books

St Mary's Parish Registers 1800-2000

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The Cleft in the Hills by Rev W A M Grant

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The History of Education in Great Britain by Curtis

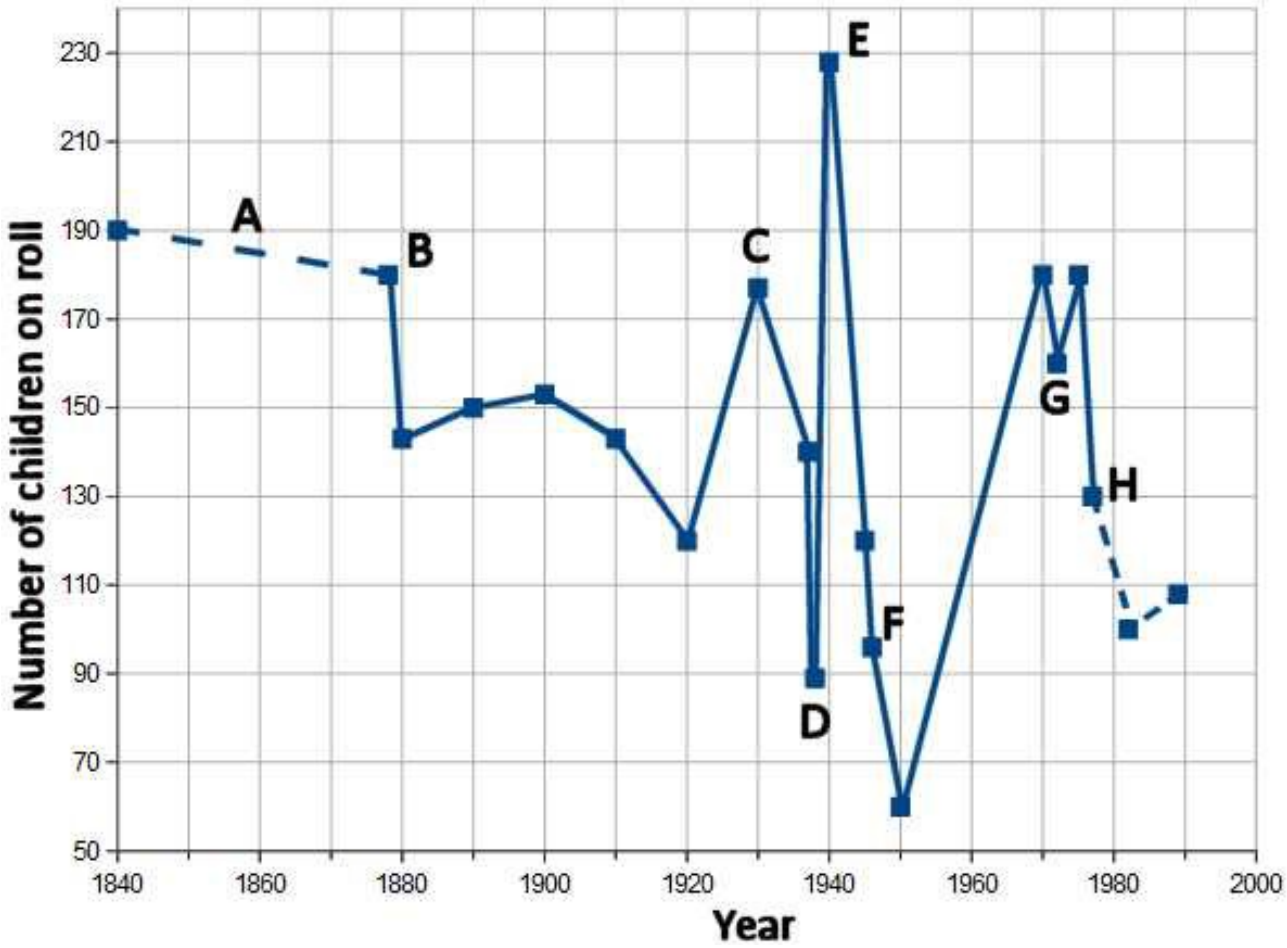
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Discussions with:-

- Mary Phillips, local historian
- Marion Roberts, past Headteacher of St Mary's School
- Mollie Fisher, past Deputy Head of St Mary's School
- Ethel mason, pupil at St Mary's School in 1920s
  - parent of a past pupil in 1940s
  - music teacher at St Mary's School 1958-1980
- Florrie Robinson, pupil at Miss Burrows' School 1922-1926
  - pupil at St Mary's School 1926-1930
- Alf Jeffrey, pupil at St Mary's School 1900-1910
- Rae Hughes, Head of the Kindergarten 1971-1992
- Christine Spurgeon, present Headteacher of St Mary's School

Graph of number of children on the roll.



