

Chudleigh Schools 1833-1870

Community

By 1830 the thriving woollen trade which had sustained the people of Chudleigh for generations had been abandoned. In the past, the lives of the artisans and the professional men of the town had been closely woven into the fabric of the locality. But a new influx of gentry had moved into the town, many of whom had formerly lived in India or the West Indies, and their customs and attitudes tended to create a social divide.¹ The population fluctuated between 2,278 in 1831 and 2,108 in 1861. Schools came and went, particularly the private schools.

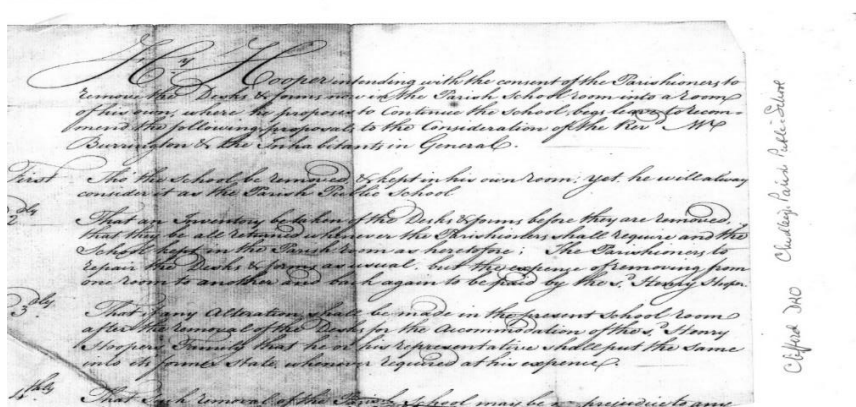
The Church House School

Foundation and Governance

The first school to be recorded was the Church House School, situated in part of the Church House. It contained a schoolroom and is mentioned in a deed of 1597. It is then referred to again in the parish register in 1605 and again in 1657 when the seven men responsible for the management of the affairs of the parish agreed the appointment of Mr William Pollexfen to 'come to keepe school here in Chudleigh.' He was to teach six poor boys of Chudleigh. The seven men 'promised to give him thirteen pounds six shillings and eight pence for the first year, and to repayer the schoolhouse and chamber adjoining in convenient manner'.² It is believed to be the only school in existence until the foundation of the grammar school in 1668. It was overseen by the vicar and churchwardens.

Premises

In 1781 the schoolmaster, Mr William Hooper gained permission to remove the boys from the Church House to a room in his home.



The Church House was never again used for education of the boys. Following the move to the master's house, it is believed that the boys were taught initially at Gidea

¹ Crockett, A, Chudleigh: A Chronicle

² Chudleigh Parish Register

House adjacent to the church and finally at 42 Fore Street, Chudleigh, the home of Mr Flood.³ The Church House was demolished in 1859.



No. 42 Fore Street, Chudleigh

School finances

Fees for the poor boys of the parish were provided principally from an endowment of 10/ per annum, payable out of the estate of Mr Richard Eastchurch. By his will of 14 March 1692 he provided an annual sum to the church wardens for payment to 'such person or persons as should diligently teach four poor children to read the scriptures' and also for the purchase of 'Bibles and other good books' for the benefit of the poor. By 1823 the sum of £10 was paid to the schoolmaster, but no monies were paid for books.⁴ Fees for boys not covered by the parish were paid by their parents. By 1845 the Master no longer received any payment from the churchwardens as children of the poor attended the National School.⁵ Any endowments including Eastchurch's gift of 1692 had been presented to the National School.

