

# **The Devon Historian**

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## **Early Victorian Schools**



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2019

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## Early Victorian Schools



The Devon History Society has issued this additional volume of  
*The Devon Historian* to mark the 50th anniversary of the  
foundation of the Standing Conference for Devon History,  
which evolved into the present Society.



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## Editorial note

A list of abbreviations used for those bibliographical references which appear in two or more chapters appears at the end of this volume together with notes on the individuals who have contributed the chapters.

# 1

## Introduction and Overview

JULIA NEVILLE and HELEN TURNBULL

*Particular acknowledgment to Brenda Powell for research  
on attitudes to education in the county*

In 2015 the Devon History Society (DHS) set up a research project into early Victorian schools in Devon. Whilst the intention behind the project was to celebrate the jubilee of *Devon Village Schools*, published in 1967 by Roger Sellman, a founder member of the DHS, the project differed from Sellman's in two ways. First, it was open to any member of the Society, and offered those interested, whether from a village or a town, the opportunity to study the history of schools in their own community, and to include all schools, not just elementary. The second major difference was in the time frame chosen. Whereas Sellman's study covered village schools from their earliest foundations through to the 1944 Education Act, the DHS project focused on the period 1833 to 1870—1833 marking the first secular government-sponsored inquiry into educational provision and the first government grants, and 1870 the passing of the Elementary Education Act that committed the government to take steps to provide elementary education for all. The period under study thus concentrated on a time when the government and the voluntary sector, primarily through church foundations, tried to work in partnership, without state compulsion, to increase the availability of elementary education, particularly for the poor.

The first meeting of the research group took place in May 2015, and the research generated was presented at the DHS Annual Conference in October 2017. The Society then invited the group to prepare the essays in this volume for a special fiftieth anniversary themed edition of *The Devon Historian*. Members who participated in the research throughout or at specific points

were Helen Turnbull and Julia Neville, who co-ordinated the work, Elizabeth Andrew, Marcia Babington, Michael Blower, Ann Bond, Jackie Bryon, Ann Claxton, Sue Dymond, Gail Ham, Andrew Jones, Judy Moss, Brenda Powell, Sue Price, Gill Selley, Chris Saunders, and Jan Wood. The group were also provided with information on researches already undertaken by the Chardstock and District Historical Record Society and the Sampford Peverell Society. Dr Bruce Coleman and Dr Rob Freathy of the University of Exeter came to a meeting half way through the project and provided the group with valuable feedback and insights, and Mike Sampson also joined the group to discuss the history of Blundell's, Devon's leading public school. The results of some of the research undertaken as part of the project have been chosen to appear in two national publications.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1.** Case Study Parishes in the Early Victorian Schools Project.

Note: other communities are also referred to in the specialist chapters for pauper schools, lace schools and 'county' schools.

Alfington	Kingsteignton	Throwleigh
Bovey Tracey	Marwood	Tipton St John
Branscombe	Ottery St Mary	Tiverton
Chagford	Pilton	Topsham
Chudleigh	Poltimore and Huxham	West Hill
Dartmouth	Rose Ash	Westleigh
Dunchideock	Shillingford	Widcombe
Exmouth	Sidmouth	Wiggaton
Feniton	Taleford	

Because of the self-selecting nature of the participants the case studies produced do not form a representative sample of Devon communities. As Table 1 shows, they include North Devon villages, Dartmoor and edge-of-Dartmoor towns and villages, a number of East Devon communities, and the town of Dartmouth. However, though they do not include either of Devon's principal urban areas, Exeter or Plymouth (which deserve studies in their own right), they do provide information from a spread of different settlements

<sup>1</sup> Billinge et al., 'Schools for the Poor'; Judy Moss, 'Education in Throwleigh prior to 1877', *History of Education Researcher* (forthcoming).

including small villages and hamlets, market towns, coastal settlements, and also industrial Tiverton. The individual case studies produced by members of the group are available on the DHS website [www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk) in a collection under the Research tab.

The essays in this volume draw on the material researched to provide an analysis of the access children in Devon had to education in the early Victorian period and the way in which this changed over a generation. Although researchers collected material on the topics of foundation and governance, school finances, premises, admission criteria and attendance, curriculum and the school day, and the teachers, these essays focus on how schools were set up in particular areas or for particular groups. The authors are conscious that the project did not cover some other aspects of Devon education, such as the numerous ‘dame schools’, except in the context of lace schools; ragged schools; naval education; technical education; and education for children with special needs.<sup>2</sup>

The context for these studies is both historical – rooted in the social and political background of the period – and historiographical. Devon in the 1830s was a traditional rural county. Most people earned their living from the land: by farming or fishing or in ancillary trades associated with those occupations, such as blacksmithing or boat-building. Farming in early nineteenth-century Devon was not well regarded nationally. The labouring population was extremely poorly paid, often being expected to take part of their wages in the sour cider the farmer could not sell. Leading Devon landowners did, as discussed in Chapter 9, begin to collaborate during the 1840s and 1850s over the introduction locally of improvements to agricultural practice. The largest traditional industry, the manufacture of woollen cloth, declined as new industrial techniques used in factories in the Midlands and the North produced cheaper goods in greater quantities. There was a gradual migration of the population from villages to towns and cities, inside and outside the county, and the population ceased to grow. Communication with metropolitan areas such as London, or even Bristol, was slow, but this changed during the 1840s with the introduction of the Penny Post, the commercial electric telegraph, and, above all, the railway, which arrived in Devon in 1844. This contributed to a change in Devon’s economy. The well-to-do, frustrated at the virtual closure of the Continent to them during the Napoleonic wars, had already discovered the pleasures of Devon’s seaside, and the first coastal

<sup>2</sup> Bill Pratt, *A Visionary Friend: Exeter’s School for the Blind 1838–1965* (Trowbridge: West of England School Association, 2015) is a recent illustration of relevant work on the latter topic.

resorts were developed. Once the railway arrived the middle class came too, changing for ever the character of the old fishing villages.

Remote from London as it was, Devon was affected by all the dramatic changes of the early nineteenth century. It was a time of reform: electoral reform, extending the franchise to more voters; religious reform, breaking the monopoly of the Church of England on state offices; workplace reform, changing the obligations of employers to employees; and social reform, providing new opportunities for those who had not been born into privileged positions. The question of how children should be educated was affected by all these changes, widely discussed and argued over, and eventually, after the Elementary Education Act of 1870, settled firmly on the path to the universal, secular, compulsory and free education system of the twentieth century that would have been hard to imagine fifty years earlier.

Progress on extending the numbers of schools, however, was ‘sluggish and halting’, as Smelser has described it.<sup>3</sup> The need for a legislative framework was not widely accepted. Indeed, the two principal charitable organisations driving the development of schooling, the British and Foreign Schools Society (BFSS) and the National Society for Promoting Religious Education (NS), opposed it. The BFSS was originally founded in 1808 as the Society for Promoting the Lancasterian System for the Education of the Poor, and in 1814 was refounded as the British and Foreign School Society for the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of Every Religious Persuasion. It was based on non-sectarian principles and was supported by nonconformists in particular. The schools it established came to be known as British Schools. The National Society was founded in 1811 as the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales. It was devoted to the teaching of the ‘National Religion’, i.e. Anglicanism, to the poor and promoted the establishment of National Schools.

The principal legislation affecting children in the 1830s and 1840s was driven by two questions not directly part of education policy: how should the employment of children be regulated, and how should poverty be relieved? Both, however, required the establishment of particular forms of schools. The 1833 Factory Act prohibited the employment in cotton mills of children under the age of nine and required children between nine and thirteen to receive two hours of schooling daily. John Heathcoat, MP for Tiverton, as Chapter 5 describes, secured an exemption to this for factories in the lace-making

<sup>3</sup> Neil J. Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 3.

trades, such as his Tiverton enterprise, though in his own Factory School he did voluntarily comply. For the pauper population the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 required Poor Law Unions to provide children with at least three hours a day of schooling, though at other times they were expected to work.

As part of the study Brenda Powell examined attitudes towards the education of the children of the labouring poor, a topic that cropped up regularly in the press, in reports of speeches at agricultural and other meetings, letters and leader articles. Just how much education did a labourer's child need, who should provide it and who should pay for it were hotly debated questions in mid-nineteenth century Devon as elsewhere. Sir Lawrence Palk (squire of the case study communities of Dunchideock and Shillingford) confessed in 1855 that 'the question of education was the most difficult he had ever attempted to grapple with'.<sup>4</sup>

A common view was that children should be educated for the station in life they were called upon to fill, and should not 'be made to be discontented with their lot'. Such views were expressed by Captain Tanner Davy and Mr Daw at a Devon Chamber of Agriculture meeting in North Devon, for example.<sup>5</sup> Most of the farmers quoted agreed that a child should learn to read and write, but were against children staying at school beyond seven or perhaps nine years of age. 'It was impossible to have a good labourer unless he was inured into the hardships of farm life in early years'.<sup>6</sup> They also were opposed to the labourer's son being 'put in front of the farmer's son', by being given a better education.<sup>7</sup> But there were some landowners who were able to appreciate the value of education for all. One such was the noted educationalist Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, who had estates in Devon and Somerset, on both of which he developed schools, and who, as described in Chapter 9, was an ardent advocate of a national examination system as a method of quality assurance. He put the case that education should be about more than training for future employment:

He should be extremely sorry if it went forth to the public, to the employers of labour, the labourers themselves, school masters and ministers of religion that the object which this society aimed at was to make tools and instruments of their labourers and that in their country parishes and their homes they were going to spend time, money and effort – for what? – to convert these poor

<sup>4</sup> *WT*, 3 November 1855. Sir Lawrence Palk, at a meeting of the Newton Agricultural and Labourers' Friendly Society.

<sup>5</sup> *NDJ*, 15 April 1869.

<sup>6</sup> *WT*, 26 October 1869. William Porter, speaking at a ploughing match dinner in East Devon.

<sup>7</sup> *EPG*, 8 November 1855. J. N. Stevenson, at a ploughing match dinner in South Devon.

little half-starved creatures into better tools to make money with. God forbid that this should be the object of agricultural education. Seeing that it was their duty to fit these children for their future station and responsibilities in life, as living beings, husbands, fathers and good faithful servants, was this, he asked, to be accomplished by teaching them to be better diggers, hedgers and drainers?<sup>8</sup>

Anglican clergy were, in general, sympathetic to the provision of schools for labourers' children, although the evidence from the Exeter Diocesan Board discussions, explored in Chapter 2, was that some believed that children in rural Devon did not need education in the same way as those in industrial areas. They were also aware of the difficulties, in a county of scattered settlements, of getting children to school and keeping them there.<sup>9</sup> They lamented the attitude of parents towards education. Revd R. K. Cornish of Landkey, for example, claimed that 'they often found the parents degraded and drunken and unwilling to send their children',<sup>10</sup> and it was also said that the farmers opposed it.<sup>11</sup> Clergy and landowners realised that it could be a sacrifice to allow a boy to be at school when he could be earning three shillings a week to add to the father's wage of seven shillings.<sup>12</sup>

The voice not heard in these reports is that of the labourers themselves. They neither made speeches at meetings nor wrote to the newspapers. A rare occurrence is reported by the Vicar of Buckerell who heard one of his parishioners say after attending night school: 'I used to have to get somebody to write my letters to my son John in the Crimea but now I be thankful to say I can write to 'un myself, and tell all in my mind without anybody else knowing ought about it'.<sup>13</sup> During a period when many young people left their homes to work elsewhere, the ability to read and write, and the Penny Post, helped families like his to stay in touch.

Later during the study period the government did establish three educational commissions which led to legislation and to radical change. The Newcastle Commission, which reported in 1861,<sup>14</sup> led eventually to the 1870

<sup>8</sup> *WT*, 13 December 1864. Sir Thomas Acland, in a speech to the Royal Agricultural Society.

<sup>9</sup> *EPG*, 5 November 1859. Revd T. C. Childs.

<sup>10</sup> *NDJ*, 4 March 1869.

<sup>11</sup> *EPG*, 17 April 1869. Revd H. Bramley, speaking at the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education. Several others supported his statement.

<sup>12</sup> *EPG*, 30 October 1863. Lord Churston, presiding at the Newton Agricultural and Labourers' Friend Society meeting.

<sup>13</sup> *EPG*, 30 November 1860. Letter from Revd Edwin Coleridge.

<sup>14</sup> The Newcastle Commission was set up in 1859 as the Royal Commission on the State of Popular Education in England.

Elementary Education Act; the Clarendon Commission,<sup>15</sup> which reported in 1864, to the 1868 Public Schools Act; and the Taunton Commission<sup>16</sup> (1868) to the 1869 Endowed Schools Acts. By this time the state had assumed the responsibility for developing elementary education.

At the start of the project members undertook a survey of earlier literature on this topic. It came as a surprise to find that, although there are numerous studies on aspects of education in Britain, relatively little has been written in recent years of particular relevance to mid-nineteenth century developments. As one of the most recent historians of educational provision, John Cannon, has written: ‘educational history has remained something of a subdued subject’, and he quotes Brian Simon’s assessment that ‘mainstream historians [look] on this area as a kind of backwoods, under cultivation by mere educationalists’.<sup>17</sup> The group used the help of Derek Gillard’s *Education in England: a history* website and other references gleaned by group members, to identify a cluster of books published in the early 1970s such as Lawson and Silver’s *A Social History of Education in England*; Sutherland’s *Elementary Education in England*; and Simon’s *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure, 1780–1870*.<sup>18</sup> These created a narrative about the development of elementary education in England that has not been superseded. It is reflected, for example, in the National Society’s recent history, *Distinctive and Inclusive: The National Society and Church of England Schools, 1811–2011*, in which Loudén describes how in this period the Society (and the same would be true of the BFSS) focused on training more teachers and increasing the numbers of schools, with the assistance of government grants. Although there was positive progress on both these initiatives, from the moment government grants were made dependent on satisfactory inspection, there was an ‘argument about the impossibility of separating the religious and the secular’ which continued even beyond 1870.<sup>19</sup>

Project members benefitted from the participation of Jan Wood, archivist at the Devon Heritage Centre, who guided members through source material available both locally and nationally. Nationally, the two major collections

<sup>15</sup> The Clarendon Commission or the Royal Commission on the Public Schools was appointed in 1861.

<sup>16</sup> The Schools Inquiry Commission, chaired by Lord Taunton, was established in 1864.

<sup>17</sup> Cannon, *Schooling in England*, i, 1.

<sup>18</sup> John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen, 1973); Brian Simon, *Two Nations and the Educational Structure, 1780–1870* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974); Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Historical Association, 1971).

<sup>19</sup> Loudén, *Distinctive and Inclusive*, 92–93.



of the NS and BFSS provide material about school development, and Parliamentary Papers provide an invaluable resource particularly in the detail of inquiries in Devon.

Most Victorian school histories, such as *Devon Village Schools*, draw illustrative material from school log books. Few of these survive from the period under study, but there remains other local material, chiefly accounts of events and letters in newspapers, but also references in general church and chapel records. Material previously written about early Victorian schools is limited. Sellman's focus was on development after 1870; and Bovett's compendium, *Historical Notes on Devon Schools*, is inadequately referenced. Community historians of an earlier generation have referred to school history, but sometimes make statements which it has not been possible to check.<sup>20</sup> A particularly helpful source for the local context of the development of schools in Devon has been Nicholas Orme's *Unity and Variety; a history of the church in Devon and Cornwall*, containing John Thurmer's chapter, 'The Nineteenth Century: The Church of England', and Bruce Coleman's chapter, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', both of which provided many helpful insights into the religious background that generated so much of the impetus for school development.

The chapters that follow this introduction span the development of elementary schools driven by churches, chapels and their national educational societies; case studies from a sample of localities; schools for paupers; the 'lace schools', a peculiarity of Devon; and schools for the middle classes. Chapter 2 focuses on action by the Church of England within the Diocese of Exeter. The established church dominated most of the case study village communities, but the chapter distinguishes the different character of developments: villages where the squire maintained the old traditions of providing charitable schooling for parishioners; villages where an individual, lay or clerical, put energy and effort into school development; and those where little or nothing was done. The impetus for action given by the Diocesan Board of Education was inadequate to secure uniform provision. In Chapter 3 the friction between and within the established church and religious minorities over elementary education is explored to demonstrate how rivalry between religious sects helped or hindered the development of education for the poor. It demonstrates the scope there was, in market-town Devon in particular, for individuals from a particular denominational background to set up new schools to provide an alternative option.

These two general chapters are followed by a selection of extracts from the

<sup>20</sup> e.g. Mary Stanbrook, *Old Dartmoor Schools*.

case studies, combined in Chapter 4, to demonstrate the range of work. The sections are: Michael Blower's history of educational provision in the North Devon village of Marwood; Sue Price's study of philanthropy in Chagford, considering the commitment of the Hayter-Hames family to education from the late eighteenth century to 'a very satisfactory position' in 1870; and Gail Ham's study of the sorry case of the decline and disappearance of Dartmouth Grammar School. They support the emerging theme of the importance of committed individuals in local communities for the development of school provision. These are followed by a fuller study in Chapter 5 of one remarkable individual, John Heathcoat, portraying the range of the non-sectarian schools he and his family established in and around Tiverton, and the contribution he made to other educational establishments in the town.

The final four chapters deal with the way in which the idea that children should receive an education that fitted them for their place in life was played out in the practicalities of education for different sub-sets of the population. Chapter 6 demonstrates how the general provision for pauper children, revolutionised by the Poor Law Reform Act, led to standards being set by the state for workhouse education, and how, where these were taken seriously, they could lead to criticism that the education provided was 'in advance of that provided for farmers' sons and to the children of the labouring poor educated in charitable establishments'. The emphasis was still on vocational training for work in such trades as tailoring, shoemaking, domestic service and laundry work. A few 'industrial schools' were also established in Devon, including one at Chardstock, set up by the parish priest but later expanded to take on some of those orphaned in the Crimean War. This type of school was echoed by the 'certified schools' of Kenton and in Exeter (later Torquay) where training was offered to young women referred not only by boards of guardians but charities for orphans.

The question of education as preparation for earning a living recurs in Chapter 7 on the East Devon lace schools, which demonstrates how the significance of a few additional weekly pence to a labourer's family made parents reluctant to send girls to school, when they could earn money making lace. Some, at least, of the lace schools sought to offer education, generally in reading and Bible study as well as occupational training. The handmade-lace trade was in decline, however, and this, together with the greater availability of alternative educational provision, had already led to the decline of the lace schools by the 1860s.

In the final two chapters post-elementary education is examined. Chapter 8 considers the general provision of schools for those whose parents could afford to pay fees, but within the specific context of the swift growth in the

number of schools provided to meet demand in new seaside communities. Advertisements provide a glimpse of the sometimes ephemeral nature of provision and the adjustments schools made to their curricula as fashions in education changed. Chapter 9 looks at the pioneering attempt to provide middle class education for farmers' sons through the Devon County School established at West Buckland and the similar East Devon establishment at Sampford Peverell. The efforts of Revd John Brereton, in partnership with members of the Fortescue family, local aristocratic leaders, made this a model the Schools Inquiry Commission commended. Though the recommendations of the Taunton Commission about general secondary education were not followed, it can be argued that the success of these 'county schools' influenced the development of county secondary education over the next fifty years.

Smelser's description of progress in this period as 'slow and halting' has already been cited. Was this true of rural Devon, and was what happened there distinct from what happened elsewhere? A substantial piece of work on schools in Norfolk was published in 2013 by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group.<sup>21</sup> This, as the authors and their title suggest, focuses on the school buildings themselves, and covers a longer time-period than the Devon study. Their general conclusions, however, are that in Norfolk, the tradition of rural conservatism, the influence of landowners and the established church 'provided the ideal ground for the creation of church-funded schools' in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> The two other features of the period they note are the challenge of the importance of the earnings from child labour, and a pattern of non-sectarian provision dominated in urban areas by the strong presence of well-off independent thinkers and their influence in the British Schools' movement, whilst poorer nonconformist independent congregations in rural communities found it difficult to establish and sustain schools.<sup>23</sup> The Devon studies demonstrate a more nuanced picture: schools could serve small and scattered communities like those around Widecombe; and the focus of Bible Christians on schooling as part of their congregational practice (described in the Throwleigh case study) demonstrates the priority they gave to education. Sarah Villiers, in her survey of village schools in Somerset, suggests that the earliest schools were established along the major roads, and also that in villages where the patron of the living was a corporation, school

<sup>21</sup> Adam Longcroft and Susanna Wade-Martin (eds.), *Building an Education: An Historical and Architectural Study of Rural Schools and Schooling in Norfolk, c.1800–1944* (Norwich: Norfolk Historic Buildings Group, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–13.

foundation was slower.<sup>24</sup> The Devon studies do not specifically corroborate the link with major roads but confirm, particularly in the East Devon and Chagford studies, the importance of the patron of a living.

The Devon studies indicate that the county's geography, though challenging, is not the most potent explanation for why schools developed in some communities but not in others. As might be expected when provision was dependent on voluntary organisations, much of the innovation was driven by local champions. This was also true in the private sector. The West Buckland school would probably not have been created without Brereton (Chapter 9), and in Exmouth Drewe and Sharland (Chapter 8) demonstrate the drive to expand their private schools. However, for the children in a poor community, the presence or absence of such an individual could mean a major difference to their chances in life. The case studies show a range of individuals, lay and clergy, male and female, who took a leading role in school foundations in the years between 1833 and 1870. Some seem to have done this from a sense of duty, like the Revd Edward Southcomb in Rose Ash, and subsequently to have stepped back; others like Sir John Kennaway of Escot, made multiple foundations and encouraged their neighbours to do the same (Chapter 2). Some individuals, like Miss Pidsley of Woodbury Salterton (Chapter 7) were wealthy; others, like Miss Croker of Bovey Tracey (Chapter 3) were not, but managed to secure support from others. The most effective champions were those who could not only convince others that a school was needed, but seize opportunities for gathering resources to create it and then manage the sometimes fractious relationships amongst all parties until the school came into existence.<sup>25</sup> Their presence or absence helped secure provision in the communities in which they lived or were interested, but for children in other places there could be little or no provision, a Sunday school or a 'dame school'. John Heathcoat provides a true example of such an entrepreneur in Tiverton. Evidence of the lack of equal opportunity for children across the country caused by this haphazard pattern was to become the major driver for state provision. What had begun as an initiative to help children submit to their 'station in life' had now become an imperative to open up new opportunities.

<sup>24</sup> Sarah Villiers, *Village Schooling in Somerset: Learn 'em Hard* (Wellington: Ryelands, 2012), 213-14.

<sup>25</sup> For further discussion of this point see Billinge et al., 'Schools for the Poor'.



## 2

# Patrons and Parsons: the development of elementary education in rural Devon parishes, 1833–1870

JULIA NEVILLE

*Case studies provided by Mike Blower, Ann Claxton, Sue Dymond, Andrew Jones, Judith Moss, Julia Neville, Brenda Powell and Jan Wood. Particular thanks are due to the late Chris Saunders of Ottery St Mary Heritage Society for his contribution to the section on Ottery St Mary and its tithings*

This chapter explores in detail the work of the Church of England to promote the establishment and development of day schools in rural communities in Devon, using 18 small village communities which were the subject of study by the research group. It demonstrates a contrast between enthusiasm and apathy that resulted in a particularly uneven development of educational opportunities for the generation of children born between 1830 and 1865.

### The National Context<sup>1</sup>

Intense interest in education in the early nineteenth century led to a number of nationwide or diocesan enquiries of parishes about the education available to the labouring poor, and its uptake. It also prompted the establishment of the National Society for Religious Education (Anglican) and the British and Foreign Schools Society (non-denominational) which took voluntary action to increase educational opportunities. Education continued to be debated in parliamentary circles and the first allocation of government funds for

<sup>1</sup> This section is based on Loudon, *Distinctive and Inclusive*, Chapters Two and Three.

grants for schools, to be administered by the two societies named above, was made in 1833. There was no systematic plan for how these funds should be allocated, although there was general guidance that the priority was to create schools in large urban areas. Dissatisfaction on all counts with this method of state investment led in 1839 to a more formal scheme for making grants to be set up under the aegis of a Committee of the Privy Council for Education. The Council, composed exclusively of lay members, instituted a new regime of application and inspection on which grants were dependent. The encroachment of the state was opposed by the National Society but gradually became accepted, though with significant debate and controversy in the 1850s. The unevenness of development led finally to the establishment of compulsory education for children between five and twelve years old, brought in by the Elementary Education Act 1870.

### The Devon Village Case Studies

The baseline selected for the present project was the schedule of responses to a Parliamentary enquiry established in 1833,<sup>2</sup> the first to be conducted by lay officials (the overseers) rather than parish clergy. This was also the baseline that Roger Sellman, author of *Devon Village Schools in the Nineteenth Century*, selected, arguing that this was ‘the beginning, however tentative at first, of state involvement’,<sup>3</sup> and because the Parliamentary returns provide almost comprehensive coverage, with only the parishes of Dolton, Rousdon and Hacombe missing.<sup>4</sup> Comparison of the responses made to this enquiry with information such as the earlier 1818 Parliamentary enquiry,<sup>5</sup> Charity Commissioners’ reports of various dates, local enquiries made at the Bishop’s visitations<sup>6</sup> and the enquiries and inspections of the National Society<sup>7</sup> were also included by researchers, even if sometimes their content raised questions rather than provided answers. The original clerks who summarized the responses to the 1833 enquiry for Devon also puzzled over the information they had found. They were unable to reconcile the 1833 and 1818 figures with any certainty, although they found that there was undoubtedly a substantial

<sup>2</sup> 1833 Enquiry.

<sup>3</sup> Roger R. Sellman, *Public Elementary Education in Rural Devon, 1833–1903: The Locality and the State*, PhD Thesis, University of Exeter. Copy held at Devon Heritage Centre, DHC sx370/DEV/SEL.

<sup>4</sup> 1833 Enquiry, Summary for Devon, 215

<sup>5</sup> 1818 Education of the Poor.

<sup>6</sup> Such as those published in *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821*.

<sup>7</sup> For the background to these see Loudon, *Distinctive and Inclusive*, 27–8.

**Table 1.** Case Study Villages referred to in this chapter.

The population figures and types of school are taken from the 1833 Enquiry (pp. 168-215). The town of Ottery St. Mary includes the surrounding villages of Alfington, Fluxton, Taleford, Tipton St John and Wiggaton, known as tithings.

PARISH/VILLAGE	POPULATION	SCHOOLS
Branscombe	829	Two Sunday Schools
Dunchideock	182	One Daily School
Feniton	343	One Daily School One Preparatory Boarding School
Huxham	153	One Daily School
Marwood	944	Nine Daily Schools School of Industry Two Sunday Schools
Ottery St Mary	3,849	One Infant School Five Daily Schools Four Day and Boarding Schools Two Day and Sunday Schools Three Sunday Schools
Poltimore	292	One Daily School commenced 1832
Rose Ash	407	Two Daily Schools
Shillingford St George	89	One Day and Sunday School
Talaton (including Escot)	479	One Daily School One Day and Sunday School
Throwleigh	460	No school in this parish
Westleigh (Leigh West)	484	Two Daily Schools One Sunday School
Widcombe-in-the-Moor (including Leusdon)	959	Four Daily Schools One Sunday School

net increase of about 664 infant and day schools.<sup>8</sup> The clerks also wrestled to make sense of apparent changes to school funding in the county summary for Devon. ‘The maintenance of schools’, they reported, ‘presents details incapable of exact classification’.<sup>9</sup> Evidence drawn from enquiries like these, where the questions lacked definition, needs to be used with some caution.

<sup>8</sup> 1833 *Enquiry*, 214-15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.



