

# EDUCATION and SCHOOLS

## Introduction

The earliest reference to a school in East Bridgford is contained in Du Boulay Hill's book 'East Bridgford – The Story of an English Village', where he mentions that, *'between 1792 and 1827 the Rectory was let by the Rev. Thomas Beaumont, curate in charge for the non-resident Rector, the Rev. Peter Broughton, to a Miss Beach as a private school for girls.'*

The first National School was built in 1829 on glebe land on the north side of the churchyard. The boys entered from Trent Lane and the girls through the churchyard.

The current St. Peter's Church of England School was built on a site known as Howet's Orchard on Kneeton Road, which was given by Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1863. It opened on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1864 and has provided continuous education in the village for nearly 150 years.

When it opened the Master in charge was a Mr. James Gill and 26 boys and 17 girls were admitted. At first there were virtually two schools; the boys and girls were taught separately and this continued until 1878 when the classes became mixed.

Over the years the increase in the village population and the proximity of RAF Newton (1936 - 1996) has enabled the village to retain its school, whereas the schools at Kneeton and Shelford both closed because of decreasing numbers.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of great change in education and was a continual challenge for both children and teachers. The school was very fortunate in that during the century it only had 5 Headteachers and the continuity experienced enabled any changes to be integrated smoothly.

Information for this chapter has been obtained from the school logbooks, village magazines, The Rev. Du Boulay Hill's book on East Bridgford and interviews with ex pupils and teachers.

The original school buildings, minus the bell and turret, in 1999 with the School House, by then a private residence, behind.



## Henry Goldston 1885-1923



The 20<sup>th</sup> century was ushered in with Henry Goldston as Headmaster at St. Peters. Mr. Goldston had been appointed as head in 1885 and remained in charge until 1923.

It was during his period of office that education became free, the School Managers making this decision on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1902. An earlier entry in the School Log Book indicated that fees were 1s 7d per week per child – a not insignificant amount in those days. It is obvious that there was a commitment for children to attend school and the parents of a Frank Holmes were fined 5 shillings for irregular attendance. Forster's 1870 Education Act had attempted to address the subject of school fees, but the widespread idea amongst the general public that elementary education was free was far from the truth. In 1891 parents were given the right to demand free education but fees were not entirely abolished until 1918.

Entries in the School Log Book in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century make interesting reading and provide an historical snapshot of life at that time. In 1902 it was reported that the schoolyard was well rolled which greatly added to the comfort of the children at playtime and the following year the school acquired a piano which was a considerable improvement on the harmonium which had been previously used.

Children had to be disciplined, as they still have to be to-day although the methods of dealing with disobedient pupils have changed somewhat. Mr. Goldston reports that a certain Mark Curtis had to be punished for writing a note to Florence Hunt, a girl in the same standard. He gave him four cuts with a small stick and placed him in a corner. Mr. Goldston then talked to him about lying as he had first denied having written it, whereupon the boy became impudent. *"I tried to put him across my knee, but as he struggled and tried to kick my shins I laid him across the desk and gave him three cuts on his seat."* At choir practice that evening Mr. Goldston was assaulted by the boy's father at the chancel door. An officer was sent for and Mr. Curtis summoned. On receiving the summons a cross summons was taken out for 'beating the boy.' The case was heard at Bingham a week later. Result: Curtis was fined 10 shillings for assault as he had borne a good character hitherto and the cross summons was dismissed. Mr. Goldston hoped that the result of the case would have a *'salutary effect on the villagers.'*

Empire Day was always celebrated during the early years of the last century and on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1905 a short address was given to the children on the meaning and extent of the British Empire. The children were exhorted to do their duties faithfully as worthy citizens of this great Empire.

Girls seemed to take a pride in their appearance and although it was against school rules quite often used to attend with their hair done up in rags. This caused friction between parents and staff even though the children were attempting to make themselves smart for a 'Concert' or 'The Band of Hope Tea.'

It was the Headmaster's responsibility (as it still is) to monitor what was being taught in each class and Mr. Goldston did not seem too impressed in 1904 with a Miss Garratt. He wrote, '*I find that the lack of intelligence in standards 1 and 2 is due to unintelligent teaching. Miss Garratt had put a problem for standard 1 to work, which was impossible, as the terms were contradictory. I then set a typical problem for each standard and after a time asked the teacher to show them on the board and to my astonishment she worked each one wrongly. The problems were quite simple only requiring two steps in subtraction, the numbers not exceeding 20.*'

Attendance at school was not always satisfactory during the early part of the century as boys, especially, were quite often employed illegally by local farmers, particularly at Harvest Time. The school was also closed on one afternoon so the children could pick blackberries.

Outbreaks of disease and fever were continually happening and children were requested to stay at home rather than risk passing anything on to other pupils. Health was always a major concern and in 1909 it is recorded that 3 dozen tooth brushes and 4 dozen packets of camphorated chalk were sold to the children, the Education Committee having provided them at cost price.

Open fires and stoves provided heating, neither system being very effective because of the heat loss due to high ceilings. It was impossible for children to work well when tempera-



A class photograph with Mr Goldston on the left, taken between 1900 and 1910 to judge by his age. The school photographer continued to use an identical pose and position for class photographs regularly for many years.

tures were down to freezing, so on very cold days during winter months children would be huddled round the fire and stove.

Besides the normal literacy and numeracy lessons, variety was provided by the addition of other subjects – R.I., History, Geography, Nature Study, Physical Education and Art and Craft. A visit by the Nature Inspector recommended an interest be taken in gardening. Mr. Goldston obviously thought this a wonderful idea and set the standard 3 and 4 boys to work on his own garden (he lived in the house adjoining the school) prior to converting a nearby field into an allotment.

In 1921 some of the older girls attended County Council cookery classes at Bingham, being taken there by motor car. Meanwhile milking lessons were given to the boys.

Swimming was also on the time-table for the boys, these taking place in the River Trent, Mr. Goldston giving a shilling to the first boy to swim across the river. Fortunately there are no reports of any accidents happening, although it is recorded that Joseph Newton, who had learnt to swim in the River Trent, did save a small boy from Scarrington who was on the point of drowning in one of the local ponds. Swimming for girls was obviously not considered appropriate and whilst the boys were swimming they went for a walk in 'The Plantation.'

