

APPLEDORE
VILLAGE
SCHOOL

from
(maybe) 1519
to 1991

Foreword

For most of its history, the average resident of Appledore has been an agricultural labourer, and labourers didn't need formal education to do their work. They needed basic numeracy, and a working knowledge of dimensions and quantities, but those things come naturally to children, like language.

As late as the mid-nineteenth century, the primary purpose of schools was to promote religious education, and schools were (sometimes literally) attached to the church.

In the words of one local gentleman, in 1842, education of the lower orders "shouldn't go too far". They should only learn those things that would be "useful to them, in the sphere of life in which, in all probability, they would continue to live."

No notion of a child fulfilling its potential there... but things were about to get a little better. In 1880, education became compulsory for children aged 5-10. There was a gradual move to state funding, and the Education Act of 1918 abolished fees for elementary schools.

The first surviving reference to a school in Appledore comes from a bequest in a will in 1519, although it may have been a proposal that wasn't realised. Subsequent schools weren't independent buildings, but spaces or rooms in buildings that also served other purposes, including the church. We don't know if these early schools were open to all, or just 'the deserving', or to what extent they were attended, but there is evidence of them providing education for poor children.

Appledore Village School was founded in 1840, although not in the building we think of as the school. It closed on the 31st August, 1991.

This booklet gathers together information from several sources: *A History of Appledore* by Sir John Winnifrith, newspaper archives, trade directories, research by members of Appledore Local History Society (past and present), and contributions from Appledore residents.

Alan Tribe
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Long ago

When William Brokhill wrote his will, in 1519, he made elaborate provision to pay the £8 salary of a priest in perpetuity. The priest would assist in the church on Sundays, where he was to sing plain song in the choir, and on working days he would teach grammar to boys in a school. Part of Brokhill's estate was to be used for buying "some convenient house or shop as near the church as possible". Sir John Winnifrith speculates that the place intended could have been the 'Long House', which later housed a baker's shop, and more recently, part of it was a hairdressing salon.

We can't be absolutely sure who William Brokhill was, but the Brockhills were an important family of the time, and in 1477 William Brockhill took over the archiepiscopal manor of Cheyne Court, Brookland. It was probably him. At any rate, he was a wealthy man. The legacy apportioned to pay for the priest teacher was £180, around £136,000 in today's money.

There is no later record of this school so William Brokhill's intentions may not have been realised. This would not have been a school for the children of the ordinary people of Appledore - or peasants, as they would have been known at the time. Grammar schools taught Latin to the sons of the middle classes, so that if all else failed, they could become clergymen.

The school in the church

In 1662, Francis Drayton, the vicar of Appledore, signed a certificate testifying that "Mr William Graves is of good conversation and of good ability to teach a school. I give my consent that Mr William Graves teach school at Appledore".

William Graves died within a year, in January 1663. He was buried in Lydd, and was recorded as having been a schoolmaster.

At this time the school was located in the church. In 1700, the north chapel was partitioned off, allowing for a designated and separate room. As with the Brokhill school, this wouldn't have been a school for the children of the 'farm servants', in their smocks and floppy hats.

There is some evidence of wealthy residents sending their children away for schooling. William Munk went to the boarding school at Cranbrook in the early 1800s.

An unknown researcher has identified a Thomas Miller, schoolmaster, who taught in Appledore from April to September in 1749. He was the son of Thomas Miller, schoolmaster in New Romney, but that's all we know.

The next record of a teacher came with the death of Mrs Harman in 1787. The curate added a note to the register in Latin, which in translation reads: "Alas what a loss to the village. For twenty years and more she fulfilled her duty as a teacher with the utmost devotion. How well, all those living in the parish testify, she knew how to instil literacy in the young."

Mrs Harman was Mary Harman, born Mary Fever, in Maidstone in 1712. She married Richard Harman at Stone church in 1751. Both were described in the register as 'sojourners', meaning that they were short-term residents of the parish. Both are buried in Appledore.

Things may have moved on by the time of Mrs Harman. 'Instilling literacy' isn't the same as teaching Latin, and grammar teachers weren't women. All the same, it seems unlikely that 'all those living in the village' included those who dug potatoes or wielded a scythe.

Ecclesiastical records identify one further teacher from the time of the school in the church. In 1805, Charles Morphett was licensed as Schoolmaster for the Parish School, Appledore with Ebony.

The school in the church was subsidised by the Vestry (the parish authorities) from the Poor Rate, but the first surviving record of this was in 1820, when the annual grant of £5 for educating poor children was discontinued. Notice was given of a resolution "to shut up the school in the church".

The school in the Long House

The school didn't close, it moved about a hundred yards to the Long House, which is now 8-10 The Street. According to Sir John Winnifrith, the school was in the long room of the long house. Extracts from a notebook compiled by Dr F. W. Cock (1858-1943) says (in a memo that may have been written by someone else), that the room was believed to be on the upper floor.

By the 1840s, there were records of an Appledore school, or schoolroom, stretching back 180 years to 1662, and possibly beyond. With few records to call upon we can't assume that the presence of a school was continuous, and even in later years, Appledore often struggled to attract a teacher.

For the next development, we may have to thank a drunken vicar. The Rev. William Dixon was the last of Appledore's vicars to wear the traditional shovel hat, black round coat, knee breeches and stockings. He was appointed in 1829, having previously been curate for Fairfield and Stone-in-Oxney. His wife was a local woman, Margaret Munk, who had previously been married to Joseph Hodges of Tenterden, bearing him seven children.

William and Margaret took to the bottle, and William Dixon's ever shakier handwriting in the vestry book bore witness to his decline. He was eventually removed from the parish, but he had long needed an able and industrious curate to do much of his work. The most notable of those was the Rev. F. Goold, appointed in 1840, and it was the Rev. Goold who founded the village school.

The Rev. F. Goold

Frederick Falkiner Goold was no ordinary curate. He was born in County Limerick, Ireland, and he was the son of the First Serjeant-at-law of Ireland (the most senior legal representative of the British Crown then ruling Ireland). He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and he married the daughter of a 2nd Viscount. His son became a Member of Parliament and his son-in-law became a Bishop. After returning to Ireland, the Rev. Goold was made an Archdeacon, and then Private Chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

He came to Appledore eight years after being ordained, at the age of 32. We can only imagine what he made of his drunken vicar, then 65 years old and four years from death.

Within a year of arriving in Appledore, the Rev. Goold, who in most respects was just a young curate passing through, was credited with founding the village school. His vicar may have raised a glass in celebration - assuming that he approved of education for the lower orders - but then he might have raised a glass anyway.

The Rev. Goold was said to have “splendid and extraordinary powers of oratory”, which were no doubt used in influencing the local worthies and raising funds. He was evidently a charismatic and much admired man. He was in Appledore for four or five years, after which he sometimes returned to give charity sermons, still raising money for the school. On one of those occasions the church was reported to be “crowded to excess”.

The social and political background

Education was a hot potato when it concerned the labouring classes. In 1842, William Deedes, Esq., of Saltwood Castle, spoke of the education of the lower orders “going too far for the stations they were destined to occupy in life”. He wished to see people of all classes educated upon a sound scriptural foundation, but “beyond that he was not prepared to go”. It wasn't an unpopular view in his social orbit. People should know their place, and too much education might give them ideas of moving up in the world.



Agricultural labourers in the mid-19th century

William Deedes would have been accustomed to a system of education for those who could afford to pay for it.

(A descendant of William Deedes, Esq., also called William Deedes, was the MP for Ashford from 1950 to 1974. He was later Lord Deedes, and the family home remained at Saltwood Castle.)

For working-class children, from around 1780, there were Sunday schools, and this would be the only education they received.

The Rev. Gould must have had few qualms about educating the lower orders of Appledore, given that most of the school's pupils would come from the families of agricultural labourers.

Some more senior clergymen thought that educating the lower orders was good news for the devil. In 1845, the Rev. Canon Lockwood, speaking to the Diocesan Education Society at Canterbury, said:

“If the object aimed at was merely to advance men a little above their fellow-creatures - to sharpen their wits, and fill their minds with subjects of little use to them in life, but only tending to puff them up - such education was a curse. It would make the man vain, superficial, conceited, and the more ready instrument, in the hands of Satan, to work out his own and his fellow-creatures' destruction.”

William Deedes, now an M.P, was at the same meeting. He still thought that education for the lower orders was fraught with danger, but was in favour of education for the commercial classes (the people entitled to vote for him?), as long as it was conducted on sound religious principles. From today's perspective, it's remarkable how many classes, and sub-classes, there were. If you sold potatoes, you could be educated, within reason. If you dug them out of the ground, then probably not.

Being a little more open and conciliatory, Dr. Spry thought that educating the agricultural classes in science could make them better farmers, and well educated Christians.

It was in the mid-nineteenth century that mass education took off. Trade and industry required it, and it made good sense, but it was treated with caution. For some it was the cause of alarm and moral panic. It threatened the old order, where everyone knew their place, which was comforting if your place was quite high.

A new school in the making

According to an Irish newspaper, which was lamenting his loss to the parish of Ballymacormick, the Rev. Goold was appointed as curate to Appledore in June or July of 1840. By that time, the school in the Long House (where it had been since 1820) was either not fit for purpose or (maybe more likely) had ceased to function. This might be no surprise, considering that it had been under the stewardship of the Rev. William Dixon, who had spent those twenty years declining into alcoholic incompetence.

According to Sir John Winnifrith, in his *History of Appledore*, the Rev. Goold raised funds for a new and purpose-built school, which opened on the 21st of November, 1840. Was this possible? From fund-raising to the opening of the school's doors in five months? It wasn't, and on this occasion Sir John was mistaken.

The Rev. Goold established a new National School in November, 1840. The boys started on the 21st, the girls a week later. The location of the school in its first year is not known, but in October 1841, an entry in a school record book says: *"Took possession of Mr Adam's room for the purpose of a school for the Boys at the Annual Rent of Five pounds and to do all necessary repairs and fitting up for the same."*

Mr Adams owned the Long House, and the room was rented until 1851. The renting of a room was also mentioned in a grant application for a new and purpose-built school in 1847. The Rev. Kirby wrote:

"In Appledore there is a Charity School for boys in a hired room which accommodates between 40 and 50, and one for girls, held in a part of the Church, with room for 30 or 40. At Ebony there is only a Dame's School in a cottage, where from 12 to 20 children of both sexes are taught, 6 of whom are paid for by the parish."

Building a little on the known facts, the following might summarise the development of the Rev. Goold's first school and the later village school:

- In 1840, and within a few months of his arrival, the Rev. Goold established a school that could accommodate 68 pupils. We don't know where it was, but it's hard to think of anywhere more likely than the church. There could have been separate provision for boys and girls, utilising the partitioned north chapel. It was far from perfect but it was only for a year.
- In 1841, the boys moved to Mr Adam's room in the Long House. The girls remained in the church, in the north chapel.

- Having created a school out of next to nothing, the Rev. Goold continued on his mission by raising funds for a purpose-built school.
- By 1847, the plans were complete, a site had been secured, and the vicar completed an application to build the new school.

The class of 1840

The first school roll still exists, and it makes for interesting reading. There were 68 pupils (32 boys, 36 girls), and 60 of them can be found in the first national census of 1841.

- The age range was 3-14, but given the month of the census, the three that were 3 years-old were probably 4 when the school opened.
- 47 lived on The Heath, 10 lived in the 'Town', 3 lived elsewhere.
- 57 out of 60 had a brother or sister at the school.
- There were two children without a father, but in every other case the father was an agricultural labourer. Well, except for one - he was a ferreter.

Where are the children of the farmers, shopkeepers, publicans, carpenters, and shoemakers? There can't have been none, and it looks as though they were making private arrangements - from wealthy farmer to carpenter.

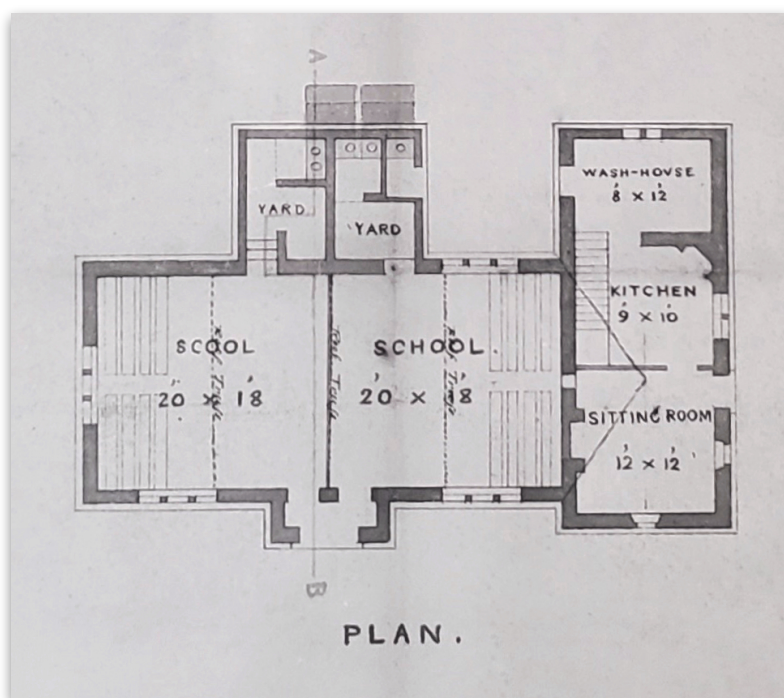
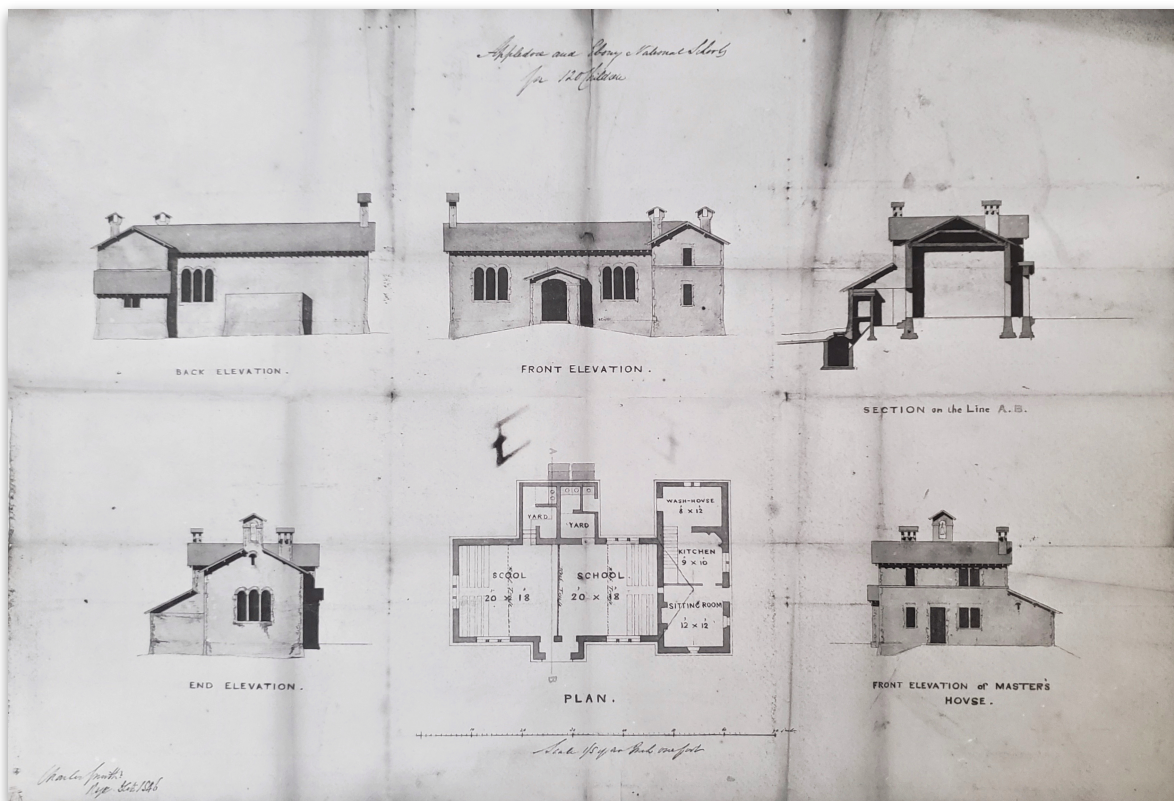
There was probably a 'Dame' school in the village. A Dame school was a lady providing tuition in her home. There was a Dame school in Ebony, and there is a record of a new one in Appledore in 1889. There is also a later passing reference to a Dame school at Manclark Cottage on the Heath. In addition, the schoolmaster and mistress were allowed to take private pupils, so might have taught some of the 'missing' children.