**Table 2.** Sources of funding for village schools as shown in the 1833 Enquiry.

VILLAGE	ENDOWED	SUBSCRIPTIONS	DIRECT PAYMENTS
Dunchideock		Supported by charity	
Feniton			Both at the expense of the parents
Huxham			Paid for by the parents
Marwood	One partly supported by bequest	School of Industry supported by voluntary contributions	One partly paid for by parents, five wholly supported by parents
Poltimore		Supported by subscription	
Rose Ash	Two partly supported by bequest		Partly paid for by parents
Shillingford St George		Partly supported by subscription	Penny weekly payments
Talaton, including Escot			Paid for by parents
Westleigh (Leigh West)			Paid for by parents
Widcombe-in-the-Moor		Supported by subscriptions (3)	Paid for by parents (1)

Sellman's *Devon Village Schools* was based on the extensive work that he had done for his PhD thesis, *Public Elementary Education in Rural Devon, 1833–1903: The Locality and the State*.<sup>10</sup> In the thesis Sellman defines a 'village' as a place with a population no greater than 2,000, but this chapter concentrates on the much smaller villages, those with under 1,000 population, which comprised much of rural Devon, and where there were particular challenges in assembling the financial resources to build a school, maintain it and pay a school teacher. The case studies meeting these criteria cover the villages shown in Table 1.

Sellman classified the pre-1833 schools by source of funding, dividing them into those that were endowed; those supported by subscriptions; those funded from parish funds; and those where parents paid directly. As Table 2 shows, the principal form of funding in 1833 was payment by parents. No schools were maintained from parish funds, and few had received bequests for the

<sup>10</sup> Sellman, *Public Elementary Education*, 1.

purposes of education. This pattern was maintained throughout the period 1833-1870, although support to build and equip schools was sometimes achieved through the provision of grants either nationally or from the diocese.

### The Exeter Diocesan Board of Education

In 1833, the parishes of Devon (with one or two extra-parochial exceptions) lay within the Diocese of Exeter. The recently-appointed Bishop, Henry Philpotts, was not a particularly prominent advocate of extending education to the labouring poor. He did, however, make a significant contribution to the engagement of the clergy in parish life, chiefly by his opposition to appointing non-resident parsons. This brought the incumbents into closer contact with their parishioners and afforded greater opportunities for them to become involved in the establishment and management of parish schools. In addition Philpotts acknowledged the pressure from the National Society and from his clergy to set up a Diocesan Board of Education. Such boards had been envisaged by the National Society from the beginning of its existence, but Exeter did not create one until 1839.<sup>11</sup>

Nominally from 1839, when the Diocesan Board of Education was set up, there was a supervisory mechanism for monitoring progress towards the goal of an Anglican school for every parish. In practice this function was devolved to local diocesan boards, each headed by the appropriate archdeacon. The reports of these local boards do not survive, and indeed it seems that these were not always presented in time for their contents to be incorporated in the formal annual reports, which are the only documents to have been archived. Progress was also monitored by the National Society: for example, according to Sellman, their records state that in 1846–47 there were 111 rural schools in Devon attached to the National Society, and 111 rural schools in union with the Diocesan Board of Education, but only 53 belonged in both categories.<sup>12</sup>

The speakers at the initial meeting of the Exeter Diocesan Board convey the degree of support its foundation attracted. The Bishop presided and, when he left, his place was taken by Lord Clinton. Speeches in support of the proposals were given by members of Devon's leading families, the Earl of Devon, Thomas Dyke Acland, Henry Stafford Northcote and Samuel Trehawke Kekewich.<sup>13</sup> The objectives of the Board were also set out at the first meeting – to create a Diocesan Training School for teachers; to bring existing

<sup>11</sup> Loudon, *Distinctive and Inclusive*, 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> Sellman, *Public development of education*, 47.

<sup>13</sup> EPG, 12 January 1839, 2.

schools ‘into union’ with the Diocesan Board;<sup>14</sup> and to develop schools of good quality for the middle classes.<sup>15</sup> There was no reference to increasing school provision in rural areas. Indeed, Earl Devon, the county’s senior peer, is reported to have re-emphasised at the inaugural meeting that, as far as elementary schools were concerned, the priority was to make existing schools ‘more effective for their object’.<sup>16</sup> This was to be achieved by the process of bringing them ‘into union with the Board’.

At the second Annual General Meeting, held in December 1840, the Board received a report of an enquiry conducted by two local clergymen. This stated that the Board should look for education of a ‘more simple and elementary kind, applied to large numbers, where the curriculum would be more exclusively religious and demonstrate a greater connection between the school and the parish’.<sup>17</sup> The emphasis on ‘large numbers’ suggested urban areas were to be a priority, as they were nationally. The report distinguished the needs of children in Devon from those in the north of England, of which they wrote that it was a place where ‘the intellects of men are sharpened by continual collision, and a considerable intellectual effort is required in the daily business of life’. There, they felt, ‘education may be carried far beyond the point to which we should deem it advisable to carry it out in our national and parochial schools’.<sup>18</sup> By ‘more exclusively religious’ they meant not only placing the catechism and the scriptures at the core of the curriculum, but allowing them to pervade other aspects of teaching, for example teaching the geography of Palestine instead of that of Europe. The Second Annual Report did, however, try to encourage landowner action to increase the numbers of schools by quoting approvingly from the report of the Diocese of Chester the statement that

it is hoped that the proprietors of landed estates will see the duty of caring for their tenantry and that possessors of personal property will literally divide a portion of their wealth to furnish a concentrated population with that wisdom which, at once, adds to the general well-being and individual happiness.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Bringing schools ‘into union’ meant that the Bible and catechism should be the basis of teaching; that the teacher should be a communicant; that the children should attend Divine service; that books used should be approved; and that the parish priest and diocesan inspectors should be permitted to visit.

<sup>15</sup> *Report of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1839), 2, hereafter referred to as the *Exeter Diocesan Board*.

<sup>16</sup> WT, 12 January 1839, 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1840), 20.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

### Development in rural parishes and the tithings around Ottery St Mary

Almost inevitably, given that the diocese of Exeter covered the whole of Devon and Cornwall, the day-to-day organisation of its work related to local parishes was delegated to the local boards. In the Archdeaconry of Exeter, for example, there were boards in Exeter, Honiton, Tiverton and Crediton.<sup>20</sup> This meant that work proceeded at a different pace in different areas, driven, it seems, by the enthusiasm of individuals. Not all boards were successfully established: by 1847 it is clear that the Board in Plymouth (covering the Three Towns) was inactive as no inspections had taken place there, there were no fixed dates for meetings, and no lists of subscriptions.<sup>21</sup>

The Honiton Board, however, was more active, and the work its members supported in and around the parish of Ottery St Mary was particularly noted by the Diocesan Board in the report for 1846 which stated that ‘the progress made in the parish of Ottery St Mary towards bringing the population



**Figure 1.** Sir John Kennaway, 2nd Baronet, 1797–1873  
(by kind permission of A. J. Smyth).

<sup>20</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1839), 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1847), 19, 31.

under church instruction was stated to be indeed extraordinary'.<sup>22</sup> Much of the credit for this must be given to Sir John Kennaway II, lord of the manor of Ottery St Mary, major East Devon landholder and substantial donor to church charities. He was a Vice-President of the Diocesan Board of Education from its inauguration, and paid an annual subscription of two guineas to their work plus two guineas to the local board of which he was a member from its foundation in May 1839.

The parish of Ottery St Mary was substantially provided with schools in 1833 (see Table 1) but these were almost entirely within the township itself. The 1833 enquiry referred to two of the schools, however, as being founded in 1832 and wholly maintained by Sir John Kennaway I (father of the Sir John Kennaway referred to earlier).<sup>23</sup> One of these schools is likely to have been that in the tithing of Wiggaton, where Sir John adapted an existing building and purchased a cottage to make provision.<sup>24</sup> Sir John I had also founded a school in Taleford, the parish that covered his own seat of Escot, probably in 1832.<sup>25</sup>

Sir John Kennaway II followed his father's example: he provided schools for the population in the tithings, and in neighbouring villages such as Feniton, so that young scholars had no need to walk into Ottery for their school. He also engaged the support of members of other local landowning families such as the Coleridges and Pattesons in founding schools themselves. As local board papers have not been preserved, what happened has been reconstructed from local newspapers and directory entries. The initiative undertaken by Sir John II and his collaborators is shown in Table 3. The initiative to redevelop schools went hand in hand with the provision of new churches, built for Tipton and Alington and later (1863) at West Hill.

Not all the areas within the remit of the Honiton Board were as active, however. Branscombe, although a relatively large parish, provides a complete contrast. The only schools referred to on the 1833 return are two Sunday Schools.<sup>26</sup> These may be identified with the 'two parochial schools' referred to in the Diocesan Board's Annual Report in 1840, which also recorded four

<sup>22</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1846), 21.

<sup>23</sup> *1833 Enquiry*, 196.

<sup>24</sup> Chris Saunders, *The Schools of Ottery St Mary Parish between 1830 and 1870*, 10. Available on Devon History Society website at <https://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/research/>

<sup>25</sup> Dated by reference to the Escot Estate Account books for 1832 when provision was made for bricks, timber and windows. See Saunders, *The Schools of Ottery St Mary*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> *1833 Enquiry*, 173.

**Table 3.** School Foundations in the Ottery St Mary area, 1840–9.

DATE	LOCATION	FOUNDATION	LEAD
1840–1	Tipton St John	Church and school	Kennaway
1843	West Hill (Fluxton)	School (national)	Kennaway
1844	Feniton	School (national)	Kennaway/Patteson
1845	Wiggaton	School transferred to Vicar of Ottery	Coleridge/Patteson
1849	Alfington	Church and school	Coleridge

*Note:* the earliest reference to the school at West Hill (Fluxton) is on the Tithe Apportionment. The date of the foundation at Feniton is uncertain: there is a strong local tradition that it was founded in 1844 by Miss Patteson, but the National Society was unable to confirm this date and no other reference has been found. There had been an earlier school under Feniton's controversial Rector, Revd H. Head.

dame schools.<sup>27</sup> There is a reference in an 1857 directory to the fact that at Branscombe 'a National School is under consideration' but, if so, it was never established.<sup>28</sup> The parson seems to have been uninterested in education, and neither he nor any of the local landowners took the initiative to establish such a school, though numbers of children recorded as scholars in the 1851 and 1861 censuses and oral history testimony show that some education was taking place.<sup>29</sup> The first Board school was not opened in Branscombe until 1878, long after the 1870 Act.

### Developments in other case study villages

Where there was an active individual like Sir John Kennaway, provision was made, grants were obtained and neighbours like the Pattesons and Coleridges inspired to follow suit. This was unusual, although the ecclesiastical process of founding new schools and churches and indeed of creating new parishes to serve dispersed populations in the nineteenth century led to a similar

<sup>27</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1840), 55.

<sup>28</sup> *M. Billing's Directory and Gazetteer of the county of Devonshire* (Birmingham: Martin Billing, 1857), 151.

<sup>29</sup> Interviews with Horace Pike (1998) and Lily Gush (2006), recorded for the Branscombe Project, referring to their parents' experience of schools in Branscombe in the 1860s to 1870s. Information provided by Sue Dymond.

initiative in the large and scattered parish of Widecombe-in-the-Moor. The Widecombe and Dartmoor Schools Charity had been founded in 1796 and provided support for a number of small schools.<sup>30</sup> The 1833 Enquiry identified four daily schools in the parish, one of which, Dunstone, had just been founded.<sup>31</sup> The others were probably those in Widecombe town and in the villages of Ponsworthy and Poundsgate.<sup>32</sup> The Local Board of Education did not think highly of the quality of these schools, assessing them in 1840 as '3 Dames Schools' and '2 Writing Schools', none in union with the Diocese.<sup>33</sup>

A further school, a National School, was built at Leusdon in 1854.<sup>34</sup> Built and supported by a Mrs Larpent, who seems to have taken Leusdon House on her widowhood, this became the 'flagship of the parish'.<sup>35</sup> The separation of Leusdon from Widecombe as a new parish in 1864 compelled the vicar and parishioners of Widecombe to upgrade their school in Widecombe to a National School. The small school at Dunstone appears, according to the parish accounts, also to have been closed at this date.<sup>36</sup> Quality rather than quantity of provision was now seen as the determining factor in decision-making.

In the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple there were nominally three Local Boards of Education: Barnstaple, South Molton, and Torrington. The Barnstaple Board obtained from the National Society the services of an organising master, Mr Tearle, to support the local boards. Tearle worked first in Liskeard in 1845-46 and then moved to Barnstaple in 1847, where it was claimed that 'there is hardly a parish without its school and superintended, more or less, by the clergyman'.<sup>37</sup> In the case study village of Westleigh the school had already been inspected by the Diocesan Inspector in 1841, and in 1842 was shown as one of the first to move to union with the Diocesan Board.<sup>38</sup> The enthusiasm for education did not disappear. In the study

<sup>30</sup> Stanbrook, *Old Dartmoor Schools*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> *1833 Enquiry*, 215.

<sup>32</sup> NS/7/7/1/1.

<sup>33</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1840), 39.

<sup>34</sup> TNA ED49/1615. Educational Endowment file for Leusdon.

<sup>35</sup> Ann Claxton, *Report On Early Victorian Schools in the Parish of Widecombe in the Moor, Devon. 1833 to 1870*. 16. Available on-line at <https://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/research/>

<sup>36</sup> DHC 2955A/PF/1. Widecombe and Dartmoor Charity Schools Account book, 1796-1875.

<sup>37</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1845), 12; *8<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1847), 19.

<sup>38</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1840), 48; *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1842), 26.



parish of Marwood a new National School was founded in 1857. An earlier endowment had proved inadequate to the needs of a growing population, and the recently-appointed Rector, Frederick Collison, opened discussions with the local Board, seeking a preliminary expression of their support, in 1855.<sup>39</sup> He subsequently submitted his costings for the project, noting that he proposed to convey a portion of the glebe to the Archdeacon for the site of the school, and that he had also applied for a grant from the National Society.<sup>40</sup> By a combination of funds from different sources he succeeded in building the school, which was opened in 1857.

The Torrington Board seems never to have been fully functional, and that at South Molton lapsed before 1847.<sup>41</sup> The case study parish of Rose Ash, in the South Molton area, in 1833 had two daily schools, one of which received funding divided between an endowment that covered the costs of six children, a further six were paid for by charitable contributions from the clergyman and parishioners, and parental payments were made for twelve more.<sup>42</sup> The Diocesan Board's Annual Report in 1840, however, noted Rose Ash as without a school.<sup>43</sup> Possibly the 1833 schools were both in abeyance. Here the Revd Edmund J. Southcomb built a schoolhouse in 1845–47. This was apparently supported by a grant from the National Society as Sellman refers to the Committee of the Council of Education report of 1848 stating that the school is 'only lately established'. The Committee also noted that the Rector had only guaranteed the salary of the master for a single year.<sup>44</sup>

Rose Ash appears likely to have been one of the parishes which led to the cautious expression, quoted above, of a North Devon school being superintended 'more or less' by the clergyman. Edmund Southcomb was succeeded in 1854 by another member of the family, J. L. H. Southcomb, and it appears that leadership in school matters then passed to a local layman, John Tanner Davy, a yeoman keen to improve his social standing. As well as chairing the school managers he sought and obtained positions as a local

<sup>39</sup> NDRO B6Z/11/2/3. Letter dated 21 October 1855.

<sup>40</sup> NDRO B6Z/19/1. Letter dated 19 April 1856.

<sup>41</sup> EPG, 27 February 1847, 4. The Archdeacon referred to 'the extinction of the local board at South Molton' at the Annual General Meeting in February 1847, when lamenting the similar but more recent cessation of the Three Towns Board.

<sup>42</sup> 1833 *Enquiry*, 202.

<sup>43</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1840), 66.

<sup>44</sup> Roger R. Sellman, *Early Devon Schools: evidence from published & unpublished sources*, unpublished, 1984, 123. Copy held at Devon Heritage Centre, DHC sx372/DEV/SEL.



JP and as lieutenant-colonel in the militia.<sup>45</sup> By the middle of the 1860s the Rector was no longer a subscriber.<sup>46</sup>

The case study of Throwleigh illustrates a rather different issue related to the involvement of the parish clergyman. It demonstrates the difficulties that could arise for the parson in a parish where parochial duties had been neglected. The 1833 Enquiry recorded no school at Throwleigh.<sup>47</sup> The Bible Christians, members of a dissenter sect that had originated on the edge of Dartmoor, had spread in this part of central Devon. A chapel had been established at nearby Providence and Richard Gay, a major local landowner, was a leading figure and teacher to the congregation. Successive rectors of Throwleigh tried and failed to get support from the Anglican congregation, and from the National Society, in order to supplement their own resources and fund a school. The diocese did offer them a grant-in-aid of £5 to assist their funds as a poor parish, but there was never enough to establish a separate school and classes continued to be held in the Rectory.<sup>48</sup> The case of Throwleigh also illustrates the fact that the diocese did make use where possible of other sources of funds. One such was the Betton Charity, a legacy derived from the estate of Thomas Betton, a London merchant and ironmonger, administered by the Company of Ironmongers. Grants, usually of £5, were made in 1865 to 35 Devon parishes in the Diocese of Exeter.<sup>49</sup> Throwleigh was the only case study parish to benefit.

The difficulties of securing the establishment of parish schools during this period of voluntarism were compounded by lack of support for their maintenance. Sellman noted that the Committee for the Council of Education made grants to schools at Butterleigh, Colyton and Exbourne, all of which subsequently failed.<sup>50</sup> Various causes of failure might be identified. It was reported in 1848 that ‘the distress prevailing during the past year has made labourers unable to pay for the instruction of their children’.<sup>51</sup> The district of Okehampton was noted in the 1851 Annual Report as having a ‘state of education’ which ‘does not advance’ as well as in other parts of the county. The ‘great practical evils’ suggested as a cause were ‘irregularity of attendance

<sup>45</sup> DHC 47/3/4/30. Miscellaneous Records of Rose Ash School.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Jones, *Victorian North Devon: A Social History* (Devon: author, 2010), 352.

<sup>47</sup> 1833 *Enquiry*, 173.

<sup>48</sup> For a more detailed report see Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’; *Exeter Diocesan Board, 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1861), 5.

<sup>49</sup> 1868 *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol 21, Tables*, 654-55. Available online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=kDYIAAAAQAAJ&cdq>

<sup>50</sup> Sellman, *Early Devon Schools*, 106.

<sup>51</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1847), 5.

and the early removal of children'.<sup>52</sup> It was not merely those in positions of authority who needed to be convinced to establish a school; parents needed also to be persuaded of its value.

There was also a group of villages where the introduction of the opportunity to obtain grants either nationally or from the diocese seems never to have influenced the provision of schools. Predominantly these were villages with what Sellman termed 'squirearchic patronage' where one landowner dominated the parish.<sup>53</sup> In Dunchideock, a village prevailed over by the Palk family, the day school was reported in 1833 as 'supported by charity', the funding coming from Lady Palk.<sup>54</sup> In another Palk village, tiny Shillingford St George, the 1833 'dame school', supported by subscription similarly continued unchanged until after 1870.<sup>55</sup> At Poltimore the school, noted in 1833 as funded 'by private subscription'<sup>56</sup> later became known as 'Lady Poltimore's school' as she had assumed responsibility for its maintenance. Bovett suggests that the 1833 school was funded by Lady Poltimore,<sup>57</sup> but at that date Lady Poltimore was an invalid and resident in London. It is more likely the school was taken over by the later Lady Poltimore as part of the thanksgiving for the birth of a son and heir in 1837. The school was maintained entirely at the expense of the Poltimores until the introduction of compulsory education.

## Conclusion

The spread of village schools shown on Sellman's map shows that there were many parishes still not provided for by state-aided schools in 1870, in spite of the multiplication of provision once state grants were introduced.<sup>58</sup> Some never had such provision, like Branscombe and Throwleigh among the study parishes; some may have had provision at one stage that failed. The development of schooling, when left to voluntary action, proceeded at an uneven pace. There were still individual dominant landowners like Lord Poltimore who regarded it as an appropriate obligation for their family to fund. There were dynamic and committed individuals like Sir John Kennaway II who mobilised a community to support several foundations. There were

<sup>52</sup> *Exeter Diocesan Board, 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Exeter: Board, 1851), 16.

<sup>53</sup> Sellman, *Devon Village Schools*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> *1833 Enquiry*, 181.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>57</sup> Bovett, *Historical Notes*, 252.

<sup>58</sup> Sellman, *Devon Village Schools*, 41.

clergy like Mr Southcomb and Mr Collinson who regarded it as their duty as the parish priest to set up schools. Yet by the late 1860s there were still too many children denied the opportunity of education and this lack of provision became more visible through the collection of statistics by the Government, the Church and the National Society. It was time for the state to grasp the responsibility of universal provision.

# 3

## Religious Rivalry

HELEN TURNBULL

*Case study material provided by Judith Moss, Frances Billinge  
and Mike Blower*

This study focuses on a number of communities where religious fervour either fostered the establishment of schools or, alternatively, brought about their final demise. Much depended upon local individuals who championed the cause for a school of their own religious affiliation. The support of the community as donors was equally vital. The principal communities under consideration are Chudleigh, Bovey Tracey, Ipplepen, Throwleigh and Marwood.

The Christian religion underpinned the ethos of schools for the poor, with Bibles and prayer books often forming the chief reading material provided. Schooling was believed to be a method of producing a moral docile workforce for the future. The growth of the schools reflected the religious challenges of the age. Thurmer describes Britain in 1828 as ‘a Church-state in which citizenship and churchmanship were identical’.<sup>1</sup> Anglicans perceived themselves as ‘the establishment’, with those of other denominations not fully part of the civil community. But the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828) and the Catholic Emancipation Act (1829) which admitted nonconformists to Parliament, were to affect the power of the Church of England.<sup>2</sup>

There was increasing laxity within the established church.<sup>3</sup> Knight asserts that during this period, the church became a resort for the devout rather

<sup>1</sup> Thurmer, ‘The Nineteenth Century’, 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>3</sup> Coleman, ‘The Nineteenth Century’, 139.

than a resource for the community.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, there was an accelerated growth of dissent; chapels were built and these had a strong appeal for the working classes.<sup>5</sup> Such developments threatened the privileged position of the established church – its response was the Anglican revival,<sup>6</sup> part of which was the creation of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement aimed at giving the Church of England a new direction.<sup>7</sup> The Movement promoted a religious renewal of the church's Catholic heritage, and its leaders produced pamphlets called 'Tracts for the Times'. But the views of their adherents, the 'high churchmen' or 'Tractarians', were divisive within the Anglican church.

Pupils in the National Schools were instructed in the liturgy and catechism of the Church of England, whereas dissenters were fervently opposed to these doctrines being forced upon members of their congregations. Hence a denominational conflict arose from the desire to control the religious education of the children. It was out of this climate that the impetus for new schools was spawned.

In the 1830s the state became involved in the provision of education of the poor, much to the chagrin of many Anglican clergymen who saw this as a threat to their traditional dominance of elementary teaching. A sum of £20,000 was allocated towards the building of new schools. This money was to be divided between the National Society (NS), set up to keep elementary education within its domain, and the British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), which drew most of its support from dissenters. At this juncture, the Catholic Church received no part of the government grant and was driven to its own resources.<sup>8</sup> The grant was conditional upon schools accepting scrutiny by government inspectors, whose appointment, as noted by Horn, was to create 'considerable sectarian bitterness' between the two societies.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1860s there was growing pressure to provide schools in areas where none existed. This opened a debate on whether the state should pay for schools run by religious bodies, or, alternatively, whether they should be purely secular.

The Education Act of 1870 created school boards where there were

<sup>4</sup> Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 71.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: working-class children in nineteenth-century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Coleman, 'The Nineteenth Century', 130.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>8</sup> T. Murphy, *The Position of the Catholic Church in England and Wales during the last two centuries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1892), available at <https://www.forgottenbooks.com/en/books>, accessed 28 November 2018..

<sup>9</sup> Horn, *Education in Rural England*, 52.

insufficient school places resulting in a dual system of voluntary schools and board schools providing elementary education. Coleman states that the Act ‘ushered in a period of often intense conflict between Church and Chapel over the establishment and then the control of the Boards’.<sup>10</sup> The churches were equally fearful that a situation could arise when no religious education was provided in board schools and this created the impetus for a spate of school building particularly by the Church of England, and also the Roman Catholic Church, following the 1870 Act.<sup>11</sup>

### Case studies

**Chudleigh:** Victorian Chudleigh provides a good example of how the religious conflict was to bring about new schools. A church school had been in existence there since the sixteenth century, but by the early nineteenth century had become principally a private school. Although nine ‘poor’ boys were in attendance, their social status would not have been classified as ‘the labouring poor’. They were selected by the vicar and churchwardens, and funded by an endowment (Eastchurch’s Gift) together with a sum from the church. For the other poor children of the town, there was no day school. The Vicar, Revd Gilbert Burrington, showed little interest in schools for the poor, spending much of his time as the local magistrate.<sup>12</sup> That is until 1813 when news came that a Lancasterian School was being planned by the dissenters. From this point onwards, competition between the two sects drove the establishment of schools for the poor in Chudleigh.

The dissenters thought that the great and the good, irrespective of denomination, would support the foundation of a school. But, as one resident reported to the Lord of the Manor, Lord Clifford, ‘the High Church Party resolved to oppose it in a body hoping to crush it in its beginning by their refusal [to support it] ... Mr Burrington took alarm and all our endeavours were misrepresented as a cunning attempt to form Presbyterian proselytes’.<sup>13</sup> Horrified at the prospect of children being educated by dissenters, the Revd Burrington instructed his curate, Joseph Cuming, to set plans in motion to provide a National School. So, the catalyst for the establishment of a National School came about as a response to the actions of the dissenters who provided a Lancasterian school.

<sup>10</sup> Coleman, ‘The Nineteenth Century’, 152.

<sup>11</sup> Gillard, *Education in England*.

<sup>12</sup> Ugbrooke Archive. Letter from Rev. J.P. Jones, BB 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Clifford, September 1822.

<sup>13</sup> Ugbrooke Archive. Letter from Mr. J. Jones, BB 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Clifford, 16 September 1813.

In 1831 Chudleigh's population was 2,278. There were two major land owners – one being Lord Clifford, a Roman Catholic who actively promoted education for Catholic children nationally, and provided a free school for the children of that denomination in Chudleigh, and the other was Montague Parker of the Whiteway Estate who only contributed a nominal sum towards the National School there.<sup>14</sup> The parish church was going through the doldrums,<sup>15</sup> but there was a growing confidence amongst the dissenters. Parker reminds us of the 'tidal surge of interest in working class education' in Exeter,<sup>16</sup> and this was certainly the case in Chudleigh – the Independent Chapel was rebuilt in 1830 and the Wesleyans also built one.<sup>17</sup>

The 1830s ushered in the next spate of school building. There is conflicting evidence surrounding the foundation and situation of Chudleigh's British Schools. The dissenters applied to the BFSS for a grant in 1834<sup>18</sup> and schoolrooms, initially for girls and infants,<sup>19</sup> were added to the Independent Chapel. By 1845 a Boys' school was situated in Clifford Street, and Girls' and Infants' schools in Fore Street,<sup>20</sup> possibly in a converted cooper's shop.<sup>21</sup> In response to the activities of the dissenters, the Anglicans remodelled the former workhouse school to provide better classrooms for boys, girls and infants of the National School. It was funded and maintained by a wealthy resident, John Williams.<sup>22</sup>

In 1847 the widow of a former minister of the Independent Chapel, Elizabeth Davison died and left an endowment for the foundation and support of the Brookfield Baptist Chapel, the minister's residence, and schools to be conducted upon the principles of the BFSS. The chapel was erected in 1850. The plans for new British Schools created further animosity between members of the Anglican Church and the dissenters. Tensions heightened.

A pamphlet headed 'Little Salem' was in circulation which denounced Baptists and other dissenters as heretics, and made a vicious attack upon the supporters of the proposed British Schools to be known as 'Little Salem'.<sup>23</sup> The dissenters responded by criticising the Anglicans, stating that

<sup>14</sup> TNA ED103/62. Chudleigh.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Jones, *The History of Chudleigh* (London: T.W. Grattan, 1852), 52.