Up until the introduction of The National Curriculum in the 1990s it was possible for teachers to be flexible in their teaching and in the content of what they taught. So it was on July

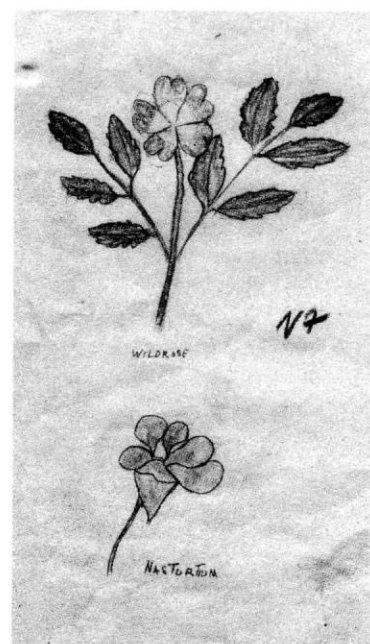
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|--|----|--|---|----|------|
| 1855.  |    | Bradford July 1856.                      |   |    |      |
| Frederick Simpson Esq.                           |    | Dr. to R. Huggins.                       |   |    |      |
| Nov.   | 3  | 2½ tons of Wallsend coal @ 24/- per ton. | 2 | 12 | 6    |
|  | 17 | 3 " " House " @ 19/6 "                   | 2 | 18 | 6    |
| Dec.   | 4  | 4½ " " " @ 20/- "                        | 4 | 10 | 0    |
|  | 23 | 5 chaldrons of coke @ 14/- per chaldron. | 3 | 10 | 0    |
| Recd. Aug. 10 <sup>th</sup> 1856.<br>R. Huggins. |    |  | £ | 13 | 11 0 |

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| Recd. Aug. 10 <sup>th</sup> 1856<br>R. Huggins |    |  | £ | 13 | 17 0 |

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Two examples of school work from the exercise books of Edward Bullers in 1909. On the left an example of the copying exercises school pupils did to practise their 'copperplate' handwriting. On the right one of the weekly drawings for Nature Study—the original was beautifully coloured.



24<sup>th</sup> 1911, that as the children were assembling in the playground, an airship passed overhead causing great excitement. Afterwards they perhaps weren't so excited as they were required to write an essay on 'The Great Aerial Contest.'

The school was used for social events, despite the fact that the Temperance Hall and W.I. hut would have been available. Probably the custodians of these premises wanted to keep their premises in reasonable order, because after a social evening in the school during May 1908 it was reported that the room was not swept, the air was very stuffy, the ink wells had not been put out, two flower pots had been broken and ink spilt on the cupboard. Dancing in heavy boots had also considerably damaged the floor, breaking two floorboards which needed repairing.

Currently it is not considered appropriate for husbands and wives to teach on the same school staff. However, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was quite common and frequently the Headmaster's wife would have been employed at the same school as her husband. St. Peters was no exception and Mrs. Goldston taught there, possibly on a part-time basis. Unfortunately in 1912 she met with a serious accident whilst trying to avoid a motor car. Her arm was fractured and she received a severe shock to her system. Four years later she had to resign her post at the school owing to the fact that she suffered a nervous breakdown resulting from her earlier accident. She had taught at the school for 31 years.



After 38 years as Headmaster at St. Peter's School Mr. Goldston retired and was succeeded by Mr. Nelson Rhodes.

This school group can be dated towards the end of Henry Goldston's period by the presence of several uncles and aunts of living villagers (in 2000). Some families connections with St. Peters go very deep!

## Private Education

Private Education was provided in East Bridgford at the "East Bridgford Academy" – a boarding school for boys. This school had been founded in the late 1820s by Edward Clough and was located in the large white house behind Corner Cottage at the junction of Main Street and Walnut Tree Lane. This school was run by the Clough family until 1912 and catered for boarders and also day boys. There was some animosity between the boys at this private school and those who attended St. Peters and it was not uncommon for the police to be called to help to sort out problems.

After 1894 girls were admitted but they were taught separately at Burneham House (now called the Old Manor House). This building, situated on the corner of College Street and Main Street, was a sprawling farm owned by Magdalen College and was surplus to requirements. Below is an extract from the diary of Gertrude Godley (nee Hardstaff) of Bingham.



In the year 2000 the old Clough School Building still has a 'presence' on Walnut Tree Lane despite being converted into several dwellings and being surrounded by evergreen bushes.

*"It was one of those grey still days which we sometimes get between Christmas Day and Twelfth Night, when step-mother and I set out to walk to East Bridgford to see the school to which I was to go to in the Easter Term. It was 1895 and I was nearly 12 years old. It was a three-mile walk from Bingham to Bridgford but in those days to us just a pleasant stroll.*

*Burneham House had been taken over by Mrs. Clough with a spirit of enterprise and adventure to run as a girl's school in conjunction with East Bridgford College for Boys which had been conducted by her husband and by his father before him. High on the walls of Burneham House was a board bearing in large gold letters the words LADIES COLLEGE. I was much impressed.*

*Turning down a pleasant side lane we came to the Boy's College. Here we were shown into a pleasant small sitting room, with a brightly burning fire, and a round table laid for tea. I had imagined Mrs. Clough to be tall, thin and commanding, quite unlike the little lady who greeted us. Mrs. Clough was very small, slim and sparkling and so neat. She wore a grey silk dress; her silvery hair was coiled on top of her head. For tea we had very thin bread and butter and Huntley and Palmers Best Mixed Biscuits. These were small, of fascinating shapes and iced, and at home were only provided as a treat.*

*After tea Mrs. Clough sent for her daughter Alice and we walked back to Burneham House. "Alice dear, fetch the school room key from Miss Oldfield," and Alice trotted across to the housekeeper. The schoolroom had been built in a pleasant spot between the garden and orchard. We then went into the house. It must have been a few days before the start of term, for bright fires were burning in all the bedrooms and the mattresses and blankets spread out to air, I thought this was lovely! There were three bedrooms for pupils, one for the headmistress, one for the housekeeper and one for the maid.*

*I don't remember any conversation except that Mrs. Clough explained I must have a little shawl to cross from house to schoolroom, table napkin and a ring, and a knife, fork and spoon. Then we set off for our quiet walk home."*

The 1901 census makes interesting reading. Residing in the Walnut Tree Lane building were

|                  |    |  |                     |
|------------------|----|--|---------------------|
| Charles Clough   | 64 | Schoolmaster                                 | born East Bridgford |
| Emma Clough      | 54 | Housekeeper                                  | born Halifax        |
| Charles Clough   | 25 | Banker's Clerk                               | born East Bridgford |
| Mary Clough      | 22 | Music Teacher                                | born East Bridgford |
| George Clough    | 21 | Student                                      | born East Bridgford |
| Hilda Clough     | 18 | Student                                      | born East Bridgford |
| Rupert Clough    | 16 | Draper's Apprentice                          | born East Bridgford |
| Muriel Clough    | 15 | Student                                      | born East Bridgford |
| Frederick Clough | 13 | Student                                      | born East Bridgford |
| Ernest Thompson  | 22 | Assistant Master                             | from Alford, Lincs  |
| Charles E. Jones | 15 | Pupil Teacher (Father Grocer and Job Master) |                     |