Key to Graph

A - Approximate attendance at old National Schools.

B - Roll shortly after opening of the new National School.

C - 11+ children transfer from Haynes and Clophill, and Infants included for the first time.

D - 11+ children transferred to Shefford.

E - 11_ children return due to war, and evacuees join the school.

F - Evacuees have slowly reduced during the war, and 11+ children again transfer to Shefford Secondary Modern School.

G - 10+ children transfer to Robert Bloomfield Middle School, Shefford.

H - 9+ children transfer to Robert Bloomfield Middle School.

PHOTOS



Rev Nethersole's 1844 Girls' School. High Street.
(now Taylor's Cottage, a private house)



1836 Boys' National Schoolroom
in the grounds of 95 High Street,
(later the Reading Room. now demolished, photo 1980)



Ivy House. High Street
(1864 'ladies boarding school')



Oakley House, High Street.
(Previously Biltris High School)



Miss Burrows Private School in 1920s

(later the butcher's shop, now a private house)



The Kindergarten 1958 - 1992

Great Lane

(now a private house)



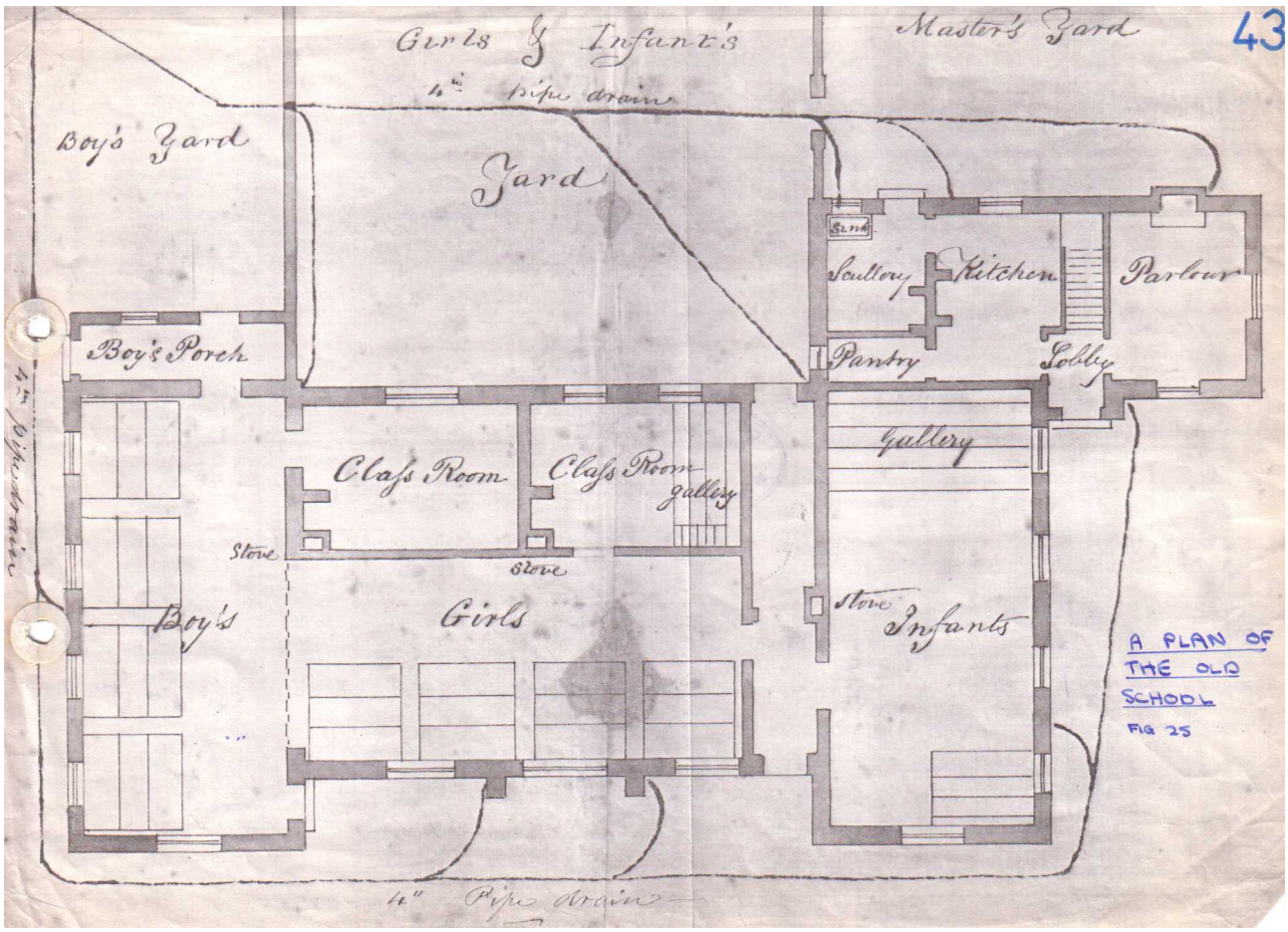
St Mary's C of E Lower School, High Street.
(photo taken in 1998)