Curriculum

Whilst Mr Bond was Master, French was part of the curriculum. An advertisement for Mr Bond's school reads 'Young gentlemen are admitted under very moderate terms; and instructed in every branch necessary to qualify them in the navy, army, or trade'.⁶ But by 1823 the children were taught only reading, writing and arithmetic.⁷

Teachers

In 1775 Mr Henry Hooper was appointed Master followed by Mr William Bond in 1783 who taught nine poor boys together with a number of fee paying boarders and day boys. Like his predecessors he also acted as Vestry Clerk. Mary Jones

³ 1838 tythe map for Chudleigh

⁴ Endowed Charities Return 1909 Parish of Chudleigh, p.6

⁵ Chudleigh Parish Records

⁶ Exeter Flying Post 17.1.1805

⁷ Endowed Charities Return 1905

describes the school as 'one of the best of the description in the county.'⁸ By 1822 he still received a small sum of money from the parish. He was followed by Mr George Flood in 1827. By 1833 the school was known as the Commercial School and both day and boarding pupils were admitted. The Master was appointed by the vicar and churchwardens.

Mr George Flood (Master) was assisted by Sarah Flood (Mistress of the day pupils).⁹ The school continued until Mr Flood retired after a 'lingering illness' shortly before his death in 1858. He is buried in the churchyard and his gravestone records that he was 'Master of the Commercial School for upwards of 30 years'.

Admission criteria – eligibility – and attendances

The 1833 Education enquiry reveals that the school contained from 40 to 60 pupils of both genders (mainly boys) from which an average of nine day boys from the parish of Chudleigh were selected by the vicar and churchwardens.¹⁰

Pynsent's Free Grammar School

Foundation and Governance

John Pynsent, Esq, the founder of the school was born and educated in Chudleigh. He became one of the Prothonotaries of the Court of Common Pleas. In 1667 he negotiated with Sir Thomas Clifford and the leading parishioners of the time to acquire 'part of the sporting place adjacent to the church yard amounting to one acre' for the erection of a school in Chudleigh for the free education of the children of the parish.

The school was duly built to accommodate twenty boys, together with the schoolmaster's house. But as Mary Jones writing in 1852 comments 'the original intention of the founder in reference to his native place do not appear to have met with the success he intended, for comparatively few of the children of the town or parish are educated in this "Free Grammar School". She further comments. 'However, as a classical boarding school, it has at different periods attained considerable celebrity. It is at present in high repute'.¹¹

The endowment was administered by the trustees who had powers to make regulations. They should appoint a 'schoolmaster of good name, manners and teaching and conformable to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England'.

⁸ Jones M, The History of Chudleigh 1852

⁹ Kelly's 1844 Directory

¹⁰ 1833 Education Enquiry

¹¹ Jones, Mary, History of Chudleigh 1852

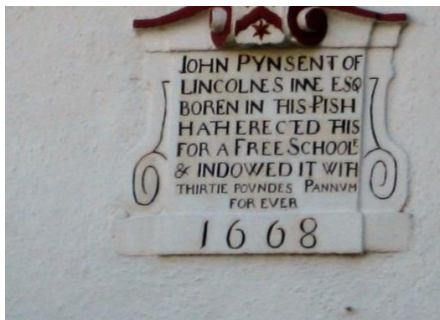
Finances

The schoolmasters were paid £30 per annum for the teaching of the boys out of the endowment bequeathed by John Pinsent. They were responsible for running costs of the school together with the repair of the buildings.

The master's income, other than the endowment of £30 per annum came from the pupil's fees.

Premises

A tablet can still be seen on the front of the building and bears the inscription: 'John Pinsent of Lincoln's Inne, esquire, boren in this Pish hath erected this for a Free School and Endowed it with £30 per annum for ever 1668'. The Rev. Cuming spent a considerable sum of money on repairs to the property on his appointment in 1818. He also built a spacious and lofty schoolroom and dormitory; also a classroom for a second master.¹²



Curriculum

In 1868 the boys studied Latin, Greek, arithmetic, algebra, geography together with dictation.