There were also 12 pupils included in the census return aged 9-14

The census return for Burnham House was as follows –

|                    |    |                 |            |
|--------------------|----|-----------------|------------|
| Agnes Hayle        | 25 | School Mistress | Scotland   |
| Gertrude Hardstaff | 17 | Pupil Teacher   | Bingham    |
| Ethel Robinson     | 17 | Pupil Teacher   | Nottingham |
| Susan Humbles      | 50 | Housekeeper     | Nottingham |
| Hannah Higgs       | 16 | Housemaid       |            |

#### **Pupils (all boarders)**

|                   |    |                    |
|-------------------|----|--------------------|
| Annie Ball        | 16 | Nottingham         |
| Nellie Richardson | 15 | Oxton              |
| Daisy Richardson  | 14 | Ossington          |
| Hilda Walker      | 14 | Tithby             |
| Lucy Shelton      | 14 | Ruddington         |
| Annie Reynolds    | 13 | Radcliffe-on-Trent |
| Ethel Redgate     | 12 | Radcliffe-on-Trent |
| Emmeline Parr     | 12 | Radcliffe-on-Trent |

In 1885, Charles Clough succeeded his father Edward in running the Boys' School, and remained in charge until 1902, when his son Ernest took over. Charles maintained some involvement, but in 1912 the school closed when he was diagnosed as having Parkinson's disease. At the same time the girl students moved to St. Anne's on Sea, Charles's daughter Mary going with them.

The East Bridgford Mason family had a long association with the school, and Charles Bullers, another important figure in village life was educated there.

## Nelson Rhodes 1923-1957

Life at St. Peters continued in much the same vein under Mr. Rhodes. Teaching conditions were still difficult – a wide age range of pupils, ( 5 – 14 ) taught in only three classrooms, and shortly after his arrival Mr. Rhodes decided that Religious Instruction could be better taught in the church. He requested that parents sign a form agreeing to their child being taken there occasionally during school hours.



A curtain was also hung in the larger classroom to divide the classes. This didn't, however, shut out the noise and the teachers and children would have found it difficult to concentrate. In July 1925 Kneeton School closed with 21 children being transferred to St. Peters, thereby increasing further the pressure on accommodation.

Miss Fox who lived in East Bridgford Hall visited the school regularly to check the registers and inspect needlework. She also presented a new gramophone to the school.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s annual school outings were made to Skegness, by coach, usually on a Saturday and in 1924 Mr. Rhodes and six pupils visited the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. These visits would no doubt have been considered very progressive and radical in those days.

The school still closed frequently in October so that the older children, both girls and boys, could help the local farmers with potato picking and harvesting the sugar beet. For this they were paid 4d per hour.

Illness was a constant concern and resulted in frequent absences of children. On May 8<sup>th</sup> 1931, 114 cases of measles were reported out of a total school roll of 135. Mumps, bad throats, chicken pox, German measles, jaundice and ringworm also accounted for many absences during the early part of the century. In 1931 dental examinations commenced and out of one hundred and nine children examined ninety-one required treatment!

In 1935 a milk scheme was started at the school – the milk being supplied by Netherfield Co-operative Society. One third of a pint bottles were provided at a cost of one halfpenny. During October 2147 bottles were supplied proving that this initiative had the support of the parents. In the winter months the milk was frequently frozen solid when it arrived and had to be placed in front of the fire to thaw out.

As there was no accommodation available for inside physical activity this had to be undertaken outside. Both boys and girls played football and cricket on the adjoining field which at that time belonged to Charles Kirkland Allwood who lived at Prize Farm on College Street. Hazards included the grazing cows and their droppings. The playground was also used for games – official and unofficial-, Joseph Allwood sustaining a fracture of the right leg whilst playing 'Up Top Billy Boy.'

## The War Years

In 1939 the opening of St. Peter's for the autumn term, like most schools in the country, was delayed due to the outbreak of war. Term commenced on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> when 54 evacuees from Sheffield were admitted. A further 11 arrived on October 30<sup>th</sup>. During 1940 and 1941 more evacuees arrived from Great Yarmouth and Littlehampton in West Sussex. Some of the children remained at the school for a few weeks. Others stayed for the whole duration of the war. The parents, depending on their wartime commitments, made these decisions. Two teachers from Sheffield, Mr. D. Young and Mr. F. Fletcher accompanied the initial evacuees and were temporarily attached to the staff at St. Peters. Because of this considerable increase in numbers the Women's Institute Hut had to be hired to accommodate the older children.



Sheffield Victoria Station in 1939. Evacuees on their way to East Bridgford

Most of the evacuees admitted to St. Peters were 'Official Evacuees', although there were also one or two 'Private Evacuees.' The latter were normally sent to stay with friends or relatives, unlike the former who were simply allocated to homes who had space to accommodate them. The majority of evacuees who came to East Bridgford were extremely happy – it was a welcome respite for them, moving from the centre of a big industrial city to a village in 'Rural England.' They were generally given a warm welcome by their host families and enjoyed the greater variety of food, which was available in the country areas.

In May 2002, a re-union of evacuees from Sheffield was held in East Bridgford. They met local people who had attended St. Peter's School at the same time, toured the village to see the changes that had taken place and spent some time re-visiting the school. It was interest-



ing that the evacuees did not remember much at all about St. Peter's School but could recall a great deal about the village and the time spent there.

Peggy Hague (nee Oliver) remembered arriving in Bingham from Sheffield by train, carrying a gas mask on her shoulder. On arrival in East Bridgford the evacuees were taken to the school where they waited in a classroom until they were chosen by a village resident. Peggy and her friend Jean Bradley (nee Marriott) were selected by Mrs. Kent and they were extremely happy there, enjoying 'wonderful fruit pies and lovely meals.' They also used to attend the Methodist Chapel each Sunday.