And crucially, the new school was a National School, and 'National' was short for *National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church*. A petition for the establishment of the school had specifically stated that it would be for the poor of the parish. But looking at the class of 1840, that would seem to mean that you couldn't be poor unless you worked on a farm (or were wholly employed in ferreting).

However, the social distinction is stark, and it was marked on the ground in the geography of the village. The Heath and the 'Town' were different.

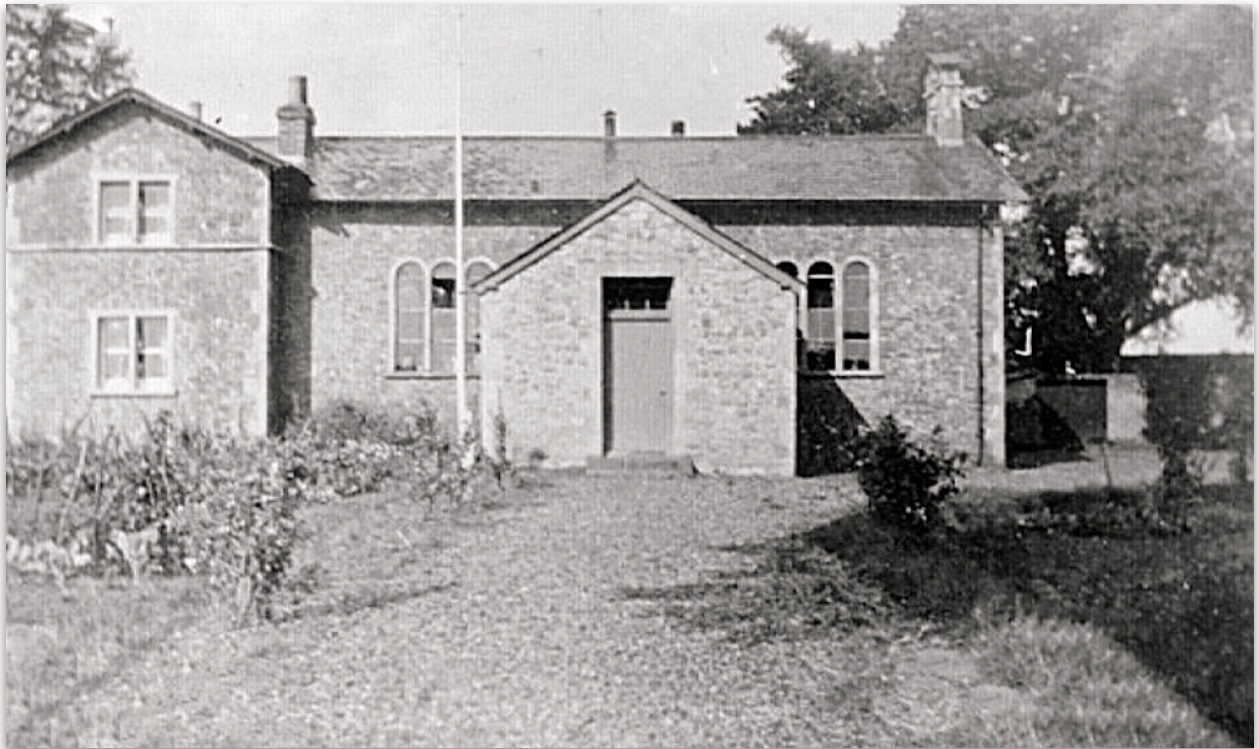
Bricks and mortar

The plans of the new school survive, and they are dated 1846.



Note the spelling of 'school' on the left. At least it wasn't 'skool'.

The draft plans were drawn by the Rev. Cobb, who said: "I have not done it with scale or compass, but I suppose it is sufficiently correct." The building plans were produced by Charles Smith, an architect in Rye. The orientation is reversed from the school that was built, which was to have the school on the right and the schoolhouse on the left.



The school was designed to accommodate 120 pupils, which means there were 60 children of varying ages in a room that was 20' x 18'. Separate toilet facilities are an indication of separate classrooms for boys and girls. The toilets were earth closets, not connected to a drainage system. A scoop of ash or soil reduced the odour, a little. In 1860, it was the responsibility of the headmaster to empty the closets when full.

The seating was galleried, as in this illustration -



There was a coke stove for heating, which was commonplace in schools, right up to the 1960s. Wet raincoats would be hung on the railing around them, with Wellington boots pegged together in pairs.

Two rooms were added to the original four of the schoolmaster's house. A small room for infants was created at the rear, but subsequent additions were in the form of separate buildings. The original classrooms became the hall. When fully enlarged, which didn't happen until the 20th century, the school had three classrooms, a hall, and a dining room.

Initially, there was no playground. That had to wait until the enclosure and subdivision of the 'waste' or 'common land' of the Heath.

The new school opens

But when? It wasn't in 1840, as has sometimes been said, and another date that has been proposed doesn't look right either.

In February 1847, the Rev. Cobb sat down to complete a long questionnaire. It was an Application to the Lords of Committee of Council on Education - the newish body that was the forerunner of the Department for Education.

Education was now a matter for Parliament, and the Lords of Committee distributed grants for the building of elementary schools. Amongst other things, the Rev. Cobb had to answer questions on the thickness of the walls (14") and the nature of the subsoil (sand). The walls of the schoolmaster's house would be plastered, but the walls of the school would be left bare, other than wooden panelling to a height of 3'. The walls of the schoolroom would be 14' high, with an open ceiling to the pitched roof.

When given a fairly small space to say why Appledore was a deserving case, the Rev. Cobb wrote:

"The poverty of the district, the want of proper accommodation, the impossibility of gaining it without the liberality applied for, the small inducement we are able to offer to a teacher (a very low salary and no house)."

There is much more of interest in the questionnaire. The site was a piece of waste ground, a quarter of an acre in size, owned by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury. It wouldn't be fenced off from the Heath, but would be when the Heath was enclosed and boundaries were established. At that point a play area would be created.

There would be three Trustees - the vicar and the two Church Wardens, who were Jacob Kingsnorth and Burren Brown, both farmers.

There was a list of the main subscribers, and they were: The Archbishop of Canterbury, E. A. Taylor, Esq., Charles Philips, Esq., the Rev. William Cobb, plus Appledore farmers Mr G. Walker, Mr E. Cock, Mr T. Adams, Mr E. Kingsnorth, and Mr H. Blackman, Corn Factor.

Subscriptions to the new school were expected to total around £20 a year. In the last seven years, since the existing school had been established, an average of £10 a year had been raised. Subscriptions should increase when a proper school was up and running.

The Master and Mistress had been receiving around £9 each, annually. They had been allowed to take private scholars, usually 10 to 12 a week.

The population served would be 729 from Appledore and 561 from Ebony. There was no endowment or other funding for education. As noted earlier, there was a charity school in Appledore and a Dame School in Ebony. The estimated cost of erecting the school was £380. Thus far, the total amount of subscriptions received on promise was £96. Application for funds was also being made to the National Society and the Diocese.

The application was approved in February, 1848. It carried the proviso that the school would be inspected by government officials. The Inspector would not interfere with religious instruction, or discipline, or the management of the school. Their job was to collect information and submit a report to the Committee of Council. But wasn't that much the same thing in practice? This proviso was effectively a reassuring sop to the Church of England.

Attached to the application documents are two later applications for grants. The first, dated 1856, relates to "ceiling the roof under the slates, and to provide new fittings". The work was carried out by John Palmer, a local builder. The cost was £31 19s. The second, dated 1859, relates to lining the walls of the schoolroom with wood, up to a height of 5'.

In October 1848, the Diocesan Education Society received a certificate "of the proper execution of the school buildings".

So what evidence do we have in trying to date the construction and opening of the new school?

- 1846 - Architectural plans.
- 1847 - Application for a grant to build a school.
- 1848 - Application approved in February.
- 1848 - Building certified in October.

From that, it seems clear that the school was built in 1848. The addition of a ceiling in 1856 looks like remedial work after years of suffering a cold and draughty school. And yet, according to Sir John Winnifrith, the school was still paying rent for the room in the Long House in 1851. The Rev. Goold returned to Appledore in 1856, still raising funds for the school with a charity sermon. And according to a 20th century headmaster, the school managers told him that the school was built in 1856.

Conceivably, the rented room could have been used for infants while the school was finding its feet. The Rev. Goold gave a fund-raising sermon “for the liquidation of the debt on the school”, rather than the means to build it. More than a hundred years down the line, the school managers may have been wrong.

The 1856 date presumably comes from the fact that surviving log books start from that year. Gerald Sweetman, headmaster in the 1960s, had been told that the school opened in 1856, but didn't have access to the records and wasn't entirely sure that this date was correct. The absence of a log book in the 1960s doesn't mean the absence of a school in the 1840s, and if we don't doubt that the school building was approved and certified in 1848, why would it remain unoccupied until 1856? Maybe there is more to discover.

Whatever the date, and wherever much of the money came from, Appledore school was built by the people of Appledore. The gentlemen of Appledore, or a good number of them, must have had a positive view of education.

The official name of the school was Appledore and Ebony National School, and a directory described it as a “National School supported by school fees, voluntary contributions and a government grant”. In the early nineteenth century there were National Schools and British Schools. Before this time, education for poorer children was limited to charity schools. A National School was a school founded by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. A British School was a school founded by the British and Foreign School Society. Wherever possible, as in some neighbouring villages, National Schools were built next to the church. National Schools were more numerous than British Schools. Together they provided the first near-universal system of elementary education in England and Wales. In 1944, these schools were absorbed into the state system, with state funding, but were still able to promote the teachings of the Church of England.

Charles Igglesden, in *A Saunter Through Kent*, says that the location of the school, at a little distance from the village itself, was determined by the need to cater for the children of Ebony. Ebony was to have its own school in 1882, and Appledore was to have an inconvenient school forever.

However, the siting of the school must have had something to do with the Diocese having a piece of land that they didn't mind losing. The Rev. Cobb, in a petition to the Dean & Chapter in 1841, described it as being “in a barren and uncultivated state, not producing the least profit to the Dean & Chapter or tenants of the manor”. And as we have seen, in the early years of the school most of the pupils lived on the Heath.

The National School

A feature of the school that lasted right through the nineteenth century was that parents had to pay 1d a week for each child attending. This payment was required even after school attendance became compulsory in 1880. An agricultural labourer may have earned around 20d a day in 1840, so that penny might have been a significant expense for some - and that was for one child when several wouldn't have been unusual.

These pennies were an important part of the schoolmaster's salary, which was an incentive for him to encourage attendance. At harvest times there was a disincentive for pupils to attend, because they could be earning money in the fields, and attendance figures were often low. In May of 1862, a visiting inspector found that only 63 out of 127 pupils were present, because "the numbers were much thinned by wool gathering". In July 1897, in the school log book, the headmaster wrote: "No children came and therefore no school." Appledore school was routinely closed from August to October for hop picking, which wasn't unusual in Kent. If the picking season continued beyond that date, so did the closure. Poor attendance, or poor performance by pupils, could lead to a cut in the government grant.

In 1840, the schoolmaster's salary was £10 a year, about a quarter of what an agricultural labourer would earn in a year. His house and garden came free, and he received the penny fees on top of his salary. It wasn't a lot, even though the basic salary may be a little misleading, and staff turnover was high, which must have had an impact on the quality of education offered.

Sir John Winnifrith notes the presence of a 'sempstress', paid at £5 a year, who was employed to teach sewing. Beyond the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, the education of boys and girls was not the same. A working class girl had few prospects beyond being a working class wife and mother, when she would be making and mending most of the family's clothes and linen. Skills in sewing and darning might also be required of a domestic servant.

In 1860, the teacher's salary was raised to £20, and the pennies brought in an additional £35. In the previous year there is also a record of an evening school at Appledore. Adults could attend such classes, although there is no record of how many attended in Appledore. They were held in the winter months and were generally for boys and men. The school was also used in the manner of a village hall, for amateur concerts and charity events. In December 1894, the first meeting of the Parish Council was held in the school.

There was perpetual difficulty in raising sufficient funds, especially for repairs or additions to the building. Retaining teachers was even more difficult, with many not lasting a year. Some may have resigned because Appledore was not a very healthy place to live. When advertising the post in 1860, it was thought wise to mention that ague was prevalent in the parish.

The school received a windfall in 1859 with the enclosure of the Heath. Enclosure of common land had been happening for more than a century, but the Enclosure Act of 1845 meant that common land, like Appledore Heath, could be enclosed without an Act of Parliament. The good side of enclosure was that land became more productive. The bad side of enclosure was that landless people lost the right to use common land for cultivation or grazing.

In Appledore, it looks as though some prominent locals divvied up the Heath between themselves, with the active assistance of the vicar and the Diocese, and then charitably assisted the new school. Four acres were granted to the school by the tenants. Four acres granted to the Lord of the Manor (the Diocese) were transferred to the school. 1¼ acres (roughly speaking) were presented to the school by J. C. Schreiber, Esq. of Henhust, Woodchurch. In all, the Trustees of the National School (the vicar and churchwardens) received 9¼ acres, 9 of which were rented out. In 1862, two further pieces of land (believed to be 'Sixty Six Farm') were transferred to the school. The Rev. Cobb may have been a very able facilitator of these transactions. The ¼ acre plot was to be used for a playground.



The playground (or field) was on the opposite side of School Road, in the field marked 177 on this late 19th century map.

The playground was the first part of the school to be fenced off from the Heath. It was ditched and planted with trees, with an oak gate opposite the path to the schoolmaster's house. The trustees called it the school garden. It wasn't for the exclusive use of the school and was also rented for grazing to Jacob Kingsnorth Jnr. This was a cosy arrangement, considering that Jacob Kingsnorth Snr., as churchwarden, was one of the trustees of the school. Jacob Kingsnorth Jnr. also rented two larger pieces of the school's land.

Teachers were appointed by the vicar, and the school was inspected by the Ruridecanal Inspector, who was a clergyman appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury (although there was no system of inspection until 1850). The curriculum was mainly 'the three Rs', plus religious education, with sewing for the girls and woodwork for the boys. However, school inspector reports also mention the teaching of geography and history.

Money remained tight, despite the windfall from the enclosure of the Heath. Minor improvements could depend on a loan from a prosperous farmer..

Appledore - a school for scandal

Sir John Winnifrith says that at least one schoolmaster had to leave because he became too friendly with the seamstress. He doesn't name the pair, but...

Charles Sinden may have been appointed headmaster in 1854, although that date is not certain. In March 1856, approval was given for him to be joined in the schoolhouse by Mrs Apps, the seamstress, together with her husband George and their children. These living arrangements only had force while Mr Sinden was the schoolmaster. A new headmaster with a family might need the whole house. Mrs Apps readily agreed.

Mr Sinden was a single man. Mr and Mrs Apps were almost certainly George and Elizabeth Apps (née Button). George was an agricultural labourer and was 39, Elizabeth was 31. They had three children, aged 9, 6, and 3.

Mr Sinden resigned, within four weeks of Mrs Apps and her family moving in. Mrs Apps was given three months notice, presumably because there were serious concerns about her conduct.

The school had the bad luck to be visited by an inspector on the day that Mr Sinden resigned and Mrs Apps was given notice. He might have found them a little distracted, but the number of pupils attending that day was small and he didn't stay long.