<sup>16</sup> Parker, *Early Victorian Devon*, 128.

<sup>17</sup> Jones, *The History of Chudleigh*, 65-66.

<sup>18</sup> BFSS 1/1/1. Minute Books, Chudleigh, 1834.

<sup>19</sup> Jones, *The History of Chudleigh*, 65.

<sup>20</sup> Bovett, *Historical Notes*, 67.

<sup>21</sup> DHC 5114D/41. *Charity Commissions' Report on Endowed Charities (County of Devon): Parish of Chudleigh, 1909* (London: HMSO), 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>23</sup> WT, 23 February 1850, 6

the Tractarians are making great efforts to get the education of the poor into their hands with a Catechism-cramming, church filling object, caring less for the knowledge which the poor children were to get than for the recruits which the National establishment was to acquire thereby.<sup>24</sup>

The dissenters' schools were established by Mrs Ellen Rouse.<sup>25</sup> They were administered by the ministers of both the Baptist Chapel and the Independent Chapel. The Rouse family supported the schools' maintenance.<sup>26</sup> In the same decade, new National Schools were planned. Their promoters applied for a grant to the NS stating that extra funding was necessary because

one half of the land in the Parish of Chudleigh, and all the Rectorial [*sic*] Rent Charges are the Property of a non-resident Roman Catholic Nobleman, from whom no consideration towards the proposed Schools can be expected. Of the remaining Landowners, three of the largest are likewise non-residents, and have declined affording any pecuniary or other assistance.<sup>27</sup>

Although there were no major landowners financing the proposed schools, there were a number of professional men, annuitants, property owners and retired military officers living in the town who contributed towards the establishment and maintenance of the new schools built in 1859 and 1860. The principal benefactors being John Williams and Sir David Dunn.<sup>28</sup>

Denominational hostility remained. When a member of the Ladies' Committee requested a donation towards the annual treat for the National School children, Lord Clifford replied, 'I am as a Catholic opposed to the doctrines taught in the establishment and its schools and cannot even indirectly aid and oppose them at the same time'.<sup>29</sup>

**Bovey Tracey:** The historic borough of Bovey Tracey had a population of 2,086 in 1851. The religious census of that year shows that the Anglican attendance at the parish church's main service was the sum of the Baptists and Methodists together. In 1849 the Revd the Hon. Charles Leslie Courtenay, the Queen's Chaplain, had been appointed to the living.<sup>30</sup> Such a distinguished

<sup>24</sup> WT, 13 April 1850, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *The Weekly Express*, 24 April 1889.

<sup>26</sup> DHC 5114D/41. Pp. 20-21.

<sup>27</sup> NS/7/1/3062.

<sup>28</sup> TNA ED103/62. Chudleigh.

<sup>29</sup> Ugbrooke Archive, BB 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Clifford, Sept. 1860.

<sup>30</sup> *The Globe*, 6 June 1849, 3.



person held both power and wealth. He was a supporter of the Oxford Movement and planned to ‘Romanize’ the architecture within the parish church.<sup>31</sup> He built a ‘high church’ on an isolated part of the Heath with a view to attracting pottery workers, most of whom attended the Baptist Church. Courtenay’s strong Tractarian leanings led to a fracture within his church: members opposed his practices which were alien to the local community. Dr Croker, the local surgeon even complained to Bishop Phillpotts to little avail.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, Croker and a group of like-minded farmers established a Free Church which was to participate on terms of greater equality.<sup>33</sup>

A National School was extant in the town, managed by trustees, one of whom was the Vicar. Miss Annie Croker, the surgeon’s daughter, was so vehemently opposed to the Vicar’s Romanizing practice, that she opened a small non-denomination British School in a hired room in 1861 to stem the tide of Tractarianism.<sup>34</sup> Sellman describes how she struggled to fund her venture.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, she wanted to provide access to education for the poorest children, many of whose families worked at the local pottery. In 1865 the chairman of the school described how the pauperised mothers were induced to prevent their children from attending ‘dissenting places of education’.<sup>36</sup> This mirrored the experience in Chudleigh where mothers were offered free clothing to entice the children away from the British School.<sup>37</sup>

Miss Croker did, however, acquire the co-operation of John Divett, JP, co-owner of the pottery. He leased ground on Mary Street for a new British School to be erected for a nominal consideration, contributing valuable materials himself towards the building.<sup>38</sup> The new school rooms were opened in 1866. Despite being a strong supporter of the Vicar, Divett was prepared to enable the children of his pottery workers to have an education even though the religious instruction would be non-denominational.

The Vicar’s crusade for Tractarianism continued and at his invitation the Clewer Sisters of the Community of St John the Baptist set up the Devon House of Mercy in the parish in 1863. The Clewer community had Tractarian

<sup>31</sup> WT, 21 June 1862, 2, in Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’.

<sup>32</sup> WT, 24 June 1854, 7, in Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’.

<sup>33</sup> WT, 6 February 1858, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust holds the Annie Croker Scrapbook 1865–1900, which contains documents of Annie Croker, dated March 1866 and 1 May 1866, and *Little Ones in Devonshire*, from the British School newsletter; quoted in Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’.

<sup>35</sup> Sellman, *Devon Village Schools*, 42.

<sup>36</sup> BFSS/1/7/2/2/3/4. Letter from Dr Ritchie, Chairman, Bovey Tracey British School to the National Secretary, 30 December 1865.

<sup>37</sup> WT, 27 April 1850, 6.

<sup>38</sup> WT 24 July 1866, 5, in Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’.

leanings and Annie Croker resented the fact that the sisters taught in the National School, as she was concerned that their popish beliefs would be disseminated to the children.<sup>39</sup>

**Ipplepen:** Ipplepen was described in 1850 as a large rural parish with good fertile farmland supporting a population of some 966.<sup>40</sup> The parish church had traditionally enjoyed a strong following, but the Revd Nicholas Brooking, appointed Vicar in 1843, held Tractarian views which upset the congregation so much that numbers began to dwindle. By 1848 Brooking complained of the small attendance at the Sunday service which often totalled no more than twenty.<sup>41</sup> The parishioners were particularly upset when he decided to replace the teacher of the National School. Brooking elevated a former stonemason to the position since he was of a similar inclination to himself. Commentators described him as ‘a catechism crammer’. The parishioners had always subscribed generously but as opposition grew, they withdrew their funding. Consequently, in 1847 the Vicar had no alternative but to close the school.<sup>42</sup>

**Throwleigh:** The small moorland parish of Throwleigh had 481 inhabitants in 1851, of whom 100 attended the parish church for its principal service, and another 112 people worshipped at the Bible Christians’ Providence Chapel.<sup>43</sup> In 1833 there was no school in the village. Like Chudleigh, the parishioners seemed disinterested and demotivated since the rectors were mainly absent. Such a state of affairs made way for adherence to the dissenting chapels which was much in evidence.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, when the Revd W. H. Schwabe was appointed Rector, he had difficulty in generating enthusiasm for building a new school house with a classroom above. He applied to the NS for funding but had great difficulty in gaining local support for his venture. This was a poor rural parish where there was stiff competition from the nonconformists. Schwabe was disappointed with the poor response from the NS, and shortly afterwards left the parish.<sup>45</sup>

Schwabe was succeeded in 1852 by the Revd S. H. Archer. He too tried to

<sup>39</sup> Valerie Bonham, *A Joyous Service: the Clewer Sisters and their Work* (Windsor: author, 1989), 10, in Billinge et al. ‘Schools for the Poor’.

<sup>40</sup> *White’s 1850*, 433.

<sup>41</sup> *WT*, 15 April 1848, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *WT*, 10 April 1847, 6.

<sup>43</sup> M.J.L. Wickes, *Devon in the Religious Census of 1851* (Devon: author, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> NS/7/1/12604, Throwleigh, in Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’.

<sup>45</sup> Emmie Varwell, *Throwleigh – The Story of a Dartmoor Village* (Throwleigh: the Rector, 1938), 132, in Billinge et al., ‘Schools for the Poor’.

establish a purpose-built school: his mission being to acquaint the children with the Church of England liturgy. Like his predecessor, Archer applied to the NS for a grant.<sup>46</sup> However, despite offering a sum from his own funds, there was still insufficient support from either the local land owners or the NS and, consequently, his vision was unfulfilled. There was still no local landowner willing to provide financial support.

Schooling from the early 1840s became the province of the nonconformists who had a strong following. This can possibly be explained by the fact that the major landowner, Richard Dunning Gay, was the leading protagonist within the local Bible Christian community, and it was he who built the chapel and domestic accommodation at Providence Place. Records show that the Bible Christians were running a Day and Sunday school in the 1840s with about forty scholars attending the former.<sup>47</sup> In 1849 Gay was the superintendent and his wife was one of the teachers.<sup>48</sup> Richard Dunning Gay had established a school with the solid support of the Bible Christians and this would appear to be the polar opposite of the experience of both Archer and Schwabe.<sup>49</sup>

Throwleigh is a good example of a community being too under-resourced financially to provide both Anglican and dissenting schools. Unlike most parishes in which the great and the good were members of the Anglican Church, this was not the case in Throwleigh showing a marked contrast to the other communities studied.

**Marwood:** In 1851 Marwood's population was 1,054. A new rector, Revd Frederick Collison, was appointed to the living in 1853. He soon concluded that the educational provision in the parish was inadequate and an application was submitted to the Barnstaple Board of Education in 1855 pressing the case for a new school. The school was built under a trust deed of 1857.

Despite the fact that Collison wished to improve the school provision in Marwood, his Tractarian leanings upset some members of the community. A letter was sent to the *North Devon Journal* complaining that the incumbent had 'strong sympathies with the Tractarian heresy' and participated in the 'narrow and exclusive spirit of that renegade sect'. The letter goes on to state that a little boy named George Green had been dismissed from the day school as a result of his attendance at the Wesleyan Sunday School. The writer ends the letter, 'This case needs no comment'.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> NS/7/1/12604, Throwleigh, in Billinge et al., 'Schools for the Poor'.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> DHC 2200D/28, in Billinge et al., 'Schools for the Poor.'

<sup>49</sup> Billinge et al., 'Schools for the Poor'

<sup>50</sup> *NDJ*, 9 July 1857, 5.

It was not uncommon for a vicar to take this action. School rules and regulations often contained clauses obliging pupils to attend a Sunday school linked to a particular church, and failure to comply could result in exclusion from the day school.<sup>51</sup> However, the letter perhaps reflects the animosity felt for the Vicar amongst not only 'low church' Anglicans but also the nonconformists. The Methodists had been active in the parish since 1806.

### Philanthropy and Ecumenical Initiatives

Given the spirit of the age, when such acrimonious rivalry was evident, certain respected Anglicans with liberal views put their religious affiliation to one side and founded or supported non-denominational schools for the poor. Sir Henry Seale of Dartmouth was such a man. Despite being an Anglican, he supported the establishment of a British School, working closely with local nonconformist communities.<sup>52</sup> John Heathcoat, MP for Tiverton, like Sir Henry, disliked sectarian education and promoted and supported non-denominational schools. Likewise, Miss Annie Croker and Mr John Divett, JP, both Anglicans of Bovey Tracey were instrumental in founding and funding a non-denominational school for the benefit of the local children.

### Conclusion

The climate out of which schools grew in these Devon communities is complex: whereas there are strands which are similar, few are identical. Chudleigh is a good example of the religious conflict which arose between Church and Chapel. Initially, it was the response of members of the different factions which spawned new schools. It was a means of depriving one another of new recruits. Later, although the level of animosity continued, the foundation of new schools arose from the action of wealthy benefactors whose motives might be seen as purely altruistic.

Throwleigh demonstrates the strength of nonconformity in a poor rural area. Even an enthusiastic vicar championing the cause could not acquire the financial support or enthusiasm needed when the Bible Christians had such a strong hold on the community.

Despite the fact that the Rector of Marwood was a Tractarian, the necessary funding to build a new National School was obtained. However,

<sup>51</sup> *EPG*, 4 August 1855. 6. The master of the National School in Bartholomew Yard, Exeter, threatened to expel children who attended the Baptist Sunday School in St. Thomas, Exeter.

<sup>52</sup> BFSS/1/1/6/86. Report of 1897, Appendix no. 17, List of British Schools from 1798 to 1897, in Billinge et al. 'Schools for the Poor.'

in Bovey Tracey, the Vicar's Tractarian practices caused so much criticism that a fellow Anglican, Miss Annie Croker, established a non-denominational school in order to 'stem the tide of Tractarianism'. In Ipplepen, similar opposition was evident when the Tractarian incumbent tried to influence the school children by appointing a head teacher with 'Romanising' views. On this occasion, the parishioners were so hostile to the appointment that the school was forced to close.

The religious conflict which had been evident in so many parishes in the 1830s created the impetus for new schools to be opened. During the period under discussion, certain individuals had emerged whose largesse had contributed significantly; some were affiliated to a particular religious sect whereas others were purely altruistic. The opportunities presented by the 1870 Education Act relieved many managers of the financial burden of maintaining their schools especially when unable to meet the mandatory standards required; presumably this was the case in Throwleigh where a new board school opened in 1877. Those voluntary schools that had the benefit of funding from grants, subscriptions and donations from wealthy benefactors, such as in Chudleigh, were able to retain control of their schools. However, religious controversy was not yet over, for the composition of the new school boards was to be another contentious issue.

## 4a Marwood Schools

MICHAEL BLOWER

Marwood, a five thousand acre parish, situated three miles north-north-west of Barnstaple, has long comprised small hamlets and farmsteads connected by winding lanes and bordered by tall earth banks. Many of its settlements had origins in Saxon and early medieval times, and were vibrant, self-sufficient, and occupied almost entirely by large, low income rural families.

Efforts towards providing education for the children of Marwood were referred to in the report of the Charity Commissioners in 1823, which mentioned a plaque in St Michael and All Angels' Church that recorded bequests firstly by Revd Richard Harding, rector from 1714 until his death in 1782 aged 95 years. In his will, dated 10 June 1779, he gave £150 for investment in three per cent Consols (shares), from which proceeds were payable for teaching five or six poor children of the parish. They would be required to 'read the Bible, and to learn and repeat the Church Catechism distinctly and leisurely', and to be instructed 'in the principles of the Christian religion'. He specified that their lessons should be conducted in the church or church-house for an hour or more and twice each week so as to 'examine, catechise and instruct them'.<sup>1</sup> A second similar bequest of 15 December 1810 was made by William Westacott, described by Lysons in *Magna Britannia* as a farm labourer, who had accumulated £750 for investment in similar shares for the benefit of the school.<sup>2</sup> Dividends from the two bequests amounted to £11 each year of which £7 10s was paid to Rebecca Rock, but by 1822 she had become too frail to continue in her role. She therefore arranged

<sup>1</sup> Anna-Louise Bowman, *Marwood: A Fond Encounter with a Rural Devon Parish* (Chippenham: Merewode Books, 2011), 185.

<sup>2</sup> Bovett, *Historical Notes*, 206.





**Figure 1.** Marwood's first school was located in the church-house, now known as the Lych-gate Rooms. (Photograph by the author).

for the payment to another schoolmistress, believed to be Grace Warren of Guineaford.<sup>3</sup>

By Revd Richard Harding's time there was already a two-storey church-house in use, which stood on the left of the lych-gate to the courtyard. It was a stone and slate building with an external stone staircase to the chamber or upper room, so often a feature of ancient church-houses. The lower storey, open at the side, was formerly used as a stable for persons coming to the church on horseback. This was converted into living quarters to accommodate some of the poorer families of the parish, leaving a fair sized room on the upper floor for a school. Teaching continued here until 1891, when children previously unable to afford fees were transferred to the free National School.

As well as Sunday schools, it was reported by the same Commissioners that a School of Industry had been established since 1818 for 16 girls. They

<sup>3</sup> The occupation of Grace Warren was recorded as schoolmistress in the Guineaford census for both 1841 and 1851.

received instruction in spinning wool, knitting, sewing and embroidery; and, ideally, through the sale of their work became self-supporting by keeping some of the money they earned. Children would have been taught reading and writing, with the temptation to emphasise an occupational aspect to cover expenses. In some areas, no poor persons would be eligible for relief unless their children were sent to the school, or could prove that satisfactory employment had been found for them.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, from the early to the mid-nineteenth century women ran 'dame schools' in their homes, known to exist locally in Muddiford, Milltown and Middle Marwood. A charge of up to three pence a week was made for teaching reading and writing. The quality of education was variable, especially if the dame's literacy was inadequate; otherwise they could be described as little more than child minders. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, their pupils were transferred to the Board School.<sup>5</sup>

The nineteenth century population of Marwood peaked in 1851 at 1,054, although later declining partly through the migration of farm labourers with no alternative but to look elsewhere for work. Some moved to Barnstaple for different employment, but for others farm work was their only skill and they therefore journeyed overseas to Australia, New Zealand or Canada. The evolutionary changes to farming also had a knock on effect on local crafts people: their livelihoods depended on the industry, and the variety of existing trades began to diminish. Then in 1853 a new parish rector, Revd Frederick Collison (1815–1889, incumbent until 1886), arrived and soon concluded that the current educational provision for children was inadequate. He therefore wrote to the Barnstaple Board of Education in 1855 stating and pressing the case for a new school.

Following approval, an orchard near the church was conveyed by the Archdeacon of Barnstaple in trust by deed, dated 28 February 1857, for the purpose of a school. The builder, Thomas Curtis, utilised materials such as best Combe Down Bath stone for the sills and window frames, quality Delabole slates for the roof, and solid oak boards for the floor. He designed a detachable partition wall on rollers for dividing the schoolroom, and internal water closets for each side of it. For the era, flushing waste with no foul smell was a relatively new innovation, beyond the experience of most parishioners who would not have had water closets installed in their own homes.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Bowman, *Marwood*, 186.

<sup>5</sup> For example, when the dame school in Muddiford closed in 1883, 4 boys and 9 girls were transferred to the Board School, which also received 17 pupils from the dame school in Milltown in the late 1870s.

<sup>6</sup> Bowman, *Marwood*, 190. The Board School did not have flushing water closets until 1901.





**Figure 2.** Marwood's National School founded in 1857, now used for social gatherings and cream teas in spring and summer months. (Photograph by the author).

The school, built at a cost of £200, continued to be funded by a combination of subscriptions, pupil fees, and government grants on a 'payment by results' basis. Examinations were held in the four 'r's (reading writing, arithmetic and religion), and the results, together with a satisfactory attendance score, would determine the amount of fees to be given and the pay that teachers would receive. Teaching was provided through a husband and wife partnership, and the latter had to be able to instruct girls in sewing.

Church of England clergy, such as Revd Collison, university educated and from privileged backgrounds, knew very little about farming or country pursuits, and often failed to relate to either the working class or landed gentry. This was exactly the state of affairs when the Revd Richard Riley became the incumbent in 1804. Hence, unsurprisingly, the Methodist movement became attractive to Marwood residents, and in 1806 a local preacher first held services for fourteen members. Thereafter, a chapel costing £164 was opened on Good Friday 1829.

In 1858 the will of Mary Ann Tamlyn of Prixford bequeathed the sum

of £100 to be invested for the benefit of the Methodist Chapel and a Sunday school. However, it was not until 9 October 1874 that a new Methodist Chapel opened, and the former chapel converted into a day school. Popular with children of local parishioners,<sup>7</sup> it remained open for only two years - its future closure and amalgamation with the National School determined by the provisions of the Elementary Education Act (1870).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.



## 4b

# The Chagford Philanthropists Ensuring Education for the Poorer Members of their Community 1790–1870

SUE PRICE

From 1637 each generation of the Hayter family provided the rector of Chagford, the incumbents of the living being ensured of both home and income, and, thereby, status within the community. Thomas Hayter was Sub-dean of York in 1730, and from then until 1751 Archdeacon of York. In 1761 he accepted the Bishopric of London and was tutor to the royal children, one of whom became George III.<sup>1</sup> Thomas died unmarried and without issue, and it was to his nephew John Hayter that the living of Chagford next passed.

In 1790 John Weekes of Chagford, a mariner, left a legacy of £200 to Revd John Hayter and John Hooper with a wish that they invest the money, and use the interest to educate six poor children, thus enabling them to take an apprenticeship.<sup>2</sup> Being named by Weekes as a trustee of his Charity, John Hayter became responsible for ensuring that the funds were correctly invested to provide a continuing income and thus be dispersed to provide education and find suitable apprenticeships from 1790 for a succession of the poor children in the parish.<sup>3</sup> On John's death his brother George inherited the living and, following George's demise, it passed to his sister Grace who married John Hames, and thence to their son William in 1821. The said William incorporated Hayter into the family name becoming the first Hayter

<sup>1</sup> Jane Hayter-Hames, *The History of Chagford* (London: Phillimore, 1981), 74.

<sup>2</sup> DHC 1429A/3/PF/1.

<sup>3</sup> DHC 1429A/PW/5. Churchwardens accounts of Chagford 1729–1821.



**Figure 1.** St Catherine's House, now known as Endecott House.  
(Photograph by author).

Hames, and his son, Hayter George Hayter Hames, received the advowson in 1852.

A school, which had been until 1824 supported by the interest of the invested Weekes Charity money, was held in St Catherine's House, a building belonging to the church and used, on the ground floor, for housing the poor of the parish, with the school being on the upper floor. William Short had been appointed schoolmaster in 1809. He was greatly respected and remained in post until his death in 1845,<sup>4</sup> when he was succeeded by his son. Fortunately, Short's son Caleb was already employed as a teacher at the school and his abilities recognized. The census returns of 1851 record him aged 32, living in Mill Street with his sister, Mary, a nephew Caleb Honnacott aged 14, and William Endacott aged 15, a school assistant and servant.

By 1853 the school population had grown and Constance Hames, the wife of the then Rector, Hayter George Hayter Hames, saw the need to establish a

<sup>4</sup> WT, 26 April 1845.

separate Infants' School to provide education for children less than six years old. By resolution of the vestry held 24 February 1853, the houses under the parochial schoolroom, being the property of the churchwardens, were granted, rent and rate free, to the Rector for an Infant School, with leave to make any alterations or additions, and the garden behind the schoolroom was let as a playground for the children. The building was maintained by the Rector and his family who paid all expenses except fire insurance.<sup>5</sup> Miss Ann Gidley presided over as many as 85 infants there, and the school continued to be held in St Catherine's House entirely supported by Mrs Hames.<sup>6</sup> Short was still teaching on the upper floor, now over the Infants, the average number of his school being seventy.<sup>7</sup> A report in the *Exeter Flying Post* of 13 March 1856 commends him for being one of only two schoolmasters to be awarded Class A status in English schools inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors the previous Christmas. The children were taught Reading, Writing and Arithmetic and Scripture, and the girls were also instructed in sewing by Caleb's wife, Susanna, with the help of monitors who were older, more able girls.



**Figure 2.** Mrs Constance Hames, c.1860. (Photograph kindly loaned by the Hayter Hames family).

<sup>5</sup> This was paid by churchwardens out of church funds until 1902.

<sup>6</sup> Hayter-Hames, *The History of Chagford*, 111.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.



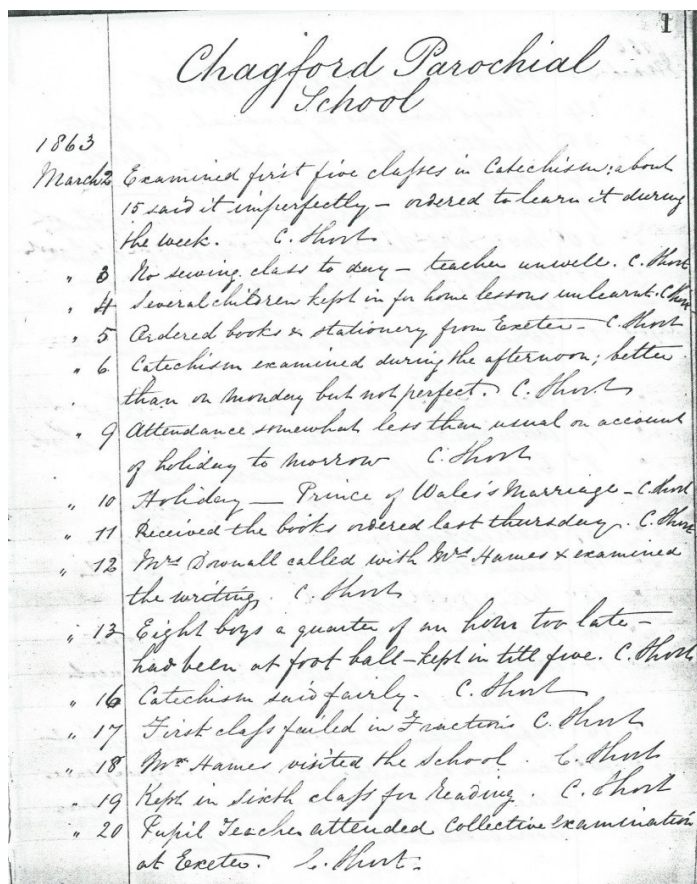


Figure 3. First page of Caleb Short's Log Book dated March 1863 (by permission of the Devon Heritage Centre).

In 1860 the Education Department of the Privy Council issued a declaration to the effect that parishes willing to progress the education of their poorer parishioners would be supported in their endeavours by the government. Chagford Parochial Council began to make serious investigations into the improvements that could be made in the town. St Catherine's House, which housed the school, is shown as plot number 3 on the 1840 tithe map and designated as 'poor houses and garden', with The Care House, listed as 'alms house and garden', to be the New Parochial School shown at number 23. On Monday 22 July 1861 'Two Grand Amateur Concerts' were held 'in aid of the New Parochial School Room, Chagford'.<sup>8</sup>

In 1862 compulsory regulations required 'Schoolmasters,' or 'The Principle [sic] Teacher,' to keep log books and 'daily make, in the log book, the briefest entry, which will suffice to specify either ordinary progress, or whatever

<sup>8</sup> EPG, 26 July 1861.

other fact concerning the school or its teachers, such as dates of withdrawals, commencements of duty, cautions, illness etc.’

A Methodist Church was built in Mill Street in 1867, and held regular Sunday School meetings which enabled the elders to provide elementary education for interested adults and children, and when the church was built a room was added which enabled pupils to meet and study at times convenient to themselves and their volunteer teachers.<sup>9</sup>

In August 1868 it was reported that

the Rev W W Howard, H M Inspector of Schools, examined our Parochial and Infant Schools on the 15th and 16th ult. The result was very gratifying to the Managers, most of the papers (which are forwarded to the Privy Council) being done without fault. The children of different Standards, with but few exceptions, passed their examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic, according to the Government requirements. The writing of the upper classes was especially commended. The girls’ sewing and needlework was also inspected in both schools, Mrs Short presiding over the elder girls in the Parochial School, and Miss Waters over those in the Infant School.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 4.** Copy of photograph of procession held in Chagford Local History Archive.

<sup>9</sup> Chagford Local History Archive. Perryman and Thorn, Local Family Histories.

<sup>10</sup> DHC CPS. Chagford Primary School Log Book, kept by Caleb Short.



That same year there was a report of the 'Annual Tea Drinking and School Fete', held on 22 July.