Elsie Fergus (nee Lee) arrived in East Bridgford with her mother and brothers aged 2 and 11. They were housed with Mrs. Pendleton, whose husband was a major in the army. Elsie recalls, *'The house was an eye-opener – fitted carpets, feather eiderdowns and walnut furniture and two maids also worked there. We gathered blackberries for pies and jams and enjoyed spending time with Mr. Lander, the cobbler, who always had sweets to give us.'* She vividly remembers 'The Drunken Pilot Officer' who the girls helped, on more than one occasion, returning him safely to RAF Newton carefully avoiding passing the guardroom. All this was a far cry from inner city Sheffield and for many of the children it was a magical time far away from the problems being experienced at home.

Extremely severe weather conditions were experienced during January and February in 1940. The school bus was unable to reach Kneeton because of deep snow drifts, and due to the heavy snow, followed by floods, the school sessions were changed to 9.00 – 1.30.p.m. This was done to avoid children walking to and from school twice, to help teachers who had to travel and also to conserve fuel. In April 1940 three Air Raid Shelters were completed in the school grounds and were ready for use – each accommodating 50 people.

The war continued to affect school life. The Government ordered all schools to re-open at Whitsun after only two days holiday due to the gravity of the situation. In October the school was closed by the Education Committee so that the children could help with potato picking and in November, children aged 12 and over, were granted further leave of absence to help the farmers. Morning sessions at school were re-scheduled to commence at 9.30. am on account of the blackout. All children were issued with gas masks, which had to be taken to school each day, and in June 1942 it was reported that the Gas Van (ARP) visited to test all the children in their gas masks. In February 1943, Mrs. Squires, one of the teachers was granted 4 days leave of absence as her husband was on leave from H.M. Forces.

When the war finally ended in 1945 the school was closed on May 8/9<sup>th</sup> to celebrate 'Victory in Europe.'

## **The Post War Years**

Shortly after the war finished two major innovations commenced at St. Peters. On October 7<sup>th</sup> 1946 the provision of school meals started, the food being supplied by the Bingham school kitchen. The following year a Clerical Assistant was appointed to work one day per week.

The Pea Factory on Main Street was back in full production and the senior children were shown round from time to time by Jack Kemp who was a School Manager and also the Manager at the factory.

Heavy snowfalls during February and March 1947 again prevented the Kneeton children from attending school on many days. RAF Newton, now the war was over, had families living on the base and during October 1947 the children there were put in quarantine because of a case of Infantile Paralysis.

An Inspector's Report in 1950 commended the school for its excellent work but expressed grave concern about the overcrowding and inadequate accommodation. Up until this time St. Peters had remained an all age school providing education for children from the age of 5 to 14. However, on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1950 all the senior children – 49 of them aged 11 and over – together with 2 staff, Mr. Whitehouse and Mrs. Metcalfe transferred to the Robert Thoroton School at Flintham; St. Peters re-opened as a Junior Mixed and Infant School with 99 children on roll in 4 classes.

It was becoming very obvious, in spite of the fact that numbers on roll had decreased, that more and better accommodation was required. St. Peters at this time was a C of E (Aided) School, but because the Church could not afford to provide extra accommodation the Aided status was relinquished and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1951 it became a C of E (Controlled) School. The three Foundation Governors appointed by the Church were retained, but the Local Education Authority now became responsible for all maintenance, provision of equipment and also staff appointments.



A school class group taken in the late 1940s

In April 1952 the school re-opened following renovations and repairs to the building. During the holiday 3 new lavatory pans, 5 new washbasins, 2 Esse stoves and a wooden screen to separate classes 1 and 2 were installed – the latter replaced the existing curtain. The playground was also re-surfaced and exterior painting of the school completed.

The W.I Hut continued to be used for dancing, physical education and other activities on two afternoons each week. Christmas parties were held either in the Village Hall or W.I. Hut because at this time the school did not possess a hall.

A piece of school history disappeared on Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> 1955 when the School Bell and Turret had to be removed from the roof because it was unsafe. For nearly 100 years it had signalled the start of school sessions.

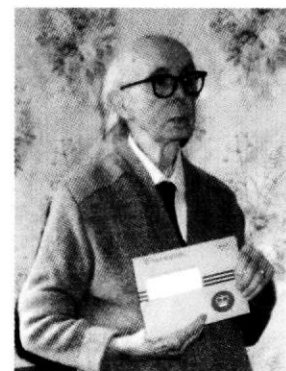
Mr. Rhodes was now approaching the time when he would be retiring and it was ironic, that after struggling for so many years with inadequate accommodation, three new classrooms, together with extra toilets and cloakrooms were built in 1955 and 1956.

Mr. Rhodes finally retired in 1957 after 34 years as Head-teacher. He had not only been in charge at the school but had also played a full part in the life of the village. He was very interested in sport and represented the village at both cricket and football. Indeed it is rumoured that he had been offered a contract with Aston Villa but decided to concentrate on teaching rather than become a professional footballer. He and his wife were also instrumental in starting the Tennis Club in the village, which of course continues to thrive. There was also a strong connection with the Church and Mr. Rhodes besides being a Church Warden was Choirmaster for many years.

On retirement Mr. Rhodes left East Bridgford to live in Chesham Bois, Buckinghamshire. He continued to teach at a Private School there until well into his 80s.



Some of his pupils remember Mr Rhodes as a severe man—but he had a lighter side. Here, on the left, we see him in 'doublet and hose' ready to participate in the pageant to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.



Nelson Rhodes on his 100th birthday with his telegram from the Queen. He died aged 102 in 1994.

## Ex-pupils Remember

**Jean Dix (nee Smith)** was born at Sunnyside, Kneeton Road in 1924 and commenced school at St. Peters in 1929 when she was five years old. Nelson Rhodes was the headmaster having been appointed in 1923.

Jean recalls the Victorian Elementary School where she was first taught by a Miss McHardy, progressing next to the Long Room where a curtain separated standards one and two. Here she was taught by a Miss Attenborough, a very severe lady from Bingham. Later Jean remembers a Miss Davey who replaced Miss Attenborough. She lived at Collingham and came to school by bicycle to Newark, then by train to Lowdham and finally by bicycle again to East Bridgford. She did that every day regardless of the weather. The curriculum included English, Arithmetic, R.I., History, Geography, Nature Study and Art and Craft. This latter subject consisted mainly of measuring things and making cardboard models. The girls were also taught Needlework.

When the girls at the school became twelve they were taken each Friday by special bus to Bingham where they were taught cookery and housecraft. This took place in the Old Tithe Barn belonging to the Church, which was situated in the grounds of The Rectory. It stood where the Robert Miles Junior School now is. Meanwhile the boys were receiving instruction in woodwork and gardening.