Masters

1830 Rev. Joseph Cuming.¹³ Curate of Chudleigh Parish. (Resigned 1843)

1844 Rev. Charles E Collins¹⁴ He gained an MA at Exeter College, Oxford in

1839.¹⁵ He was joined in 1846 by a 2nd Master, Mr W A White, BA.; and 3rd Master,

¹² The Report of the Charity Commissioners 1823

¹³ 1830 Pigot's Directory

Mr R S Barnes. Four other teachers were employed; a French Master M. Le Ducⁱ: a Drawing Master : Mr F Tucker; Dancing : Mr Mason, Drill : Sgt Cornish ¹⁶ Rev. Collins resigned in 1850.1851; Rev. George Moyle MA, 2nd Master, Rev. John Leighton, MA. The assistant masters were: Dr Frazer Halle author of 'Letters, historical and botanical relating chiefly to places in the valley of Teign and particularly to Chudleigh, Lustleigh, Canonteign and Bovey Tracey' in 1851. Also Mr Thomas Cayzer who taught the classics and mathematics.¹⁷ In 1861 Mr Alfred Luckman taught Latin and English.¹⁸ Rev. Moyle resigned 1861. 1871 Rev James W Inman MA¹⁹ He gained an MA at Cambridge in 1836. He was also curate of Chudleigh Knighton. He resigned in 1884.

Admissions & Attendances

Whereas the boarders paid a fee for instruction and boarding, the children of the inhabitants of the parish as were recommended by any two of the trustees paid nothing for their instruction. In 1823 at the time of the enquiry by the Charity Commissioners, there were 10 such boys from Chudleigh together with 25 boarders. The boarders paid between 45 and 50 guineas per annum. By 1848 ten of the boarders were natives of France.²⁰

Since the instruction included the Latin and Greek languages, it was considered a necessary qualification that each boy should be able to read before he was admitted. The Master required all his pupils at stated times to read the Bible and to say the catechism of the Church of England. This in effect precluded non conformists from admission.²¹

The 1851 census reveals that out of 27 boarders, 6 boys were born abroad in Calcutta, Bangalore, the Tyrol, and France. It might be that those boys born in the Indian sub-continent had a connection with certain residents in Chudleigh since a number of them were late of the East India Company. 12 boys were born in Devon (but not Chudleigh) and 9 were from other parts of the United Kingdom. The age range of the boys was 11-16 years. It is not known how many boys resident in Chudleigh were in attendance or the number of day boys.

The 1861 census reveals that there were 10 boarders of whom 1 boy was born in Lahore and 1 in Italy. The age range of the boys was from 9 – 14 years. The Charity Commissioners Report of 1867 reveals that there were 19 boys in attendance, 8 boarders and 11 day boys. One of these was a free pupil and five

¹⁴ 1844 Pigot's Directory

¹⁵ Oxford Alumni

¹⁶ Exeter & Plymouth Gazette 2.1.1847

¹⁷ 1851 census records

¹⁸ 1861 census records

¹⁹ 1871 census records

²⁰ Exeter & Plymouth Gazette 12.2.1848

²¹ The Report of the Charity Commissioners 1823

were the master's sons. Fees for a day pupil were £8. 8s. if resident in Chudleigh, £12.12s if living out of the parish.

In 1871 there were 6 boarders, 5 of them children of the headmaster. Three day boys resident in Chudleigh attended the school. They were Leonard Lillies, the son of the medical practitioner, Phillip Ellis, the son of a local land owner and a son of Rev. Doke, the Baptist Minister. This would appear to indicate that those boys who attended the school were of a class above the general 'artisan' class of the town.²² By 1881 three boys from the National School, Chudleigh went on to 'Pinsents' to be 'finished'.²³

Closure

Following a report in 1872 by Mr J Fitch then as assistant Endowed Schools Commissioner, it was recommended that the school be closed but this was opposed in the parish and did not go ahead. However, the school closed finally in 1913 and the premises sold to the last Master, a Mr Mackay Lawrence upon the recommendation of Devon Education Committee.²⁴

Alumni

Major James Rennell, (1742-1830) cartographer and oceanographer²⁵

John Williams,ⁱⁱ major benefactor in early 19th century Chudleigh.²⁶

Charles and Edward Clifton, former pupils of Rev. George Moyle MA erected a plaque in the parish church of Chudleigh in his memory.