The school managers resolved that the new Headmaster would be a married man, that his wife would act as Seamstress, “and that strict enquiries be made as to his moral character”.

There’s hardly any need to read between the lines, but perhaps we shouldn’t rush to judgement about Mrs Apps. These were Victorians after all, with their unbalanced attitudes towards women. Perhaps she was more sinned against than sinning.

In the following year, George and Elizabeth Apps had a fourth child. Charles Sinden went on to be a teacher in his home town of Hastings. He married, and his wife was, or became, a teacher, as did their daughter. When he fell from grace in Appledore he would have been 21.

The next headmaster, suitably assessed for moral character, was Mr Adams, assisted by his wife as Seamstress. Mr and Mrs Adams came and went within a year. Next up were Mr and Mrs Sarjent.

Mr Sarjent was appointed in July 1856, and was given notice five months later. His wife had been employed as Seamstress. Mr Sarjent asked if he could resign, rather than being sacked, and his wish was granted. He failed to find another position in his notice period, and said he would have to stay on in the schoolhouse. The Rev. Kirby said his departure would be enforced if necessary, and Mr and Mrs Sarjent “were thereupon very insolent”.

A week later, it was noted in the school’s minute book that Mr Sarjent and his wife had left Appledore by the first train.

We don’t know why Mr Sarjent was sacked - and we can only wonder how it was known that he and his wife had left on the first train. He was run out of town, Wild West style, by the Rev. Kirby.

Mr John Jarvis, Schoolmaster

The school achieved some equilibrium in 1869, with the appointment of Mr John Jarvis, assisted by his wife, Mary Ann Jarvis, as sewing mistress. Their two daughters were to become Assistant Mistresses. John Jarvis was 26 when he came to Appledore, and he was schoolmaster until he retired, aged 65, in 1908. He was the longest-serving of the school's headmasters.

Shortly before the appointment of John Jarvis, an inspector had reported the school to be "thoroughly inefficient", but there were no further complaints in his time at the school. In 1887 the report was "very satisfactory". In 1886, John Jarvis received a salary of £109 (around £12,000 today), inclusive of pennies. It was reduced by £9 in 1887 "owing to the continued depression in trade and agriculture". The pay wasn't great, but teachers were provided with a house.

There were 150 children on the books in 1860, but John Jarvis and his school had to cope with the effects of an agricultural depression. There was an impact on attendance and income, and improvements were urgently needed. Ventilation was poor, the schoolroom was cramped, and Mr Jarvis was instructed to supervise the management of the earth closets.



John Jarvis, staff and pupils, circa 1903

photo courtesy of Karl Neve

The school received a second windfall when the parish authorities decided to sell Poor Row, and gave £243 of the proceeds to the school. Together with other donations, nearly £300 was spent on extensions and improvements in 1874.

One improvement, recommended by an inspector, and then ordered by the local Education Department, was the building of a separate classroom for infants. This involved the relocation (or loss) of an office, which is not shown on the original plan. The new classroom was finished in 1875, and probably involved an extension to the rear of the building.

In 1877, Mr Kingsnorth was told that only sheep and lambs were allowed to graze on the school playground. Cattle and horses were prohibited. The playground would be drained, and drainage pipes were purchased. In wetter weather, the playground was probably a bit of a quagmire (and a manured quagmire), leading to children playing on the road.

There is a record from 1882 that makes you want to know more. The school had proved popular as a meeting place, and as a venue for entertainment, and the managers set a hire charge of 10 shillings. That's around £50 in today's money, which seems like a lot, but the real point of interest is that entertainments were to be held within a few days of the full moon. Setting aside the possibility of ancient lunar rites persisting in Appledore, this was presumably on the grounds of safety. Crinolined ladies may have fallen into ditches, gentlemen in tailcoats may have become ensnared in brambles.

It was also in 1882 that the Council of Education ordered the building of a school in Ebony, which reduced the funds available to Appledore. Irregular attendance was a continuing problem, even after attendance was made compulsory in 1880, and that too had an impact on finances. George Jarvis reported that some parents were under the misapprehension that attendance was only compulsory in Board Schools, not National Schools.

The soggy playground was abandoned, mainly because horse riders, and the drivers of carriages and carts, complained of the children playing in the road. The new playground was within the bounds of the school, on a plot where the headmaster had been growing potatoes. George Jarvis was also told to remove his clothes-line and hencoop.

The playground seems to have returned to the field at some point - or maybe George Jarvis refused to give up his hencoop, and the proposed move never happened. Cecil Green, born in 1904, remembered it being in the field, and he remembered children playing hopscotch and rolling hoops on the road.

Summarising the contribution of John Jarvis, Sir John Winnifrith says:

“By current standards the school was gravely overcrowded and grossly understaffed, but Appledore had every reason to be grateful for its foundation and continued existence. Mr Jarvis’s schooling opened the way for new employments and a wider life for many of the children who came under his care.”

Regardless of difficulties, the newspapers always reported a happy band of pupils and teachers on the day of the annual ‘treat’. Assembling at the school, they formed a procession, “which proceeded to the vicarage, headed by music, banners, and a beautiful garland”. There were games, and cake, and the afternoon ended with the singing of ‘God Save The Queen’ and the ‘doxology’, which was a short hymn of praise to God. The names of the attending clergy and their lady helpers were faithfully recorded in the reports, but the teachers remained anonymous.

On Boxing Day in 1885, the Kentish Express announced the advent of a very different kind of school in Appledore -

POPLAR HALL, APPLIEDORE, ASHFORD, KENT, WILL be Opened as a BOARDING and DAY SCHOOL for YOUNG LADIES.

Principal: Mrs. GEORGE SUTTON, Assisted by a Resident French Governess and Visiting Professor of Music. Course of Study to include English (taught in the most modern way), French, Drawing, Music, Singing, Dancing, Drilling, and Needlework.

*Terms very moderate. Prospectus on application.
This School will be Opened on the 18th JANUARY, 1886.*

There was no trace of this school five years later, in the census of 1891. In that year, Poplar Hall was the home of farmer Edward Kingsnorth and his family, together with two servants, a house boy, and a nursery governess.

Mrs George Sutton may have over-estimated the prospects of a school for young ladies in Appledore, or the appeal of English taught in the most modern way. ‘Drilling’, apparently, was a combination of marching to music with no spoken instruction, and callisthenic exercise. You can picture it, in the rear garden of Poplar Hall, with the sheep looking on.

Changing times

There was nothing much to report from Appledore school, as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Nationally, there was major change, involving a move from church to state control, and to compulsory education.

Until 1870, most 'ordinary' schools were under the control of church authorities. 90 per cent of those, as in Appledore, were run by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. From 1833, the schools received supplementary grants from the government. Many schools relied on one teacher, assisted by 'monitors', who were older pupils teaching groups of younger pupils. There might be one room, accommodating all ages of pupils. Discipline was harsh, with routine and everyday use of the cane.

Overcrowding was always an issue, and became more of a problem when education became compulsory, and when the school leaving age was raised. In 1880, education was compulsory up to the age of 10. It was raised to 11 in 1893, and to 12 in 1899. If existing schools couldn't cope, 'Board Schools' would be set up, which would be non-sectarian, and paid for by the rates. Monitors would be replaced with pupil teachers, who would be apprenticed, with prospects of further training to become fully qualified.

Compulsory education led to school attendance officers, and in 1891 the attendance officer for Appledore was Mr George Sutton*, paid a salary of £25 a year. Non-attendance could result in a fine, and there were a few occasions when Appledore parents found themselves in court. There was a new inspectorate, with responsibility for the existing schools as well as the Board schools, which led to Appledore's school having two inspections - one from the Diocese, and one from Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools. Poor attendance, or poor performance by pupils, could lead to a cut in the government grant. The 'school penny' was abolished in 1891, thus making education free for those attending public elementary schools.

The Church of England was a little troubled by the prospect of non-sectarian schools. At one Diocesan meeting, Appledore's vicar, the Rev. T. Harrison, proposed that electors could periodically cast a vote on the matter of religion in Board schools. His proposal was far from practical, and wasn't accepted, and it was no longer really a matter for the church to decide.

* *Was this the husband of Mrs George Sutton, who probably failed to set up a school for young ladies at Poplar Hall? It may well have been. There was a likely couple living in Appledore, but the census records are not conclusive.*

Into the 20th century

The century began with radical change that led to the fall of the government. In 1902, elementary schools were placed in the hands of local education authorities, under the control of county councils. But it wasn't as simple as that. In the case of church schools, like the National school in Appledore, the LEA was responsible for paying the teachers and providing the equipment, but the church was still responsible for the building, and for providing religious instruction.

One tinderbox issue was that Anglican ratepayers could find themselves paying for Non-Conformist schools, and vice-versa. Those who favoured a non-sectarian Board school (which were sometimes said to be generally more enlightened) would also be paying for sectarian schools elsewhere. On top of that, the 1902 Education Act didn't say that the LEAs had to support all schools equally. There were many instances of Anglican schools receiving more support than Non-Conformist schools. The situation in the country was compared with that of a civil war, and the government fell.

We can forget how vituperative these things once were. In Tenterden, there was outcry when the Workhouse appointed a Methodist chaplain - after the Church of England persistently failed to provide one. The vicar of Tenterden refused to be in the same room as the Methodist and Baptist ministers - and said so in a letter to the local newspaper.

There is no record of sectarian unpleasantness in Appledore, but the school did get a new name. In 1906, the National schools changed their name to Church of England schools. The British schools took their denomination's name, becoming Methodist, Baptist, or Congregational, etc.

There was a distinct oddity related to the formation of the Kent Education Committee - it was administered from the Grand Hotel in Charing Cross, London. In 1907, a local newspaper sent a questionnaire to Kent schools asking: 1) if the Kent Education Committee should be moved to Maidstone; 2) whether there was general satisfaction with the current administration; and 3) whether the system of education should be less centralised. The Rev C. Berney Hall, responding on behalf of Appledore, said yes to Maidstone, and yes to less centralisation, and no to being satisfied.

Moving the Kent Education Committee to Kent was a resigning matter for some, who found the Grand Hotel more convenient, and it wasn't until 1913 that its offices were relocated to the Sessions House, Maidstone.

Meanwhile in Appledore, the school was sometimes closed when there was an outbreak of chickenpox, measles, mumps or diphtheria. There were some concerns about the quality of the school's water, which came from a well. An engineer's report said that it wasn't polluted but was "naturally second rate". The school was advised to let the water stand for an hour before boiling it for tea, but it was fine for cooking. The school had 'sanitary conveniences' installed, which signalled the end of the earth closets. The conveniences emptied into a cess pit.

Sometimes the school was closed by the children not turning up. It was more important to the life of the village that they went beating - raising game birds into the sky for shooting parties. Boys would sometimes slip away from school when there was a hunt to follow. They would be caned the next day, but that was routine.

In 1904, Annie Gurr joined the infant's class, even though she was 10 years old. It was her first attendance at any kind of school. Annie's father was William Gurr, an ostler and coachman who carried on his trade from the railway station. Annie's previous absence from school may have been related to difficulties at home. In 1906 her mother died at Chartham Asylum, aged 47. In later life, Annie was general cook for a prosperous family living on the Morghew Estate in Tenterden.

Things had changed a little since 1840, when all of the children came from the families of agricultural labourers and were semi-officially 'poor'. In 1906, the school roll included two daughters of Albert Avery, the grocer and draper with a flourishing shop in the village. The daughters were aged 10 and 8, and they left that year to go to a boarding-school. In the same class was Mabel George, aged 13, who had just come first in a prize for writing. Mabel was the daughter of a shepherd, and had to leave school because she was required at home. As it happens, in her home were two older brothers who were draper's assistants working for Albert Avery. Back in 1840, without formal education, it is more likely that they would have been labourers, and the Avery girls wouldn't have shared a classroom with their sister. There were signs of change, but it only went so far.

On one occasion, the children received a drawing lesson from Appledore's most celebrated resident, Mr Harrison Weir. The art of illustration would soon lose out to photography, but Harrison Weir's pictures of birds and animals were known around the world. In his later years he lived at Poplar Hall.

The children received a lecture on Temperance and Hygiene from Dr Harvey, the village doctor. After the lecture they were required to write an essay on the subject of 'Alcohol', with certificates issued by The Band of Hope Union.

The Temperance movement had a widespread influence, not just in Britain, but in Europe and America (where it led to Prohibition). It was a kind of moral panic, not unlike the previous fears about the education of the lower classes. 'Hygiene' wasn't just about washing your hands, it was about 'social purity' - a dubious concept that managed to combine religious and sexual matters with notions of national and racial purity. The children went home with their certificates and the pubs didn't go out of business.

John Jarvis had been headmaster for more than thirty years, since 1869, but the turnover of assistant teachers was quite high. Some, like Mary and Ethel Jarvis, were the wives and daughters of the master. Some left the profession or moved away after marrying. In 1906, the departing Miss Palmer gave a tea to her pupils, who responded with a wedding gift of an electro-plated teapot, jam spoon and butter knife.

There could, for the first time, have been the provision of a midday meal, but the opportunity wasn't taken up in Appledore. In 1906, an Act of Parliament allowed for free meals, funded out of the rates, but it wasn't an attractive proposition for councils and ratepayers. In 1913, only 7 per cent of children in elementary schools received free meals. In Appledore, the children took a sandwich or went home for dinner. The provision of school meals became a statutory requirement in 1944.

In March 1915, eight months into World War I, the school premises were assessed for their military potential, presumably as an emergency hospital. Eight of the children (seven boys and one girl) were given Labour Certificates which would allow them to be taken out of school for essential war work. In a rural area, this would probably have meant working on the land in the event of a labour shortage. In 1918, boys were kept away regardless of certificates of exemption and the employers and parents were cautioned.

In the absence of a village hall, the school was used for entertainments and other events. Fox hunters and hare coursers assembled at the school. In 1915, when the First World War entered a critical phase, it was the venue for a 'War Lecture', illustrated by eighty magic lantern slides. The title of the lecture was "*How British pluck won through in France*", although it related to a famous British retreat at the Battle of Mons. In 1924, the school hosted a 'cinematograph entertainment' in aid of repairs to the church.

1930 brought the first mention of an Open Day and sports, and the first indication of the school being divided into infants, juniors and seniors. The sports events were held in an adjoining field, lent by Alfred Boon. To foster a spirit of competition, the school was divided into two houses, Caxton and Wolfe.

In 1931, there were inter-school sports, with the boy's cricket team thoroughly trounced by Woodchurch, although the girls had an easy win at stoolball (an ancient Sussex game said to have been invented by milkmaids).

The school had to accommodate more pupils in 1936, with the closure of the school in Stone-in-Oxney. Some pupils came to Appledore, some went to Wittersham, presumably depending on where they lived.