From the age of five Jean always knew she wanted to be a teacher and at the age of thirteen she sat and passed an exam for entry into the Nottinghamshire Rural Pupil Teachers' Centre, where all students came from country areas. She started the four-year course at the age of fourteen. The timetable was organised so that part of the time was spent at the University (which was then on Shakespeare Street, Nottingham), the remaining time being spent at St. Peter's School. Whilst in school, Jean observed teaching methods and taught small groups under the supervision of a class teacher. She recalls taking a lesson with all the class, when she covered the whole period of the 'Middle Ages' in half an hour! She also played the piano for assemblies and singing lessons and vaguely remembers being paid 4s 6d a month for her teaching work. At the conclusion of her four years as a Rural Pupil Teacher, Jean went on to further training and then to Goldsmith's College, London, emerging as a fully qualified teacher. She continued to pursue a very successful teaching career in the local area.



Jean cycling past the entrance to Hunt's coal yard in about 1935.



**Dorothy Millichamp (nee Kemp)** attended St. Peter's School from 1932-1937, when Nelson Rhodes was the headmaster. She has many happy memories of her time spent there. As an Infant, she recalls the 1/3 of a pint bottles of milk being provided. All the children had a choice of cold, warm, or hot milk, depending on how close to the fire they were placed. In creative lessons, adhesive paper and crayons were the main items used. Even at this early age, tables were taught by rote. The highlight of the week came on Friday afternoons, when Miss McHardy read stories about Brer Rabbit.

As Dorothy moved further up the school, English Grammar was introduced, and Mr. Rhodes also paid particular attention to handwriting. She was frequently in trouble because her writing was considered to be too small. Poems had to be memorised – sometimes selected by the teacher, whilst on other occasions the pupils had a free choice.

Country Dancing was performed on the playground when conditions were dry, although the boys did not participate with much enthusiasm. For the older girls, emphasis was placed on sewing during the handwork lessons, and they were encouraged to design and make summer dresses. They were also taken to Bingham once a week for house craft lessons and Dorothy remembers distinctly having to scrub the wooden tables, using green soap. Ironing, folding table cloths, washing woollens and all manner of domestic duties were taught. These took place in the Old Tithe Barn, which stood in the Rectory Grounds (now the site of The Robert Miles School, off the Market Square).

On hot days, the boys were taken swimming to the River Trent, where they plunged in naked and then dried themselves with their handkerchiefs. Meanwhile, the girls were taken for nature walks. These took place in The Plantation, which was reached by going through 'The Hole in the Wall', on Kirk Hill.

The children were frequently taken across to the Church for services and Dorothy recollects learning the Catechism and other Anglican prayers, although she attended the Methodist Chapel. At Christmas, various firms gave advertising material to the school, which the children were allowed to take home. Special occasions at school were welcomed with enthusiasm. Each year the older children were taken up the Clock Tower on Ascension Day, where they sang appropriate hymns. This was followed by a cricket match on Butt Field, with both boys and girls participating.

Many celebrations in the village involved parades and Miss Fox who lived at East Bridgford Hall (now demolished and the site of Lammas Gardens) allowed the children to choose suitable costumes from her large selection of dressing up clothes. The Flower Show was always an exciting time, the Fair providing welcome entertainment. The annual trip to the seaside, organised by the school for both parents and children, was eagerly awaited each year.

At the age of 11, Dorothy passed the Scholarship examination for West Bridgford Grammar School, receiving a Governor's Special Place. This entitled her to free tuition but transport had to be paid for by her parents. Buses were not very frequent and although school finished at 3.45pm she didn't arrive home until 6.00pm. It wasn't all bad news, however, as she often used to walk into Nottingham and enjoy visiting the shops!



## Hugh Owen Rees 1957-1970

Hugh Owen Rees followed Nelson Rhodes as headmaster commencing duties in 1957. Mr. Rees had been headmaster at the Le Brays School, Calverton, which had recently closed. He lived in the schoolhouse attached to Le Brays and was reluctant to move to the one in East Bridgford, which had traditionally been occupied by the headmaster. After three years standing empty the house was eventually sold by Magdalen College, who owned the property, to Dennis and Ruth Curtis on June 28<sup>th</sup> 1960.

It was during Mr. Rees time as headmaster that the school expanded still further with more building taking place. In January the Hall was completed enabling all functions, including concerts and parties, to now take place at the school instead of in the W.I. Hut or the Village Hall.



On May 4<sup>th</sup> 1965 school re-opened after the Easter Holidays with 298 children on roll. The hall had to be used as a classroom and the need for further accommodation was desperate. Work started in earnest on additional extensions immediately. A section of boundary wall adjoining the Royal Oak was knocked down to enable lorries and bulldozers to gain access to the grounds. Finally in 1966, three new classrooms, a head teacher's room, staff room, staff toilets, stock room and kitchen were added, making conditions for both children and staff more acceptable. It was fortuitous that that land had been available adjacent to the school for these extensions to take place, enabling the buildings to remain on one site. Many schools in surrounding villages were not so fortunate and this meant that they ended up with split sites – not an ideal situation.

Mr. Rees was very involved with the Rural Studies Association in Nottinghamshire and he was instrumental in designing and planning the attractive gardens which form part of the school site. In February 1962, a School Garden Dedication Service and tree planting ceremony was held, the garden being dedicated by the Rector, the Rev. R. McLean, but it was not until June 1964 that the official opening of the garden happened. The Flower Queen (Linda Ellis) was crowned and this was followed by a programme of choral singing, may-pole dancing, country dancing and infant action songs and mime. Among those present were, Mr. Jones, Assistant Director of Education, the Rev. E. Roberts, Diocesan Inspector of Education, Mr M.G. Weeks, Area Education Officer, Dr. S. Fraser, Dr. G. Brooks and the Rector, the Rev. V. Johnson.

During the 1960s the school participated each July in the South Notts School Sports which were held in the grounds of Saxondale Hospital.

The Classification Examinations for Secondary Schools (more commonly known as the 11+) were held each year and these carried on until 1968, when they were finally discontinued. This coincided with the opening of Toothill Comprehensive School in the following year. The 11+ examination had been standardised by the 1944 Education Act. Previously children had been able to take a Common Entrance Examination, which varied, from Authority to Authority.

East Bridgford children who took this exam went to West Bridgford Grammar School on a free scholarship if their pass mark was high enough; otherwise they had to pay. It was possible also to take the examination for Nottingham High School. Dennis Rhodes, the son of the previous head teacher, Nelson Rhodes was the first recorded pupil from St. Peter's School to pass this exam.

Annual Open Days and Prize Days were held each July when prizes were distributed to various pupils and the parents were entertained by the children. It was traditional at this time, also, for the school to be closed each Monday and Tuesday during St. Peter's Feast week.