St Cyprian's School, Ugbrooke

Foundation and Governance

The school was founded in 1824 by Lady Clifford. The teachers reported to the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh directly.

School Finances

The school was funded principally by Lord Clifford. Payment of school fees was not mandatory and Lord Clifford not only provided medical attention for the children but also clothes for 'Sunday best'. Those parents who could afford to subscribe toward prizes for the pupils did so but for others, the school was free. Lord Clifford subscribed to Joseph Lancaster, the founder of the British & Foreign School Society whose system of teaching was adopted by the school. Examples of how arithmetic should be taught are shown below:

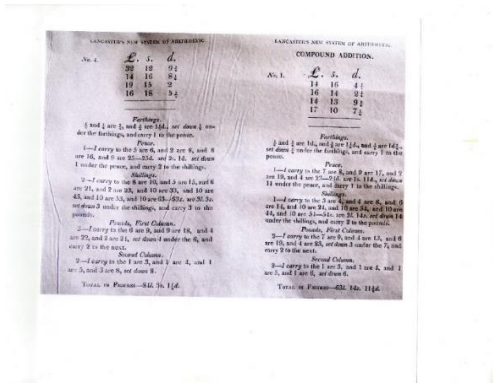
²² 1871 Census records

²³ Endowed Charities Report 1909, parish of Chudleigh, p.16

²⁴ Mid Devon Advertiser 7.9.1912

²⁵ Kumud Biswas, Father of Indian Geography

²⁶ Chudleigh Weekly Express 30.8.1946



Premises

Two schools were formed initially located on part of the Ugbrooke Estate. The boys' schoolroom was located in the presbytery, named Ashwell, and the girls in part of the property known as Biddlecombe. In 1844 an extension was built upon the Biddlecombe property to provide an additional schoolroom for both boys and girls. A footpath was created from Chudleigh for the pupils from the town and it crossed a field and the entrance is shown below.



Former Biddlecombe School, now a private residence

Admission criteria – eligibility – and attendances

Catholic children whose fathers were either tenants, estate workers or tradesmen serving the Clifford family were eligible. In 1833 Ashwell School had ten boys on the register and Biddlecombe 16 girls. In 1843, 25 boys and 33 girls were on the register.

Curriculum

Reading, writing and arithmetic with bible studies and, for the girls, needlework and knitting. Reports to Lord Clifford suggest that the principal subjects concerned religious studies and practical lessons with the emphasis on good behaviour. Teachers used pictures such as that shown below in the study of religious knowledge. Awards were given to the pupils who succeeded in specific prize lessons.



Teachers

Initially Mrs Mary Ann White was Mistress of the boys and Mrs Martha Strowbridge, the Estate Steward's wife was Mistress of the girls. She remained in post for some years, having retired by the time of the 1871 census.²⁷ A Miss Mary Bude was at that time school mistress and lived in the other part of the property.²⁸

The school closed in 1966 by which time it was situated in rooms within a coach house at Ugbrooke. At closure there were only 2 male pupils.

Influence of Patron

Lord Clifford took a keen interest in the progress of the children and received regular reports from the teachers. The address shown below mentions the interest shown by members of the Clifford family, the Honourable Miss Clifford and General Sir Henry Clifford and his family.



Roman Catholic School

²⁷ Ugbrooke Archive, Clifford III4/3a,b,d,e,

²⁸ 1871 census

This school was situated in New Exeter Street and the schoolmaster was a Mr Moore.²⁹

Independent Chapel School, Woodway Street

Foundation and Governance

The Sunday School and the Lancastrian School commenced in 1812 although the day school faltered from time to time. In 1833 the number of pupils was 44 males and 40 females.³⁰ It was run by members of the church. In 1834 an application was made to the British & Foreign Schools Society for a government grant of £170 towards the cost of a new school building estimated at £350. The school was to accommodate 150 boys and girls.³¹ It is believed that the grant went towards the building of new schoolrooms adjacent to the chapel.