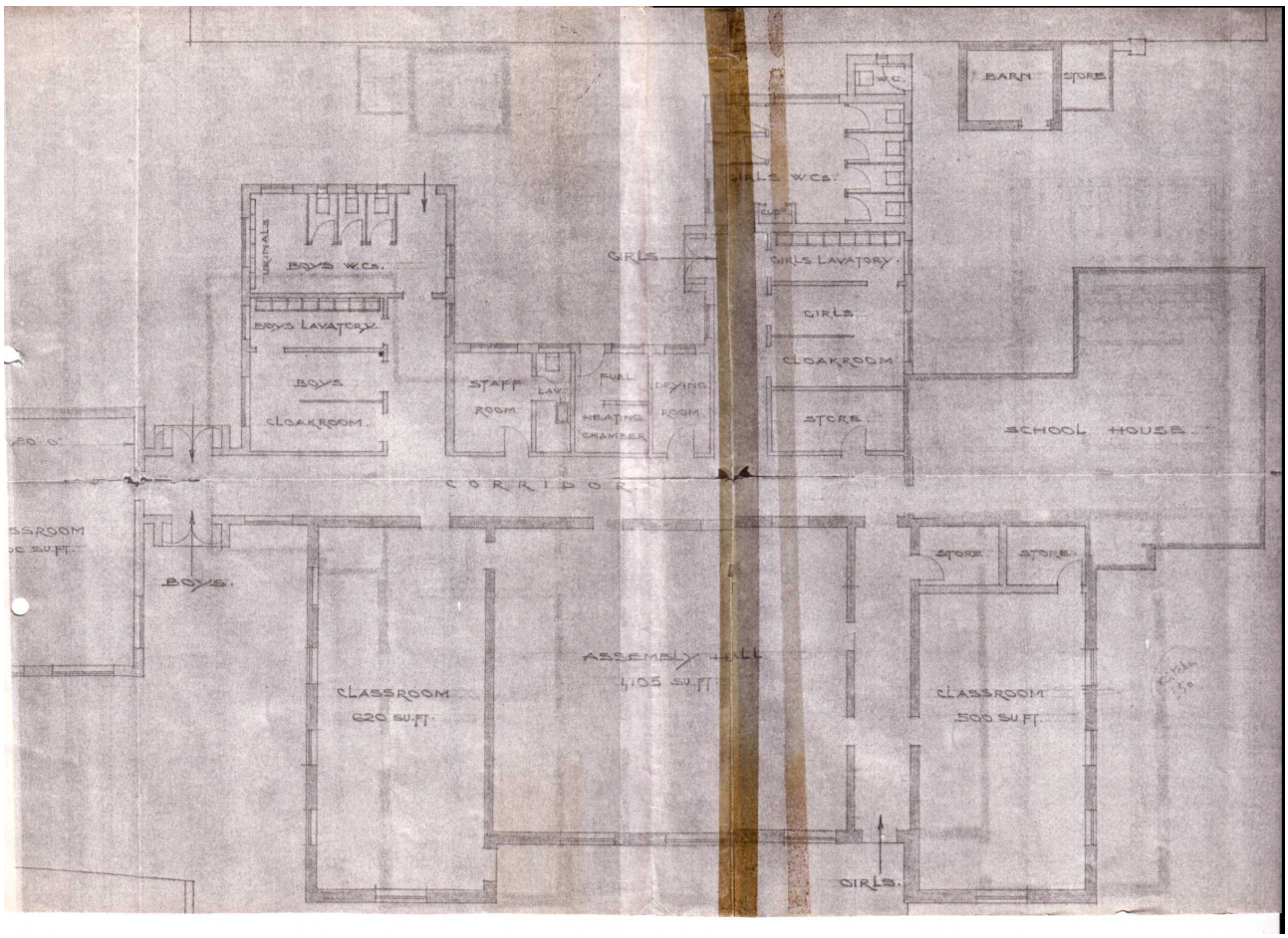
Bell tower from the 1871 St Mary's National School
(now a feature in the Lower School grounds)



1976 aerial photo of the St Mary's Schools, showing the 1871 National School, some temporary classrooms, and the new Lower School



Plan of the National School, built 1871



Plan showing proposed extension to the National School.