In 1969 the school received its first television set which was installed in the hall. At a meeting of parents in the same year it was decided to form an official parent's association which would be known as 'The Friends of East Bridgford School' (FOEBS). Over the coming years this organisation was to prove an invaluable asset to the school.

Inspections by the Southwell Diocesan Education Committee took place regularly until 1969. The teaching of Religious Instruction in each class was examined and the morning assemblies for both Junior and Infant children observed. Invariably the Inspectors were pleased with what they saw and heard.

**1963 Junior Worship** – *“this was one of the most reverent and sincere morning assemblies I have had the pleasure of attending. Consisting of hymns and prayers, led by the Headmaster, this provided an excellent opening to the school day. And the quiet atmosphere of worship was wonderfully achieved by the careful and pre-arranged attention to the details of this service by all partaking.”*

**General Remarks** – *“Throughout, this appears to be a very happy school with excellent relationships all round. The children are responding fully to the teaching given and the classes inspected reflect a continuing and developing theme which reaches it's fruition in class 1. An excellent school, fulfilling completely all that one would wish from a Church School.”*

In October 1969 Mr. Rees became ill, and although it was hoped that he would return to School quickly this did not happen and he died in February 1970. Members of staff went to the funeral service, which was held at Calverton Parish Church. A Remembrance Service at St. Peter's Church was attended by both children and staff. Mr. Alan Samuels, the deputy head, remained as acting head until September, when the newly appointed head, Garth Powell, succeeded Mr. Rees.

## Garth Powell 1970 –1994

Garth Powell arrived as headteacher in 1970, moving from Arno Vale Junior School in Woodthorpe, Nottingham, where he had been the deputy-head.

This period, 1970 –1994, saw extensive changes in education, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. The involvement of The Governing Body increased dramatically. Parent Governors were elected for the first time in 1985, joining political nominees and the Foundation Governors, who were appointed by the Church. Governors became more involved with school life and began to have ‘hands on’ experience regarding the curriculum, staff appointments, budgetary matters and building maintenance. They also began to visit the classroom on a regular basis experiencing how learning takes place.

The thriving Parent Teacher Association organised many functions ranging from annual events such as the Garden Party, Christmas Fayre and Barbecue to more adult only social occasions - Wine Tasting, Fashion Shows, Discos, Auction of Promises and a Victorian evening. These were well supported, not only by parents, but also by the whole village community.

The everyday running of the school continued apace. The first major change was the establishment of a central library. This was opened in 1970 by Mrs. Rees in memory of her husband Hugh, who had been the previous head teacher.

References in the school log book during Mr. Goldston’s time referred to open fires and stoves but this changed in January 1972 when gas central heating was installed in the Old Building. The remainder of the school, however, still used solid fuel to fire the boilers and this caused problems during January, February and March because of a miner’s strike. The school was closed for a week because no fuel was available. Power cuts were experienced and it was not possible to provide school lunches due to the fact that the kitchen was all electric. An attempt to use classrooms at R.A.F. Newton was thwarted by the Ministry of Defence in London who refused permission for this to happen. In 1974 another miner’s strike started on February 11<sup>th</sup> and the school log book records that the price of petrol was increased by 8p to 50p per gallon!

A major innovation started in February when parents began to help in school. There was initially some opposition from staff who were apprehensive about having them in the classroom, but once the benefits of their presence had been realised they were welcomed unreservedly. Each year in June, a coffee and gateaux morning was held when all parents who had helped the school in any way were invited as a thank you for their efforts.



April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, saw the County and City Education Authorities amalgamate into one new Authority and St. Peters transferred from the Newark administrative area to Rushcliffe.

Sport played a big part in school life during the latter part of the century, and St. Peters entered many competitions and tournaments. Besides the usual football, cricket and netball, the children played stoolball, table tennis and chess and took part in cross country running and swimming galas. A considerable number reached high standards. Many (both girls and boys) played chess for the County in national competitions, a number of boys represented Nottinghamshire at cricket and two ex-pupils, James Hindson and Stephen Randall, went on to play County cricket. The purchase of a school mini-bus in 1974 enabled the children to be transported to sporting fixtures far more easily.

Internal sports days were keenly competitive and for many years the junior children were divided into four houses – Caltoft, Chaworth, Deyncourt and Scrope – names of old East Bridgford families. Many were disappointed when these were replaced in the 1990s, as part of village history disappeared. Potted Sports were introduced in the early 1970s, which enabled less athletically able children to compete successfully.



Tony Woodcock and Martin O'Neill, two Nottingham Forest footballers living in the village, joined in morning assembly on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1978 and presented to the children various sporting trophies and certificates which had been won during the year. Many parents also attended and the children were very excited at having two of the successful Forest team visit the school. Forest had won the Division 1 championship for the first time in their history during the 1977-1978 season.

Other well known personalities who visited the school during this period were – Bob Wilson, the Arsenal and Scotland goalkeeper who spoke to the parents about his career in football and TV; Derek Randall, Nottinghamshire and England cricketer; Aidan Trimble, World Karate Champion; David Bellamy, Botanist and TV personality; Michael Rosen, Poet; Helen Cresswell, children's authoress; Jim Lees, the foremost authority in the world on Robin Hood; and David Prowse, who played Darth Vader in Star Wars.

Harvest Festival services were held annually and initially the produce was distributed to older village residents. In later years the harvest gifts brought in by the children were taken across to the Church for the Harvest Festival there, before being given to the Canal Street Shelter in Nottingham or a home in Southwell for children with special needs.



Extended school visits and day trips were also part of the educational experiences provided for the pupils. Week long holidays were spent at St. Ives, Dunoon, Swanage, Hastings, Weston-super-Mare, Hathersage, Grange-over-Sands and The Isle of Wight. Day visits to London were made on a number of occasions and other trips included outings to such diverse places as Warwick Castle, Eden Camp, Granada Studios and Twycross Zoo. If it was felt beneficial, visits were also made locally. Frequently parties were also taken to productions at the Nottingham Playhouse, Theatre Royal and Concert Hall.

During the period that Garth Powell was headteacher approximately 35% of the pupils at St. Peters were R.A.F. children and they added an extra dimension to the school. Many were well travelled having been stationed at R.A.F. bases all over the world. The camp at R.A.F. Newton was very supportive of the school and helped in many different ways. The Police Dogs, which were trained and kennelled at the station performed at a number of social events; chefs from the camp always cooked at the annual barbecue whilst the technical section helped with videoing various school functions. On occasions during the winter months one of the hangars was made available for football training.