Finances

It was established and maintained partly by public subscription and partly by the children's parents who were asked to pay half a guinea annually. For those whose parents could not afford to pay a fee, it was to be free.³²

Admission criteria – eligibility – the attendances

In 1813, 40 fee paying parents had enrolled their children for the day school. Children had to be recommended prior to admission.³³ By 1833 there were 44 males and 49 females in attendance at the Sunday School.³⁴

Teachers

From 1813 Mr Drake

Premises

The first Sunday school in the town was held at the Independent Chapel. The chapel was rebuilt in 1830 and schoolrooms were added later for use as day schools.³⁵

²⁹ Billings Directory 1857

³⁰ 1833 Education Enquiry

³¹ BFSS 1-1-1-1 Minute Books Chudleigh

³² Ugbrooke Archive

³³ Ugbrooke Archive

³⁴ 1833 Education Enquiry

³⁵ The History of Chudleigh by Mary Jones



Former Independent Chapel, now part of Town Hall

Baptist Schools (Heathfield Schools)

Foundation and Governance

In 1841 when Elizabeth Davison, widow of a former Minister at the Independent Chapel died, she left out of her will an endowment for a Baptist School. The endowment was funded from part of the rents from Heathfield Cottage hence the name.³⁶ In 1847, Mrs Ellen Rouse, wife of the Baptist Minister Rev. William Rouse established two schools for boys and girls.³⁷ The schools were governed and supervised by the Minister of the Brookfield Baptist Chapel, the Minister of the Independent Chapel,³⁸ and Mrs Rouse.³⁹

Finances

Rev. W Rouse supported the schools in addition to payments from the pupils' parents.⁴⁰ From a letter of March 1888 sent by the Master to the British Schools Society, we learn that Mr Rouse's income had diminished and he was unable to support the school further. The Master adds 'I fear there is no chance of obtaining subscriptions as there are so few Nonconformists.'⁴¹

Premises

Initially, the day schools were located in a former cooper's workshop in the centre of the town. In 1857 the boys' school was in Clifford Street and the girls and infants remained in Fore Street, possibly the site of the former cooper's workshop. The Sunday school continued in the Independent chapel. In 1879 two new schools were opened by Mrs Ellen Rouse in New Exeter Street adjacent to the manse, (69 New Exeter Street) to provide education for one hundred and sixty children. Mr Mardon of

³⁶ Endowed Charities Order 1909, parish of Chudleigh, p.21

³⁷ The History of Chudleigh by Mary Jones

³⁸ Trust Deed of the Brookfield Baptist Chapel dated 1862

³⁹ The History of Chudleigh by Mary Jones

⁴⁰ The History of Chudleigh by Mary Jones

⁴¹ Letter from Mr. W Bayley dated 3.3.1888

Bovey Tracey won the contract to build the schools at a cost of £400. They were established in the principles of the British Schools Society and became known as the British School.⁴² By 1908 the Local Education Authority was negotiating over the future transfer of the British School. It became a Council School shortly afterwards. The school continued until 1945 when the children were moved to the National School which was extended temporarily.



Former British School, New Exeter Street, later demolished

Admission criteria – eligibility – and attendances

Children (male and female) of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes of the town and parish of Chudleigh.⁴³ Average number of boy scholars in 1857: 40.

Curriculum and the School Day

1862 – reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English Grammar, English history, scripture, and needlework for the girls. The bible was read daily. But since the school was run principally for non-conformists, the School Regulations included a phrase which excluded the learning of the catechism from the curriculum and also confirmed that the children had no obligation ‘to attend any Sunday School or place of worship to which his parent shall on religious grounds object’.