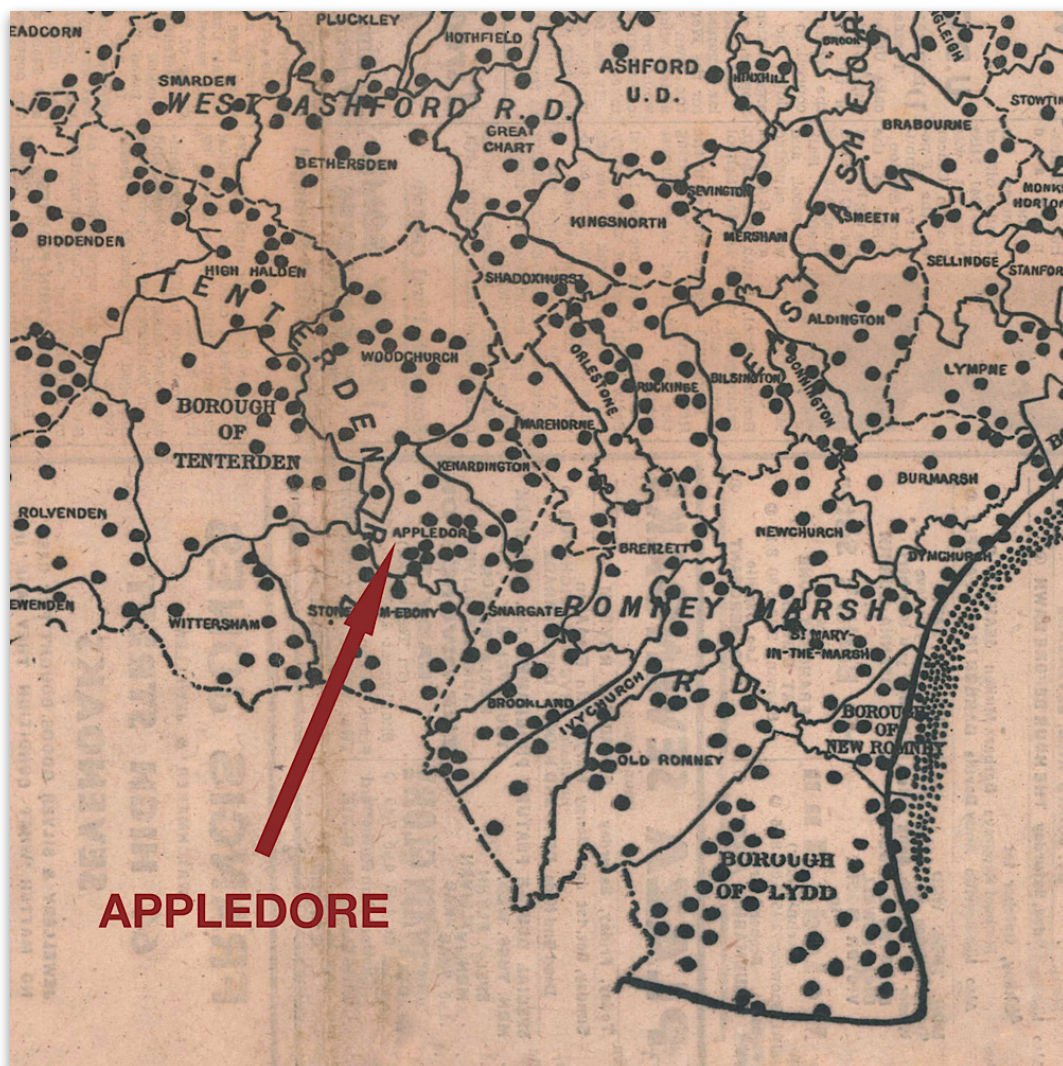
In 1937, the Kent Education Committee came up with a proposal that, on the face of it, appeared to threaten the future of Appledore school. There was going to be a new elementary school in Tenterden, for about 480 children. In addition to Tenterden, it would be available to Appledore, Bethersden, Biddenden, Headcorn, High Halden, Rolvenden, Smarden, Stone-in-Oxney, Wittersham and Woodchurch. It was big, but was it big enough for Tenterden and ten villages? Maybe it wasn't intended for infants as well as juniors, maybe 'available' to the villages meant that it could serve as an adjunct to the village schools. Nothing more was heard about this new school before the outbreak of war in September, 1939.

World War II

For the whole period of the war, local newspapers carried just one reference to Appledore school. In June 1945, the school was looking for a cleaner.

There could have been a simple reason for this. There was paper rationing from July, 1940, and newspapers shrank. The *Daily Mirror* went from 16-20 pages in 1939 to 8 pages in 1941. Rationing didn't end in 1945, and the *Daily Mirror* didn't get back to its pre-war size until 1953. If that's how it was for a national newspaper, what was it like for the *Kentish Express* in Ashford? You were perhaps unlikely to read about the Women's Institute or the school.

Bombs fell in Appledore, and in 1942 a German fighter machine-gunned the ground near the school. The greatest hazard probably came later with the V1 'Doodlebugs' and the V2 rockets. The map below, produced by the *Kent Messenger* shows that Appledore suffered as much as anyone.



In June 1944, a V1 or V2 was brought down about 60 yards from the school. The explosion shattered the windows, damaged the roof and sent the ceiling crashing to the floor. Mr Blezard, the headmaster, wrote that he and his wife had a narrow escape from flying glass. There were no pupils at the school.

The school had air-raid shelters, and the children had their dinner in the shelters when things were at their worst. The air-raid shelters survived until the closure of the school and are now incorporated into a house.

Among the sheltering children were evacuees, removed from London to keep them safe from bombs. They had come to an area of rural quiet, commonly referred to as 'Bomb Alley'.

The Battle of Britain was happening overhead.



Children taking shelter in a hop garden
unknown location

After the war

Modern Britain might be said to have started in 1945, with far-reaching social change, and a major component of that was the advent of state education, free for all. Education also had to respond to a sharp rise in the birth-rate in 1946. The most significant feature of the 1944 Education Act was the provision of free secondary education, but that also changed the nature of elementary education, which had been free since 1891. Elementary schools, such as the one in Appledore, had mostly prepared the children of working-class people for work, and work of a pretty menial kind. From 1944, they were also providing an onward route to secondary education and greater opportunity. Unfortunately for some (depending on your point of view), this also brought the 11-plus examination.

The provision of school meals became compulsory in 1944, but for most the meals were subsidised rather than free. The School Milk Act of 1946 brought free milk, in $\frac{1}{3}$ -pint bottles. The days of milk mats and milk monitors had arrived - as had a fresh (or stale) component in the prevailing odour of British schools. School meals brought cooks and dinner ladies.

The dining room, erected in 1948, was in a 'HORSA' hut. The acronym stood for 'Hutting Operation for the Raising of the School-leaving Age'. HORSA huts were pre-fabricated structures with concrete walls, asbestos roofs and metal-framed windows. There was scarcely a village school without one.

There was a change of name, from Elementary Schools to Primary Schools, because 'elementary' could be taken to mean that poorer children received a more basic and inferior education. 'Primary' could be subdivided into Infants and Junior.

Schools moved a little further from the church (who could no longer afford to pay for them), but the church wasn't excluded. National Schools, like the one in Appledore, became C. of E. Controlled state schools.

In 1947, ten years after the proposal for a super-sized elementary school in Tenterden, the Kent Education Committee was again announcing plans for a school that would cater for Tenterden and the villages. This, however, was a secondary school for 400 children, at Homewood House. Secondary school pupils from Appledore would no longer have to catch a train to Ashford.

Looking at the two announcements side by side, you might almost imagine that the pre-war proposal for a super-sized elementary school had been the result of a clerical error. But no - back in 1939, Appledore School might have been saved by Hitler.

And from that unlikely thought to the third annual event of the Weald of Kent Schools Sports Association, in June 1954. It was a fine day in Headcorn for sprints and high jumps, and for wriggling under tarpaulin in the obstacle race. The competitors were all aged under 11 and came from 17 schools. Headcorn lifted the cup for schools with over 100 pupils, Woodchurch lifted the cup for smaller schools, and then there is a mention of Appledore:

“But give a consolation pat on the back to Appledore, the smallest school with a roll of only 24 who did not manage to secure a single point. They tried as hard as anyone.”

Seventy years later you can still feel for them.

From the 1960s

It wasn't until the mid-1960s that there was a footpath from the village to the school. Children who went home to dinner walked the road four times a day, and weren't always accompanied by an adult.

A petition was raised in 1964, and Mr Sweetman, the headmaster, sent a supporting letter to the *Kentish Express*. Land had to be purchased to make it possible, but a footpath was provided in 1966.

The luxury of a footpath was followed by a swimming pool. Mr Sweetman organised a succession of whist drives and film nights, raising the necessary £550 in a year. The swimming pool was delivered in April, 1966.

In 1967, Mr Sweetman said that fund-raising had been helping to equip the school for some time:

"The fund-raising started originally because when I joined the school late in 1956 it was lacking in certain essential items of equipment. One cannot rely on the rate-payers to provide everything, so I put it to the parents at the Parent Teachers Association, that we ought to do something to help ourselves. Although we do not have a PTA now the co-operative efforts which parents have involved themselves in have meant we have reached a stage of sitting back and saying how well-equipped we are."

Fund-raising also helped to pay for outings. In 1969, there was an outing that included a train ride to Dungeness, a look at the lighthouses and the lifeboat, and a hovercraft ride at Lydd Airport. Things were a little more upmarket the following year, with a ferry crossing to Boulogne, and the summery delights of Le Touquet. William Deedes who in 1842 hadn't wanted the education of the lower orders to go too far, was presumably spinning in his grave.

In 1965 it had become apparent that the school, or the trustees of the school, still owned the land that had been gifted to it in the 1870s. The land had been rented out to farmers and graziers. Of the original 9 acres, 8.105 acres were put up for sale, with a price of £1,013. The proceeds may not have come directly to the school, judging by the number of fund-raising whist drives that year.

The sale made it clear what land had been held by the trustees (and latterly the education authority), and it is highlighted on the image below -



1973 brought the first newspaper photograph related to the school -



Ian Browne of Appledore plays in the Weald Of Kent schools recorder festival at Angley School, Cranbrook: Phillip Scutt, 15 months, of Faversham at Cossington Farm Gymkhana, Aylesford, on Saturday.

Ian Browne, playing in the Weald of Kent schools recorder festival, at Angley School, Cranbrook. (6 April 1973, *Kentish Express*)

In 1975, the *Kentish Express* reported the retirement of Mrs Joan Leckie, who had been in charge of infants for fifteen years -

KENTISH EXPRESS, DECEMBER 30, 1975 11

Farewell to teacher

PUPILS and staff at Appledore Primary School will miss the cheery teacher who never missed a day in 25 years.

Mrs Joan Leckie, 60, has taught at the village school for the past 15 years, and before Christmas she was given a great retirement send-off.

The children painted a giant card, and parents, teachers and youngsters clubbed together to give a quartz battery clock and a cheque.

Mrs Leckie, who was born in Chicago, USA, of British parents, started teaching in Kent 38 years ago. She lives with her retired schoolmaster husband at Tritton Gardens, Dymchurch.

She said: "I've enjoyed Appledore immensely. I tried to interest the children in things I brought back from travelling throughout the world."

An expert needlewoman, Mrs Leckie taught at New Romney evening institute for 22 years and has taught this subject at Appledore.

Previously Mrs Leckie taught infants at Dymchurch, and later more senior pupils at Aylesham Modern School.

CHILDREN of Appledore Primary School surround Mrs Joan Leckie after the presentation of farewell gifts.

The same edition of the newspaper reported the death of Mrs Ethel (Jean) Isemonger of Manclark Cottage, Appledore Heath, and noted that she had once run a small private school at that property. Nothing more is known about this school, or when it operated.

By the mid-1970s there were some concern that Appledore might one day lose its school. In 1976, in a meeting with a County Councillor, residents wondered whether children from Stone-in-Oxney could be transferred from Wittersham to boost numbers. A few months later, a petition was taken around the village, suggesting that "children from overcrowded schools in nearby villages, such as Wittersham should come to Appledore". The scale (or reality) of overcrowding in neighbouring schools is not known.

A local resident described how things were in Appledore, and the newspaper article is worth reproducing in full -

11 March 1977
Kentish Express, Ashford

Too few children

PARENTS FEAR THE VILLAGE SCHOOL MAY HAVE TO CLOSE

PARENTS worried about a 'nail in the coffin' have signed a petition to save their village school. The small school in Appledore has only 40 children, about 30 fewer than it had last summer. There are no plans to close it but the parents are worried that in a village where the birthrate is dropping, and little new development is planned, there may soon be too few children to justify keeping it open.

Mrs Shirley Pettett, of the Old Vicarage, Appledore, helped organise the petition, which was signed by 99 per cent of the village. She said: "The school is a nucleus for all sorts of things. If it closes it will be a nail in the coffin for village life." Mrs Pettett, herself a teacher for 20 years and now working for the Adult Education Centre at Ashford, said her son used to go to the school until last summer, when he was 11.

The school has about 40 pupils, she said, and these are split up into two classes; one for children from five to eight, the other for children from eight to 11. The headmaster, Mr David Jenkins, is one of the two teachers. The school consists of three classrooms and an assembly hall. To make full use of the school the parents would like the third classroom used by 'overspill' children from schools like those at Tenterden, Wittersham or Hamstreet.

The school used to have a third full-time teacher who took a third class until last year. It was her leaving and the cutting of the classes from three to two that provoked Mrs Pettett to write in the parish magazine asking if people realised what was happening at the school. The petition resulted. It has been sent to both the divisional education officer and the county divisional education officer.

Mr John Oliver, the assistant divisional education officer, confirmed that there were no plans to close the school. He said of the idea of moving children to Appledore from other schools: "Parental choice is a strong point here but it's a plan that could be looked at." Two weeks later, the school was advertising for a part-time teacher, two mornings a week.

At this point, it is worth noting that throughout its history, Appledore school had classes that were mixed in age. At the start, it had two classrooms, one for boys and one for girls, and each catered for children aged from 5 to 10. The school was extended, and boys and girls came together, but the school never had more than three classrooms, catering for children aged from 5 to 11. This was the norm for rural primary schools and there is still mixed-age teaching in village schools today. There are pros and cons, and some pretty smart and fee-paying schools in major cities have mixed-age teaching.

In December 1979, the *Kentish Express* carried a prominent article saying that Appledore would either grow or die. This was the prophecy of village blacksmith and Ashford Borough Councillor Ray Moseley, pictured outside his forge with the hammer of doom in his hand.



Village Blacksmith Ray Moseley, "No stagnation".

New move to help young job hunters

A NEW jobs directory for school leavers is to be produced by Ashford's Chamber of Trade.

It's grow or die, village is warned

by Graham Smith

ing news for the 700 villagers. Most of the 40 pupils at

APPLEDORE is a pretty village and full of charm. But if it is not allowed to grow a little it is in danger of dying. These are the warning words of Councillor Ray Moseley, the village's only representative on Ashford Borough Council. Councillor Moseley is also the village blacksmith, and he said this week that it was vital to maintain 'moderate growth' so that people do

Street from an antique village council is mindful

Councillor Moseley wanted modest growth so that people didn't move away. The butchers shop had gone two years before, and there were plans to turn an antiques shop into a house. The village was in danger of dying, but the article ended with some good, and perhaps surprising, news -

“In the past fortnight there has been encouraging news for the 700 villagers. Most of the 40 pupils at Appledore Primary School have a long journey because the school is outside the village. Now Kent Education Committee has plans to build a new primary school in the centre of the village.”

It didn't happen. The County Council wanted to build a new school and the Borough Council wouldn't give them planning permission. The intended site of the new school was the field next to the village hall, which the Kent Education Committee had purchased some twenty years before.

In the early 1980s, Appledore school had a budding ballet dancer on the books, and her name was Pretty Flying Bird - if it was translated into English from Vietnamese. She was an adopted orphan from the Vietnam war, and her adopted name was Gemma Anthony. Gemma's new parents lived at Horne's Place, and she was featured in the *Kentish Express* because she had been accepted as a junior associate of the Royal Ballet School. This booklet is a history of the school, rather than its pupils, but Gemma serves as a striking example of the school's journey through history. Back in 1840, which wasn't really so long ago, the Rev. Gould's highest hope might have been that the sons and daughters of agricultural labourers would be able to read the Bible, and know a little more of the world around them.

A graceful 'flying bird' lands success in ballet

VIETNAMESE war orphan Pretty Flying Bird came to the security of an Appledore family as a babe - now, with her new name Gemma, she's grown into a graceful girl who is making the grade as a ballerina.

Phi Thi Yen, was in the care of American nuns in Saigon when she was three months old, in September 1974.

The Anthony family, of Horne's Place, Appledore found her by chance when Ken Anthony saw her in Vietnam when he was on a business trip.

Moved by the plight of this troubled country the family had already made an application to adopt a child, hopefully Gemma, to join their two adopted sons, Jonathan and Nicholas.

When a mercy mission flight was organised by the Daily Mail, for 100 orphans, Gemma was onboard and the Anthonys were there to welcome her as the flight landed.