The school was always invited to special occasions, such as when Princess Anne visited Newton and also when the Red Arrows Display Team gave a demonstration. When a study of the village was taking place the Commanding Officer arranged for aerial photos to be taken which helped enormously with the work being done by the children. Occasionally, open evenings for R.A.F. parents were held at the Community Centre at Newton as some had difficulty in getting to East Bridgford.

School uniform was introduced in 1979 at the request of the parents. The school had previously been reluctant to suggest this because of the expense involved, particularly for the parents at R.A.F. Newton who with their constant moves would have been forced to purchase changes of uniform on a regular basis. However, on a free vote nearly 100% were in favour and a dark and light blue uniform was the eventual choice.

It was also in 1979 that Doris Hand retired as Correspondent to the Managers (Governors), a post she had held for 27 years. Five years later Miss Hand was one of the local residents chosen to receive Maundy money from the Queen at Southwell Minster and she visited the school to show the children the coins she had been given.

In 1985 computers were introduced into school for the first time. Both staff and children showed great interest in this new teaching aid, although everyone was immediately on a steep learning curve.

In May of that year the school took part in a National Domesday Project, which was an up to date version of the original Domesday Book written 900 years ago. A 12 sq kilometre grid around East Bridgford on the local Ordnance Survey Map was allocated to the school and a study was made of land cover and amenities. Twenty computer pages were written on interesting features of the area and the information collected was put together on a computer disc which was then incorporated on to a new highly technical video disc.



In May 1985 the school was numbed by the news of a terrible fire that happened at the Bradford City Football Ground on May 11<sup>th</sup> claiming 53 lives. Tragically, a boy in the 4<sup>th</sup> year, Andrew Fletcher died in the fire along with his father, grandfather and uncle. The Rector, Alan Haydock visited the school and talked to the children, helping them to overcome the shock of this event and their own personal feelings of sorrow. Two magnolia trees and daffodil bulbs were planted in the garden area adjacent to the main school entrance in memory of Andrew. A garden seat was also purchased and placed alongside. Because of the Fletcher family's interest in sport £1000 was donated to the East Bridgford Sports Pavilion Fund from the memorial fund, which had been set up.

St. Peters was a very busy school. Films were shown after school during the winter months and were always well attended. Annual Book Fairs were introduced in 1989. Each year the school participated in the County Road Safety Quiz; invariably doing well. A cycling proficiency course was organised annually for the older children, with most taking part.

Instrumental tuition by outside teachers was made available to any children who were interested. This augmented the recorder, percussion and guitar lessons taught by St. Peter's staff. All this, along with excellent choral work, ensured that music provision was first rate. The wonderful Christmas shows written and produced by Mr. Thomas became legendary attracting as many as 700 people each year during the duration of their runs.

Art and Craft was well catered for, particularly pottery, which was taught by Frances Wood, a retired secondary school teacher. Each year, whilst it was organised entries were made in the Cadbury's National Exhibition of Children's Art. In 1987 the school entry entitled 'Our Village Flower Show' won the Frank Tuckett Award for its outstanding contribution to craft. It was adjudged the best Primary School entry. The children were presented with the award at the Central Hall, Westminster by the Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Many children who attended St. Peters will no doubt still have one of their pottery masterpieces in their house.

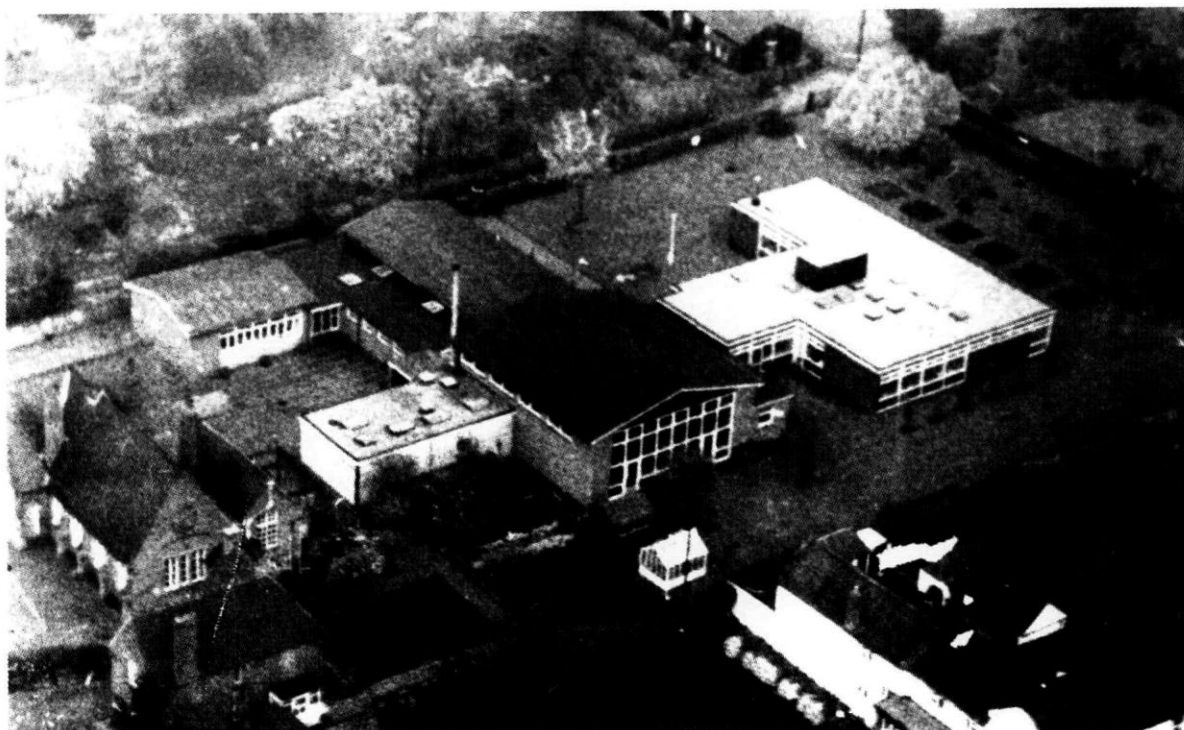
There were other noteworthy educational changes during this time.

- The National Curriculum was introduced in 1988, one of the innovations contained in the Education Reform Act of that year.
- Special Needs Support Assistants were also appointed to help children with disabilities. Indeed a considerable amount of money was spent by the Authority in providing facilities for the disabled.
- In-service training days were introduced, five days being set aside each year for staff to attend school for preparation, practice and study.
- Teacher appraisal began. Head teachers appraised each member of staff, whilst they in turn were appraised by other head teachers and inspectors.
- The use of corporal punishment in school was abolished.