Teachers

1851 – William Taylor, Mrs Charlotte Amey, Miss Mary Truman and Miss Elizabeth Truman

1857 – Boys school : G Dodge, Master, girls School : E Rottenbury, Mistress,
infants school : E Dodge

1861 – George Sparkes, Master of the boys’ school and Louisa Pinsent, Mistress of the girls’ school, and Mary Ann Sparkes, Mistress of the infants school.

1871 – Caleb Tapp was Master of the boys’ school and Elizabeth Humphreys was Mistress of the girls’ school.⁴⁴

⁴² Brookfield Baptist Chapel Trust Deed 1862

⁴³ Endowed Charities Order 1909, Parish of Chudleigh, p.20

⁴⁴ Trade Directories

National School (Bell's School)

Foundation and Governance

A National School, known as 'Bell's School', superseded the old church school which had become a Commercial School. It was founded by the Vestry in circa 1813, but it appears that it may not have been in continuous operation thereafter due to lack of subscribers. It was in evidence again in 1818. However, the school was not in evidence in 1839 possibly due to the fact that the premises was being modernised.⁴⁵

Finances

The school was funded partly by small weekly payments from the children⁴⁶ and also by voluntary contributions including collections from bodies such as the Freemasons.⁴⁷

Premises

The school was established in part of the workhouse in Fore Street which also contained the workhouse schoolroom, which prior to its removal to the Newton Abbot Union workhouse, was run by a Mistress. In 1818 the former dilapidated workhouse was taken down and rebuilt by the parish. In 1839, the property was purchased by John Williams Esq., who converted part of the building into a National school. Mary Jones writes: it 'contains spacious boys, girls and infant schoolrooms, with a committee room and accommodation for the residence of the female teacher.' It was provided free of charge.⁴⁸



Former National School and workhouse, now the Constitutional Club

Admission

In 1833 there were 30 male pupils and 35 females attending the school.⁴⁹
By 1857 there were 66 boys, 40 girls and 40 infants

⁴⁵ Western Times 13.4.1850

⁴⁶ 1833 Education enquiry

⁴⁷ Western Times 24.11.1838

⁴⁸ Jones Mary, The History of Chudleigh

Curriculum

Reading, writing and arithmetic and study of the doctrine of the Church of England.

Teachers

1833 – H Brown, Master; M. Martin, Mistress;

1840 – W Shamler, Master; M Martin, Mistress;

1849 – H Brown, Master, M Martin, Mistress, M Widdicombe,
Infants' Mistress.⁵⁰

New National School (Bell's School)

Foundation and Governance

Although the population in Chudleigh barely changed between 1833 and 1846, the number of children attending the National School almost doubled. In 1847 a request was submitted to the Committee on Council for aid to build a new school. The reason for a new building was given as 'Our present schoolrooms are private Property and are not constructed or arranged to apply for aid towards the payment of the salaries of the Master and Mistresses or pupil teachers or capitation money; they are badly ventilated and ill adapted for the purpose'. The new school was to provide three hundred places. The committee of

promoters for the school were:

Wilmot H Palk, (Vicar)

Chas. N Thomas, (curate) Secretary

Chas. Langley, (Solicitor), Treasurer

George Moyle (Master of Grammar School), Member

John Williams, Member⁵¹

The school was managed by these men together with 7 other members. Members contributed 20s. each towards the funds of the school. Under the Trust Deed, the Master and Mistress of the school were to be members of the Church of England. The main Committee could in effect appoint a ladies' sub-committee to assist them in the visitation and management of the girls and infants schools, appointed annually.⁵²

Finances

The cost of the new school and teacher's furnished accommodation was approximately £1905. This sum was met partially through collections and subscriptions which amounted to £1029. 8s 1d, the principal contribution being received from Sir David Dunn who lived in a substantial house on the edge of the town. The remainder was made up of a grant from the Committee of Council on Education for £799 16s. 0d and another from the National Society for £75.⁵³

⁵⁰ Trade Directories

⁵¹ National Archives ED/103/62 – Cert. (A)