Tragically Mr Anthony died three years ago in a car accident. His wife Barbara now shoulders the responsibility of a single parent.

Ability

She is delighted with Gemma's progress, settling into the village school, and in particular her ballet.

Gemma took to Legat School Russian ballet lessons at an early age. She followed this by joining classes in Tenterden with the Gillian Mills School and gained extra ability.



Christmas 1975: Phi Thi Yen, alias Gemma, settling in at Appledore.

Gemma leaves Vietnam war so far behind

Now at 10 she is putting a fine polish to her skills.

She has just finished her first term as a junior associate at the Royal Ballet School, travelling every Saturday to London with mum, and learning with other hopefuls.

Three auditions gave Gemma a place for a year but competition is keen and as Mrs Anthony says: "This is not an easy way to the wonderful."



Back in Appledore Gemma took part in the village school's entertainment and at Tenterden won a first among the seniors. Whether it is free movement, natural dancing or national - Gemma is in her element.

Her ambition? "To dance with the Royal Ballet in Romeo and Juliet - that would be wonderful."

Barbara Anthony prepares budding ballerina Gemma.

The end

By 1988, when it had 17 pupils, there were fears for the future of the school. Inevitably, some parents responded to these fears by placing their children in other local schools, accelerating its decline. Mr Carr, of Kent County Council, suggested that the village should try to increase its birthrate if it wanted to keep the school open.

Mr Carr's advice came a few years too late, because in 1990 a new funding formula threatened the survival of Kent schools with fewer than 50 pupils. Appledore had 12, and was the smallest school in Kent. Bodsham (a hamlet on the North Downs) was the second smallest with 28 pupils, but somehow survived, and has a primary school today.

To some extent, the plight of Appledore's school was a result of Appledore being protected. After the rejection of a new school, in a field next to the village hall, there was a rejection for housing on the same site, because it was in a conservation area. If you want a school, you need houses for young families. Appledore's blacksmith was right, back in 1979.

Parents and friends of the school met with Mr Carr, of Kent County Council, "to discuss and plan action to keep the school open". That's the way it was described in the *Kentish Express*, but there's no report of the discussion or the plan. It's hard to know what the plan could have been, other than unlikely subsidies, or taking outlying pupils from other schools.

There was a public consultation. Martin Frey, an Appledore resident and a governor of Homewood School, worked out that the cost of keeping 38 small schools open amounted to £290,000, against a saving of £500,000 if they closed. He wasn't in favour of keeping bad schools open because they were small, but "I am most definitely not in favour of closing good schools, just because they happen to be small."

In truth, it wasn't just about money. The government was concerned that small schools might not be able to deliver the National Curriculum.

In July, 1990, the school held an end of term open day. There was country dancing, supervised by Norah Isemonger who had been teaching country dancing at the school for twenty years "for the love of it". Norah Isemonger had attended the campaign meetings to fight for the school's survival. She hoped that former pupils would have babies that would become her future pupils.



Labour of love at school that 'must not close'

NORAH Isemonger has been teaching country dancing at Appledore primary school 'for the love of it' for 20 years, and fervently hopes she will continue to do so.

The school is under threat of closure and she has attended all the campaign meetings to fight for its survival.

At the end of term open day, the 17 pupils gave a recorder recital and display of old English folk dances including the Circassian Circle, the Cumberland Square, Durham and Virginia reels.

She says: "Many pupils are now grown up and have babies of their own, and I hope they will become my pupils one day. We are very keen that the school should not close."

The children learn the dances during a one hour lesson weekly.

Brookland school was also earmarked for closure, and there they debated the possible permutations of Appledore, Brookland and Brenzett schools. Perhaps there could be a new school in Appledore covering all three villages. A Brookland councillor noted that the county council had spent £9 million on new offices in Maidstone. "They have their priorities wrong somewhere along the line."

According to one report, the county council's plan was to send Brookland's 31 pupils to Brenzett, and Appledore's 14 pupils to Hamstreet. How did Brookland have twice as many pupils as Appledore when the village was half the size? Appledore's population may have had an older age profile. In this report, Appledore had gained two more pupils since the last head-count.

A Brookland farmer later offered to subsidise the village school for two years. Members of the Education Committee accepted his offer by 11 votes to 9.

The new school year began in September, and for Appledore it was probably the last. The caretaker and cleaner might have jumped ship, because a new one was urgently required on the 28th. The headmaster, David Jenkins, lived 15 miles away in Broad Oak, near Rye. That was hardly a vote of confidence, but the schoolhouse might not have been desirable accommodation in 1991.

The bad news came in November, and the closure was confirmed by an official notice in February, 1991.

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
SOUTH KENT AREA
PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 of the Education Act 1980, that the Kent County Council, being the Local Education Authority, intends to cease to maintain the Appledore CE (Controlled) Primary School, Appledore, with effect from 31 August 1991.

The nearest alternative appropriate school is Woodchurch CE (Controlled) Primary School where there is sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils who will be displaced from the Appledore CE (Controlled) Primary School.

Pupils who are transferred from the Appledore CE (Controlled) Primary School will receive free transport between Appledore CE (Controlled) Primary School and Woodchurch CE (Controlled) Primary School. Applications for transfer to other appropriate schools in the area will be considered, subject to availability of places, but such pupils will not be entitled to free transport.

Any ten or more local government electors for the area may within the period of two months after the date of the first publication of the proposals submit an objection to the proposals by a letter addressed to the Area Director, South Kent Area Education Office, 3 Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone, CT20 2SQ, and objections to the proposals may also be submitted to him within that period by the governors of any voluntary school affected by the proposals and by any other local education authority; and the Authority shall within one month at the end of that period transmit to the Secretary of State, copies of all objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) in that period, together with their observations on the objections.

Signed: ROY PRYKE

Director of Education Services, Kent County Council

Date: 7 February 1991

EXPLANATORY NOTES;

1. The proposals set out above, result from a review of primary school provision in the Appledore, Brenzett, Brookland area of Romney Marsh, arising from the need to make the most effective use of resources for the maximum benefit to pupils.

2. For an objection by local government electors to constitute a statutory objection, it is necessary for ten or more such electors to show that they are acting jointly. This is most clearly demonstrated if the letter of objection is signed by each of them.

3. Section 12 (1) of the Education Act 1980 provides as follows:

'12 (1) Where a local education authority intend -

a. to establish a new County School;

b. to maintain as a County School any school which is not such a school;

c. to cease to maintain any County School, or.....any voluntary school;

d. to cease to maintain a nursery school established by them or a former authority;

they shall publish their proposals for that purpose in such a manner as may be required by the Secretary of State and submit to him a copy of the published proposals.'

Appledore Primary School would close, with effect from 31 August 1991.

Pupils would be transferred to Woodchurch Primary School.

Free transport would be provided from Appledore to Woodchurch.

Parents could make an application for transfer to other appropriate schools in the area, but in that case free transport would not be provided.

In Appledore school, it cost £5,550 a year to teach each child, vastly more than any other school in the county.

There must have been a change of plan somewhere along the line, because Appledore's pupils were transferred to Wittersham.

The school and parents weren't passive in accepting the school's fate. In March, the school applied for grant-maintained status, even if that was more often associated with secondary schools, or minority faith schools.

Grant-maintained schools were a new thing, created by the government in the Education Reform Act of 1988. They were controversial and they were political. They were said to create greater diversity in education, but they were also intended to weaken the influence of local education authorities, who might not be in step with the government. You might easily conclude that the government, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, was not a whole-hearted supporter of state education. Not as it stood, anyway.

Grant-maintained schools were owned and managed by their governors, but with grants from central government. They could have selection criteria to limit admission, but this wasn't proposed in Appledore. A ballot in Appledore showed that 89 per cent of the parents were in favour of funding from central government. Most of the parents might simply have wanted to save their school.

A few weeks before the closure of the school, the headmaster sent a letter to parents saying that it had at least one more term to go. His belief was based on the fact that the notice of closure had come from the local education authority, and was not yet approved by the Secretary of State for Education. He also cautioned against listening to rumours coming from "local lady coach drivers", who presumably knew about school bus contracts for the coming year. At the end of the letter, he responded to those who were surprised that he hadn't spoken to the press during the debate on the future of the school. "There is one reason for this" he wrote, "I hold the press in contempt and don't see why I should provide them with income." It's an odd letter, possibly written under stress, and the lady coach drivers knew best.

The application to become a grant-maintained school was unsuccessful, and that being the case, it had only served to disrupt the orderly closure of the school. The Secretary of State gave the authorisation that had been delayed by the application, and the school closed as planned on the 31st of August, 1991. Parents and children had one week to prepare for the new school year in Wittersham.

In practice, the school had closed its doors in July, at the end of the summer term. There was no record of its passing in the local newspapers, and the building was sold at auction in 1992. Was there country dancing supervised by Norah Isemonger on the school's final day? Possibly not, but it would have been a bitter-sweet farewell if there was.

Appledore's school was probably unsustainable in any form. Nationally, only 3 per cent of grant-aided schools were primary schools. The grant-aided model was abolished in 1998, ten years after it was introduced.

The parish magazine produced a special edition, one-third devoted to the passing of the school. The vicar praised its last headmaster, David Jenkins, and noted that many were angered by the way the school had been closed. The former Chairman of Governors detailed the calendar of the closure, noting that the school had been authorised to appoint a new teacher for an Autumn term that never happened. It's entirely possible that the Secretary of State (Kenneth Clarke) had acted in breach of his department's guidelines.



The magazine included memories of the school which are further preserved in this booklet.

Brookland school is still running, more than thirty years after the farmer's money ran out, as is Brenzett school.

Appledore school was built to take 120 pupils, most of them the children of agricultural labourers. Appledore grew, but not by much, and by the end of the 20th century, it wasn't a village comprised of working families who raised successive generations of children. It didn't have enough young families, or homes for young families, as people had been saying for years.

One question remains unanswered. Where is the school bell?

Appledore teachers

This is an incomplete list that is bound to contain errors. It is drawn from several records (that don't always agree) and some dates are those of the records, so do not indicate a period of service.

Name	Year	Designation	School
William Graves	1662-63	Schoolmaster	Church
Mary Harman	c. 1750-75	Schoolmistress	Church
Charles Morphett	1805	Schoolmaster	Church
James Gurney Boon	1840-43	Headmaster	Nat. Sch. / Long Hse.
Mrs Riddles	1840	Assistant Mistress	Nat. Sch. / Long Hse.
Mrs Strickland	1843	Schoolmistress	Nat. Sch. / Long Hse.
? Crisp	1844-52	?	Nat. Sch. / Long Hse.
James Medhurst	1845-50	Headmaster	National School
Ann Strickland	1847-51	Schoolmistress	National School
James Abram	1851	Headmaster	National School
Charles Sinden	1854-56	Headmaster	National School
Mrs Apps	1856	Seamstress	National School
John Adams	1856	Headmaster	National School
Mrs Adams	1856	Seamstress	National School
Wm. Matthew Sarjent	1856-57	Headmaster	National School
Mrs Sarjent	1856-57	Seamstress	National School
Charles Walker	1857-58	Headmaster (temp)	National School
Miss Carrick	1857-61	Seamstress	National School
Frederick Winter	1858	Part-time Master (temp)	National School
Richard Varty	1858-62	Headmaster	National School
Mrs Strickland	1858	Schoolmistress	National School
Alfred (Albert) Springett	1859	Monitor	National School
Mrs Varty	1859	Schoolmistress (temp)	National School
Angelina Crux	1859	Seamstress	National School
Miss Sharwell	1959-60	Schoolmistress	National School
Mr Skinner	1862-68	Headmaster	National School
Miss Skinner (sister)	1862-68	Seamstress	National School
John Jarvis	1869-1908	Headmaster	National School
Mrs Mary Ann Jarvis	1869-1908	Sewing Mistress	National School
Mary Cooper	1871-73	Pupil Teacher	National School

Alice Mary Pearson	1877-83	Pupil Teacher	National School
Georgiana H. Fowle	1881-85	Pupil Teacher	National School
Georgiana H. Fowle	1885	Assistant Mistress	National School
Miss J. Griggs	1885	Pupil Teacher	National School
Miss Mary Jane Palmer	1885	Monitor	National School
Miss Olive Rummery	1885	Monitor	National School
Mrs A. Mummery	?	Infant Teacher	National School
Sarah Frances Sutton	1891	Assistant Mistress	National School
Mrs Harriet Williams	1892	Assistant Mistress	National School
Ethel Jarvis	1892	Assistant Mistress	National School
May Emily Jane Swaffer	1897	Supplementary	National School
Louisa F. Jarvis	1901	Assistant Mistress	National School
Fanny Chapling	1901	Monitress	National School
Miss Mary Jane Palmer	1901-05	Assistant Mistress	National School
Jane Dunster	1902	Monitress	National School
Beatrice Relph	1905	?	National School
Miss Mary Maud Lindsay	1906-09	Assistant Mistress	C. of E. School
Dorothy Johnson	1907	?	C. of E. School
Thomas. Lindsay	1908-17	Schoolmaster	C. of E. School
Mr Clancy	1909	Headmaster (temp)	C. of E. School
Miss Emily M. Flisher	1909-22	Uncertified Teacher	C. of E. School
Miss Gertrude Lindsay	1911-13	Supplementary	C. of E. School
Miss Maud Lindsay	?	Supplementary	C. of E. School
Miss Marchant	c. 1910	infants teacher	C. of E. School
Miss Harris	1912-13	Assistant teacher (temp)	C. of E. School
Arthur A. Farrar	1917	Headmaster (temp)	C. of E. School
May Emily Jane Swaffer	1917	Assistant Teacher	C. of E. School
Miss Constance A. Errey	1917	Headmistress (temp)	C. of E. School
Miss Florence Lily Sagar	1919-21	Headmistress	C. of E. School
Miss Frampton	?	Pupil Teacher	C. of E. School
Mrs N. Ratherham	1921	Supply Headmistress	C. of E. School
Miss Mary Elizabeth Wallis	1921-29	Headmistress	C. of E. School
Hilda Lilian Wallis	1922	Uncertified Teacher	C. of E. School
Constance Hardinge	1922	Uncertified Teacher	C. of E. School
Catherine Doris Mowl	1922	Supply Teacher	C. of E. School
Blanche Tempest Marshall	1923-36	?	C. of E. School
Laddie Hodge	1923	Temporary Teacher	C. of E. School
Mrs Rosa Minnie Worrall	1929	Supply Headmistress	C. of E. School
Norman Francis Blezard	1929-45	Headmaster	C. of E. School
Miss Hilda Hardy	1929-43	Teacher	C. of E. School
Miss Madge Poynter	1929-31	Teacher	C. of E. School

Miss Madge Job	1934-44	Assistant Teacher	C. of E. School
Laddie Hodge	1936	Temporary Teacher	C. of E. School
Mrs Hilda C. Strickland	1937	Temporary Teacher	C. of E. School
Mrs Blezzard	1945	Temporary Headmistress	C. of E. School
Miss Doreen H. Bagnall	1945-56	Headmistress	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Hilda C. Strickland	1943-47	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
(née Hilda Hardy, and part-time cover to 1955)			
Mr B. E. Judge	?1947-54	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss Gwendoline Hughes	1954	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss J. H. Young	1955-56	Infant Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss Elizabeth M. Newton	1956	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Ernest Elliott	1956	Headmaster (temp)	C. of E. Primary
Miss Watson	1956	Supply teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs J. Bates	1956	Infant Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Strickland	1956	?	C. of E. Primary
Ernest Elliott	1956	Temporary Headmaster	C. of E. Primary
Gerald J. Sweetman	1956-67	Headmaster	C. of E. Primary
Mrs H. Seymour	1958	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
(née Gwendoline Hughes			
Miss Carrick	1959	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss Sharwell	1959	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss Dean	late 1950s	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs. Joan Leckie	1960-75	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs M. Rattenbury	1960s	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss M. Isemonger	1964-68	Teacher (part-time)	C. of E. Primary
W. Black	c. 1965/66	Headmaster (temp)	C. of E. Primary
David W. Jenkins	1968-91	Headmaster	C. of E. Primary
Mr Snelgrove	c. 1969	Supply teacher	C. of E. Primary
Miss Jennifer White	c. 1969	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Callaghan	?	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Dougall	?	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Carol Beasley	? - 1990	Teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Jacqui Bayford	? - 1991	Infants Teacher	C. of E. Primary

Ancillary

Mrs Norah Isemonger	1970-91	Country Dancing	C. of E. Primary
Les Colthup	1950s/60s	Caretaker	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Ivy King	1950s/60s	Meals > Caretaker	C. of E. Primary
Doris Terry	1950s/60s	School Meals	C. of E. Primary

Mrs Linda Coleman	1950s/60s	School Meals	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Lucy Padden	1950s/60s	Midday Welfare Asst.	C. of E. Primary
Mr Wagstaff	1990s	Peripatetic music teacher	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Ena Coles	1968-90	School Secretary	C. of E. Primary
Ms Cindy Wilcox	? -1991	Caretaker	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Daphne Waters	? - 1991	Kitchen Assistant	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Leslie Miller	? - 1991	Midday Supervisor	C. of E. Primary
Mrs Joy Noakes	1990-91	School Secretary	C. of E. Primary

Memories

GERALD SWEETMAN

Headmaster 1956 - 1967

(Mr Sweetman was also an artist, and produced pencil sketches of local scenes. Many appeared on the front cover of the parish magazine, which he also had a hand in producing.)