The children of the Parochial, Infant and Sunday Schools, numbering 230, mustered in the Infant schoolroom shortly before three, and precisely as the clock struck three, the procession, reaching the entire length of Mill Street, sallied forth, headed by the Chagford Band, the children carrying flags and banners with suitable inscriptions.<sup>11</sup>

In November 1870 a meeting of the ratepayers was held to 'consider the position of this parish with respect to the provisions of the Elementary Education Act 1870'.<sup>12</sup> The Chairman, the Revd Hayter George Hayter Hames, opening the proceedings, congratulated the Meeting on the school accommodation of this parish, and said he would ever feel grateful to his parishioners for their liberality in aiding him in the erection of the new Parochial Schoolroom in 1861, as well as having granted him the free use of the Infant Schoolroom in 1853. He felt that Chagford had set an example in the great cause of education, and had kept pace with the spirit of the times. Mr Short then explained that their Infant schoolroom was 44 feet long by 16 feet wide and 17 feet high, while the Parochial School room was 46 feet long by 16 feet wide and 15 feet high. This gave accommodation for 288 children. Mr Stanbury then moved, and Mr Ellis seconded, 'that this meeting having gone into the details of the Elementary Education Act, and having considered the school provision in this parish, deem the provision sufficient, efficient and suitable. The resolution was unanimously carried'.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *EPG*, 25 November 1870.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

## 4c

# The Slow Death of Dartmouth's Endowed Grammar School

GAIL HAM

In March 1828, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* carried an advertisement from solicitor John Browne Smith, a leading member of the reform party in Dartmouth, announcing a new initiative:

Wanted, for a Classical and Mathematical Academy now establishing at Dartmouth, a GENTLEMAN, who will be found a School Room, and guaranteed for three years £150 per Annum, and allowed to take a limited number of boarders ... The candidate is required to have taken a degree in one of the British Universities ... Holy Orders will be considered as an additional recommendation.<sup>1</sup>

Revd Edward Williams, BA, from Pembroke College Oxford, was appointed, and the 'Dartmouth Classical and Mathematical School' opened on Monday 14 July 1828.<sup>2</sup>

This was the first of two attempts in the nineteenth century to re-establish Dartmouth's old endowed grammar school. The school, known locally as the 'Latin School', was located in an old building by St Saviour's church, originally the town's Guildhall, owned by the Corporation and used as a schoolhouse since the Reformation.<sup>3</sup> In 1669, the Corporation agreed to pay £10 annually to a Latin schoolmaster appointed by them to teach ten poor

<sup>1</sup> *EPG*, 22 March 1828, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *EPG*, 12 July 1828, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ivor Smart, 'The many ancient Guildhalls of Dartmouth', *TDA*, 123 (1991), 15-39, 17.

children. These funds were increased in 1679 by part of the income from a charitable endowment (from an unknown benefactor). But a condition of the bequest was that, if the Corporation stopped their payment, the money went to the poor instead.<sup>4</sup>

The school functioned throughout the eighteenth century but had failed by 1821, when the Brougham Commission enquired into the town's charities. The Corporation's payment of £10 had 'long since ceased' and the last Latin schoolmaster had left in 1817. Although Revd John Glubb of St Petrox had 'of late' been appointed, he ran his classical school in his house and had no free pupils. There were no surviving trustees.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission pointed out that payment from the endowment to Glubb was in breach of trust and in 1822 it was stopped. However, the Corporation did not appoint a new Latin schoolmaster, although the school building was 'put into repair'.<sup>6</sup> But they did support a new initiative in 1828. On application from 'some gentlemen endeavouring to establish a latin-day-school', the Corporation agreed to lend Mr Williams the schoolroom (if kept in repair), and to grant £10 per year to fund one boy at the school.<sup>7</sup> This commitment may have enabled funds to be paid from the endowment. *Pigot's Directory* of 1830 described the new school as a 'free grammar school' and in 1832 it was 'well supported'.<sup>8</sup>

Municipal reform brought the next set of Commissioners to Dartmouth, who reported in 1835: 'There was a School in the borough, to the master of which the corporation annually presented a gratuity of £10. This school has been discontinued about a year'.<sup>9</sup> This appears to be a reference to Mr Williams' new school, but clearly, by the time of the report, it had failed. The circumstances are not known and there is no further record of Mr Williams in Dartmouth. No longer requiring the Latin School building, the Corporation decided to take it down to improve access to the church. But the decision was close and was reversed at their next meeting, shortly before they were disbanded as a body.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Commissioners concerning Charities; containing that part which relates to the County of Devon, Vol 1* (Exeter: T. Besley, 1826), 13-18. Borough of Dartmouth, Forder Estate Charity.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>6</sup> DHC R/9/1/C/1. 18 February 1822.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 10 October 1828.

<sup>8</sup> Octavian Blewitt, *The Panorama of Torquay, A Descriptive and Historical Sketch of the District comprised between the Dart and Teign* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1832), 153.

<sup>9</sup> *First report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, Part 1, Appendix* (London: C. Knight, 1835), 480.

<sup>10</sup> DHC R/9/1/C/1. 29 October 1835, 12 December 1835.

In 1836 a 'reformed' Town Council came into office. The new Town Clerk was John Browne Smith, who had led the earlier initiative to re-establish the school. But the new Council was inexperienced and confronted by complex political and financial problems; the grammar school was not a priority. In 1837 they too decided that the Latin School building should be taken down, though 'in the event of a Latin School Master being again appointed, before another room shall be appropriated for the School, a substitute [shall] be provided by the Council'.<sup>11</sup> But no such appointment was made.

However, the Latin School was not forgotten. In 1859, 'An Old Pupil' wrote to the *Dartmouth Chronicle*:

The great objection to living at Dartmouth is often the want of a GOOD BOY'S SCHOOL [sic]. The residents here feel this want also very much. Don't you think there is a good opening for such a Public School, especially as *there is an endowment; and OUGHT to be a School House?*<sup>12</sup>

In 1861 George Henry Drewe came to Dartmouth, the former home of his wife Elizabeth Puddicombe. Having run a private classical and mathematical school in Exmouth, he took over Bampton Collegiate and Commercial School in Oxfordshire 'for the purpose of affording a 'Public School' Education to the sons of the Clergy, Officers and others of limited means on very low terms'.<sup>13</sup> Seeing an opportunity, he offered to open a branch of Bampton in Dartmouth as the basis for a new public grammar school, using the old endowment and new charitable money. A public meeting was organized, chaired by the Mayor, Richard Cleland, and a Committee set up.<sup>14</sup>

The Committee applied to both the Council and the Charity's trustees about resuming their payments, but neither would make the first move.<sup>15</sup> Without the Council's support, the Charity's funds could not legally be used. Why cooperation was lacking is not clear but, according to a later report, the Mayor was non-committal – he saw more value in his 'evening free school', providing the very poorest children with free education.<sup>16</sup> Further, some questioned the link with Bampton. For example, H. P. Emeric de St Dalmas, owner of a private school, sensed unfair competition. He described the plan as '... nothing more than a *ruse* on the part of certain individuals for obtaining

<sup>11</sup> DHC R/9/1/C/1a. 22 September and 9 October 1837.

<sup>12</sup> *Dartmouth Chronicle*, 1 July 1859, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *John Bull*, 16 November 1861, 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Dartmouth Chronicle*, 2 August 1861, 2.

<sup>15</sup> WMN, 8 June 1865, 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Dartmouth Chronicle*, 1 January 1870, 3.

a *prestige* in behalf of a *private speculation* ...'.<sup>17</sup> By December 1861, progress had stalled.<sup>18</sup> No new grammar school opened in Dartmouth; George Drewe moved elsewhere.

The Taunton Report of 1868 showed that the Latin School was the only endowed grammar school in Devon to have entirely disappeared: 'School has long ceased to exist in consequence of corporation having failed to meet endowment, income of which is accordingly distributed amongst poor'. Referring to the attempt to re-establish the school, the report noted, sadly:

The healthiness of the situation, its beauty as a place of residence, its growing importance since the building of the railway, and easiness of access, the absence of any important school, all point to Dartmouth as a fit place for such an establishment, and it is a subject for regret that the committee were not able round the nucleus of the old endowment to develop a school required by the wants of the neighbourhood.<sup>19</sup>

A publicly funded grammar school was not established in Dartmouth until well into the following century.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 2 August 1861, 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 4 December 1861, 3.

<sup>19</sup> *1868 Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. 14, Special Reports by Assistant Commissioner South-Western Division*, 297-98. Available online to those with access to ProQuest.

<sup>20</sup> Dartmouth Secondary School opened in 1921 and was renamed Dartmouth Grammar School in 1928.

## 5

# The Heathcoat Family and Education in Tiverton

MIKE SAMPSON

In 1816 John Heathcoat, a man from the Midlands, unknown to the people of Tiverton, purchased a large redundant woollen mill in the town. The premises were a sad reminder of the prosperity that the town had once derived from being one of the country's leading producers of woollen cloth. However, Heathcoat in his mid-twenties had constructed and patented a lace-making machine that was already revolutionising the industry, and would revitalise Tiverton. Within a few years of his arrival, he had installed several of his machines in the former mill, and soon over a thousand men, women and children were employed there. Apart from regular work, Heathcoat, during his lifetime, would furnish Tiverton and its people with many benefits, but this study will concentrate on those contributions he and his immediate family made to education.

Although he was an engineering genius and successful entrepreneur, Heathcoat's own schooling had been basic. He attended the village school at Hathern in Leicestershire, where he learnt 'to read, to write a clear hand, to understand and apply the rules of English grammar, to use the globes, and to deal with such figures as a plain man might expect to meet in the course of his day's work'.<sup>1</sup> He came to a town which already had three well-established schools; one founded by Peter Blundell in 1604, known variously as Blundell's School, the Latin School or Tiverton Grammar School, another endowed in 1611 by Blundell's nephew, Robert Chilcott, often called the English School,

<sup>1</sup> W. Gore-Lloyd, *John Heathcoat and His Heritage* (London: Christopher Johnson, 1958), 28.

and the Blue Coat or Charity School which dated from 1713. In addition to these there were several ‘dame’ schools of unknown date and longevity. Furthermore, Tiverton’s response to the foundation of the Sunday School Society in 1785 had been rapid – within a year more than 200 children were attending nine such schools – and three years later a school was set up in the Workhouse.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after Heathcoat’s arrival, in 1818 a school was built on the west side of St Andrew Street with the aid of a grant from the National Society.

From the beginning, Heathcoat took a keen personal interest in the well-being of his workforce and in the prospects for his newly-adopted home. In 1825 he was elected a trustee of Chilcott’s School,<sup>3</sup> and in December 1832 the people chose him along with a Radical, James Kennedy, to be the first MPs for the reformed borough of Tiverton.<sup>4</sup> Not long after their election the Factory Act (1833) was passed, ensuring

- no child workers under nine years of age
- children of 9-13 years to work no more than nine hours a day
- children not to work at night
- two hours schooling each day for children.

However, this Act did not apply to lace factories, such as that of Heathcoat. Indeed, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* stated that the exemption had been brought about ‘through the exertions of Mr. Heathcoat’, but added ‘judging the state of the children employed in the extensive lace-manufactory at Tiverton, it is but justice to say, that so far as that establishment is concerned, the Bill is entirely uncalled for’.<sup>5</sup> The situation regarding the age of children employed by Heathcoat is confusing. The enduring myth in Tiverton is that soon after his arrival he announced that he would not employ children under the age of nine years and, even then, not until they had learnt to read and write. Yet, Dr Stewart in his report to the Children’s Employment Commission states, in relation to lace factories in Tiverton, Barnstaple and Chard, that

<sup>2</sup> Martin Dunsford, *Historical memoirs of the town and parish of Tiverton in the County of Devon ...* (Exeter: the author, 1790), 261-262.

<sup>3</sup> William Harding, *The History of Tiverton, in the County of Devon* (Tiverton: F. Boyce; London: Whittaker and Co., 1845-47), book iii, 173.

<sup>4</sup> The 1832 Reform Act had enfranchised 462 Tivertonians, whereas previously the Mayor and 24 Burgesses had been solely responsible for choosing the town’s two MPs.

<sup>5</sup> *EPG*, 17 August 1833.

instances occur in which children begin work as early as five, and between five and six years of age, and many between six and seven, but the greater number from seven and upwards; it is stated, however, that scarcely any go to the machines before they are twelve.<sup>6</sup>

Although an MP, John Heathcoat's appearances on the floor of the Commons were to be rare – it was later said of his political career 'though Mr Heathcoat seldom spoke in debate, he was indefatigable in attendance, and his aid in committees was much and deservedly prized'.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, his position in local affairs was without parallel. Living in the parish of Tiverton meant that he was able to participate personally in a wide range of local activities. In 1836 he was elected Alderman for the Westex Ward, in the following year he was instrumental in the formation of a branch of the Church Missionary Society and became its Chairman,<sup>8</sup> and in 1838 on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Coronation he entertained his workers and all the town's Sunday School children to a feast of beef and plum pudding.<sup>9</sup>

The Reform Association of Tiverton, having seen the momentous success effected in electoral reform and the administration of the borough, turned their attention to certain matters at Blundell's School. Interest had been aroused because the School was producing a considerable surplus of income and the Trustees seemed intent on spending the money on 'bricks and mortar' which would be of greater benefit to the boarders. In 1838, following a requisition by several of the town's inhabitants, the Mayor called a public meeting, at which Heathcoat voiced the two main concerns of the Association which were the perceived preference given to boarders over local boys in awarding scholarships and exhibitions to the Universities, and the narrowness of the curriculum. The original intention was to approach the School's Trustees with the Association's concerns, but, learning that the Trustees were submitting a petition to Chancery detailing *their* proposed methods of disposing of the surplus, the townspeople agreed also to petition Chancery. Heathcoat, again making the most telling speech, determined that

Though he was not a native, he was deeply anxious for the welfare of Blundell's school, and was very desirous that the inhabitants should have all

<sup>6</sup> 1843 *Children's Employment Report*.

<sup>7</sup> William Felkin, *A History of the Machine-Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1867), 267.

<sup>8</sup> *EPG*, 30 September 1837.

<sup>9</sup> *EPG*, 30 June 1838.



the benefits from it, which were designed by the founder. He was therefore ready to aid them in every possible way, by his personal exertions and with his purse.<sup>10</sup>

Heathcoat wanted to settle these differences amicably, but, much to his chagrin, town and gown embarked on a prolonged, costly Chancery case,<sup>11</sup> with Heathcoat's son-in-law, Samuel Amory, acting as one of the town's attornies.<sup>12</sup>

Heathcoat took on more duties in Tiverton: in 1838 he was elected Chairman of the newly established Board of Guardians, and one of his first tasks was to oversee the appointment of a schoolmaster and schoolmistress 'whose province it will be to instruct the children who are inmates of the [Work]house'.<sup>13</sup> Chilcott's School, of which Heathcoat was already a Trustee, also advertised for a schoolmaster 'who must be a member of the Established Church'.<sup>14</sup> The preferred candidate appears to have been successful, as the *Western Times* reported that 'the scholars ... in consequence of the election of a fit and proper master in the room of a very inefficient one, had increased from six or eight to 86 in the course of a month'.<sup>15</sup> The factory owner was also a trustee of Blagdon's Charity, the proceeds from which helped clothe and educate the children of the Blue Coat School. News came during 1839 that, arising from a judicious exchange of lands belonging to the Charity, the School was to benefit from sufficient funds to erect new buildings in Castle Street.<sup>16</sup> At the end of April 1841 Heathcoat laid the foundation stone of the new National School on a site adjoining St George's Churchyard.<sup>17</sup>

At this time John Heathcoat made the important decision to build and endow a school for the free education of pupils of all classes without religious restriction. The site chosen was by the entrance to the Factory, and it was made known that the school would be run under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society.<sup>18</sup> Designed by the local architect,

<sup>10</sup> WT, 2 February 1839.

<sup>11</sup> Thoroughly covered in Harding, *History of Tiverton*, book iii, 140-164.

<sup>12</sup> He had married Anne, Heathcoat's second daughter, who died in 1834, aged just 26 years.

<sup>13</sup> WT, 29 September 1838.

<sup>14</sup> WT, 4 May 1839.

<sup>15</sup> WT, 16 November 1839.

<sup>16</sup> WT, 10 August 1839. The new buildings were opened in November 1841 with 60 boys and 48 girls, but capable of accommodating 150 and 100 respectively.

<sup>17</sup> EPG, 3 April 1841. Delays due to lack of finances did not see them open until 1844

<sup>18</sup> WT, 5 June 1841.

Gideon Acland Boyce,<sup>19</sup> the school, in a Tudor style with an H-plan and very long rear wings, was opened at the end of January 1843 – the first factory school in the West Country,<sup>20</sup> containing the first infants' school in the town.

At the opening ceremony, John Heathcoat spoke at some length about his motives for founding the school and how it was to operate.<sup>21</sup> He explained that it was to be open to children of all denominations, as he firmly believed that 'allowing children to mingle together, irrespective of religious distinctions, has a tendency to prevent those distinctions from rising up as barriers between them in after life.' Religious instruction was not to be 'in distinctions of creeds', but he made it a condition the children must belong to a Sunday school. Heathcoat's own actions in Tiverton reflect his dislike of religious divisions. Although he is described as a Baptist by Harrison,<sup>22</sup> there is no evidence given to support such a claim, and throughout his life he supported groups irrespective of their Christian persuasion. As for teachers, they were to be from the British and Foreign School Society's training college, which he had visited and found 'churchmen, and dissenters of all denominations living together in harmony and good will'.<sup>23</sup> Great emphasis was to be placed on the formation of 'good habits – habits of cleanliness, order, subordination, industry, and proper behaviour to equals and superiors', and he pointed out that

We shall require that the children shall be fit to associate with other children. If there be the absence of this, from their having had bad examples as to language and general habits, and thus expose to danger and mischief the children of others, we shall be obliged to say to the parents of such, 'We fear the harm your children will do to others will be greater than the good we can do to yours, and we can't admit them'.

<sup>19</sup> Boyce (1797–1861) had his practice in Gold Street, Tiverton, and among his other buildings in the town are the Mortuary Chapel (1855) in the Cemetery, the former Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery (Sion House) (1836), and the former St Peter's Church House and Bluecoat School (1842). He was also responsible for restoration at St Peter's Church in 1825–1829, especially the south chapel, and was Clerk of Works for the building of St Paul's Church.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Brayshay, 'Heathcoat's Industrial Housing in Tiverton, Devon', *Southern History*, vol. 3, 1981, 82–104, p.89.

<sup>21</sup> WT, 4 February 1843.

<sup>22</sup> F.M.W. Harrison, 'The Nottinghamshire Baptists and Social Conditions', *The Baptist Quarterly*, vol. XXVII, no. 5, January 1978, 212–224.

<sup>23</sup> WT, 4 February 1843. All of the quotes of Heathcoat (up to footnote no. 24) are taken from the speech made at the opening of the School.

Of the infants, he said the ‘object is not to force an education beyond the capacities of the children, but to aim at the development of their faculties, and at the production of right dispositions.’ He announced that the management of the School would be in the hands of his son-in-law, Ambrose Brewin, adding if it were not for him, ‘I should, perhaps, at my time of life, have hesitated to establish these schools’.

The high regard in which the school was held by visitors and observers was borne out in one of its early annual examinations, that of 1846, in which the pupils were tested in Grammar, Geography, Mental Arithmetic, and Mathematics, all revealing a very high standard. There were 165 boys, 133 girls and 156 infants on the register. In addition to the day-school, all those children between the ages of 13 and 17 employed in the factory were expected to attend the night schools for one hour, four times a week.<sup>24</sup> Heathcoat could justifiably take considerable pride in ‘his’ School, and his views on Blundell’s were shared by the Court of Chancery as the Vice-Chancellor finally decreed, in October 1846, only free scholars would be eligible for scholarships or exhibitions, and science, literature, and one or more foreign languages were to be taught.<sup>25</sup>

Ambrose Brewin not only took care of the Factory School but also established two further schools; one in Chapel Street in Elmore, considered one of the poorest areas of Tiverton, and an infants school in Bampton Street. The Elmore school began in 1846 with 85 children on the register,<sup>26</sup> although it was designed to hold 100 boys, 50 girls, and 100 infants. The school gained rapid success in attracting children as the annual treat in 1849, held at Brewin’s Exeleigh House residence, entertained about 300.<sup>27</sup> Often both Elmore and Bampton Street schools (as well as the Factory School) are described as ‘Baptist Schools’, but Ambrose Brewin did not favour this sect in his public life.

In 1849, Robert Ware, an Independent, gave a plot of land at the village of Bolham, just outside Tiverton, for a chapel, which was to be used as a schoolroom during the week. The building was completed in the following year, and the school opened in 1851. Although given an ‘Independent’

<sup>24</sup> *EPG*, 15 August 1846.

<sup>25</sup> *WT*, 31 October 1846.

<sup>26</sup> *WT*, 14 November 1846. Such was the poverty in this area of Tiverton that in 1865 the town’s one and only Sunday Ragged School was opened ‘entirely for children who cannot go to other schools on account of their clothes’. The existence of the school was justified as 60 children attended each week (*Tiverton Gazette*, 9 May 1865).

<sup>27</sup> *EPG*, 15 September 1849.

attribution, the system of teaching there was to be unsectarian.<sup>28</sup> At this time a National School was built near the church in the outlying hamlet of Withleigh.

Considerable light was thrown on the curriculum followed at the Factory Schools by an article in the *Western Morning News* of 5 July 1851 concerning the examination of the boys. The subjects included Reading, Grammar, Geography, English and Scripture History, Mental Arithmetic, the Construction of the Human Body, the Circulation of the Blood, and the Process of Digestion, 'illustrated by suitable figures'. After the examination, many of those present, expressed 'the obligation of the town to J. Heathcoat Esq., and his estimable family, for their munificent efforts for the education of the young'.<sup>29</sup> The family's beneficence was not limited to education; about this time John Heathcoat contributed £100 out of an estimated £350 towards building a court house at the town's gaol, and agreed to supply a fire engine, and, together with Ambrose Brewin, in 1852 gave £500 towards the establishment of a General Dispensary 'to afford relief and assistance to a great number of very deserving, but really necessitous, sick persons of the town and parish'.<sup>30</sup> Ambrose Brewin made a grand gesture to the people of Westex in 1853, informing the populace of his intention to build a church there. He had persuaded the trustees of Mary Peard's Charity to give £3,000 towards the building on land that he owned personally.<sup>31</sup>

On 13 August 1855 Ambrose Brewin died. He was especially mourned by the children of the Factory School and those attending the Elmore and Bampton Street schools; on many occasions he had treated as many as 400 of them to tea and currant cake, and delights such as having boats sail down the River Exe beside his residence at Exeleigh House, and, in later years, at his Hensleigh home.<sup>32</sup> Treats had been a characteristic of the Heathcoat family from the earliest days. Feasts for the workers at the Factory were not uncommon, and excursions for the men and their families dated from 1848, when John Heathcoat contracted the Bristol and Exeter and South Devon Railway Companies to supply a special train to transport 1,400 passengers to Dawlish for the day.<sup>33</sup> Yet even this was surpassed in 1854 when two trains

<sup>28</sup> WT, 18 January 1851.

<sup>29</sup> WT, 5 July 1851.

<sup>30</sup> EFP, 10 June 1852. In 1846 Ambrose Brewin and his wife had donated £50 each to the Devon and Exeter Hospital (EPG, 4 April 1846).

<sup>31</sup> EPG, 20 July 1853.

<sup>32</sup> e.g. EFP, 9 August 1849 and EPG, 6 August 1853.

<sup>33</sup> *Bristol Mercury*, 22 July 1848.

were chartered to take 2,500 men, women and children to Teignmouth.<sup>34</sup> It seemed, however, to give John Heathcoat greater personal pleasure to treat the schoolchildren, especially those in the Factory's Infant School. Usually the procedure was for the children, along with the teachers, to walk to Bolham House, where, on one occasion

The pleasure-ground was beautifully decorated with flags, and the junior classes were provided with every delicacy. At the conclusion an appropriate address was presented to the benefactor, and the children left well pleased with their afternoon amusement.<sup>35</sup>

St Paul's Church was opened in January 1856, but, due to the Bishop of Exeter being unwell, the consecration service was delayed until May, by which time he had recovered. At the conclusion of the service, some 340 children from various schools in the parish of Tiverton 'were regaled with tea and buns' in the Factory Schoolrooms, while the senior dignitaries were 'entertained at a cold collation' at Bolham House by John Heathcoat,<sup>36</sup> who had promised an organ for the church. In memory of Ambrose Brewin the workers of the Factory placed a tablet in the church in the following year.<sup>37</sup>

Across the road from St Paul's, Caroline Brewin subsequently paid for the erection of a range of buildings, completed in 1861, comprising reading rooms (open every evening to the working classes), library, classrooms, and a large room for public meetings, as well as a house for the curate.<sup>38</sup> Following her husband's death, she had conveyed the Elmore and Bampton Street Schools to the Corporation of Tiverton in trust, but during her life she was to have 'the sole, uncontrolled management and direction' of the schools, and then the management was to become vested in the Rector of Tidcombe Portion and the Corporation.<sup>39</sup>

The building of a National (Church of England) school was begun in 1856 on land belonging to John Heathcoat next to the church in Chevithorne, with one of the Management Committee being Heathcoat's grandson, John Heathcoat Amory, the son of Samuel Amory. The building was finally opened in October 1857, and the ceremony included a procession headed by 70 to 80

<sup>34</sup> WT, 12 August 1854.

<sup>35</sup> EPG, August 28 1852.

<sup>36</sup> EPG, 3 May 1856.

<sup>37</sup> WT, 9 May 1857.

<sup>38</sup> WT, 23 August 1861.

<sup>39</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 28 November 1876.

of the school's children, who were afterwards treated to the obligatory tea and buns, and 'a fire-balloon and other amusements'.<sup>40</sup>

Heathcoat, at the advanced age of 75, announced in 1859 that he would not stand again as a Parliamentary candidate, and was to retire from public life.<sup>41</sup> The workers at the Factory gave him a fitting testimonial, in a year when they had been granted Saturday afternoons off – in the hope that this 'would result in the improvement of their moral and physical condition'.<sup>42</sup> In addition to the former 'gift', the management, no doubt having received the full backing of Heathcoat, in 1859 organised a picnic for the employees and their families with sports and entertainments in a field on the Halberton Road.<sup>43</sup> The closure of the Factory for three days and the success of the picnic prompted other employers in the town to organise a similar event in August 1860. Sufficient funds were raised by subscription, with Heathcoat and Company contributing £50, and when the day came 8,000 people ventured to the picnic field.<sup>44</sup>

John Heathcoat died at his home, Bolham House, on 18 January 1861, aged 78. As the town's newspaper stated 'now he rests from his labours: the trusted friend, the honoured master, the beloved relation, the patriot, the philanthropist, the promoter of education and piety, and the friend of the young'.<sup>45</sup> He was laid to rest in the family vault in St Peter's Churchyard, alongside the remains of his wife, three of his children,<sup>46</sup> and his two sons-in-law.

His eldest male descendant, John Heathcoat-Amory, one of the directors of the Factory, exhibited many of his grandfather's traits; his care for the poor had prompted him to set up a soup kitchen in Tiverton in 1855,<sup>47</sup> he succeeded John Heathcoat as Alderman of Westexe Ward in 1859,<sup>48</sup> had chosen to equip 20 men of the newly-formed Tiverton Rifle Corps,<sup>49</sup> and offered to host the 1861 annual festival of the Tiverton Temperance Society at the Factory School.<sup>50</sup> In the sphere of education, he had become an early shareholder of

<sup>40</sup> *EPG*, 24 October 1857.

<sup>41</sup> *WT*, 23 April 1859.

<sup>42</sup> *WT*, 14 July 1860.

<sup>43</sup> *WT*, 27 August 1859.

<sup>44</sup> *WT*, 18 August 1860.

<sup>45</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 22 January 1861.

<sup>46</sup> His daughter Anne, and two sons who died in infancy.

<sup>47</sup> *EPG*, 22 December 1855.

<sup>48</sup> *WT*, 12 November 1859.

<sup>49</sup> *EPG*, 28 January 1860.