In 1992 an intruder alarm was installed at St. Peters. This coincided with an increase in school burglaries due to the fact that computers and other high cost equipment were often to be found on school premises.

Throughout this period the school never lost sight of the fact that it was a Church of England School and the ties with St. Peter's Church initially begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century continued. Four Rectors were resident during the 24 years that Garth Powell was headteacher – all showing a keen interest in the school and always acting as Chairman of the Governing Body. Assemblies were taken on a regular basis by each Rector and Clergy of other denominations were also frequent visitors.

No one could have foreseen the changes that were to happen during this time and Mr. Powell left St. Peters in July 1994 with many mixed feelings – happy in the knowledge that he had enjoyed his period as head teacher but relieved to escape the constant changes introduced in education by successive governments.



St Peters School as it remained in 2000 following the expansion in the 1960s. The old school is on the left (with the school house below), with the hall and kitchen in the centre of the picture and the new classroom block to the right.

## David Maddison 1994 – Present

When David Maddison was appointed head teacher in 1994 he could have been forgiven if he had thought that innovations and initiatives in education had at least temporarily finished. Not so! If 1970 – 1994 had been a difficult time with many changes, more was to follow, making life for head teachers and staff even more demanding. The National Curriculum was constantly being altered and had to be fully resourced and made educationally effective.



The Government then decided that all children in Primary Schools at the age of 7 and 11 should be subject to Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). In essence these were exams in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Handwriting, Science, and Mental and Formal Mathematics. They are set and marked (in the case of the older children) externally and the results published nationally. They were introduced in the educational year 1995-1996, and in 1996 St. Peters achieved the best results of all the primary Schools in Nottinghamshire, and was included in the Sunday Times top 500 Primary Schools.

Perhaps the most significant educational change in Mr. Maddison's time was the introduction of School Inspections, by the Government's Ofsted Inspectors. Although this only happens about every five years the impact and power of these inspections has helped bring a new rigour and discipline to education. In 1998 when they visited St. Peters they said it was a very good school and recognised all the hard work put in by the head teacher and staff.

On a more local level the school continued to extend its links with the East Bridgford pre-school, which meets in the W.I. Hut. An Early Years Group was formed which enabled children to attend pre-school in the morning, have lunch at school and then enjoy an afternoon learning with other Foundation Stage pupils (4-5 year olds).

The use of computers in the classroom increased dramatically in the last few years of the century and the training requirements for teachers were great. St. Peters was one of the first schools in Nottinghamshire to have a wireless network of laptop computers available to the pupils.

Slightly removed from the classroom but no less important to the life of St. Peters, was the fact that it became the first school in the county to run its own independent meals service. A choice of meals was introduced and village residents were invited in on a regular basis to join the children for lunch. Jeanette Orrey, the school's cook, frequently found herself in the news because of her innovative ideas and in 2001 she became joint National School Cook of the year.

One of the major challenges, which faced David Maddison when he arrived in 1994, was the impending closure of R.A.F. Newton. This had far reaching effects on the school budget, as

funding was based on how many children were on roll. The station closed in 1996 and at a stroke approximately 50 children left, which meant that a teacher had to be made redundant and Mr. Maddison had to teach full time in order to solve the budget deficit. After this crisis the situation stabilised with more houses being built in the village, the airmen's quarters at R.A.F. Newton being sold to private buyers and more children being admitted from outside the immediate catchment area.

Physical changes also took place within the school. The increased administrative workload meant that from inheriting one part-time secretary, Mr. Maddison now needed a full time administrative assistant plus a part-time secretary. Separate rooms were created for the head teacher and secretarial staff to ensure a degree of privacy and confidentiality, particularly when parents were being interviewed.

The structural state of the building left much to be desired, having been badly neglected by the Authority. Extra money provided by the Government, LEA and also from the school budget enabled building improvements and repairs to take place. A gas boiler was also installed, to replace the existing solid fuel one, in the newer part of the building.

An outdoor learning area was provided for the younger children so that the curriculum could be accessed both inside and outside.

Since the extension of the school in the 1950s and 1960s there had always been at least one spare classroom, which over the years had been used for many purposes. In the late nineties it became known as the 'Green Room' because of its green carpet. It was used sometimes in the summer term as a classroom if numbers were high and during the rest of the year for group work in various subjects.

In 1997 it became the home of the Before and After School Club. This allowed parents to drop off their children at 7.45 am and they could remain after school until 6.00 pm. It was also open during school holidays and was very well supported, providing a useful service for the village community. It was run by a management committee of parent users.

The Parent Teacher organisation continued to flourish and made a very useful contribution to school finances. It became known as WASPS (Working Alongside St. Peter's School) and again welcomed support not only from parents but the whole village community. Annual events included a Craft Fair, Dinner Dance and Barbecue, all of which were very well attended.

Music continued to play a large part in school life with outside instrumental tuition being provided by peripatetic tutors. The expertise of the staff was still utilised to the full and the ability of the children was demonstrated in musical productions such as Bugsy Malone, Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Annie and Oliver.

A highlight for the school was their participation in March 1995 at the Royal Concert Hall, in a musical entitled 'Who is this Jesus?'. It had been written by Sue Aldridge, a Nottingham City head teacher and was a co-operative effort by various primary schools to celebrate the life of Jesus.

Hockey and lacrosse were added to the games played at St. Peters and a girls' football team was started. Tennis took place on the local courts and the school paid for some professional coaching for some of the sports. This help resulted in some excellent results at local and regional level.

A major development commenced in September 1996 when the Police became involved in the DARE (Drugs Awareness Resistance Education) Programme. This was a course taken by the older children for 12 weeks, at the end of which they were issued with a certificate. The scheme was supported financially by the Parish Council who felt strongly that all assistance possible should be given to help prevent children being involved with drugs as they became older.

This chapter has been a brief summary of 100 years of education at St. Peter's School. It is the story of staff, children, parents, governors, St. Peter's Church and the village community. Their commitment to achieve the very best for the school has overcome many challenges and changes (both good and bad) and has helped the school to be successful.

Hopefully St. Peters will carry on moving forward and strive for continued success, meeting any future challenges.



Education was taken very seriously in the latter part of the century, but St. Peters School managed to provide more than that. Some of the 'more fun' activities are shown above (clockwise from top left) 'sack race' at the schools sports day (1992), country dancing round the maypole (1992), one of the celebrated school plays and a function for the parents in the school grounds.