Although it is now more than 23 years since my wife and I said farewell to Appledore School, we cherish many happy memories of the twelve years that we spent in the School House and we share with the village a very real sense of loss and sadness at its abrupt closure.

I am sure that Appledore's local historians have been able to ensure that the early Log Books, Registers and Account Books are preserved and placed in the care of the County or Diocesan Archivists. These records speak vividly of a distant past. At one time we printed some extracts in the APM : perhaps the time is opportune for more to appear?

One may assume that a Log Book was maintained from the start of the life of the school in its new building of the late 1840's or 50's, when it was just the one large school room with a four-roomed dwelling for the Master adjoining. By the 1870's plans were implemented for the addition to the original school room of an Infants' Classroom (galleried) and porch and two more rooms for the House. I believe the School Bell bears the inscription "1853" – though it may have been 1843, it's a long time since I climbed to the roof! – and I was informed by the School Managers who appointed me in 1956 that the school was then in its Centenary Year. In the absence of any documents I had always been unable to verify these facts, until reading Sir John Winnifrith's History of Appledore, and this seems to support the date suggested in APM by my one-time pupil, Mary Shaw (nee Strickland).

Sir John may have had access to those earliest documents, for these were in the possession of the late Miss Dorothy Johnston and presumably left by her in the care of the National Trust. The oldest book that I found on searching the cupboard in the Headmaster's desk was started on 1st July 1889 by John Jarvis ("Master, 1st Class"), at that time already 20 years in service as the Head.

His final entry in the Log is in a shaky hand, less confident than his earlier decisive inscriptions:

“May 8th 1908. I end my labours today as Schoolmaster of Appledore having been here 39 years.”

He was succeeded by Thomas Lindsay, 1908-1917. Arthur Farrar took over from him temporarily and in June 1917 the handwriting changes again as Constance Errey takes over. The Heads at this time seem to come and go with a frequency that must have shocked the shade of John Jarvis : Florence Sagar, Jan 1919-Sept 1921, N Ratherham, Supply Headmistress, Oct-Nov 1921, and then on Nov 28th 1921 Mary Wallis took office, remaining Head until March 1929, to be followed for a term by a number of “Supplies” under Rosa Worrall.

Norman Blezard took over in September 1929 and in my time it was his name that was best remembered as “The Schoolmaster”. He resigned in April 1945, having been appointed Head at Otford. After a term when his wife took temporary charge, Doreen Bagnall was appointed “Temporary Head” – an appointment presumably ratified to permanency for she remained until April 1956.

The outstanding feature of the period of Miss Bagnall’s Headship was the implementation of the Hadow reports and the Education Act of 1944. The “H.O.R.S.A.” hut intended for School Meals was completed in 1948 but no meals served there until April 1949. On that day the school became “Junior Mixed and Infants” and children over the age of 11 were transported to the new Homewood Secondary School in Tenterden. Her influence on the school was humane and she sought to extend the range of work and aims of the school. In this she was badly frustrated by an extreme shortage of suitable teachers and the Log Book renders a long list of temporary supply teachers with Miss Bagnall striving bravely on. I think she was responsible for the design of the school badge and the motto “Persevere”, taken from the last line of her chosen School Hymn, ‘Jesus good above all other’.

I was appointed at interview during the Easter holiday, 1956, and took up the post in September. The school was without regular staff for the Summer Term, so Mr Ernest Elliott, then at Southlands School and later to be Head of Brenzett became Temporary Head with assistance from Miss Watson, a supply teacher from Ashford.

The school at that time consisted of some 68 children, taught in crowded conditions in the two classrooms of the original building. I was assisted by Miss Joyce Newton, shortly to become Mrs Bates. Material resources were at an all-time low and parents who were associated with the school at that time may recall the frequent calls for help and the beginning of the long series of fund-raising schemes. By 1958 approval had been given to divide the large group of Juniors into two classes, using the Dining Room as a make-shift classroom and Mrs Seymour joined the staff on a 9/10ths week. She was later replaced by Miss Dean.

By 1961, with a continued rise in school numbers, the 9/10ths allocation was changed to a full-time post, and with the resignations of Mrs Bates and Miss Dean, Mrs Leckie and Mrs M Rattenbury were appointed. In 1964 an additional part-time post was created and Miss M. Isemonger joined the staff, sharing duties with her appointment at Wittersham School. She remained with the school until July 1966 and again from Sept 1967 to July 1968.

During that interim period I spent a year on secondment at the University of London Institute of Education (which led to my subsequent career as Principal Lecturer in Education at Weymouth College of Education until its closure in the early '80's led to early retirement). During that year, Mr W Black, Deputy Head of the CE Primary School, Tenterden, was appointed Temporary Acting Head. By this time the number of children on roll was beginning to reduce to the 50's – a sign of things to come!

The 60's was period of considerable changes in the school's buildings. At the rear of the back lobby a staff toilet and head's office was erected – the latter designated "staff room" but of such small dimensions that it could be no other than the head's office. The coke stoves were removed, to be replaced by a new central heating system of a design that was surely destined for early obsolescence. It seems incredible that the chipboard panels laid on rotting joists had not surrendered to the daily pounding in the two old classrooms. Such potential accidents were averted when new solid flooring was installed.

By the end of '63 the two classes occupying the old building were able to move into the new cedarwood classrooms. The toilet block was made a little more weatherproof, the playground extended and by the Summer of 1966 the Swimming Pool was completed and brought into popular use. Many villagers had helped us in our fundraising efforts to provide the pool. The laying of the foundations and erection of the structure was undertaken and

completed almost entirely by two teen-aged ex-pupils whose initials “MS” and “GC”, together with those of others who had assisted, were inscribed in a panel of cement at the poolside. The pool carried a manufacturer’s estimated life expectancy of 20 years (10 years for the liner), if I remember correctly. Did it survive that long without major repair, I wonder?

This review of the staff and structure of Appledore School up to 1968 would be incomplete without special mention of those who served on the ancillary staff during the period of my headship. Mr Les Colthup was the school’s caretaker – “Cleaner-in-Charge” – and Miss Ivy King in charge of the School Meals Service. When Les and his family moved from the village, his job was taken on by Ivy who worked hard and well to keep the premises warm and clean and to serve the school dinners : a loyal and faithful friend. Later, Mrs Doris Terry took over the school meals duties, assisted by Mrs L Coleman. The late Mrs Lucy Padden is remembered with affection as the midday Welfare Assistant.

With the closure of the village school, a long and worthy chapter in Appledore’s history comes to an end. The spirit of Appledore School lives on through the many, young and old, who have passed through its classrooms. I sincerely hope that their memories remain as happy as mine.

Gerald Sweetman
1991



Gerald Sweetman

CECIL GREEN

THE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF CECIL GREEN, EX-PUPIL

Printed in the October 1991 edition of Appledore Parish Magazine.

Cecil Green started going to Appledore School in 1907, when he was three. He left when he was twelve and-a-half because by then the war was on and boys were needed to work on the fields when the young men were away fighting in France.

He used to walk to school from the Old Sweetshop carrying his lunchtime sandwich, arriving at 9.00 and leaving at 4.00. There were no outbuildings in those days. The main hall had a big stove in the middle, with a class to either side, the infants being accommodated in the back room.

The headmaster was Mr Lindsay, assisted by Miss Flisher, whose parents ran the Railway Hotel. Schooling consisted of the three Rs - reading, writing and arithmetic. There were no history or geography lessons. The children used slates then, along with copy-books. There were no printed schoolbooks for the children's use. "We were well taught", Mr Green says, "and there was no unruly behaviour, because otherwise the can out [*words missing from sentence*]. Anyway we were all strictly brought up in those days to be polite and well mannered."

"At 11.00 am there was playtime for a quarter of an hour, and we crossed the road to where the playground then was. On the corner was the tuck shop, very tempting to visit. We didn't play athletic games, mostly marbles, skipping and spinning tops. One day the Hunt met at the crossroads during playtime and half the boys slipped away to follow the Hounds. Next day Mr Lindsay had us all out in front and gave us six whacks across our backsides ... you didn't dare to go home crying or you might get another whacking."

Amongst Mr Green's contemporaries were Charlie Marchant, Albert and Sid Fowle, Reg, Fred, Cyril and Maggie Boon. There were ten Boons and six Greens at the school at the same time - almost as many as the total attendance today. He says that school was good fun - all the families knew one another and helped each other out. He learnt his lessons well, for when he was twenty and examined for entrance into the London Police he passed in as one of only twenty out of sixty applicants.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

BOYHOOD AT APPLEDORE

Extract from a memoir written in about 1970 about Appledore in 1910.

The School - The exterior, apart from additions, seems little changed. There were then two rooms, infants, and the main school room, with coke fire in centre, always with basin of water on top.

The school masters – Mr Jarvis, who was lame, I just remember, and Mr Lindsay. Teachers – the infants, one of the Marchant girls, whose Christian name eludes me. Seniors, Miss Dolly Flisher, who cycled daily from the Station Hotel, and one of Mr Lindsay's daughters, perhaps the one who married a Mr Lesser.

Tommy Lindsay was by no means hesitant about using the cane, of which he had several. After all, if during afternoon play break we heard the huntsman's horn, and decided that following the hounds was preferable to lessons for the remainder of the afternoon, we expected six of the best on the following morning, and were not disappointed. But he took great interest in the boys and girls, and gave us an excellent basic schooling on which we could, as we chose, build later on.

Each Christmas he wrote to a number of firms, and obtained picture puzzles, drawings, and other odds and ends, and their distribution to all scholars made a great contribution to our Christmas joys. I have before me some of his handwriting, a perfect copper plate style. As I sometimes listen to a radio quiz my thoughts go back to the general knowledge questions that he pinned up each week, and the Friday afternoons when he dealt with our replies and gave an acid drop to each of the winners; then read to us for the remainder of the afternoon from Tom Sawyer, Brer Rabbit, White Fang or some similar book. Yes, there must be a number like myself who feel that any success we may have attained in after life rests on the foundation that he laid so well and truly.

The playground had a maypole but its use had been discontinued before my time. When the ground was too wet our playtime was spent on the roadway outside the school entrance (after all, in those days roads were made for hop scotch, hoops, peg tops etc., certainly not for motor cars). The games had their seasons; hoops, iron for boys, wood for girls, in Winter; peg tops in Spring; and in Summer we brought our marbles and alleys to School.

One memorable afternoon during playtime lightning struck the tree on the fence at the Tenterden side of the playground. There was usually time for recreation after eating our dinner in school before lessons restarted, and I recall an occasion when a group of boys were in luck's way when we found the goose temporarily off her nest at a farm, and we were able to clear her sitting. Alas, on reaching School, we found the eggs were set, and had to dispose of them before lessons began. The inevitable happened later in the afternoon, but to our intense relief, the farmer asked Mr Lindsay to put away the cane that he had brought from the cupboard in readiness, after he had received a very crestfallen apology from us. On another occasion there was quite a stir among us, when Mr Lindsay's pince-nez fell off on to the floor whilst he was caning a boy whose name I forget, and the boy promptly stamped on them.

When 12 years old, I worked on Saturdays at the Schoolhouse, 9am to 6pm, doing light work in house and garden. Pay: 6d and dinner, of which Mrs Lindsay always gave very generous helpings.

EILEEN OVEN

EXTRACT FROM EILEEN OVEN'S MEMOIRS

We all went to school in Appledore, save those who were lucky enough to win a scholarship to the Ashford Grammar School for Girls. My sister Jean was lucky enough to win a scholarship, but the rest of us went to Appledore School.

We had three classes; infants, middle class and top class. I remember some of the teachers, for example Miss Job. I always had to stay in for her. Everything I did was wrong. My other teachers were Miss Hardy (Mary Shaw's mother), Mrs Wallace, Mr Jarvis, Mr Blezard, Mr Sweetman, and Mr and Mrs Jenkins. Of course there were other teachers too, over the years.

The school was opened in 1856 and the school bell cast in 1853. We used to love it when the maypole was put up and we could all dance around it. There were two teams, yellow and blue, and we kept these colours for sports day. I felt sorry for the children who came from Stone and Appledore Station, because most of them had to walk, unless they were lucky enough to own a bicycle.

Note: There may be a transcription error in Eileen Oven's memories. She was born in 1923, so was at the school during the headship of Mr Blezard, and not the other three headmasters mentioned.

It's unlikely that she examined the school bell herself, which was high on a gable above the roof, but she gives the same dates for the bell, and the opening of the school, as Mr Sweetman. Directly or indirectly, the information may have come from him at a later date.

ETHEL KNIGHT

SCHOOLDAYS BETWEEN THE WARS

I have two brothers and a sister, we had quite a walk to school and came home for our midday meal, the hours were 9am to 4pm. The girls played stoolball and netball and the boys played football and cricket. Ascension Day and Empire Day (24th May) meant a day off school, On Ascension Day we had to march to church for a service, with the rest of the day off. Every Sunday afternoon we went to Sunday School and on special days – Easter, Whitsun, etc. – all the family would go to church or chapel as well as Remembrance Sunday.

The Sunday School outing was mostly a day at Dymchurch or Hastings that was quite a day, our 'holiday' of the year. The chapel anniversary in May, when the chapel was full and the children would be seated on forms put in tiers, with a platform in front where all the children would take part - sing, recite or read a story, etc.

My father did thatching and charcoal burning, and he would also act as a looker* for a Mr Barling who had sheep on Shirley Moor - that meant summer evening walks with our parents on Sundays. My mother went 'thistle spudding' to earn extra money and also did washing for the landlady at the local pub. My sister and I used to take it back all nicely ironed in a wicker basket. My mother also made wine - parsnip, potato, dandelion etc.

The summer I left school I went hop picking to earn money to buy a bicycle, second hand, and then I went to work at a Guest House and Tea Room in the Village, and saved for a new cycle - £6. I had one half day each week off that would be spent cycling to Rye or Tenterden to the 'pictures' or shopping; sometimes to Dymchurch in the summertime. My mother also went hop picking, we would all pick as it meant new shoes and clothes for the winter.

There was a bus service to Ashford and Rye morning, noon and evening. Most of the shopping was done in Ashford. I also used to go and stay with an aunt in the summer holidays in Ashford and I had a penny a day to spend. One day it would buy a banana and another day a lovely ice cream. We had an 'ice cream man' come to Appledore, he rode a tricycle with a yellow box. I can just remember a 'muffin man', a tray on his head covered with a white cloth and ringing a bell.

The Doodle Bugs were frightening, as they often turned in flight and we did not know where they would come down. They looked like a cross in the sky with flames coming from the tail.