<sup>50</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 1 January 1861.

the innovatory Devon County School at West Buckland,<sup>51</sup> and was listed as a patron,<sup>52</sup> and, later, a director of Sampford Peverell's East Devon County School.<sup>53</sup> He chaired an interesting and informative lecture at the Athenaeum, Tiverton, in September 1860, given by Sir John Taylor Coleridge entitled Public School Education.<sup>54</sup>

The admissions register of the Factory Infants School in 1861 shows that just over one hundred entered, of whom only 30 were children of factory employees. As their ages ranged from 18 months to just over six years,<sup>55</sup> it is clear that the school served as a crèche, enabling the mothers to work in the Factory or elsewhere. The Factory had long ago introduced a night school, and by 1861 the attendance there was between 300 and 400 children,<sup>56</sup> whereas a similar institution at Elmore attracted just 28 youths and adults,<sup>57</sup> and one for adults at the National School in St Andrew Street gave instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, for a penny a week.<sup>58</sup>

In April 1863 John Heathcoat Amory married Henrietta Unwin, and their first child was born two years later. In the evening of the day of his baptism pupils from those schools under the family's patronage were given tea in the grounds of Bolham House, where Heathcoat Amory had resided following the death of his grandfather. Also present in the evening were the 'young ladies of Miss Heathcoat's school'.<sup>59</sup> This was Eloise, John Heathcoat's eldest daughter, who kept a training school for governesses at Bolham.<sup>60</sup> Little is known of the school's history, but the 1841 census shows 30 'young ladies' between ten and fifteen years of age, and that of 1861 shows 36 aged between sixteen and twenty-three. The latter also shows teachers of English and Drawing, German and Music, English, and French. On both occasions all the teachers and 'young ladies' were living at 'Bolham School'.<sup>61</sup>

A typical summer treat was given in 1866 to the children of the Factory School, by that time often referred to as the Heathcoat School. Coffee and

<sup>51</sup> WT, 25 August 1860.

<sup>52</sup> EFP, 26.6.1861. At which time it was known as the Middle Class Proprietary School.

<sup>53</sup> WT, 23 June 1863.

<sup>54</sup> EPG, 8 September 1860. The lecture was published, and subsequently ran to three editions.

<sup>55</sup> DHC 2745C/EFA1.

<sup>56</sup> EPG, 30 August 1861.

<sup>57</sup> WT, 9 December 1862.

<sup>58</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 8 January 1861.

<sup>59</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 23 May 1865.

<sup>60</sup> *1868 Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. 5, Minutes of evidence taken before the Commissioners, part 2*, 625. Available online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=INNMAAAAcAAJ&pg>

<sup>61</sup> TNA HO 107/255/5 (1841); TNA R.G. 9/1480 (1861).



cake was provided for 500 in their classrooms, which had been ‘beautifully decorated with evergreens, flowers, &c., tastefully arranged and formed into crowns, garlands and other devices.’ After tea they all went out to the large playground at the back of the school where ‘they amused themselves in various ways, some playing at games, others trying their skill in jumping and racing for prizes, or scrambling for nuts.’ The report in the *Gazette* summed up these regular events thus

These little sociable reunions falling as they do upon the impressionable mind of youth have a far greater effect than many imagine in cementing a bond of union more kindly in its nature than that which is simply formed from the relations of employer and employed. Children naturally look with affectionate regard as well as respect on those who have habitually and kindly taken an interest in the promotion of their innocent pleasures, parents look gratefully on benefactors of their children.<sup>62</sup>

The Heathcoat ladies took a prominent role in the life of the townspeople, especially the children. One example of the results of the personal interest shown by these ladies was the excellent concert given by the Factory School Singing Class, a particular favourite of Mrs Heathcoat Amory who always took time to visit the school and hear them practice.<sup>63</sup> Eloise Heathcoat and Caroline Brewin attended many functions, and, indeed, organised and paid for the Heathcoat and Elmore School treats in 1867.<sup>64</sup> Ambrose Brewin had been instrumental in founding a Dispensary in Fore Street, and, larger premises being needed, his widow purchased property in Bampton Street, which was demolished and rebuilt as a new Dispensary and Infirmary. Her sister-in-law, Eloise, gave a further £600 for the completion of a ward to be called the John Heathcoat Ward.<sup>65</sup>

John Heathcoat Amory added considerably to the good deeds of the family; he provided reading rooms in Quick’s Court near the Factory,<sup>66</sup> and in 1866 he bought a new set of instruments for the Town Band.<sup>67</sup> He was approached during 1867 to become a Liberal candidate for the Borough of Tiverton.<sup>68</sup> He acceded to their wishes, and in the General

<sup>62</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 19 June 1866.

<sup>63</sup> *Tiverton Gazette*, 26 December 1865.

<sup>64</sup> *WT*, 18 June 1867.

<sup>65</sup> *EPG*, 8 February 1867.

<sup>66</sup> *WT*, 11 December 1866. This later became known as the Working Men’s Institute.

<sup>67</sup> *WT*, 20 July 1866.

<sup>68</sup> *WT*, 9 April 1867.



Election of 1868 was returned unopposed, following in the footsteps of his grandfather.

In the forty years covered by this study, one family, the Heathcoats, had transformed the lives of almost all the inhabitants of Tiverton in several ways, most notably providing work for a large proportion of the town's men, women and youth, and constructing a considerable number of houses for them, building first a dispensary and then an infirmary for the sick, adding a church in Westexe and giving support to most of the religious groups irrespective of denomination, and building, equipping and maintaining schools to instruct infants, boys and girls, and adults. In the founder of the dynasty, John Heathcoat, was a man of great vision with an independence of thought and action. Although his fortune had come about through machines, it was the well-being of people that he cared about, especially children. Was it charity or philanthropy? He certainly gave large amounts of money to many organisations to ease particular social problems in Tiverton, but if the meaning of philanthropy is to address the root cause of those problems and to enable people to help themselves and better themselves, then John Heathcoat can be considered a true philanthropist. Moreover, successive generations of the Heathcoat Amory family have continued to follow the example of their famous ancestor.

## 6

# The Development of Schools for the Pauper Children of Devon 1833–1870

HELEN TURNBULL

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### Introduction

Amid concerns at the escalating cost of poor relief, the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act was passed to improve efficiency and control the ever-increasing burden on rate payers. Parishes were united into unions and inmates from the parish workhouses were moved to union workhouses run by boards of guardians. Under the Act, Poor Law guardians were legally obliged to provide workhouse children with at least three hours schooling a day. Much of the administration of workhouses came under the Poor Law Commissioners (later known as the Poor Law Board), but education in the workhouses came partly under the remit of the Committee of Council on Education (CCE) established in 1839.<sup>1</sup>

The Consolidated Order of the Poor Law Board prescribes that the children ‘be instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic and the principles of the Christian religion and such other instruction shall be imparted to them as may fit them for service’ (Article 114). Teachers were to regulate discipline and keep the children clean and orderly.<sup>2</sup> A code of behaviour was in effect a

<sup>1</sup> Peter Higginbotham, *The history of the workhouse*, available at <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/admin/index.shtml>. Accessed 1 November 2016.

<sup>2</sup> John Frederick Archibold, *A Consolidated and other Orders of the Poor Law Commissioners, and the Poor Law Board* (London: Shaw, 1859), 365. Available online at <https://www.forgottenbooks>. Accessed 1 November 2016.

means of social control. From 1846 an annual government grant of £30,000 was made towards teachers' salaries. The CCE Inspectors' reports helped to maintain the required standard and provided valuable information as to the schools' performance.<sup>3</sup>

HM Inspectors' Reports reveal a variance in the level of achievement of the pauper pupils in both intellectual schooling and industrial training. This article will show how the newly formed unions interpreted the government guidelines on education. It will also investigate the alternative institutions providing accommodation and education for needy orphans. Due to the paucity of local records available, particularly the minutes of the meetings of the Poor Law guardians which were sparse in relation to education, newspaper articles are used to illustrate the debates surrounding the subject. They show the diverse ways in which the various guardians fulfilled their legal obligations.

A model for the provision of education was provided by the Poor Law Commissioners. This model was adopted by the Guardians of the Axminster Union Workhouse who prescribed that after twelve o'clock daily, following lessons in religious instruction, reading, writing, and arithmetic, the boys and girls should be placed in classes, selected by the Visiting Committee, under instructors in the occupations of tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, gardening, straw plaiting and household service.<sup>4</sup>

## Guardians

It was generally agreed that a basic education and training could break the cycle of pauperism and it was considered false economy to falter on the children's education and training.<sup>5</sup> But the financial implications of providing schools for pauper children obviously influenced the guardians' actions. They had the challenge of providing an education and training whilst ensuring that the poor rates did not become inflated.

Because guardians were accountable to the ratepayers, their decisions were largely pragmatic. However, whereas some were committed to their duty of care, others clearly failed. This might be explained by the composition of the board. Those boards containing influential members such as Lord Courtenay of the Exeter St. Thomas Board, were often deemed to be highly efficient.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Higginbotham, *The history of the workhouse*.

<sup>4</sup> TNA MH12/2095/263 Folios 388-391, 5.1.1838, available at <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10564498>

<sup>5</sup> WT, 21 July 1838, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Parker, *Early Victorian Devon*, 148.

Certainly there seems to be a correlation between the general welfare of the children and the standard of education. In 1848 sixteen children in the Okehampton Union Workhouse died, apparently from neglect.<sup>7</sup> That year, HM Inspector reported on the school, announcing that he ‘considered the school to be in a very unsatisfactory condition’.<sup>8</sup>

Some guardians objected to pauper children receiving a better education in the workhouse than those of the independent labourer. Farmers who were rate payers argued that their children were deprived of an education as they needed to work on the farm and were therefore unable to acquire any education at all.<sup>9</sup> This point is taken up by the Revd James Mules from Bishop’s Tawton. In a letter to the Secretary of the Diocesan Board of Education in 1850 he writes

The instruction which is being administered to the children of paupers in our Union-houses is not only in advance of that imparted to the farmers’ sons, but that education also which is bestowed in our charity schools on the children of the labouring poor, though with less pretensions than the former, as regards the kind and amount of instruction.<sup>10</sup>

There was generally controversy over the curriculum. A common complaint was that since the Government rewarded teachers through a system of payment by results, teachers focused their attention on intellectual subjects. The Exeter St Thomas Union Guardians complained that the government system tempted the schoolmaster to train a few boys to the ‘higher steps of arithmetical knowledge’ in order to receive a premium. A case was cited where a pauper boy remained at the workhouse until the age of seventeen, by which time he had become a pupil teacher and had earned about £27 from the government grant and gained a place at the training college.

Since the preoccupation of the time was that a person’s social class was defined at birth, education was seen in terms of social engineering rather than social mobility.<sup>11</sup> The St Thomas Guardians considered it unjust to spend so much on one child, thereby reducing funds available for the industrial training of the other children deemed necessary for their future employment.

<sup>7</sup> Richard K. Morriss, ‘The Rise and Fall of Okehampton Workhouse’, *Devon Buildings Group Newsletter*, no. 28, Summer 2010, 13.

<sup>8</sup> WT, 29 September 1849, 5.

<sup>9</sup> WT, 12 January 1856, 2.

<sup>10</sup> EPG, 24 August 1850, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Horn, *Education in Rural England*, 12.

Consequently, at that time, they resolved to reject the government grant in aid of their schools so that they had freedom to reorganise the curriculum. They firmly believed that industrial pursuits should form the chief instrument of the instruction provided.<sup>12</sup>

This view was shared by many guardians and commentators alike. One complained that the schoolroom did not prepare the children for the workplace and suggested that the children would prefer to discuss the different places on the map of the world rather than dirtying their hands with such common things as turnips or mangold wurzels.<sup>13</sup> Others argued that a broad curriculum was unnecessary. One of the Tiverton Guardians argued that it should not include geography and grammar. The Chairman however, pointed out that the teachers were remunerated by the Poor Law Board and consequently had to comply with their wishes.<sup>14</sup>

The Totnes Union Guardians obviously favoured a good intellectual schooling for their inmates since the Inspector gave 'a very favourable report on the state of the lessons in the school rooms'.<sup>15</sup> A correspondent writing to the editor of the *Western Morning News* concerning the administration of the Plymouth Workhouse appeared to share that view when he suggested that the Poor Law made no provision for talented children to fulfil their potential and clearly felt this should be rectified.<sup>16</sup> The same correspondent also criticised the industrial training provided by the Plymouth Guardians. Firstly, he complained that it was conducted by adult paupers whose contact with the children was a disturbing moral influence. Secondly he made the point that the boys were taught shoemaking and tailoring, and like many other observers on the topic, he complained that this training would not benefit the children on leaving the workhouse since the market was flooded with those particular tradesmen.<sup>17</sup>

In 1843 Mr E. Carlton Tuffnell, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, commented on the industrial training at the Exeter City Workhouse, where the girls were taught to sew but the boys received no industrial training at all. He stated that the picking of oakum was hardly beneficial. Seven years later, Mr J. Ruddock, HM Schools Inspector for Devon, pointed out to the CCE the difficulty experienced by union guardians in providing an intellectual education together with an industrial training. He stated that boys who

<sup>12</sup> WT, 27 September 1856, 5.

<sup>13</sup> WMN, 16 December 1867, 4.

<sup>14</sup> WT, 13 March 1866, 2.

<sup>15</sup> WT, 13 June 1857, 7.

<sup>16</sup> WMN, 5 April 1869, 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

worked in the garden during the five months of summer spent little time in the classroom. Consequently, whatever instruction they had received during the preceding winter months was duly forgotten.<sup>18</sup>

However, the Newton Abbot Guardians appeared to have the answer. One of the guardians, a Mr Hutchings, was an innovative man. He acknowledged that the children were receiving an excellent education but felt it did not necessarily prepare the boys for the hard labour needed when they quit the workhouse. He put forward a scheme which involved the acquisition of land and the hiring of a man to oversee the farm work. After much discussion it was agreed that an agricultural committee be formed in order to supervise and control the operation of spade husbandry.<sup>19</sup> A superintendent was subsequently appointed with the sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners. The committee then reported that half of the boys attended school half the day while the others worked outdoors and *vice versa*. When the weather was unsuitable for outdoor work, the boys were employed in industrial pursuits indoors. The committee added that a satisfactory return on the land had also been achieved.<sup>20</sup>

## Chaplains

The principal duty of the chaplain, or indeed teacher, was to furnish the children with a moral code. Not all unions employed a chaplain but his input could have a positive effect. The chaplain at Totnes Union clearly took a keen interest in the children's progress. In fact, following the Inspector's visit in 1849, the report read 'the girls' school is not so efficient, [as the boys' school] but superior to the average of union schools – much is owing to the chaplain of the union'.<sup>21</sup> Another clue as to the impact of a conscientious chaplain is found in the same report when the Inspector commented that 'the care and attention of the Chaplain is apparent in the condition of these schools'.<sup>22</sup>

## Teachers

Initially, in some unions, teachers were drawn from within the workhouse. In the early days of the Bideford Union, the children were under the care of a

<sup>18</sup> WT, 24 August 1850, 3.

<sup>19</sup> WT, 30 November 1850, 7.

<sup>20</sup> EPG, 11 October 1851, 4.

<sup>21</sup> WT, 29 September 1849, 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

man and his wife who were selected from the inmates.<sup>23</sup> This shows what little value was placed upon teachers. However, in general, advertisements tend to suggest that a slightly better quality of teacher was required. Salaries ranged between £20 and £30 per annum for a male teacher together with board and lodgings whereas a female could expect ten pounds per annum less. A further sum was awarded by the CCE on the recommendation of the Schools' Inspector depending upon the grade achieved on inspection. This was paid by the Poor Law Board from the consolidated fund. There were four grades under the headings, 'efficiency', 'competency', 'probation' and 'permission'.

Whilst the guardians did not require a highly qualified teacher, they did require one of a satisfactory level. Bideford Union placed an advertisement for a 'mistress' who could achieve a certificate of 'probation', therefore requiring at least a third grade.<sup>24</sup> Advertisements would often include a proviso for terminating employment should the requisite standard not be attained. An advertisement for a teacher for the Crediton Union read

The salary will be £25 per annum and provided the qualification of the person appointed should be such as to enable him to obtain the requisite certificate from the Committee of Council on Education, the salary will be increased to £50 per annum or to such other sum as the certificate awarded, but if the Committee of the Council of Education should award him such a certificate entitling him to a sum less than £20 per annum, he will be required to resign this office.<sup>25</sup>

The religious controversy which often surrounded elementary schools spilled over to the workhouse schools. A teacher's religious affiliation was often paramount. In the case of the Honiton Union, an advertisement for a schoolmistress stated clearly that it was essential that she should be a member of the Church of England.<sup>26</sup> This prompted a dissenter, with some indignation, to question the decision of the Guardians in effect to bar a dissenter from office. He asked why a dissenter would be unfit for office. Did not dissenters contribute to the poor rate? Gustavus Smith, a Guardian, explained that the daily religious services of the House embraced the doctrine of the Established Church and the education of the children in the schools was based on that and consequently officers of the Union should be of the same religious affiliation.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Alexander G. Duncan, 'Bideford Poor and Poorhouses 1830–1840', *TDA*, 50 (1918), 546.

<sup>24</sup> *WT*, 12 May 1860, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *EFPP*, 6 December 1849, 1.

<sup>26</sup> *WT*, 11 October 1845, 4.

<sup>27</sup> *WT*, 8 November 1845, 4.

Teachers were usually of a humble station,<sup>28</sup> and therefore had little power to influence the curriculum or equipment used for the children. Books and maps could be ordered by the guardians from the Poor Law Board and in the case of the Barnstaple Union, there was also a library. However, the teacher of the girls' school had never been given access to the library and the teacher of the boys' school had been supplied with one or two books for his own reading.<sup>29</sup>

In 1848 Mr Ruddock, the Inspector, provided a report on the state of the schools in the different union workhouses in Devon. There was a large variance in efficiency: Axminster, Barnstaple, Bideford, Crediton, East Stonehouse Boys School, Exeter (City), Honiton, Newton Abbot, Exeter St Thomas and Totnes were deemed very fair, the remaining nine unions were considered unsatisfactory. Reporting on the Tiverton Union the Inspector wrote, 'I can record no favourable impression of these schools; the religious instruction of the children is particularly defective'.<sup>30</sup>

The numbers admitted to each workhouse do not appear to correlate with efficiency, but it is difficult to establish how many infants were included. What is clear is that where no separate infant school was in existence, a downturn in achievement was noted. Such was the case in the South Molton Union Workhouse.<sup>31</sup>

An indication of the standard of education afforded the children in later years can only be derived from a few Inspectors' reports, or the certificates awarded. Standards of those schools listed above remained constant. The teacher of the Barnstaple Union Boys' School was praised by the Inspector in his report. He appeared to think that the teacher's skills were the result of attendance at a good teacher training school since he noted 'the master was trained at Exeter'.<sup>32</sup>

We learn that the teachers at Plympton St Mary Union 'passed a very fair examination',<sup>33</sup> as did those of Exeter St Thomas Union, although the Inspector added that the children 'did not show much intelligence'. The teachers at East Stonehouse Union also received a favourable report. The Inspector stated that the children displayed 'considerable intelligence and information' and he thought their state was very creditable to their teacher. The children appeared to be above average. The role of the Inspector

<sup>28</sup> Horn, *Education in Rural England*, 68.

<sup>29</sup> NDJ, 5 February 1857, 4.

<sup>30</sup> WT, 29 September 1849, 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> WMN, 20 February 1869, 2.



clearly made a positive impact on some of the schools. The Tiverton Union received a better report in 1853 when the Inspector stated ‘the boys were in a most satisfactory state of improvement and that great credit was due to the persevering master, Mr Hosegood. The girls were progressing very favourably under their newly elected mistress, Miss Shorten’.<sup>34</sup>

## Certified Schools and Orphan Homes

Another issue often hotly debated was the suggestion that children should be educated outside the workhouse in order to prevent contact with adult paupers who could be a bad influence. Mr Ruddock, the Inspector, was not alone when he argued that in order to prevent a ‘malign influence’ through contact between children and adult paupers, separate schools should be established for the children.<sup>35</sup> Dr James Kay, the First Secretary of the CCE was a proponent of district schools for pauper children funded by grouping unions together for that purpose.<sup>36</sup>

An alternative to the workhouse was the establishment of certified schools. The 1862 Poor Law (Certified Schools) Act enabled Poor Law guardians to pay for the children in their care to be boarded out. The amount would have been equivalent to the costs of the children had they remained in the workhouse. Later clarification from the Poor Law Board allowed guardians to pay additional amounts to include the proportion of the expenditure in support of the home.

The Kenton Industrial Home for Girls was a certified school. It appears to have been established in 1861 by the Countess of Devon.<sup>37</sup> After her death in 1867, the Earl assumed support for the school. As no prospectus survives, the style of education provided for the girls is not documented. There is no indication of the kind of elementary education provided. But the 1871 census reveals that the pupils were aged between nine and fifteen and the staff comprised a matron, schoolmistress and laundress. A number of sources indicate that laundry work was particularly important at Kenton. One such example is an advertisement placed by the home in 1869 for a position required for ‘a strong clean girl of 17, who ... has been well-trained in an industrial school’.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *EFP*, 14 July 1853, 4.

<sup>35</sup> *WT*, 24 August 1850, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Higginbotham, *The Children's Homes Website: Separate and District Schools*, available at <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/DS>. Accessed 28 June 2018.

<sup>37</sup> *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire*, 1866 (London: Kelly, 1866).

<sup>38</sup> *EPG*, 22 May 1869, 1.

Newspaper articles give clues about the circumstances of some of the pupils. One example comes from 1870 when *HMS Captain*, a Royal Naval warship, sank with the loss of around 480 officers and crew. The Portsmouth Ladies Committee of the Captain Relief Fund was set up to support the widows and orphans of the disaster. One of their members, a Mrs Burgoyne offered to pay the fees for one girl to attend the Kenton Industrial School.<sup>39</sup>

Like so many homes for orphans and, indeed, elementary schools, the Industrial and Orphan Home for Girls was established by members of the Anglican Church. It opened in 20 Magdalen Street, Exeter, in 1859. Its object was to train girls for domestic service. Girls were admitted at the age of thirteen and upwards but the restriction was that they must be of good character. Like so many other orphanages, they were not to be illegitimate. When the home moved to Torbay in 1864 it became accredited as a certified school. It later returned to Exeter and was taken over by the members of the Community of St Wilfred's, an Anglican order of nuns.<sup>40</sup>

As in the case of the Kenton home, some girls were sent from the workhouse. However, the boarding out of workhouse children brought about a matter for debate by the St Thomas Board of Guardians in November 1866, when the Chairman, the Earl of Devon, proposed an increase in the allowance made to two schools at Torbay and Kenton for the maintenance of pauper children placed there by the Union. This was accepted but later rescinded at the following meeting, when the Guardians put forward a number of counter arguments. Firstly, they believed that the Union Workhouse had more than sufficient capacity for the children to be housed and trained separately from the adult paupers within the institution itself. It was therefore unnecessary to send the children elsewhere, incurring additional expense.<sup>41</sup> Another argument for rescinding the motion centred on the nature of the religious training provided in the home. Some described the schools as Tractarian, controlled by 'ritualists'. The Earl of Devon stated that the children at Kenton attended those places of worship according to their parents' wishes. A further cause for complaint was the lengthy period during which the children were resident. Many objected to children remaining until the age of sixteen when they could be earning a living. Children from workhouse schools made perfectly adequate servants to small tradesmen and farmers whilst those from the industrial homes were given a superior training which fitted them as servants to the aristocracy and clergy.

<sup>39</sup> *Hampshire Telegraph*, 21 December 1870, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Higginbotham, *The history of the workhouse*.

<sup>41</sup> WT, 4 December 1866, 6.

However, a counter argument was put that many governors and chaplains of gaols, matrons of reformatories and others had remarked that the most hopeless cases were those who had been trained in union workhouses. It was a false economy to send children out when they had little training.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, the point was made that could be described as a conflict of interests. Since the Kenton Industrial Home was under the patronage of the Countess of Devon, it was alleged that the Earl's proposals relating to the boarding out of workhouse children was intended to increase the number of children at the Kenton home and to increase the amount paid for each girl. It was alleged that Lord Devon was 'touting' for inmates for the home established by his Countess.<sup>43</sup>

But there was a stigma attached to the workhouse. A correspondent writing to the *Western Morning News* in 1869 stated

How much better would it be if these children lived in a house of their own, were sent to the common school, dressed like other children and let to play with them in the school ground, and to compete with them in the form and were put at a proper age to learn such a trade as they were meet fitted for?<sup>44</sup>

It seems that this was achieved at the Chardstock Industrial School for Training Servants, and was the brainchild of the Vicar, the Revd Charles Woodcock, whom Sellman describes as 'remarkable'.<sup>45</sup> With zeal and perseverance, Woodcock added industrial teaching to his National School. Initially, the Industrial School was designed for ten poor girls from the parish to be given board and lodgings and prepared for domestic service. Its mission was to keep 'orphan and other destitute children from the malaria of the union'.<sup>46</sup> Girls were usually admitted at the age of fifteen and were 'selected for their good conduct and aptitude from the upper classes of the day and Sunday schools'.<sup>47</sup> Since the Industrial School was an integral part of the National School, those receiving industrial training mixed with the day scholars. By 1857 the Industrial School had been extended to accommodate

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 14 .

<sup>43</sup> *EPG*, 23 November 1866, 5.

<sup>44</sup> *WMN*, 5 April 1869, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Sellman, *Devon Village Schools*, 32.

<sup>46</sup> David Everett (Chardstock Historical Record Group), *Chardstock Industrial School*, Appendix B, taken from *Western Advertiser*, 31 October 1855. Available at <http://www.chardstockwebmuseum.org>

<sup>47</sup> P. J. Wood & Chardstock Historical Record Group, *A History of Education in Chardstock and All Saints 1712 to 2009*, 14. Letter from Revd E. D. Tinling.

boys and girls whose fathers had fallen in the Crimean War. A number of these children were admitted from Plymouth. Their expenses were covered by the Patriotic Fund.<sup>48</sup>

The Devon and Cornwall Female Orphan Asylum was another institution which catered for girls whose fathers had perished in the service of their country. It was established in Octagon Street, Plymouth, in 1834. The principal object of the Asylum was to rear, educate and train girls to become good female domestic servants.<sup>49</sup> The Earl of Morley took the chair at the early meetings. The Duchess of Kent was Patroness, the Earl of Morley, President, and the Duke of Bedford, Vice President.<sup>50</sup> Funding was through donations, subscriptions, church collections, and fund raising events usually arranged by a ladies' committee. A number of naval and military officers supported the institution and helped to raise its status.

The children were aged between nine and nineteen years.<sup>51</sup> Applicants for admission were selected by a periodic ballot of the Asylum's donors and subscribers although a number of inmates were directly maintained by the Seamen and Marines' Female Orphan Fund. Advertisements were posted twice yearly for new entrants who 'must be furnished with a written recommendation from a subscriber or life governor, with a certificate of baptism or other proof of age, register of parents' marriage and place of parochial settlement together with a medical certificate'.<sup>52</sup> The Secretary in his report in the thirtieth year of the institution's existence stated that, 'the committee believe that it [the home] will bear comparison with that of any institution, even of the highest in repute in this land'.<sup>53</sup>

The Royal British Orphan Asylum for Female Orphans in Devonport originated in 1839 out of a split in the management of the Devon and Cornwall Female Orphan Asylum. It too was concerned with the orphans of soldiers and sailors and dockyard men. Children were maintained, clothed and trained in the 'habits of industry'. Its patron became Queen Victoria and the venture was supported by the Dukes of Cambridge and Northumberland together with the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe.<sup>54</sup> In 1845, the foundation stone for a new building was laid by Hugh, Earl Fortescue, on a site provided by

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, and Appendices.

<sup>49</sup> WMN, 29 May 1863, 4.

<sup>50</sup> EPG, 22 February 1834, 1.

<sup>51</sup> WMN, 16 March 1860, 1.

<sup>52</sup> WMN, 21 September 1869, 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Western Daily Mercury*, 27 May 1864, 4.

<sup>54</sup> WMN, 4 March 1861, 4.

the Lord of the Manor, Sir E. Saint Aubyn.<sup>55</sup> Fund raising initiatives were supported by the Lords of the Admiralty and there was often a naval flavour to the events; the Band of the Royal Marines played at bazaars and this all helped to raise the profile. In addition, the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund made two large donations.<sup>56</sup>

Girls were admitted from the age of seven to sixteen. In 1867 the Government Inspector and the Revd A. Grant, Inspector to the Royal Patriotic Fund, both gave the home a satisfactory report.<sup>57</sup> The institution also ran a registry in order to find positions for the girls as domestic servants. The 1871 census reveals that the children came mainly from within Devon and Southern England. The staff comprised a matron, chief school mistress, assistant school mistress, cook and laundress.

