Ipplepen Schools

Edited by H Turnbull from a paper headed 'Schools in Ipplepen'

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The National School

On 14th December 1840 a meeting was held at the Wellington Inn to set up a 'National School for the Education of the Poor of Ipplepen and its Vicinity'. The school was to be based on the principles of the Church of England. The chairman of the meeting was John Shepherd who was a landowner living at Combe House, Combefishacre. The secretary was Thomas Calley, a retired surgeon. The treasurer was Rev. Nicholas Brooking, who three years later became Vicar of Ipplepen. At the time he was Curate of Abbotskerswell. His interest in the project was probably because he owned Bulleigh Barton and his tenant was Edward Symons who was also at the meeting.

A subscription of at least seven shillings a year entitled subscribers to recommend one poor person's child for entry to the school; those who gave fourteen shillings could proffer two children etc. etc. Those who gave at least £5 were entitled to have three votes at meetings but there were only two such people. Initially, there were fifty-six subscribers.

The accommodation was provided by the parish Feoffees in a building adjacent to the Wellington Inn. The school books were bought from the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the children paid one penny every Monday morning.

According to the Western Times of 15 April 1848, the parish church had previously enjoyed a strong following but the number dwindled during the Rev. Nicholas Brooking's incumbency as a result of his Tractarian views. The parishioners were particularly upset when in 1847 the Vicar decided to replace the teacher with a former stonemason who had similar leanings to those of his own and the parishioners duly withdrew their funding from the school. As a result, the school we are told, closed. It clearly re-opened later and continued until 1873