At primrose time we picked, bunched and packed them in cardboard boxes and sent them by train to market in London. With the money we bought some new clothes for the holiday – this was after the war.

*A looker is a Romney Marsh shepherd.

DON PENFOLD

NOTES GIVEN BY MR DON PENFOLD - APRIL 2007

On the wall of the school shelter was a mural of a doodlebug being chased by Spitfires. This was on the wall facing you as you went in the right hand entrance. The painting was done by one of the pupils, Charlie Collison, brother of Cyril.

SHIRLEY PUCKETT

MEMORIES OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

The school was the beating heart of the village. Children were not driven to school usually, and most mothers walked with the children. The school gate was the hub - for news, gossip, laughter, advice, opinions, recipes and all the important things that made up the lives of Sixties mothers.

The building is Victorian, built by the Church on Church ground, why it is outside the village. In the hall, which earlier would have comprised the whole school, Mr Sweetman the Headmaster took the seniors. Mrs Leckie had the

infants, originally in the small room which later became the office. Mrs Rattenbury had the middle class, in the modern 'prefab'.

After Mr Sweetman left, David Jenkins took over. A good disciplinarian, while carrying on with traditions, he introduced various innovations. An excellent mathematician, he will be remembered by his pupils for bringing them "up to scratch" in this subject. The prefab became the Canteen when it was cleared for school dinners. Mrs Paddon kept an eye on the canteen and the playground. Eat up and play nicely, little Johnny, or she will tell your mum!

Walking to school meant younger children got used to the idea of school. Not everyone though. One little boy, when asked how he got on his first day, admitted, "It wasn't too bad." Adding something he had no doubt heard a grown-up say, "But I don't think I shall go again." Bad news darling!

The School year progressed in step with life around it. Fields were reaped and the infants arrived, mothers hiding tears, seeing their babies in school uniform. Lambs frolicked and the children enjoyed the Nature Walk to the church on Ascension Day. One summer outing created some excitement when the school party found a wallet on Horse guards' Parade. Violet Masters found it and was rewarded with one pound, worth a lot more then.

As the beans climbed the poles there was Sports Day in the school field with Open Day and prize giving in the hall. The winter fields slept but the Christmas Fair and Nativity Play were colourful and lively events. Country children grew up connected to the world around them, and kept this connection, even if their paths took them far away.

One innovative idea was the construction of the swimming pool. It was erected in record time, from the fund-raising to the noisy splashings of excited children. An above-ground pool, it was situated the extra classroom. A video was made of the school, including the swimming lessons. Anyone who kept a copy probably won't have now the equipment to view it, alas.

Attendance registers were kept from the start, in the 1870s. Serious research undertaken by Mr Jenkins revealed much about the school's earlier existence, being held in a school room in the church in the mid-Victorian period. Early records show that many children missed school entirely, for weeks, spending their days working in the fields. This was often general practice in the countryside, accepted as inevitable. Professional education of children was still something of a luxury. It is sad that the pandemic we have endured has had much the same effect on today's education system. Eventually there were too few children to keep the school open. The clanging school bell, the shouts and playground clamour were silenced for ever.

ANONYMOUS

APPLEDORE SCHOOL - A PARENT REMEMBERS by B.A.

Printed in the October 1991 edition of Appledore Parish Magazine.

Eighteen years ago we came to live in Appledore because we wanted our children to grow up, as we had done, in an English village. We sent our children to the village school because we felt that it was one of the central pivots of village life, and because we were impressed by the friendly atmosphere we found there. We never regretted our decision.

From the time when our eldest child started until our youngest moved on to secondary school, we were closely linked with the school for some twelve years, and though the number of children fell, the standard of the education they received was consistently high. In particular we valued the way they learned to assess and monitor their own work, to seek out information for themselves when working in small groups within mixed age classes. It made them very independent and able to work without constant supervision and stood them in good stead as they went on to higher education.

It was a happy school. We never had any problem getting them to school in the morning, only in keeping them at home when they were spotty and infectious. Then they would count the days until they were allowed back again.

Because it was a small school, every child was able to take part in all the activities. It was not only the athletic ones who raced on sports day: the fat ones and the ones with short legs were in there with the rest, and often displayed a fine eye for balancing an egg on a spoon or had the knack of not falling flat on their faces in the sack races.

And it was the involvement of every child which made those Christmas concerts so marvellous. It sometimes seemed that Appledore was unusually blessed with talented performers, but we know it was not really true, that they must be an average cross-section like all school children. But somehow David and his teachers managed to convince each new group that they could all sing, they could all play, they could all act. And once again, even when there were fewer than twenty children, they would put on another memorable show to a packed and admiring audience.

Those of us whose children were there will remember it with affection and gratitude. We know how much Appledore has lost. If you didn't send your children there, you missed out on a really good thing.

CARL MILLER

GOING TO WITTERSHAM – by Carl Miller

Printed in the October 1991 edition of Appledore Parish Magazine.

I was four-and-a-half when I started going to Appledore school. Now I am seven. Mrs Beasley taught us first, then Mrs Bayford. Last year I went into Mr Jenkins' class. I liked Mr Jenkins because he was good at maths and he did acting with us in the Mexican play. I played the recorder as well. At playtime we went outside and played tig, stuck-in-the-mud, traffic lights, What's the time, Mr Wolf? and bulldog.

When they said we were going to Wittersham we were a bit frightened, waiting for the minibus. But when we GOT there we were very excited because there were so many children! We play football on Wednesday afternoons. I have got new football boots and a new teeshirt and sweatshirt. I have got three new friends called Greg, Gavin and Garry ... No, the whole school are my friends.

There are twenty-seven in my class. Mrs Watts our teacher is quite strict but all right. My desk has a drawer where I can keep things. At playtime we can go into the field and play catch and practice football. At Appledore we get home at half past three and from Wittersham we get home at half past three as well.

Appledore was a nice school but Wittersham is better because we go into the field at break. There are more people to play with and there are TONS of things to do!

P.S. I want to have violin lessons.

GOOD LUCK AT WITTERSHAM TO: Cheryl Ashenden, Mark Fagan, Alison Fazzani, Douglas Fazzani, Daniel Fullager, Simon Homewood, Lydia Hyde, Matthew Hyde, Karl Miller, Wayne Parker, Victoria Robinson, Sarah Smith, Naomi Willis

MARY SHAW

Printed in the October 1991 edition of Appledore Parish Magazine.

Many of us have not yet had the chance to think of the real implications of losing our school, but part of our history has gone forever.

Many will remember their schooldays there. The older ones will remember Miss Flisher, who taught there in my father's time and then lived for many years at Swan House with Miss Bartleet. Mr Blezard came in 1929, the same year that my mother Mrs Strickland (then Miss Hardy) began teaching there. She taught full time for eighteen years until 1947 and then part-time if any teacher was sick until her death in 1955.

My generation will remember Miss Bagnall, Mrs Seymour (Miss Hughes), Mrs Bates and Mr Sweetman. The younger ones will remember Mrs Rattenbury, Mrs Leckie, Mrs Callaghan, Mrs Dougall, Mrs Beasley, Mrs Bayford and, most important of all, Mr David Jenkins, for twenty-three years the Head Teacher.

Over the years there have been many other teaching staff, some only part-time, some only for a short time and many other people have worked at the school, too numerous to mention individually but not forgotten – the caretakers, the voluntary helpers, the 'dinner laides', the mid-day supervisors, etc. I must mention those who suddenly found themselves redundant: Mrs Daphne Waters, the Canteen Assistant, Mrs Lesley Miller, mid-day supervisor, Mrs Cindy Wilcox, the caretaker, Mrs Joy Noakes, the secretary. To them we offer our sincere thanks and we must not forget to say thank you to Mrs Ena Coles, who was the school secretary for twenty-two years and only left at Easter. To Mrs Jackie Bayford, the Infants Teacher who left in July to have a baby we send all our good wishes for the future. To all the school's Governors, or Managers as they were formally called, thank you for loyally supporting the school over the years.

Finally a very big thank-you to David Jenkins for so ably teaching hundreds of children throughout his years at Appledore School, and also for giving the village many hours of pleasure and enjoyment in the magnificent concerts/plays/cantatas which he so enthusiastically produced. For the Harvest Festivals, the Christmas Fairs, etc, etc, thank you.

I know that everyone will wish David and his wife Alex a very happy future and that they will have many happy memories of us all, whether we were pupils, parents or just friends. We will all have our memories of Appledore school - for that is all it is now - memory!

[Mary Shaw was Chairman of the School Governors]

ANN HILL

Printed in the October 1991 edition of Appledore Parish Magazine.

The closure of Appledore school is a significant event in the history of the village, for there has been schooling of some kind here since the seventeenth century. Indeed, it may have started even earlier, for in 1519 William Brokhill made provision in his will for a grammar school to be set up.

For many years the schoolchildren were taught in the north chapel of the parish church, which was partitioned off for the purpose. However in 1820 the school subsidy from the Poor Rate was discontinued and it was resolved to close the school in the church. After that it continued for some years in the long room of the bakery. The present school building (with later additions) dates from the late 1840s. It was largely paid for through money raised by the dynamic Rev F Goold, who collected subscriptions and delivered fund-raising sermons. The first schoolmaster was James Boon, whose headstone can be seen at the south-west corner of the churchyard. By 1860 over 150 children attended the school. John Jarvis was the longest-serving master, teaching here from 1869 until 1904. In fact, schoolmasters tended to stay in Appledore, for there have been relatively few of them over the past 150 years.

David Jenkins has been teaching our children for nearly twenty-three years. He explains what he sees as the aims of primary education in the school prospectus, from which I quote:

‘To foster and utilise the family atmosphere of the small village school and so, within a sympathetic environment, help the pupils to form a foundation for responsible, caring adulthood. To enhance the learning process by:

- (a) An enlightened, but realistic approach to the acquisition of basic skills, which in themselves lead to the acquisition of further skills and hence to a personal, constructive way of working
- (b) An approach, largely problem-solving in style, which facilitates the development of reasoning, ordering, selecting, interpreting, testing and a reasoned conclusion.
- (c) A conviction that the learning should take place in an atmosphere generating enjoyment, achievement, satisfaction, encouragement and self-motivation.
- (d) A realisation that the above considerations apply not only to the intellectual development of the children but also to their physical, aesthetic, spiritual, emotional and social development, that methods may vary from teacher to teacher, and that the application of all of the above must take into account both the individuality of the child and of the subject matter’

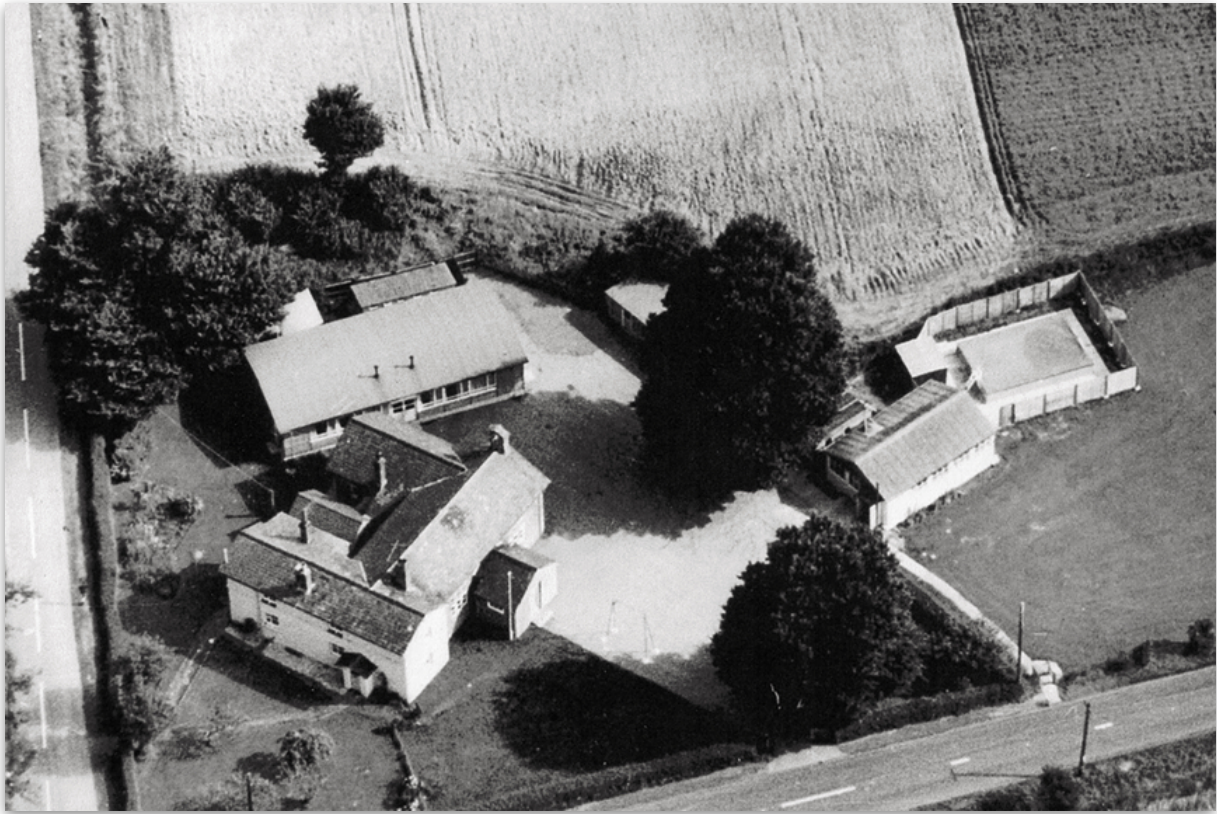
This is a pretty impressive manifesto. He is proud of the standards which he has set and maintained and told me two revealing stories. A pair of schoolboys who gained scholarships to the Norton Knatchbull school in Ashford said: 'Honestly (in mathematics) we just kicked our heels for the first year, waiting for the rest of the class to catch up with us'. The second story is more recent. A teacher from another school, carrying an armful of books out of an Appledore classroom last week said: 'I've got more real books here than there are in the whole of our school library'.

Economics have dictated that our school should close and the children have settled well into Wittersham, but we are fully justified in being proud of the standard of education given them while they were here.