## Conclusion

The various homes all had similar objectives but so many variables existed that no two establishments operated in the same way. The difference between the workhouse schools and most of the orphanages was that whereas the workhouse was required to take destitute children with no recommendations, the reverse is true with regard to the orphanages. The principal factors which affected the children's experience were the enthusiasm and ability of certain individuals to mobilize resources. Such an individual was the Revd Charles Woodstock. Individual guardians with vision and determination changed the lives of those in their care. Teachers 'on the front line' clearly made a difference. The status and initiatives of the aristocracy not only generated income but elevated the reputation of the homes they supported. Since the moral behaviour of the children was paramount, we should not forget the clergy. The schools inspectors whose efforts and initiatives shaped the way in which the schools were run were hugely important. Finally, whereas the actions of certain individuals led to improved efficiency in pauper schools, others more concerned with cost cutting failed to meet the standard required by the CCE. However in the case of the pauper schools where 'best practice' was evident, the children sometimes received a standard of education comparable to that in the voluntary schools.

<sup>55</sup> Brian Moseley, *Old Devonport UK*, available at <http://www.olddevonport.uk>. Accessed 1 November 2016.

<sup>56</sup> PWDRO 3969. Registers, minutes, photographs and papers, 1846–2008.

<sup>57</sup> WMN, 2 July 1867, 4.

## 7

# Lace Schools in East Devon

JULIA NEVILLE

*Case study material provided by Jackie Bryon, Sue Dymond and Gill Selley*

Before the introduction of compulsory attendance it was a common complaint amongst those interested in progressive education that children were taken away from school to work far earlier than was desirable. In industrial areas from 1833 the Factory Acts regulated much juvenile employment, but for other industries and in agricultural areas there was little regulation. This chapter looks at one particular form of employment specific to Devon, the lace schools, and the impact their existence had on access to formal education. The sources used come principally from parliamentary papers related to children's employment: they include the only direct testimonies from Devon children of the period identified during the *Early Victorian Schools* project.

The manufacture of 'pillow lace', lace created using bobbins, threads and pins set out on a pillow, had been widespread nationally before the introduction of cheaper machine-made lace. During the early Victorian period its area of production reduced until by the 1860s it was confined to two areas of England: South Midlands counties such as Buckinghamshire, and Devon, chiefly in the area along the southern coast east from Exmouth. Lace made here was given the broad title of Honiton lace and, according to its historian, John Yallop,<sup>1</sup> had been manufactured in the area since the sixteenth century. It had experienced something of a revival in Devon, often associated with the lavish use of it in 1840 by Queen Victoria in her wedding trousseau. The flounce for the dress alone gave employment to 200 women in Beer for six

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Yallop, *History of the Honiton Lace Industry* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992).





**Figure 1.** The Lace-making tradition in Beer. This is an Edwardian postcard, but the lace maker may have been one of the pupils in the 1860s (Postcard in the author's possession).

months.<sup>2</sup> However, the trade was never to recover to the levels of its heyday and throughout the period under study earnings, based on piece-work, fell to such a low level that it became almost impossible to earn a living from lace-making.

There are references to East Devon lace schools in the 1833 Enquiry about school provision, although the only two places where they were identified were East Budleigh, mentioned as having 'four schools in which 65 females are taught to read and make lace', and Harpford, where 'one or two elderly women ... instruct children in lace-making and reading'.<sup>3</sup> Earlier, the 1818 Enquiry had mentioned two lace schools in Littleham (Exmouth) which

<sup>2</sup> WT, 15 February 1840.

<sup>3</sup> 1833 *Enquiry*, 175, 185.



Figure 2. A Lace-Making School in South Devon, by Percy Macquoid, R.I., 1982 (Print in the author's possession).

the Vicar, who made the report, considered to be a 'great obstacle' to the attendance of girls at the National School; and a lace school at Otterton.<sup>4</sup>

Employment in lace schools was next mentioned in a Government enquiry in 1842, the *Enquiry by the Poor Law Commissioners into the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*. The Assistant Commissioner for the South West, Alfred Austin, was required to inquire into pay, working conditions and implications for health, and also into 'its effects upon the opportunities they have for obtaining school instruction as well as moral and religious instruction'. Austin recognised that, though lace-making could not strictly be classified as 'agricultural' and therefore within his terms of reference, the wages that family members were able to earn from lace could form a significant part of the agricultural labourer's household income. Earnings by the labourers' daughters could be 'considerable' and he pointed out specifically that where there was 'employment for the agricultural

<sup>4</sup> 1818 *Education of the Poor*.



population besides that of farm labour ... in Devonshire the lace-making', then there were no reports of 'want of food'.<sup>5</sup>

Austin's interviews with two of the Medical Officers to the South Molton Board of Guardians highlighted some of the environmental health issues they observed in 'small rooms' where lace work was carried out. This theme was to recur within a parallel report undertaken by the Children's Employment Commission, which specifically covered the trade of making lace.<sup>6</sup> Dr Leonard Stewart was despatched as Assistant Commissioner to undertake interviews and collect evidence in the South West. As he rightly pointed out, the phrase 'lace schools' gave a false impression. The schools, he said, were 'more properly workshops'.<sup>7</sup> Children, by that time exclusively girls, were sent to learn how to make lace and remained, producing work which they or the mistress sold, until they got married or set up workrooms of their own. In some schools they were also taught to read, or at least practised reading, and, although Stewart's main concern was the conditions of work, he also investigated the opportunities the girls had to access education other than in the craft of lace-making. He interviewed 39 people in all: in Sidmouth, Newton Poppleford, Beer, Seaton, Lympstone, Exmouth, Ottery St Mary, Woodbury, Woodbury Salterton, Budleigh Salterton and Honiton. The individuals comprised fifteen pupils, fourteen lace schoolmistresses, five lace makers, two teachers in general schools and three others, as shown in Table 1. (At end of article).

It appears that when he reached Honiton at the end of his tour, Stewart had accumulated so much information that he felt nothing would be added by recording further interviews with pupils as they 'merely repeated the information which has usually been elicited from these little nymphs of the many twinkling fingers'.<sup>8</sup> His Honiton interviews were solely with lace workers, and in Axminster he found lace dealers but no schools.<sup>9</sup>

Stewart did record the way in which two communities were seeking to gain the benefit of combining a more formal approach to education with the opportunities for earning given by the lace schools. In Seaton the teacher at the National School explained that 'the clergyman of the place has had lace-making introduced as a branch of instruction at the National School, and a young woman from Beer is employed teaching lace-making to the little girls'

<sup>5</sup> Poor Law Commissioners, *Report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture* (London: HMSO, 1843), 16. Available online to those with access to ProQuest.

<sup>6</sup> 1843 *Children's Employment Report*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, d31, interview no 128.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, d33.

in order to ‘prevent the girls from being removed by their mothers in order to take their lessons in lace-making’.<sup>10</sup> The church was evidently keen to drive down the appeal of their competitors by demonstrating that the National School could offer both a general and a commercial education.

In Woodbury Salterton a local charitable benefactor, Miss Pidsley, whose praises, according to Stewart, were sung by ‘several of the scholars and many of the neighbouring cottagers’, supported a school. The teacher there testified that she taught ‘reading, spelling, sewing and knitting’ to boys and girls and that the girls did not begin to make lace until they were at least eight years old.<sup>11</sup> Marianne Pidsley<sup>12</sup> is well-known as the ‘founder’ of Woodbury Salterton. She had inherited a substantial holding of properties from her father which enabled her to give generously for charitable purposes. In the 1840s she established the infrastructure for the new parish of Woodbury Salterton, building the church, vicarage, school and a well, in order to form a new centre for what had previously been a scattering of cottages and farms. Creating a school was one of her first actions: she rented a cottage to use as a school to prevent the need for children to walk into Woodbury. This is the school referred to in the interview; it was replaced in 1847 by a purpose-built establishment.

The overall picture presented by the report shows that only one of the girls interviewed actually started lace before the age of six. Four of the lace schoolmistresses (just over a quarter of those interviewed) refer to teaching the pupils to read, although this does not necessarily imply the others did not. The levels of literacy recorded vary from being able to read only ‘telling their letters’ to reading biblical passages. Only one girl could write and cipher. Sunday school was the only other form of schooling mentioned.

Stewart concluded his report regretfully stating that ‘numbers of parents are unwilling that their children should attain more than their own measure of information’ and ‘there too commonly exists a desire, on the part of the heads of families, to “turn their children to account,” and keep them as subordinate instruments of their own plans, which are often blind and low in the extreme’.<sup>13</sup>

No government action specific to lace schools appears to have resulted from this report, and, twenty years later, another commissioner was despatched to

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, d30, interview no. 120.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, d32, interview no. 134.

<sup>12</sup> Malcolm Randle, *The Story of Marianne Pidsley, Founder of the Holy Trinity Church and the Village of Woodbury Salterton*, available on-line at [http://www.woodburyhistorysociety.co.uk/uploads/5/6/3/8/56381833/the\\_marianne\\_pidsley\\_story.pdf](http://www.woodburyhistorysociety.co.uk/uploads/5/6/3/8/56381833/the_marianne_pidsley_story.pdf). Accessed 8 August 2018.

<sup>13</sup> *1843 Children’s Employment Report*, 125.

Devon to collect information for another report about children's employment. In 1862 the Children's Employment Commission began an investigation into employment of children (under 13) and young persons (under 18) in 'trades and manufactures not yet regulated by law'. Such trades included chimney-sweeping, prompted by the national outcry that followed publication of Devonian author Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*, written in 1861 while he was staying in Bideford. The 'fairy tale' was really in part a tract about the iniquities of the employment of young boys as chimney sweeps. Tom, his hero, 'could neither read nor write'. The manufacture of lace was another trade included within the Children's Employment Commission investigation. This included both machine and hand-made lace, and the conditions revealed by the Commissioner who visited the South West were as horrifying in their way as those in other manufactures scrutinised.<sup>14</sup> The lace schools were still over-crowded, poorly-ventilated and poorly-lit, and the children worked exceedingly long hours.

The task of investigating pillow lace-making fell to John White, who took evidence from ten communities in East Devon including Honiton, Sidbury, Sidmouth, Branscombe, Colyton, Seaton, Beer, Newton Poppleford, Otterton and Colaton Raleigh. White interviewed 60 people: five lace manufacturers, sixteen lace schoolmistresses, nine schoolmistresses from other schools, twenty-four pupils or former pupils, four clergymen and two others.<sup>15</sup> Although five of these communities were the same as those where interviews had taken place in 1842 none of the same individuals were interviewed.

White's principal findings related to the poor health resulting from the working conditions,<sup>16</sup> and to the fact that the lace makers were usually paid by the 'truck' system, not in cash.<sup>17</sup> These issues were to be covered by

<sup>14</sup> Children's Employment Commission, *Employment of Children and Young Persons in Trades and Manufactures not already Regulated by Law, First Report* (London: HMSO, 1863), hereafter *1863 Children's Employment Report*, 1. Available online for those with access to ProQuest.

<sup>15</sup> *1863 Children's Employment Report*. Witness statements on pages 246-255.

<sup>16</sup> For example, he describes at Mrs Clarke's in Sidbury '[a] room too small for the number who sit in it, viz., 18 girls and the mistress. By a rough measurement it is about 9ft 4 ins in one way, and a little less the other, and 7 feet high ... or 33 cubic feet per person. It was said by the sister of the mistress to be 'very headachy' ... When there is a fire girls must sit close into it, but the mistress said she then put something over a chair to screen them. On the day of my visit, though in winter, there was no fire, but a cloth in front of the fireplace to keep off the draught as the girls are close under it.'

<sup>17</sup> Under the system operated in East Devon it appears that some workers were paid at least in part in tokens rather than in cash, and that these tokens could only be used for the purchase of goods at shops owned by the lace dealers.

employment legislation, but the report also provides an insight into the way in which such employment deprived girls of the benefits of day-school education. The ages between which the girls attended the lace schools are shown in Table 2. (At end of article).

White reports a spread of ages between five and eight as the time at which girls were sent to 'lace schools'. References to pupils starting at the age of four, 'as soon as they could hold a pillow'<sup>18</sup> have disappeared and the most common time for starting school appears to be six or seven. This allowed the girls, where such provision existed, to attend infant school before starting lace school. Lace-making interrupted their education at an age much earlier than farm activity did for boys, who needed to be older and stronger to undertake regular employment. The testimonies given, shown in Table 3 (at end of article), show this pattern of interruption, and also the efforts made by some to maintain their schooling.

By comparison with the picture given in 1842, the Sunday School is now only part of a picture of educational provision. There are references to 'infant schools'. Such schools have traditionally been regarded as established in industrial areas as places of safety for very young children, permitting adults in the family to go to work.<sup>19</sup> It is evident, however, that in these lace-making communities they provided specific opportunities for very young girls to gain some degree of literacy before they were removed to lace schools. There are also more day-schools, with National Schools and charity schools both referred to, and, at least in Honiton and Otterton, there were night schools to which the girls might go. Night schools, originally part of the provision made by factories for their workforces, had expanded in numbers during the 1850s, being set up by employers, clergy or the local National School.<sup>20</sup> As in 1842, only a minority of lace schoolmistresses (four out of sixteen) explicitly refer to reading with their pupils.

<sup>18</sup> 1843 *Children's Employment Report*. Witness statement by Wheeler

<sup>19</sup> For example in Harold Silver, *The Concept of Popular Education* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965); Caroline Winterer, 'Avoiding a "Hothouse System of Education": Nineteenth-Century Early Childhood Education from the Infant Schools to the Kindergartens', *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol 43, No 3 (Autumn 1992), 289-314.

<sup>20</sup> Amongst many local references are those to the Buckerell night school run by the vicar's wife and another in the parish run by a local landlord for his labourers (*EPG*, 30 November 1860, 6); the Honiton night schools are referred to as being 'under the superintendence of the talented master of the national schools' (*WT*, 17 October 1865, 3).

## Conclusion

The opportunity for girls to supplement the family income by lace-making was a serious obstacle to their formal education. Traditional narratives have focused more on the tendency for boys in agricultural areas to leave school early for farming occupations, but for this group of East Devon girls the interruption came earlier, at the age of six or seven. The quality of tuition in reading offered by the lace schoolmistresses was variable as it was never the prime purpose of the school. In some schools it seems that nothing was offered, and, where it was, it tended to be little more than hearing the children read.

The availability of two Government Reports in 1842 and 1862 using interviews at lace schools in Devon does allow some conclusions to be drawn about the change that was taking place. The range of provision for education in 1862 was greater than it had been in 1842, including more day schools, infant schools and night schools. Girls had the opportunity to learn to read before going to lace school, as described in Table 3, or to attend school part-time, as two girls in Ottery were noted for doing in 1869, attending morning school only and making lace in the afternoons.<sup>21</sup> Opportunities for such access were, however, restricted. Girls in Honiton, a larger community than many others in East Devon, were more likely to be able to go to night-school. The introduction of compulsory elementary education from 1870 onwards did not immediately put a stop to the practice of the employment of girls in lace work. A teacher in the Exmouth National School could still write in 1872: ‘Annie Kempe, a most promising girl, has left school to learn lace-making. I urged her parents to allow her to remain at school during the year, but they would not ... The girl is 10 years old’.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> DHC 2253C/EFL/7. Ottery St Mary Girls’ National School Log Book, 25 October 1869.

<sup>22</sup> Beacon School, Exmouth. *Girls School Log Book, 1872–1936*, 25 March 1872.

**Table 1:** Devon Witnesses giving evidence to the Children's Employment Assistant Commissioner (1843 *Children's Employment Report*, d27-d33).

Sidmouth		
Anne Newbury	Pupil – began lace at 7	Has plenty of time for sleep, meals and her schooling
Sarah Hart	Parent	
Elizabeth Hart	Pupil – began lace at 6	Can read the Bible and Testament and goes to the church Sunday School, but cannot write
Agnes Harden	Pupil – began lace at 9	Can read ‘easy words’ and goes to the independent Sunday School
Mary Ann Rogers	Lace Schoolmistress	In the evening she teaches them to read
Newton Poppleford		
Emma Knowles	Pupil	Can read short words
Mary Gooding	Pupil – began lace at 13	Can read the Bible and Testament, and write her name
Sarah Tovey	Lace Schoolmistress	
Elizabeth Small	Pupil – began lace at 6	Can read the Testament and goes to meeting school on Sundays
Elizabeth Newbury	Lace Maker	
Elizabeth Mitchell	Pupil – began lace at 7	Can read her Bible and Testament, and any easy book, but cannot write; goes to the independent meeting
Eleanor Rice	Lace Schoolmistress	
Beer		
Mary Driver	Lace Schoolmistress	
Mary Ann Driver	Pupil – began lace at 7	Can read the ‘First of John’ in the New Testament
Sarah Holmes	Pupil – began lace at 10	
Elizabeth Perry	Pupil – began lace at 7	
Seaton		
Name not given	School Mistress	

Lympstone		
Lucy Bull	Pupil	Can read the Bible and the Testament and goes to Sunday school
Mary Bansey	Lace Schoolmistress	
Elizabeth Chalice	Lace Maker	
Anne Price	Pupil – began lace at 6	Can read in the Psalter and goes to Sunday-school
Maria Lewis	Pupil	
Exmouth		
Anne Stark	Lace Schoolmistress	The girls are all taught to read in the lace school from 3 to 4 o'clock
Mary Redman	Pupil – began lace at 5	She is backward with her reading and can only 'say her letters'
Elizabeth Payne	Pupil – began lace at 8	Can read, write, cipher and sew and goes to Ebenezer Sunday school
Susan Crutchell	Lace Schoolmistress	She teaches her scholars to read
Ottery St Mary		
Samuel Evans	Lace Dealer	
Woodbury		
Mary Knowles	Lace Schoolmistress	She teaches reading in her school. Some of the children can read middling' and 'some can only 'tell their letters'.
Susan Skinner & sister	Lace Schoolmistresses	
Mrs Green	Shopkeeper	
Woodbury Salterton		
Maria Hutchins	School Mistress	
Budleigh		
Mary Pyle	School Mistress	
Sally Cooper	School Mistress	
Otterton		
Mary Warmington	Lace Schoolmistress	

Honiton	
Ann Channon	Lace Maker
Ann Maria Channon	Lace Maker
Elizabeth Fildew	Lace Maker
Jemma Viney	Lace Maker

**Table 2.** Devon Witnesses giving evidence to the Children's Employment Commissioner, including remarks as to the age at which girls start lace-making (1863 *Children's Employment Report*, 246-255).

Honiton		
Mrs Godolphin	Lace Manufacturer	6 or 5, and many towards 7
Mary Griffin	Lace worker, former pupil	Attended as apprentice at 6 years old
Miss Davey	Lace Manufacturer	Has heard people speak of children beginning lace at 3 or 4 years' old but should think 4 was as young as they did
Mrs Croydon	Lace Schoolmistress	The common age for girls to come is 6
Sarah Fuzzell	Pupil	Went to a lace school at 5
Mrs Stevens	Lace Schoolmistress	
Caroline Perry	Pupil	Went to lace school when 5
Ann Waters and mother	Former pupil	Went at 7 to a lace mistress for three years
Rev J.A. Mackarness	Rector of Honiton	Most young females ... leave school early, about 7 or 8 years' old; the lace mistresses prefer them to be apprenticed at 6
Miss Spratt	National Schoolmistress	The girls who make lace leave school at 7 or 8 ...
Miss Avery	School teacher	
Miss Hillyer	School teacher	
Sidbury		
Harriet Wheeler	–	Go as soon as they can just hold a pillow



Amelia Clarke	Lace Schoolmistress	Takes them from 6 to 7 years old for 8 or 9 years
Elizabeth Ping	Lace Schoolmistress	Keeps them from 7 to 8 years old
Julia Pyne	Pupil	
Harriet Perry	Pupil	At the national school for some years then went to learn lace at her aunt's at 10 years old
Ellen Diamond	Pupil	At the national school from 6 to 8 years old then to lace school
<b>Sidmouth</b>		
Mrs Hayman	Lace Manufacturer	Formerly children used to have to go as apprentices for 7 years and went at 5 or 6 years old
Mr Samuel Chick	Lace Manufacturer	
Harriet and Emma Channon	Lace School pupil and former pupil	Mother – went as apprentice at 4¾; daughter – started at age 9
<b>Branscombe</b>		
Rev L Gidley	Curate	Usually begin at about 6 years old in the lace schools
Mary Gay	Schoolmistress	The common age to begin here is 7
Sarah Pavey	Lacemaker	Went at 6 years old as apprentice
Eliza Woodrow	Lace Schoolmistress	
Ann Purse	Lace Schoolmistress	
Samuel Coombs	Wife keeps a lace school	
<b>Colyton</b>		
Rev Mamerto Gueritz	Vicar	
<b>Seaton</b>		
Rev Cradock Glascott	Vicar of Seaton and Beer	I believe it is the general practice is ... 5 to 6 years
Miss Coles	Schoolmistress	They do not leave [infant school] for lace-making younger than 7
Miss Major	Schoolmistress	[Few] girls at the [national] school above 7
Mrs Besley	Lace Schoolmistress	From 6 years' old upwards

Maria Besley	Former pupil	Learned lace-making at home at 6
Emily Westlake	Pupil	Began lace-making at 7 years old
<b>Beer</b>		
Mrs Copp	Lace Schoolmistress	Takes them at age 7 or 5
Mary Mutter	Pupil	6 years old
Mrs Driver	Lace Schoolmistress	6 or 7 is the proper age to learn but some go at 5, not as apprentices
Mary Northcote	Pupil	Went as an apprentice at 9
Mrs Aigland	Lace Schoolmistress	
Elizabeth Searle	Pupil	
Elizabeth Hockin	Pupil	
Leonora Chant	Pupil	Came here as apprentice when 7
Elizabeth Searle	Pupil	
Elizabeth Hockin	Pupil	
Miss Cox	Mistress of Rolle School	It is uncommon for a girl to remain in the [endowed] school after 9
Miss Stokes	Mistress of Infant School	Girls commonly go to lace at 6 years old
<b>Newton Poppleford</b>		
Mrs Woodleigh	Lace Schoolmistress	
Eliza Woolley	Pupil	
Mary Ann Ash	Pupil	
Mrs Chick	Lace Schoolmistress	The common age to begin is from 6 to 7
<b>Otterton</b>		
Mrs Hayman	Lace Manufacturer	Children usually go at about the age of 6
Susan Miller	Lace Schoolmistress	
Mrs Rosehill	Lace Schoolmistress	
Agnes Perryman	Pupil	
Harriet Robins	Pupil	
Louisa Bastin	Parent	Has put all her children to lace schools at 6 years of age

Mrs Anstey	Schoolmistress	
Harriet Power	Pupil	Began at 6
Anna Wealsman	Lace Schoolmistress	
Colaton Raleigh		
Ann Westcott	Lace Schoolmistress	The common age to begin here is 5

**Table 3.** Schools attended by lace school pupils and levels of literacy (1863 *Children's Employment Report*, 246-255).

Type of School	Levels of Literacy
<b>Infant</b>	
Fuzzell* (Honiton)	Was in an infant school.
Coles (Seaton)	Girls may be kept till 10 ... there are not more than about a dozen girls above 7 years old in the schools
Mutter (Beer)	Can read (easy words) but not write. Learned at the infant school.
Stokes (Beer)	Girls commonly go to lace at 6 years old.
<b>Day School</b>	
Pine (Sidbury)	Was at a weekday school when 5 years old ... Can read (only the shortest words and slowly)
Perry (Sidbury)	Was at national school for some years before [starting lace school at 10]. Can read, write and sum.
Channon (Sidmouth)	Goes to school (not lace) and has been since 4 years old [now aged 9] ... Can read and write (shows neatly written copy book) 9 times 9 is 33 – is 53. Has got 'bags of comforts' and books for prizes at school.
Perry (Branscombe)	Went to a reading school. Spells easy words. Does not know the figure '2' in large print. Other countries, besides England, are, Australia, California, France.
Gueritz (Colyton)	Till a year or two ago there was no weekday school, and now the older girls do not average more than 10 or 9 years of age.
Major (Seaton)	The number of girls [in the national school] is only about half that of the boys
Westlake (Seaton)	Was at a weekday school for a year before [began lace making at 7]. Knows the letters (and no more) but no figures (when shown) except '1'. White notes that her sister, who did not go to lace school till she was 8 can spell.

Chant (Beer)	Was at the endowed school four years and learned to read, knit and sew, not to write. Does not know any figures. (Reads only very short words.)
Cox (Beer)	It is an uncommon thing for a girl to remain in the school after 9
Glascott (Seaton)	Girls rarely stay at week day schools beyond the age of 8 or 9
Hayman (Otterton)	There is Lady Roll's charity school in the place ... and a school ... supported by a lady, one of the Brethren ... where some of the children are taught lace as well as other learning; and there is also a school of about 12 little readers, kept by an old lady of more than 70 years old.
<b>Night School</b>	
Spratt (Honiton)	The night school is for those above 11 years old ... There is a class of young women in it who are just beginning to read and scarcely know their letters
Avery (Honiton)	Has a class of 11 at the night school, nearly all lace makers between the age of 11 and 16. Some read fairly without spelling, some spell words of three or four letters, all can form letters, and some make figures and two do addition. This is the worst class in the school.
Fuzzell (Honiton)	Goes two evenings in the week in winter from 7 o'clock till 9, and one in summer, leaving work on purpose. Reads in the Bible at school, but not without spelling; has to write a hymn; did multiplication and addition.
Perry (Honiton)	Goes to school ... on Thursday night from 7 o'clock till 9, to read, write and spell. Reads (very little); can write from a copy book 'not very well'; added figures and did her tables. Does not know how many inches there are in a foot.
Guertiz (Colyton)	There is also a night school but it is not well attended.
<b>Sunday School</b>	
Spratt (Honiton)	Most of the Sunday scholars are lace girls
Fuzzell* (Honiton)	Has always been to school on Sunday
Perry* (Honiton)	Goes to school on Sunday
Pine* (Sidbury)	Goes [to school] on Sundays
Diamond* (Sidbury)	School on Sundays also
Perry* (Sidbury)	Goes to school one evening in the week to write
Channon (Sidmouth)	Goes also to school and church on Sundays
Gueritz (Colyton)	About 250 attend the Sunday school, and most of the elder girls there can read.

Glascott (Seaton)	Though they attend Sunday school fairly, this is insufficient
Westlake* (Seaton)	Goes to Sunday school
Northcote (Beer)	Has always kept at the Sabbath school and can read a chapter well
<b>Lace School</b>	
Purse (Branscombe)	Her girls read verses of the Testament in turns when they come in the morning; five or six of them can do so without spelling, and the others can read easy words
Woodleigh (Newton Poppleford)	All the children read when they come in the morning, and when they leave in the evening, the big girls out of a chapter, the younger out of a little book. (All the girls when asked said they could read). One, Ellen Woolley (aged 9), pointed out as the most backward, read short words easily and figures also.
Ash (Newton Poppleford)	The girls here read once or twice a day for a quarter of an hour but they cannot all read. One can spell the letters but not sound the words. None of them can write. Two are just beginning.
Chick (Newton Poppleford)	All the girls here can read a little, but three [out of eight] can do but very little. White says: The three children just mentioned one aged 8, the other two 7, read one syllable words slowly but without spelling.

\*Girl's educational attainment recorded under another heading in the table.