⁵² Church of England Record Centre, NS/7/1/3062 – Assignment & Conveyance

⁵³ Church of England Record Centre, NS/7/1/3062 –Balance sheet

The school relied heavily on subscriptions and these were secured with difficulty. This was possibly due to the fact that the major landholder, Lord Clifford, who was also owner of the rectorial rent charges, was a Roman Catholic. The other large land owners were non-residents.⁵⁴ On one occasion, when the school finances were in deficit and it had been suggested that as a result, the school should become a Board School, the Master at the time, Mr Mabey gave up a portion of his salary.⁵⁵

Premises

The freehold land used for the new school was vested in the Parish trustees, and the leasehold interest was purchased in 1857. The school was built in Bath stone under slated roofs with open fire grates for heating. The school rooms were, boys and girls each 51 feet x 17 feet, and the infants 40 feet x 17 feet. The height of the rooms were 13 feet 6 inches. The classrooms were 18 feet by 14 feet.⁵⁶ The boys and girls schools were opened in 1858 and the infants school two years later.



Former National School, now providing a library and Youth Club venue

Admission Criteria – eligibility – and attendances

From 1857 the school was for the education of children only of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes in the parish. It was conducted according to the principles of the National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the established church.⁵⁷

In 1858 the local newspaper reported on the occasion of the annual school treat on the Play Park in Chudleigh. The article stated that the appearance of the children and their behaviour was 'highly satisfactory and reflected great credit on all who were concerned in their training.'⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid – Application for Aid

⁵⁵ Obituary in Mid Devon Advertiser 1928

⁵⁶ National Archives ED103/62

⁵⁷ Trust Deed dated 16.1.1857

⁵⁸ Weekly Express 1859

The first entry in the new school log book for the year 1859/60 was in July 1859 and it shows Martha Algar, aged 4 years 4 months who started in the 4th class. She lived in New Exeter Street and was a carpenter's daughter.

The name of the first boy entered is that of Alfred Buttress in October 1859. He had attended the former National School for 3 years and 4 months and was now aged 7 years 2 months. He lived in Fore Street and his father was a plumber⁵⁹

By early 1871 the school accommodated 461 children.

Curriculum

Reading, writing and arithmetic and study of the doctrine of the Church of England.

Teachers

1857 – H Brown, Master; M Martin Mistress of girls, Infants' Mistress M Lowry. The master, Henry Brown resigned in 1857 and Miss Mary Martin, the girls' mistress supervised the infants until they moved to the new school in 1860 when she retired.

1861 – Mr Pope, Master replaced by W Rapsey. S Rapsey, girls' mistress'

1866 – J G Mabey, Master, Frances Parr, Mistress; R Lowry, Infants' Mistress.⁶⁰

Ladies Seminary

Foundation and Governance

In 1830 a Miss Clark was running a ladies boarding school. By 1838 this was referred to as a ladies seminary and run by Miss Caroline Bibbings. The 1841 census reveals that this seminary contained 9 young ladies and was located at what is now 6 Fore Street, Chudleigh. Miss Bibbings was in evidence in 1844 and continued under Miss Elizabeth Heath Saunders who was running it, presumably from her home at 6 Old Exeter Street in 1857. By 1858 Miss Saunders had taken up residence at 23 Fore Street. The 1861 census describes her as a principal of a Ladies School⁶¹ and she is listed in Kelly's Devonshire Directory for 1866 as 'Saunders Elizabeth, ladies school & Lodging house'. No reference is made to her school in 1870.⁶²

⁵⁹ DHC School Admission Registers

⁶⁰ Trade directories

⁶¹ Census records

⁶² Morris and Co's Commercial Directory 1870



Miss Saunders' School in Old Exeter Street; now a private residence

A number of other private schools for young ladies were founded and then closed over the period including one run by a Miss Frost in 1835.⁶³

Background Reading

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⁶³ Exeter & Plymouth Gazette 10.1.1835