Gallery



1961



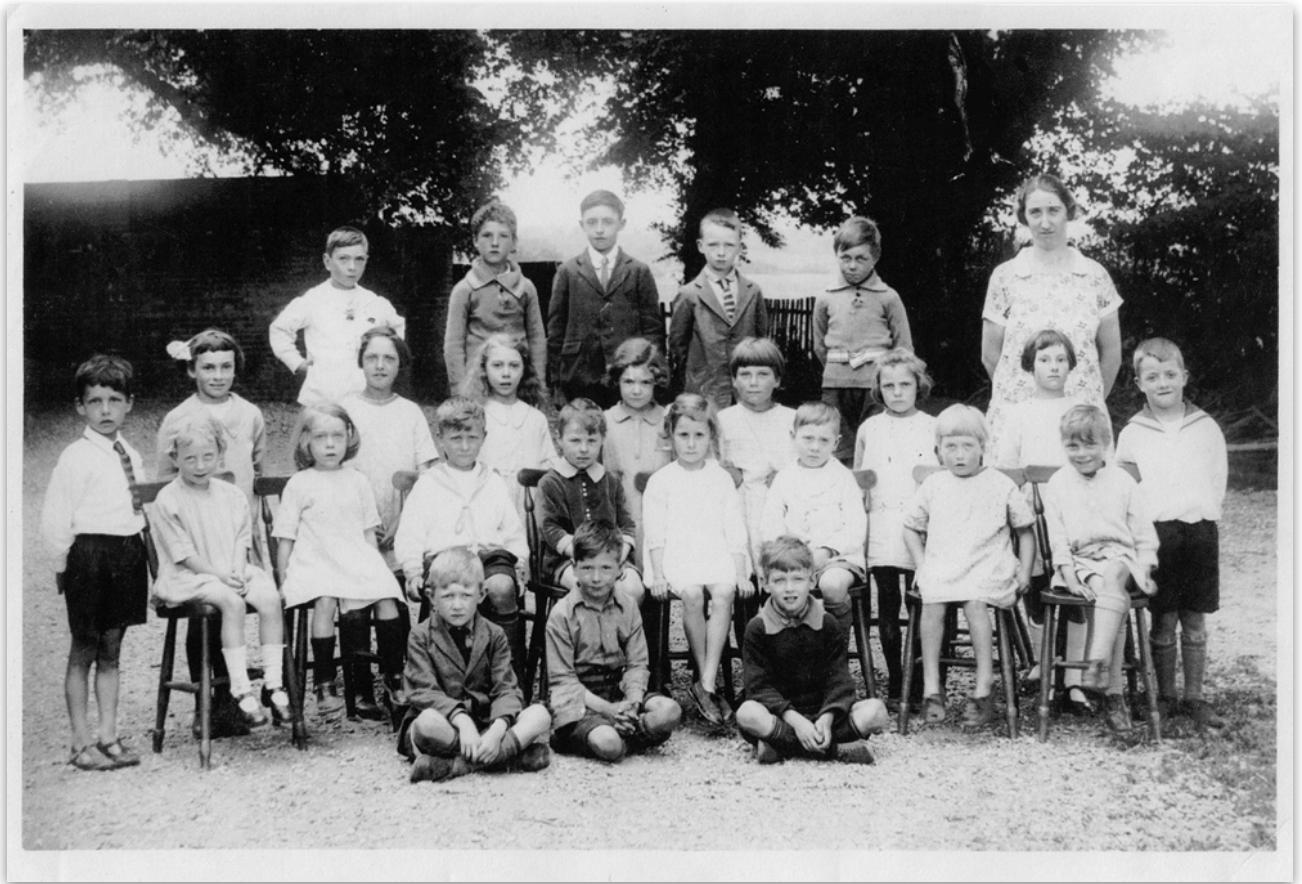
1966



Circa 1903 with John Jarvis, headmaster.



Class III, 1915. Not the happiest band you'll ever see.
One of the teachers could be Miss E. M. Fisher.



Unknown date, possibly 1920s.



1935 with Miss Hardy, teacher.



1936 with Mr Blezard, headmaster.



1936 with Miss Job, teacher.



Possibly late 1930s with Miss Job, teacher.



Sewing class 1937 with Miss Walliis, uncertified teacher.



1938 with Mr Blezard, headmaster

Gerald Sweetman's photo albums



1939 with Miss Hardy, teacher.



1947 with Miss Bagnell, headmistress.



Late 1940s or early 1950s - school outing at Westminster Bridge with Miss Bagnell, headmistress and Mr Judge, teacher.

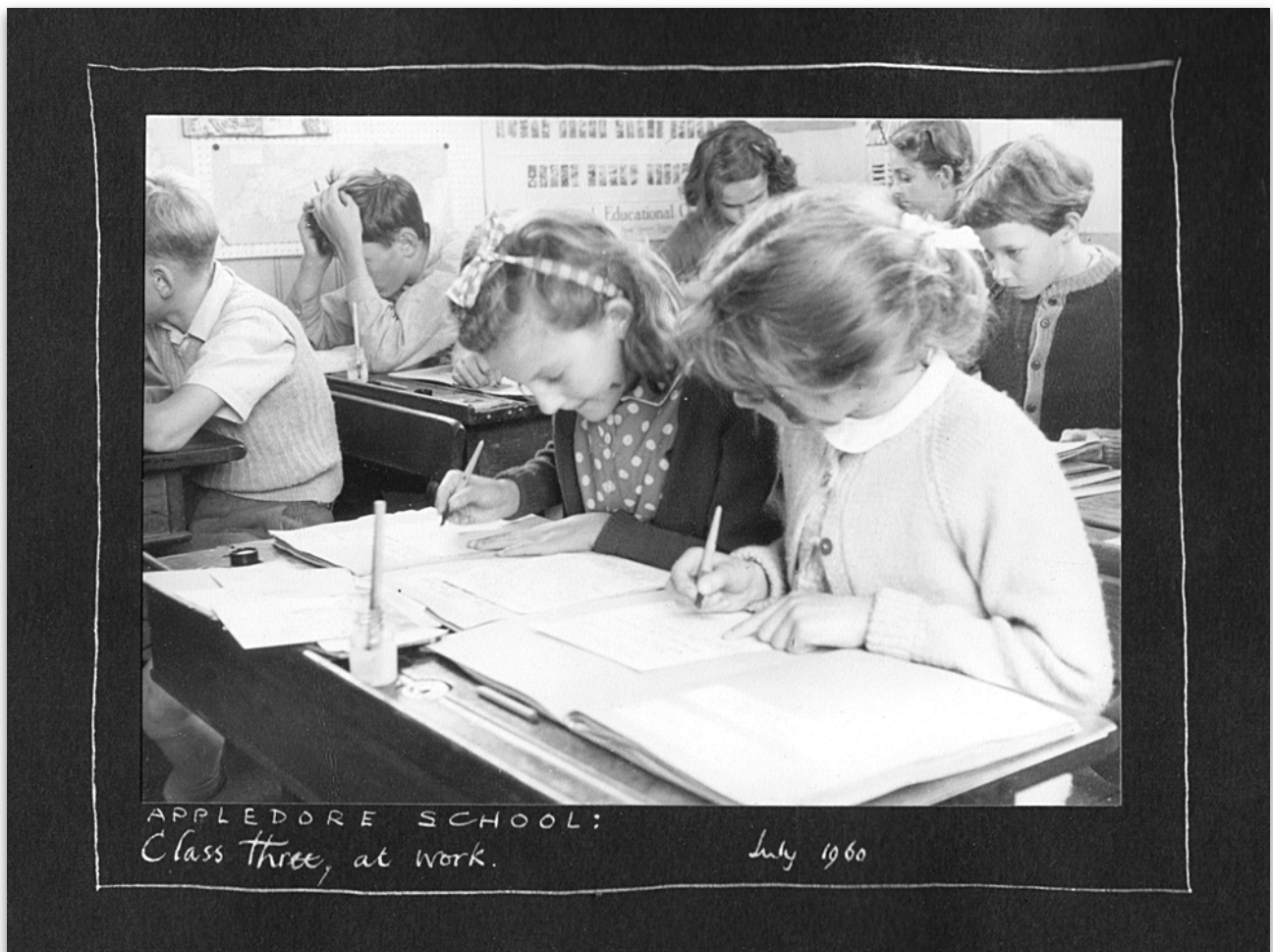


Gerald Sweetman was the headmaster of Appledore school from 1956 to 1967.

He was a keen photographer, and his son donated several albums of photos to the Appledore Local History Society.

Mr Sweetman even tells us the camera he used - a Voigtlander Vito B.

A small selection -



Gerald Sweetman was also skilled with pen and pencil -





ANDREW

ANTHONY



SCHOOL DINNER

June 1966



Dining Room



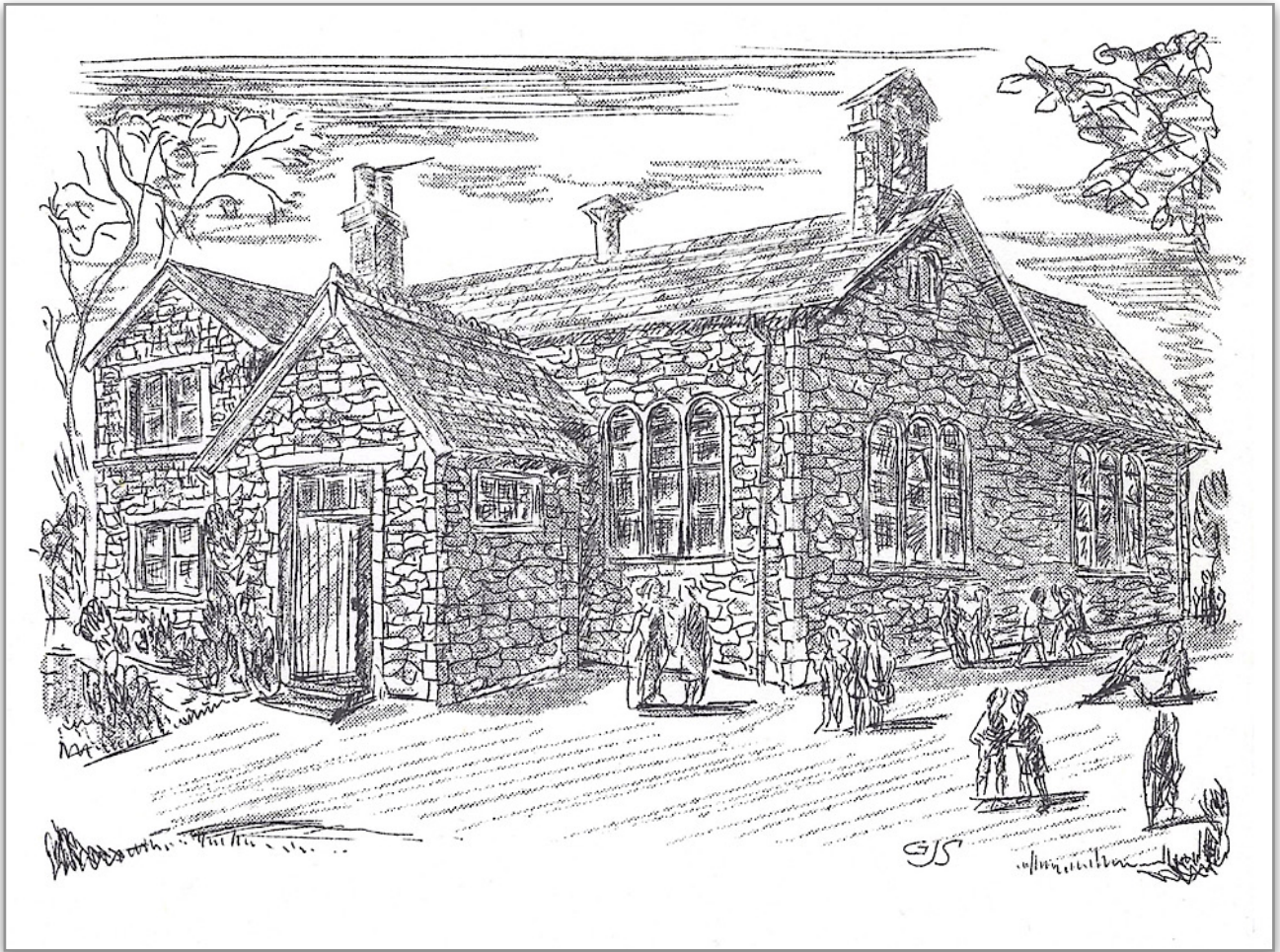
New Classrooms for Upper Juniors and Infants 12/1963



Summer Term 1961



"TWINS"
Lynn and Paula Smith
July 1961

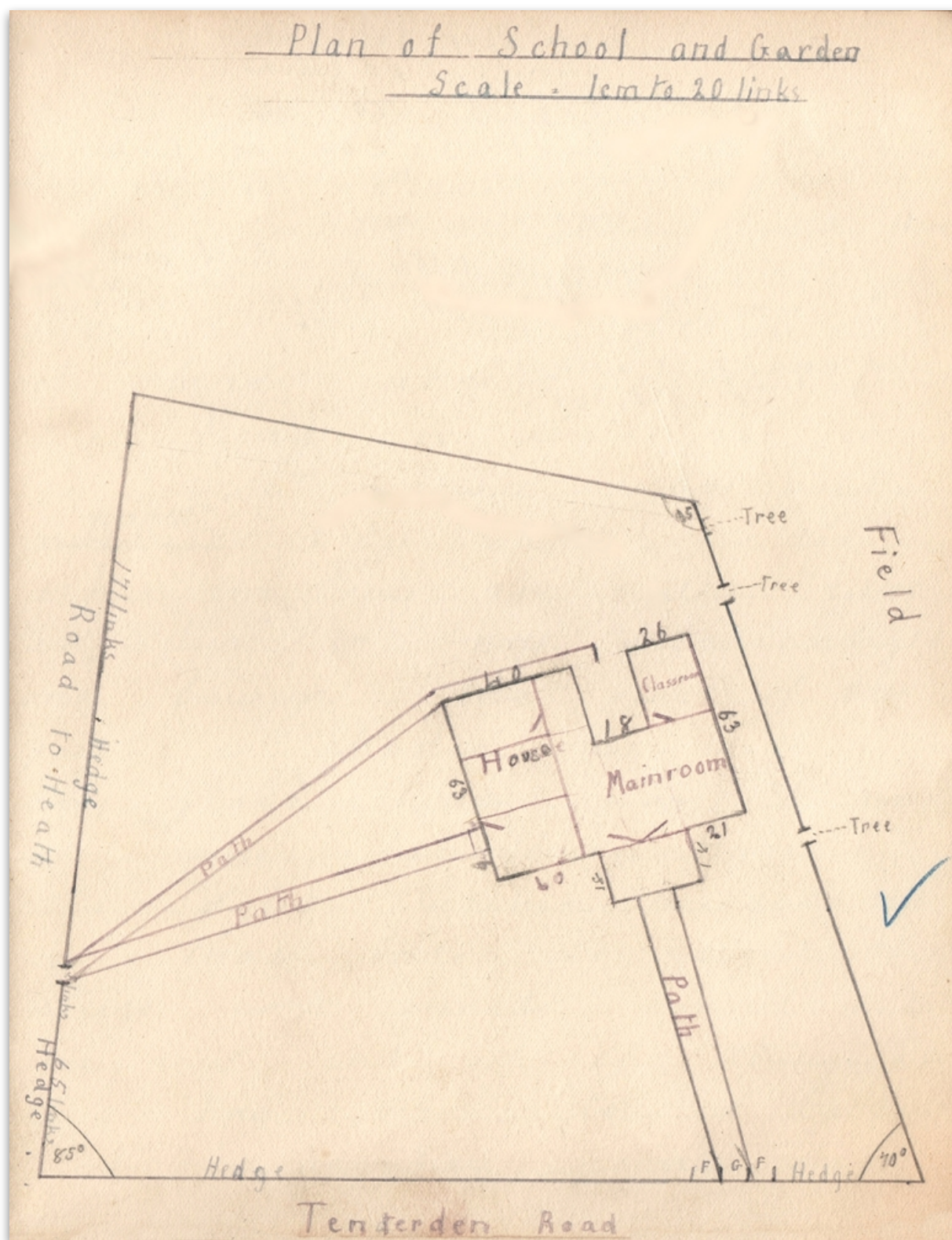


Herbert Hickman's exercise books

from the early 1920s



Herbert Hickman was born in Appledore in 1913, son of William Hickman, a cowman. He later became a carpenter and built a house for himself and his wife Florrie (Little Greenfield) in School Lane. He died in 1996.



Thanks to Herbert's plan, we can see the location of the infants' classroom at the rear of the school, which was probably added, along with additional rooms for the schoolmaster's house, in the 1870s.

Note the scale of the drawing - "1cm to 20 links".

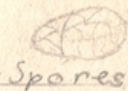
Potatoes Blight



Leaf attached by blight

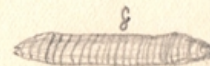


Spore bearing threads



Spores

Garrot Fly



1. Garrot root with grub feeding and 6 grubs natural size and magnified 7 and 8 pupae natural size and magnified 9 and 11 the parent fly natural size and magnified

Were the rest of the class as good as this?

The headmistress at the time was Miss Mary Wallis. She had previously been an Assistant Mistress at New Romney, and was later the headmistress at Hollingbourne.



10/10

The Early Home of the English

10/10 - not unusual for Herbert Hickman.



The school badge, courtesy of Brian Knight.

As mentioned earlier, it is thought to have been designed by Miss Bagnell, who was Headmistress from 1945 to 1956.

The badge was accompanied by the motto 'Perseverance'

The Old School today