## 8

# Private Schools in the south Devon resorts, 1830–1870, with particular reference to Exmouth

JACKIE BRYON

### Introduction

Private schools for the middle and upper classes were a common feature of educational provision in the period before state involvement became significant. However, recent writing has shown that many small private schools left little or no documentation, and much of that has taken the form of local studies and unpublished theses.<sup>1</sup> At this present time it appears that there is little other additional recent scholarship on the topic. The development of fashionable watering places, an interest in sea bathing and the health benefits of fresh air, all contributed to the demand from wealthy residents in resorts for access to facilities, including private education, during the period. This article will analyse the growth and development of private schools in south Devon with special emphasis on one particular resort, Exmouth, from around 1830. The sources used will include local directories, newspapers, census material, parliamentary records and standard local histories.

### Background

Private schooling in Devon during the early years of the nineteenth century reflected what was evident in the social structure of society at the national

<sup>1</sup> Cannon, *Schooling in England*.

level. The class-conscious Victorians lived the majority of their lives alongside their social equals. This can be seen by the phenomena, which H. J. Perkin has described as ‘the social zoning of towns and suburbs, in the refined grading of schools, clubs and societies, and in the differential pew rents within the churches and chapels’.<sup>2</sup> Thus, wealthy residents expected facilities at the developing resorts or watering places to mirror what they had experienced at the spas, namely assembly rooms, reading rooms and other facilities. Further, as Britain became richer in the early nineteenth century more middle class families could afford a private education for their offspring.

### Private Schools

Private education has a long history of public schools providing education for the upper class. This evolved from a complex pattern in the nineteenth century. Some writers have argued that before 1850 there was little need for the state to provide schools for middle and upper-class children. Here it would appear that the free market was functioning well. Certainly, according to Gillian Sutherland, there was considerable activity and formal schooling was becoming the norm, particularly for boys.<sup>3</sup> In a thesis from the 1970s, Donald Leinster-Mackay commented that much of the provision was determined by ‘increased wealth and expectations of beneficiaries of the industrial revolution; ...by the introduction of middle class and professional examinations and by the character of those prepared to meet the demand’.<sup>4</sup>

### Taunton Commission 1864–1867

The findings of this Commission’s report are relevant to this study as the recommendations were an attempt to improve education for the middle classes. In what we recognise today as secondary education the Commission made recommendations for the education of boys at the ages of 14, 16 and 18, or, in the terms of the report grades, three, two and one. The most severe criticism was reserved for girls’ schools, where they were considered to be mostly lacking in intellectual training with no direction or aim to studies. There was also a need for trained mistresses and governesses.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Perkin, ‘The ‘Social Tone’ of Victorian Seaside Resorts in the North-West’, *Northern History*, 11:1 (1976), 180-194, p.180.

<sup>3</sup> Gillian Sutherland, ‘Education’, in F. M. L. Thompson, (ed), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ii, 119-161, p.140.

<sup>4</sup> Donald P. Leinster-Mackay, *The English Private School 1830–1914, with Special Reference to the Private Preparatory School*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Durham University, 1972.

Within Chapter II of the document a number of critical observations were made about private education pertinent to this article.

First, the report refers to the large supply of private schools but emphasises their irregular distribution in terms of location. This particular point will be explored further in the study when there will be a discussion as to how specific characteristics of watering places impacted on private schools.

Second, there is criticism of the fact that for boys intending to finish their education at 14 there was ‘very little public education except in the upper class of a National or British school’.<sup>5</sup> This could have been a factor in there being few private schools in Sidmouth, a south Devon resort, which will be looked at more closely later.

Third, mention is made of the fact that private schools ‘exist on their own merit’ and are ‘subject to no inspection’.<sup>6</sup> In other words anyone was free to set up and run a private school. Moreover, a private schoolmaster was unrestricted in terms of the curriculum he followed and the fees he was able to charge.

Overall, although the Taunton Commission’s recommendations were laudable and came almost at the end of the period under discussion, modern historians have gone so far to describe them as stillborn, commenting they ‘were indicative of the deeply rooted caste system in English education’.<sup>7</sup>

## Exmouth

We now move on to reflect about the situation at a local level. The town of Exmouth comprises the parishes of Littleham and Withycombe Raleigh. In the period under discussion the two parishes had a combined population as follows:

**Table 1.** Population of Exmouth, based on the total of the parishes of Littleham and Withycombe Raleigh.

1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861
2,601	3,160	3,895	4,252	5,119	5,961	6,039

<sup>5</sup> *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. 1, Report of the Commissioners*, 103. Available online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=CFNAAAAIAAJ&>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

<sup>7</sup> Juliet Gardiner and Neil Wenborn (eds.), *The History Today Companion to British History* (London: Collins & Brown, 1995), 733.



Exmouth as a resort has a history dating back to the eighteenth century when visitors and residents were able to take advantage of spectacular sea views and the provisions for health and leisure. W. G. Hoskins went so far as to claim that ‘by the 1790s it was the most frequented watering place in Devon’.<sup>8</sup> As the town developed, wealthy residents made Exmouth their home, no doubt demanding an infrastructure and facilities to meet an appropriate lifestyle and education for their children.

In addition, communication and travel also made an impact. There is evidence of improved roads and a developing railway network. However, because of a number of competing interests Exmouth did not have its own rail link until 1861. Moreover, the town was dominated by a number of powerful families and individuals who sometimes had an impact on education. The town had an influential local landowner, namely Lord Rolle. He and his descendants were liberal patrons of the town, including the provision of education for the poor. The Hull family were also significant landowners: W. T. Hull owned land in the parish of Withycombe Raleigh and lived at Marpool Hall. Anglican clergy too were directly involved in the government of the town. Richard Prat, the Vicar of Littleham contributed to official reports. His successor, Thomas Rocke, was resident in Exmouth and chairman of the Local Board of Health from the 1840s to the 1870s. It is within this context that we can begin to consider how and why private schools developed in the resort.

### Private Schools in Exmouth

There is evidence for the existence of private schools from the late eighteenth century. Robin Bush has described how: ‘a rash of private schools for young ladies and gentlemen sprang up’.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, official returns, as one would expect, only provide brief details. The Vicar of Littleham, Richard Prat replied to his Bishop’s letter in 1821 concerning the instruction of youth in religion. He indicates the existence of three schools ‘... there are likewise various other private schools well attended’.<sup>10</sup> Evidence from the 1833 Government Enquiry indicated that the parish of Littleham had four daily schools and two boarding schools, and Withycombe Raleigh five daily schools with one taking boarders.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> W. G. Hoskins, *Devon* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003), 117.

<sup>9</sup> Robin Bush, *The Book of Exmouth: Portrait of a Resort* (Buckingham: Barracuda Books, 1978), 112

<sup>10</sup> *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821*, i, 115-6.

<sup>11</sup> 1833 Enquiry, 191, 212.

Brief details about individual private schools can be seen in Table 2. (At end of article). It is interesting to see how schools came and went whilst others moved premises on a fairly regular basis.

Local newspapers regularly featured advertisements for the opening of schools and academies, together with information about the beginning of terms, curricula and fees charged. A typical piece can be seen in the *Exeter Flying Post* for the opening of a boarding and day school in July 1831. This was to be a Classical, Commercial and Mathematical academy. Pupils would be instructed in the 3Rs, merchants' accounts, algebra, land surveying, geography with the use of globes, mapping and history, including Latin and Greek. The fees were as follows: boarders 22 guineas *per annum*; those attending weekly fifteen guineas *per annum*; day pupils ten guineas and the day school four guineas. It was also noted that the school would promote the moral, religious and intellectual development of the pupils.<sup>12</sup> The evidence demonstrates that even at this early stage schools were widening their curriculum, possibly to accommodate the growing middle class.

The 1840s saw further developments in relation to private schools in the resort. The education of young ladies is also featured. Bush stated that by 1848 the number of private schools had risen to ten, of which the following appears to be typical in relation to the education of young ladies.<sup>13</sup> Miss Bonter's establishment for young ladies was set up at 23 Bicton Street. Girls were boarded and educated in English and French languages, writing and arithmetic, geography and the use of globes, together with plain and fancy needlework. The fees were twenty guineas *per annum*; under the age of 12, pupils were charged sixteen guineas. Here we have the first recorded indication of the different curriculum for girls – the specific mention of instruction in needlework. Further, there is a hint of social tone and class consciousness in the comment concerning the fact that the school was 'established in the most healthy part of Exmouth'.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, for the middle and upper classes, there were a number of fee-paying schools offering an appropriate education for those young gentlemen wishing to enter public schools, universities or the professions. From the limited amount of evidence seen in Table 2, it would appear that private education in the town from around 1850 was a thriving industry. In October 1854, a Mr George Drewe seems to be running a school from, or at, his home at Waterloo Cottage in Exmouth. The fees for board and tuition were quoted

<sup>12</sup> *EFP*, 2 June 1831.

<sup>13</sup> Bush, *Book of Exmouth*, 112.

<sup>14</sup> *EFP*, 19 September 1844.

as 35/40 guineas a year. By November 1855, he is advertising his Classical and Mathematical School, at Oriel House, at the increased fees of between 45/50 guineas a year.

A further example of what had become Mathematical, Classical and Commercial Schools is the one in Manor House, Exmouth. This school opened on, or around, January 1846.<sup>15</sup> It was run initially by a Mr Sharland, who was born in Tiverton. At the 1851 Census the school was operating from premises in North Street, in the parish of Withycombe Raleigh. The boys who boarded were born in parishes across the county of Devon. E. R. Delderfield, a noted local historian, goes on to state that by January 1859 Sharland had moved on to larger premises at Elm Grove to accommodate 60 scholars, including boarders and farmers' sons.



**Figure 1.**  
Elm Grove  
School (from  
Ian Dowell, *The  
Lost Treasures*  
2016, 35).

By the time of the 1861 Census Sharland employed three assistant masters and had 41 boys as boarders. The youngest boarder was John Price, aged seven, who was born in Lypstone; the oldest Edward Brimsdon, aged 17, born in Liverpool. At this time, although most of the boys attending the school were born in Devon, a few came from further afield. However, there is no evidence of any pupils coming from overseas. The *Exeter Flying Post* has revealed a difference in fees between the classical and commercial course; the commercial course was 24 guineas *per annum* and the classical course 28 guineas *per annum*.<sup>16</sup> We are given a glimpse of the success of the school

<sup>15</sup> E. R. Delderfield, *Exmouth Milestones* (Exmouth: Raleigh Press, 1948), 158.

<sup>16</sup> *EFP*, 20 December 1855.

from the achievement of the boys in the twice-yearly exam results published in the above newspaper. Further, the status of the school can be gauged by the fact that in what was described as the Elm Grove Academy, Mr Sharland was ‘presented with a handsome gold pencil case and his wife a beautiful malachite brooch by the boarders and day scholars’.<sup>17</sup>

As time moved on, *Morris’s Directory of Devon, 1870*, showed how the curriculum had widened over the years. This boarding and day school offered Music, French, Drawing, Dancing and Drilling; all taught by efficient masters. Attention was also drawn to the location and the fact that the premises were large and well equipped. Therefore, one visualises a school which had grown and developed to meet the needs of well-to-do families and their offspring.

The most prestigious boys’ school in Exmouth is reputed to have been Pencarwick School. This school provided a classical education for its pupils. Devon Heritage, a private organisation, has a number of websites, one of which is a list of boarders at Pencarwick School based on the 1851 Census.<sup>18</sup> There is also some useful information about the school not available elsewhere. The building of the school in Louisa Terrace must have commenced sometime after 1829 when construction of the Terrace began. Revd C. Glascott was the first headmaster, followed by the Revd F. Wickham up to 1846. At the time of the 1851 Census, the Revd John Penrose was the headmaster. He was an Anglican clergyman who did not have charge of a parish. His early training had taken place at Rugby School, where he was an assistant master. He lived at Pencarwick with his wife and three young children. The school continued with different clergy in charge until it closed in 1908.

The number of boys in the school at any one time was consistently between 40 and 50. A survey of the boys listed on the day of the 1851 Census revealed that the composition of the school was made up of the sons of leading families from the Southwest and beyond. The majority of pupils leaving Pencarwick at age 14 went on to public school or to the Royal Navy for officer training. A more careful analysis of pupils’ achievements has demonstrated that many boys had distinguished careers in their chosen professions. A number of prominent Devon families sent their children to Pencarwick School. For example, General Redvers Buller, Arthur Champernowne, who inherited Dartington Hall and the surrounding estates, and Charles Mallock of Cockington Court were past pupils. In addition, George Holroyd, age 9, was actually born in Calcutta, one example of how and where children of the Empire were educated. The

<sup>17</sup> *EFP*, 18 September 1856.

<sup>18</sup> [www.devonheritage.org/Places/Exmouth/BoardersatPencarwickSchoolin1851](http://www.devonheritage.org/Places/Exmouth/BoardersatPencarwickSchoolin1851). Accessed 10 September 2018.

1861 Census also revealed that leading families continued to send their sons to Pencarwick School. Henry Acland, from Killerton, Tremayne Buller and his brother Mowbray of CREDITON were pupils.

Further information about this prestigious school in Exmouth has been provided by an assignment written by A. V. F. Conridge, a former pupil of what was then Rolle College. In one small section of his work he must have had access to a booklet produced by E. V. Michell, an old pupil of the school.<sup>19</sup> The source gives further detail about life at the school, including the curriculum. This appeared to consist of learning by rote Greek and Latin classics, as well as pieces of Macaulay, Scott, Pope and Shakespeare. French lessons were rather more relaxed as the teacher did not mete out much in the way of punishment. The relationship between teacher and pupil appeared to be that of the typical Victorian public school. In John Penrose's time as Headteacher, between 1846 and 1871, an authoritarian rule prevailed, no doubt influenced by his early experiences at Rugby. Meals were eaten in silence; boys who cheated were horse whipped. In the afternoon there was a contrast to the hours of rote learning when nature walks, football, cricket and model making were popular. Once a month an army sergeant came to drill the boys; in contrast, fortnightly art classes were held.

## Torquay

In other case studies from the south Devon resorts private education in Torquay is now considered. William Pengelly, a British geologist, made the town his home from the 1830s. Here, he opened a school based on Pestalozzian principles, behind the Royal Hotel. The school rapidly increased from six to 30 scholars when he bought a house in Abbey Road.<sup>20</sup> In 1846 he sold his private school to a W. Moyse. As can be seen in the directory entries in Table 3 (at the end of the article) he was able to pursue other projects and interests. Furthermore, other private schools were provided for the children of its wealthy residents.

As the century wore on there were pointers to development and change in the curriculum. In addition, schools were using wider advertising outlets. By the 1860s some directories also contained advertisements for private schools. *Morris's Directory for Devonshire 1870* contained a number for

<sup>19</sup> A. V. F. Conridge, *Local History Assignment on Education in Exmouth, 1850 to 1900*, 1973. (Available in Exmouth Museum).

<sup>20</sup> A. C. Ellis, *Historical Survey of Torquay* (Torquay: Torquay Directory, 1930).

Torquay.<sup>21</sup> A limited number will be analysed. The College in Torquay was specifically for the education of the sons of gentlemen. Boys were received in the school from the age of eight years and prepared for entry to public schools. The Principal was Revd W. Brocklesby Davies, MA. The school must have been both a boarding and day establishment as fees are charged for both. The terms were £65 a year for boarders and £15 for day pupils. This figure is high by any standard: such a figure was akin to charges at public schools. Details of the curriculum are not covered. However, we are told that the pupils distinguished themselves at military and other exams. Therefore, one can assume the curriculum was broader than a strictly classical education.

Montevidere House School has a history going back at least to the early 1840s, when the Principal was Philip Paige. The *Western Times* described it as a ‘large and respectable school’.<sup>22</sup> In the advertisement for a member of staff a graduate of Oxbridge is specified. The Census return for 1851 lists the school as having around 25 pupils who were boarders. A small number of pupils were born overseas and must have been what can be described as children of the Empire. Thomas Reed, aged 10, and his brother Henry, 7, were born in America. In addition, Charles Cooke and Henry Hughes were born in Calcutta.

By the late 1860s the school also had a detailed advertisement in *Morris’s Directory*. By this time pupils were prepared for universities, the Indian Civil Service and Oxford and Cambridge local exams. Pupils were also prepared for professional and mercantile pursuits. The terms were 30-50 guineas *per annum*. A particular feature of this advertisement is the detail given about its location and facilities. We are told: ‘Montevidere House is situated on a gentle eminence about 1 mile from the town ... 3-4 acres of pleasure ground’.<sup>23</sup> Quite clearly the school was keen to advertise its location and potential for extracurricular activities, including a private cricket ground. This is in tune with the concept of the benefits of health and exercise at the seaside.

## Sidmouth

The last of the south Devon resorts to be considered in some detail is Sidmouth, which was a fashionable watering place ranking alongside Exmouth and

<sup>21</sup> Although both Torquay and Sidmouth contain advertisements for schools in the 1870 directory, none are given in the general listing, hence the absence of 1870 data for these towns in Tables 2 and 3 at the end of this article.

<sup>22</sup> WT, 11 May 1844.

<sup>23</sup> *Morris and Co.’s Directory and Gazetteer of Devonshire* (Nottingham: Morris & Co., 1870).



Torquay during the early years of the nineteenth century. However, unlike the other resorts the number of private schools was small.

Early in the nineteenth century the *Exeter Flying Post* featured a number of advertisements for such establishments, of which the following is typical: ‘W. Barrett is desirous of informing the public that he has opened an academy ... for the reception of 20 young gentlemen, who will be taught writing, English grammar, Maths and the rudiments of Latin; tariff for boarders 20 guineas per annum’.<sup>24</sup> As can be seen in Table 4 (at the end of the article), as late as 1857 there was still only one private school in the town. This was alongside All Saints Parochial School, Sidmouth Parochial School on the Marsh and a British and Infant School. The latter adjoined the Congregational Church. One possible reason for such an unusual situation is that the town was well served by the National Schools and a well-established British School.

## Conclusion

Private schools were in effect a mirror of society at large, demonstrating that the upper and growing middle classes aspired to an appropriate education for their children. This study of private schools has shown that to a certain extent some schools only lasted for a short period of time. Others moved location and grew and developed. A careful analysis of the available directories has shown this clearly.

From the 1850s onwards a small number of private schools developed into successful establishments. Their owners were able to command significant fees. To meet the demand curricula were adapted to meet the needs of a changing clientele. In both Exmouth and Torquay prestigious schools to meet the requirements of the upper class thrived. In both resorts leading families wanted establishments that would allow their sons to go on to public schools and universities. These schools were well placed to flourish in the post-1870 environment when compulsory education provided by the state became the norm,

Finally, there is evidence that the attraction of a healthy environment in a desirable location encouraged the growth of private schools. The most successful of these schools flourished; their curriculum and facilities were akin to what developed at national level.

<sup>24</sup> *EFP*, 15 March 1810.

**Table 2.** Private Schools in Exmouth, as listed in trade directories.

Directory	Type of School	Address	Comment
<b>Pigot's 1823</b>			
Hine, N.	Ladies Day		
O'Lary, Eliz	Ladies Boarding		
Tucker, Henry	Boys Day		
<b>Pigot's 1830</b>			
Carter, John	Boys Day	Chapel Street	
Hill, Abraham	Boys Day	Parade	
Tucker, Henry	Boys Day	Parker's Place	
Turner, Thomas	Boys Day	Staples Buildings	
Williams, Mrs		Bicton Place	
<b>Robson's 1840</b>			
Burrows, John	Gents Boys	Staples Buildings	
Hill, A	Gents Boarding & Day	Wellington Place	
Mansfield, James	Day	Parade	
Wickham, Fred	Gents Boarding	The Beacon	Head of Pencarwick?
Dyer, Miss	Ladies Day	Parade	
<b>Pigot's 1844</b>			
Mansfield, James		Wellington Place	
Miller, Jemima		Parade	
Tucker, Elias	Day & Boarding		
Wickham, Fred	Boarding	Louisa Terrace	Head of Pencarwick?
<b>White's 1850</b>			
Bartlett, Robert	Day	Tower Street	
Clapson, Margaret	Boarding	Ormond Terrace	
Hague, Charlotte		Exeter Road	
Kinghorn, Eliz.		Bicton Street	
Lendon, Miss	Ladies Boarding	Long Mary Queen Street	



Mansfield, James &Mrs		Strand	
Penrose, Rev John	Boarding	Louisa Terrace	Pencarwick
Sharland, Wm	Boarding	Manor House North Street	
White, John		Wanhill Row	
Yarde, John		Bicton Place	
Billings 1857			
Bartlett, Robert	Day	Albion Street	Moved from Tower St.?
Drewe, G.H.	Classical & Mathematical	Oriel House	Moved to Dartmouth? See case study
Hicks, E	Ladies Day	Bicton Place	
Lendon, Misses	Ladies Boarding	Cliff House Exeter Road	
Mansfield, J	Classical & Commercial	Strand	School possibly developed?
Mansfield, Jane	Day	Strand	
Penrose, Rev J	Classical & Boarding	Louisa Terrace	
Sharland, William	Classical & Commercial	Strand	
Turner, Faith	Day	Albion Street	
White, John	Day	Market Street	Moved property?
Morris's 1870			
Hague, Miss Charlotte	Day	Exeter Road	
Knight, Misses Sarah and Phillis	Ladies Boarding	Henrietta Place	
Mahany, John	Schoolmaster	11 Bicton Street	
Penrose, Rev John	Boarding	Louisa Terrace	Pencarwick
Salter, Charles	Classical & Commercial	2 The Parade	Past pupil of Sharland
Sharland, William	Classical & Commercial	Elm Grove House	inc mathematics

**Table 3.** Private Schools in Torquay, as listed in trade directories.

Directory	Type of School	Address	Comment
<b>Pigot's 1823</b>			
Gawtre, Hannah	Ladies Academy	South Street	
<b>Pigot's 1830</b>			
Costill, Jno.	French	4 Park Place	
Grey, Elizabeth	2 Park St		
Grindfall, Mrs	Ladies Boarding	Tor	
Mare, Jno.	Boarding	Cary's Buildings	
<b>Robson's 1840</b>			
Arnell, John	Commercial Day	Lower Union Street	
Plaige, Philip	Commercial Boarding	Benland Buildings	inc Mathematics
Parker, Mrs	Seminary for Young Ladies		
Pengelly, W	Boys Day	Strand/Warren Place	
Walker, Lieut	Classical Boarding	Cliff House	inc Mathematics
Youldon, William	Boys Day	Union Row	
<b>Pigot's 1844</b>			
D'Almaine, Sarah	Classical Boarding	Orchard Terrace	inc Mathematics
Paige, William			Montividere House
Sugg, John			
Walker, Lieut John	Classical & Mathematical	Cliff House	
Pengelly, W		Braddon Row	
<b>White's 1850</b>			
Bibbins, Misses	Boarding	Palestine Villa	
Cairn, Helen	Boarding	Lower Union Street	
Colliver, Rev G	Boarding	Verney House	
Hartland, Chas Jas		Geneva Cottage	
Hatch, Ella		South Street	
Holman –		Temperance Street	

Jenkins, M.A. &E.	Boarding	Oaklands	
Moyse, Chas W		Braddons Place	
Nicholson, Emma M & Ellen		Oak Cottages	
Paige, Philip	Boarding		Montividere House
Rotton, Jane	Boarding	Ellersleigh	
Smith, Johanna		South Street	
Street, Benj		Waldon Terrace	
Teage, Ths Gordon		Market Street	
Walker, Lieut John	Boarding	Cliff House	
Willey, Sarah		Lower Union Street	
Youldon, Edm		Upper Union Street	
Billings 1857			
Bertram, the Misses	Ladies boarding &Day	1 Clifton Terrace	
Bibbins, The Misses	Ladies	Palestine Villa	
Colliver, Richard	Classical & Mathematical	Heber House	Related to Rev G.?
Conner, J	Classical & Mathematical	Belvedere Cottage	
Hartland, Charles	Boarding & Day	2 Madeira Place	As Robson's?
Happerton & Hocker, Misses		Leigh Court	
Paige, P.	Classical & Mathematical		Montividere House
Phillips, Emma	Ladies boarding & Day		Derwent House
Rotton, J	Ladies boarding &Day		
Taylor, the Misses	Preparatory School	7 Cary Parade	

Table 4. Private Schools in Sidmouth, as listed in trade directories.

	Type	Address	Comment
<b>Pigot's 1823</b>			
Ayres	Classical		
Byett, Margaret	Ladies		
Evans, Edward			
Evans, M	Ladies		
Hall, George			
Stone, F&S	Ladies		
<b>Pigot's 1830</b>			
Ball, the Misses		High Street	
Evans, Edward		Marsh	
Evans, the Misses		Marsh	Relatives of the above?
Hall, James		Market Place	
Hall, Mrs James		The Beach	
<b>Robson's 1840</b>			
Blackmore. James	Gent's Boarding & Day	Fore Street	
Taylor, John	Infant School	High Street	
Stocken, Misses	Ladies Boarding	Beach	
<b>Pigot's 1844</b>			
Atkins, Sarah		High St	
Taylor, John Henry	Boarding	High St	
<b>Whites 1850</b>			
Atkins, Sarah		High St	
Hayman, Paul		High St	Not listed earlier
Knight, James			
<b>Billings 1857</b>			
Taylor, J.H.		Old Fore St	



## 9

# West Buckland Farm and County School: Post-Elementary Education for Farmers' Sons in the 1860s

JULIA NEVILLE

*With thanks to the Sampford Peverell Society for their researches into the parallel history of the East Devon County School*

In the mid-1840s a farmer looking for something more of an education for his son than village schools could provide might have thumbed through advertisements in the local paper in the hope of finding a suitable school. Although the *Western Times*, for example, displayed many advertisements for private schools offering 'classical' and 'commercial' education, the only references to education in Devon particularly designed for an agricultural career were two schools, Mr Burt's Windsor House in Plymouth and Mr Ridgway's Magdalen House Classical and Polytechnic School in Exeter, where the heads promised lectures in science in addition to the usual curriculum. Mr Ridgway even promised that 'agricultural chemistry' would take 'a prominent place' and that other subjects would be 'as at the Agricultural Colleges'.<sup>1</sup> Burt and Ridgway were both pioneering heads and could appreciate that new demands were developing for subjects in the curriculum. By the mid-1850s, however, there would have been a wider field of choice. The Hallorans, at their schools in Heavitree and Plymouth, offered preparation for 'Commercial and Agricultural Pursuits' as well as more traditional professions.<sup>2</sup> In Teignmouth Mr Pridham offered 'a complete course, qualifying Youth for Commercial

<sup>1</sup> WT, 2 January 1847, 4; EPG, 25 February 1847, 2.

<sup>2</sup> EFP, 1 January 1857, 5.

and Agricultural Pursuits' and the Revd W. H. Smythe a Commercial Course including '... book-keeping, history, geography, mensuration, practical land-surveying, agricultural chemistry, natural philosophy, etc.'. <sup>3</sup> Mr Paige at Tor School 'carefully and expeditiously prepared' young gentlemen for '... professional, agricultural and mechanical pursuits'. <sup>4</sup> There was even an advertisement by a James Reynard for Morchard Bishop Proprietary School, described as 'specially adapted to the requirements of the Sons and Daughters of Farmers', offering in addition to the usual curriculum 'a thorough and practical training in Mathematics, including the elements of Mechanics and Machinery, especially where these are of importance in farm operations'. It also stated that: 'as soon as arrangements can be made, a Plot of Ground will be devoted to Experimental Farming, and regular lessons in Agricultural Chemistry will be given'. <sup>5</sup>

Sadly, it has not been possible to discover anything further about the Morchard Bishop school. After the January 1857 advertisements no more is heard of it. By 1860 James Reynard was back in Hull, his home town, with his Morchard Bishop-born wife. <sup>6</sup> But Reynard had responded to the growing perception that there should be a more appropriate education for those intending to follow a career in agriculture than a curriculum based on the Classics which was the traditional preparation for professions such as the law and the church.

This chapter explores how one such initiative, the West Buckland Farm Academy, was established in Devon in 1858 and within a decade gained national recognition as a model for 'county schools' elsewhere.

The 1840s and 1850s had seen considerable growth in the belief that greater productivity in farming could be achieved by the application of scientific practices, building on work initiated by the great eighteenth-century agricultural reformers such as Coke. The 'Bath Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Arts, Manufactures and Commerce' had been founded in 1777, one of the first of the societies which brought together landowners, farmers and scientists into an agency with the remit to spread good practice through journals and discussion. The geographical remit of the Bath Society soon widened to encompass Devon and Cornwall, and the name was changed to the Bath and West Society in 1790. The Devonshire Agricultural Society

<sup>3</sup> WT, 3 January 1857, 1; EPG, 3 January 1857, 4.

<sup>4</sup> WT, 3 January 1857, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Family tree entries for Mary Page Reynard b. 1839, Morchard Bishop, on-line at: <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/7760301/person/144327669/facts>. Accessed 27 July 2018.

was originally founded in 1791.<sup>7</sup> At the same time local newspapers began to run regular columns on farming issues with an emphasis on science.

By the 1850s there had for a long time been local agricultural societies and local shows in Devon, such as the Lifton Agricultural Society, covering the Hundred of Lifton, which held an annual show and awarded prizes.<sup>8</sup> *White's Directory* estimated that in 1850 there were about twenty such societies and a similar number of Farmers' Clubs, whose objects were 'improvements in the cultivation of the soil and the breeding of stock; and the encouragement of skill, industry and economy among the labouring poor'.<sup>9</sup> The Devonshire Agricultural Society established its own annual show and other events such as ploughing matches, designed to show skill. Once the railway made transporting livestock easier, shows could draw on a wider area for exhibitors so that the best quality livestock and produce could be exhibited and judged. The Royal Agricultural Show was held at Exeter in 1850, and the first Bath and West Show held in Taunton in 1852.

David Allsobrook has explored the background to initiatives for middle-class education in rural areas in *Schools for the Shires*.<sup>10</sup> He describes how, driven by the self-interest of landlords who recognised that increased productivity would mean that they could charge higher rents, and farmers who knew it meant they could increase their profitability, more discussion and closer consideration were given to the need to develop appropriate post-elementary education for those destined for careers on the land. As a result of an initiative in Gloucestershire, the Royal Agricultural College had been founded in 1845. This was always to be the premier institution for agricultural education. Devon's landowners sought to promote agricultural knowledge more locally. The first initiative was that of Viscount Ebrington, heir to Earl Fortescue, who in 1855 promoted a prize for sons and relatives of yeomen and farmers in the county of Devon, awarded for the best result in an examination covering English Language, the Geography and History of the British Empire and Practical Mathematics.<sup>11</sup> This limited initiative, itself the precursor of the move by Thomas Dyke Acland of the Holnicote and Killerton estates to introduce a system of examinations administered by Oxford and Cambridge Universities for pupils in middle-class education, may have been the conclusion

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Young (ed.), 'Report', *Annals of Agriculture and Other Useful Arts*, Vol. XVII (1792), 395-96.

<sup>8</sup> WT, 16 April 1831, 1.

<sup>9</sup> *White's* 1850, 37.

<sup>10</sup> David Allsobrook, *Schools for the Shires: the Reform of Middle-Class Education in Mid-Victorian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> NDJ, 11 October 1855, 4.



of debate in North Devon agricultural circles. (Acland was himself the author of a book called *The Education of the Farmer*, published in 1857.<sup>12</sup>) The local organiser for Viscount Ebrington's prize was the rector of West Buckland, the Revd Joseph Brereton.

Brereton had come to West Buckland in 1852. He helped to promote co-operation over farming improvement in the area by suggesting and becoming secretary to a local agricultural society, holding annual fetes and agricultural shows, the first of which took place on Earl Fortescue's 'model farm' at Filleigh in 1855, drawing on agriculturists in the united parishes of West Buckland, East Buckland, Filleigh and Charles, of which Earl Fortescue was President.<sup>13</sup> Brereton also gave prizes in West Buckland for the productive cultivation of cottage gardens.<sup>14</sup> He appears to have taken a keen interest in the welfare of his parishioners.

Brereton had also witnessed what had happened at the local school. Farmers had ceased to support it, apparently because of the lack of discipline under the female teacher. The parish had therefore determined to levy a voluntary rate of 4d. in the pound to hire a master and establish a school where parents paid from 1d. to 4d. a week whereupon the school had thrived. This reinforced Brereton's belief, shaped by earlier experience, that parents valued education more if they paid for it. Once the farmers' sons and daughters arrived at the end of their elementary education, however, there seemed to be nowhere appropriate for them to go for further schooling. As he later explained: 'they did not like to send them to a boarding school to learn accomplishments; they wished to secure for them a sound and useful education'.<sup>15</sup> This led Brereton to reflect on how to meet such a need. After discussion with Earl Fortescue and his son he set out his views in a pamphlet expressed in the form of a letter to Earl Fortescue, published in London and reproduced in the *North Devon Journal* in 1856:

Meanwhile the education of the middle ranks remains to be provided. They are above the necessity of limiting their learning years to early childhood ... They have a claim for liberal as well as professional education, while they can neither afford the expense or would desire the associations implied in the present public school and college career... To meet this want might not

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Dyke Acland, *The Education of the Farmer: Viewed in Connection with That of the Middle Classes in General; Its Objects, Principles, and Cost* (London: Ridgeway 1857). Reprinted by Forgotten Books in 2017.

<sup>13</sup> *NDJ*, 4 October 1855, 8.

<sup>14</sup> *NDJ*, 12 July 1855, 8.

<sup>15</sup> *NDJ*, 19 February 1857, 6.

certain schools be established on the principle that parents pay the fees for the salary of the masters, but the maintenance of the establishment should be on the industry of the scholars? ... Would it be practical for a farm of 100 acres to be bought or hired and furnished with two ranges of buildings, one for the male scholars, and the other for the female, the scholars to be placed respectively under the charge of a master and matron, while the farm should be under the management of a bailiff?<sup>16</sup>

Brereton went on to envisage a superintendent in charge of twenty schools in Devon, each costing £200 per annum, with 50 boys and 50 girls each working five hours a day on farm activities and spending five hours a day on mental instruction. Then, he concluded, ‘at the age of 15 many a farmer’s son and daughter would go back to their homes practically fit for the station in life to which they are entitled.’ For the most able there would also be a county college, also combining study and labour, for a further two years.

The topic of ‘County Education’ as Brereton’s pamphlet was called, provided material for local debate. Farmers at Landkey invited Mr Brereton to give them a lecture on the topic.<sup>17</sup> He expanded on the opportunity and illustrated the importance of preparation for new opportunities: Government offices or clerkships which were being opened up to competition, or positions as bailiffs, many of which he noted were currently filled by Scotsmen, who were better educated. Local schoolmasters felt his criticisms of their curriculum were unfair, but the debate led to a proposal, under the aegis of the Fortescues, to establish such a county school at West Buckland where students could learn agricultural subjects in the classroom and also by practical tuition on a school farm.

After a year’s absence on health grounds, and having been provided with a curate to assist in his parochial duties, Joseph Brereton returned to West Buckland and to the practical local implementation of his vision.<sup>18</sup> His particular ally was Viscount Ebrington, who was to inherit his father’s title and become Earl Fortescue III in 1861. Earl Fortescue II later confessed that he had always ‘urged caution’ and ‘rather checked Mr Brereton’s hopes’, though he later became a convinced supporter, funding a scholarship and donating money for the premises.<sup>19</sup>

The most recent history, by the School’s archivist, Berwick Coates, gives a

<sup>16</sup> *NDJ*, 27 November 1856, 8.

<sup>17</sup> *NDJ*, 19 February 1857, 6.

<sup>18</sup> *NDJ*, 10 June 1858, 8.

<sup>19</sup> *NDJ*, 26 May 1859, 8.

brief account of the School's foundation, taken, it appears, from the *Illustrated London News* report, produced when the new buildings were opened in 1861.<sup>20</sup> Coates seems not to have access to records of the first admissions within the West Buckland School archive, and his somewhat jocular style makes it difficult to identify the steps by which the school was established.<sup>21</sup> With the help of the *North Devon Journal* a more detailed picture can be drawn. The West Buckland Farm and County School started on a very small scale. Although it had been proposed to open at Michaelmas 1858, it in fact opened in November 1858 with only three boarders, all from Bishop's Tawton, housed at nearby Stoodleigh Farm, and a number of day pupils taught in the upper schoolroom of the existing school building. Terms were on an age-related sliding scale of 5 to 10 guineas for tuition plus board and lodging from 7s. a week, and the master was required to prepare his pupils for the 'middle class examinations at Oxford and Cambridge'.<sup>22</sup>

Only about half the subscriptions required to prepare the premises had been received at the time the school first opened.<sup>23</sup> The terms were revised from those first advertised to an inclusive sliding scale of £25, £35 and £40 per annum and a more explicit notice that pupils would be prepared 'for the new Oxford and Cambridge Examinations and for Agricultural and Commercial pursuits', shown by the new advertisement inserted into local papers in time for the school re-opening on 10 January 1859.<sup>24</sup> Brereton stated at a meeting in Barnstaple in December 1858 that, although Earl Fortescue had offered him temporary premises at Filleigh he had decided to use his own 18-acre farm at West Buckland and local lodgings as the initial site for the school.<sup>25</sup>

The school continued to evolve: scholarships were advertised in January 1859;<sup>26</sup> more rooms available for boarders were opened at Easter 1859; as was a preparatory division for younger boys.<sup>27</sup> By May it was reported that there were 17 pupils; and Brereton himself referred to the difficulties of implementing 'the agricultural feature of the plan', the practice farm.<sup>28</sup> A temporary schoolroom was commissioned for the autumn,<sup>29</sup> by which time

<sup>20</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 9 November 1861, 24.

<sup>21</sup> Berwick Coates, *West Buckland School* (Tiverton: Halsgrove Press, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> *NDJ*, 8 July 1858, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *NDJ*, 18 November 1858, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *NDJ*, 16 December 1858, 1.

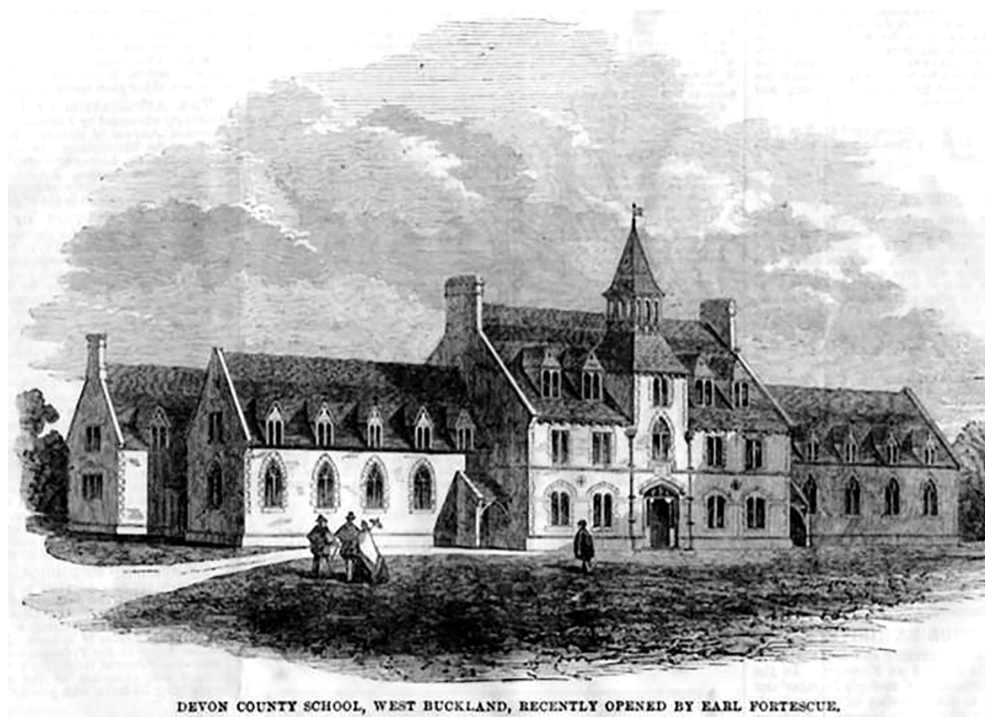
<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *NDJ*, 6 Jan 1859, p.4.

<sup>27</sup> *NDJ*, 24 March 1859, 1; *NDJ*, 26 May 1859, 8.

<sup>28</sup> *NDJ*, 26 May 1859, 8.

<sup>29</sup> *NDJ*, 9 June 1859, 4.



**Figure 1.** An early engraving of West Buckland School (from *The Illustrated London News*, 9 November, 1861).

the number of boarders had risen to 20 and the number of day boys to 13.<sup>30</sup> One young farmer aged 25, it was noted, had given up his farm for a year in order to come back to school.<sup>31</sup> When the school presented its first two pupils for the Oxford Middle Class Examination in Exeter in the summer of 1860 it was able to report that both of them had succeeded, one at senior and one at junior level.<sup>32</sup>

Such success paved the way for the formal establishment of the Devon County School Association Ltd, a joint stock association with up to 300 £25 shares, overseen by a board of trustees including Viscount Ebrington and Brereton.<sup>33</sup> This enabled progress to be made with the creation of permanent buildings for the school, for which the foundation stone was laid in October 1860.<sup>34</sup> The plans were to create accommodation for 50 boys, and the

<sup>30</sup> *NDJ*, 11 August 1859, 1.

<sup>31</sup> *NDJ*, 26 May 1859, 8.

<sup>32</sup> *NDJ*, 16 August 1860, 5.

<sup>33</sup> *NDJ*, 30 August 1860, 5.

<sup>34</sup> *NDJ*, 11 October 1860, 8.

meeting of the Directors in March 1861 backed the intention to proceed with permanent buildings not only for accommodation but for teaching, replacing the temporary classrooms erected at Brereton's expense.<sup>35</sup> The formal opening of the new school buildings took place in October 1861, shortly after the death of Earl Fortescue, whose place as President was taken by his son, Earl Fortescue III.<sup>36</sup> The school was again extended in 1862-3,<sup>37</sup> and the number of pupils being entered for Local Examinations increased to the level where the school itself became a centre for the Cambridge Local Examinations in 1862.<sup>38</sup>

The school attracted attention both locally and nationally. Brereton was made a Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral by the Bishop in recognition of his services to education. Another Devon enthusiast was the Revd C. S. Bere of Uplowman, who was an examiner at the school. He was apparently so impressed by the school that he adopted it as a model for what, though initially named the 'Sampford Peverell Middle Class Proprietary School', was to become the East Devon County School, opened in December 1861.<sup>39</sup> Bere was committed to co-operation with the school at West Buckland and the Sampford Peverell Society book, *The Schools of Sampford Peverell*, gives an account of his correspondence with Earl Fortescue about the creation of a charter which would reflect this association and the legal advice they took.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the Earl of Portsmouth, who had previously supported the provision of an elementary school in the town, founded a middle-class school in North Tawton, opened in October 1863. This was, however, part-funded by voluntary subscription and, as Earl Portsmouth acknowledged, did not have the concomitant practical farm education that existed at West Buckland.<sup>41</sup>

Nationally, Canon Robinson of York made particular reference to it in an article on 'Middle Class Education in England', published in 1861, as 'already doing much to elevate the character of Middle Class Education in its neighbourhood'.<sup>42</sup> *The Museum*, a leading educational journal, noted in 1863

<sup>35</sup> NDJ, 14 March 1861, 7.

<sup>36</sup> NDJ, 10 October 1861, 6.

<sup>37</sup> NDJ, 9 October 1862, 6.

<sup>38</sup> NDJ, 12 February 1863, 5.

<sup>39</sup> NDJ, 11 October 1860, 8; EPG, 20 December 1861, 10. The history of this school is fully explored in Sampford Peverell Society's *The Schools of Sampford Peverell: Two Centuries of Education* (Crediton: Sampford Peverell Society, 2015), 37-52. I am grateful to the Society for contributing the results of their researches to the *Early Victorian Schools* project.

<sup>40</sup> *The Schools of Sampford Peverell*, 38-40.

<sup>41</sup> NDJ, 1 October 1863, 6.

<sup>42</sup> NDJ, 9 May 1861, 5, quoting an article in *The Museum*.

that ‘the Devon County School is one that has not many compeers amongst the middle schools of the country’.<sup>43</sup> This particular reference resulted from the decision by the school that, instead of presenting two or three picked candidates for examination, as was the general practice, it would submit whole classes for examination. No less a personage than the Archbishop of Canterbury came to present the prizes that year and referred to the school as ranking ‘amongst the first educational establishments of the country’.<sup>44</sup>

The ‘county’ system suggested by the title ‘county school’ was always aspirational. It was embodied in the school’s official title, ‘The Devon County School, West Buckland’. Brereton’s 1856 pamphlet had envisaged the ancient territorial divisions of counties as the base for a system of ‘county schools’ and a ‘county college’ for secondary education. He returned to the idea of the county as a basis for education in 1863, urging that a ‘county college’ be set up as a memorial for the late Earl Fortescue II.<sup>45</sup> This was never to be: but some county schools were established in other places during the 1860s along similar lines to the West Buckland model. The East Devon County School at Sampford Peverell has already been mentioned. The Archbishop of Canterbury laid the foundation stone for the Surrey County School at Cranleigh in November 1863, reflecting in his speech on his visit to West Buckland.<sup>46</sup> A Suffolk County School was founded as a memorial to Prince Albert in 1862.<sup>47</sup> Although it was never truly successful, a proposal for a Somerset County School attracted support, with shares in it advertised in 1862.<sup>48</sup>

The most recent local historian to refer to West Buckland School’s Victorian genesis, David Parker, states that the school was unsuccessful, commenting that ‘farmers’ conservatism and social aspirations meant its founders’ hopes were frustrated’.<sup>49</sup> The local newspaper reports that he cites in evidence for this appear, however, only to date from the year the school was established (1857-8) when other schools in North Devon were questioning Brereton’s allegations about the adequacy of current teaching.<sup>50</sup> It is true that the school was slow to start, that it required gifts and grants to maintain it, and that it did lose numbers after the revolution in educational provision started in the 1870s. During the period with which this study is concerned, however, its

<sup>43</sup> Cited in *NDJ*, 9 July 1863, 4.

<sup>44</sup> *NDJ*, 15 October 1863, 8.

<sup>45</sup> *NDJ*, 24 September 1863, 7.

<sup>46</sup> *NDJ*, 3 December 1863, 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Ipswich Journal*, 5 April 1862, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 9 December 1861, 2; *Taunton Courier*, 5 March 1862, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Parker, *Early Victorian Devon*, 128.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 138, notes 16 and 17.



reputation was high and its achievements noted favourably by the national Schools Inquiry Commission, which reported in 1867.

The Commission, also known as the Taunton Commission after Lord Taunton, its chairman, was established at the end of 1864, with a board on which the Southwest was well represented, as it contained, in addition to Lord Taunton, Sir Stafford Northcote and Thomas Dyke Acland. Its genesis lay in lobbying by the National Association for Promoting Social Science, which argued that, following the report of the Clarendon Commission's Inquiry into nine major Public Schools, it was time for a report into the state of education of the middle classes, noting that 'the respectable tradesman, the small farmer, the clerk ... pay very dearly for a bad article'.<sup>51</sup>

C. H. Stanton, MA, Barrister-at-Law, was the inspector appointed to visit establishments in the Southwest.<sup>52</sup> His findings were critical of several privately-run establishments on many grounds.<sup>53</sup> A portion of his report dealt explicitly with proprietary schools, owned by their shareholders, like West Buckland School.<sup>54</sup> He examined six schools, all relatively recently established, and noted failures of others, one of which was at Plymouth, and the plans for another shortly to be established at Bideford. Of his six examples, four were aimed at preparation for the universities and the professions, but West Buckland and Sampford Peverell did not 'soar so high'. He acknowledged that there were still many farmers who did not consider that it was worth paying £25 to £30 when they could pay no more than £16 or £20 elsewhere. But he concluded that West Buckland, whilst occasioning 'some jealousy' in the neighbourhood, 'had also opened the eyes of both farmers and some schoolmasters to the fact that something better than reading and the writing of an ornamental hand, and the merest rudiments of arithmetic, will be required from the rising generation'.<sup>55</sup> Similarly he quoted a letter from the Revd C. E. Bere in which he drew attention to the 'heartly co-operation' he had received from those for whose benefit the school had been founded, i.e. the farmers. While acknowledging 'a little help from the gentry', he said simply 'I could have done nothing without the farmers'.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Cited in Allsobrook, *Schools for the Shires*, 180.

<sup>52</sup> 1868 *Schools Inquiry Commission*, Vol. 1, *Report of the Commissioners*, 7. Available online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=CFNAAAAIAAJ&>.

<sup>53</sup> 1868 *Schools Inquiry Commission*, Vol. 7, *General reports by assistant commissioners. Southern counties*, 76-78. Available online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=0jIIAAAAQAAJ&>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-63.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

The Schools Inquiry Commission noted Stanton's favourable report. They also noted that the Devon County School (West Buckland) was one of only three schools investigated where more than 20 pupils a year were awarded Local Examination Certificates in the Oxford examinations.<sup>57</sup> Their overall assessment was that 'the educational character of proprietary schools stands very high ... the County Schools gain and deserve the favour of the public almost as rapidly as they are formed'.<sup>58</sup> They concluded that in their overall recommendations for reorganisation to create three grades of middle-class schools, county schools provided the model for the 'second grade of schooling', for boys up to the age of 16. Allsobrook also notes that the idea of the county as a unit of educational administration, part of Brereton's original vision, became the basis on which the reorganisation eventually took place.<sup>59</sup>

Devon's rural character, a county where farming was the major source of employment, a national climate that supported more progressive agricultural practice, and the keen interest of key local figures such as the Fortescues and Thomas Dyke Acland in education combined during the 1850s to support the Revd Joseph Brereton in creating a 'middle class school' for the sons of local farmers and other rural professionals at West Buckland in 1858. Without financial underpinning from Fortescue and from Brereton himself, and Brereton's dogged determination, the school might never have become permanently established. In the 1860s, however, its reputation grew. Other similar schools were established in Devon and elsewhere and accounts of its success influenced the Taunton Commission into seeing it as a model for their second grade schools. That school numbers declined after 1870 should not be taken as evidence for the school's failure, but as the result both of the agricultural depression of the later nineteenth century, and most of all to the overall re-organisation of secondary education that followed the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission at the end of the 1860s. West Buckland School provided a model for future county-based rural secondary schooling, even though this was to be funded from charitable and state resources rather than through joint-stock companies.

<sup>57</sup> 1868 *Schools Inquiry Commission*, Vol. I, 333-34. The other two schools were Manchester Grammar School and the Liverpool Institute.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>59</sup> Allsobrook, *Schools for the Shires*, 80.



# Abbreviations

## **1818 *Education of the Poor***

*A digest of Parochial Returns made to the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Education of the Poor (1818)* (London: HMSO, 1819). Available online to those with access to ProQuest.

## **1833 *Enquiry***

*Education Enquiry. Abstract of the answers and returns made pursuant to an address of the House of Commons, dated 24th May 1833* (London: HMSO, 1835). Available online at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001882253>

## **1843 *Children's Employment Report***

*Children's Employment Commission, Second Report of the Commissioners: Trades and Manufactures* (London: HMSO, 1843). Available online to those with access to ProQuest.

## **1868 *Schools Inquiry Commission***

*Schools Inquiry Commission: Report of the Commissioners* (London: HMSO, 1868–69).

## **BFSS**

British and Foreign Schools Society – archive, part of Brunel University Archives.

## **Billinge et al, 'Schools for the Poor'**

Billinge, F., Ham, G., Moss, J. and Neville, J., 'Schools for the Poor in Mid-Nineteenth Century Devon: towards an explanation of variations in local development', *Studies in Church History* (forthcoming).

## **Bovett, *Historical Notes***

Bovett, Robert, *Historical Notes on Devon Schools* (Exeter: Devon County Council, 1989).

## **Cannon, *Schooling in England***

Cannon, John, *Schooling in England, 1660–1850* (Kew: The List and Index Society, 54 and 55, 2016).

## **Coleman, 'Nineteenth Century'**

see Orme, *Unity and Variety*.

## **DCRS**

*Devon and Cornwall Record Society*.

**DHC**

Devon Heritage Centre.

**EFP**

*Exeter Flying Post*.

**EPG**

*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*.

**Gillard, *Education in England***

Gillard, Derek, *Education in England: a History* (2018), available at [www.educationengland.org.uk/history/](http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/)

**Horn, *Education in Rural***

Horn, Pamela, *Education in Rural England 1800–1914 England* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978).

**Louden, *Distinctive and***

Louden, Lois, *Distinctive and Inclusive: The National Inclusive Society and Church of England Schools, 1811–2011*, available online – search [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org) for ‘distinctive and inclusive’.

**NDJ**

*North Devon Journal*.

**NDRO**

North Devon Record Office.

**NS**

National Schools, archive of the Church of England Record Centre, at Lambeth Palace Library.

**Orme, *Unity and Variety***

Orme, Nicholas (ed.), *Unity and Variety: a History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), containing Thurmer, John, ‘The Nineteenth Century: The Church of England’, 109-28, and Coleman, Bruce, ‘The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity’, 129-56.

**Parker, *Early Victorian Devon***

Parker, David, *Early Victorian Devon 1830–1860: An Age of Optimism and Opulence* (Wellington: Halsgrove, 2017).

**PWDRO**

Plymouth and West Devon Record Office.

**Sellman, *Devon Village Schools***

Sellman, Roger R., *Devon Village Schools in the Nineteenth Century* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1967).

**Stanbrook, *Old Dartmoor***

Mary Stanbrook , *Old Dartmoor Schools Remembered Schools* (Brixham: Quay, 1991).

**TDA**

*Transactions of the Devonshire Association.*

***The Diocese of Exeter in 1821***

Cook, M. (ed.), *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821: Bishop Carey's replies to queries before visitation*, 2 vols., DCRS, 3-4, 1958–60.

**Thurmer, 'Nineteenth Century'**

see Orme, *Unity and Variety*.

**TNA**

The National Archives.

***White's 1850***

*White's History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire* (Sheffield: William White, 1850).

**WMN**

*Western Morning News.*

**WT**

*Western Times.*

## Contributors

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**Dr Jackie Bryon** has had a career mainly in the library and information field. Her Ph.D. examined crime in Exmouth and Torquay in the middle years of the nineteenth century when the resorts were developing to attract wealthy residents and tourists.

**Gail Ham** is the current Chair of the Dartmouth History Research Group. After a career in the Ministry of Defence and management consultancy, she retired to Dartmouth and is now able fully to indulge her love of history. Working with other members of the group, she is currently researching several different aspects of Dartmouth's rich history, including: schools prior to the Victorian period; Dartmouth at the time of the visit of the Mayflower and Speedwell; eighteenth century privateering; and the fallen of both the First and Second World Wars.

**Dr Julia Neville** is an Honorary Research Fellow of Exeter University whose principal research interest is social change in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. She has recently completed community research projects on Exeter's First World War Hospitals, edited 'Poltimore: A Village in Transition, 1911–1921' for the Poltimore Estate Research Society, and written chapters on 'Allotments and Home Produce' and on 'Hospital Services in Devon for Sick and Wounded Soldiers' in *Devon During the First World War*, the Devon Remembers Heritage Project publication.

**Sue Price** was a Primary School Headteacher who, since retirement, has extended her knowledge and understanding of her Chagford community by researching all aspects of its local and social history.

**Mike Sampson**, born and raised in Devon, obtained a B.A. (Hons.) in Archaeology from the University of Exeter. He has twice won the Devon History Society's Book of the Year Award, and is currently working part-time as the Archivist at Blundell's School. He is at present the editor of the *Devon Historian*.

**Helen Turnbull** was Archivist to Lord Clifford of Chudleigh. She holds a B.A (Hons) degree in History with Education and has for a long time been interested in the development of schools in England. She has had a number of articles published on family and social history and is an active member of the Devon History Society.