

THE SCHOOLS OF OTTERY ST MARY PARISH BETWEEN 1830 and 1870

This paper has been the result of a study of known sources of information on all recorded educational establishments in the Parish during the first half of the 19th century. Most of them are termed Schools, although a few prefer the term Academy. A remarkable total of 22 schools of various types have been discovered during this research period, although the majority would only seem to have been in existence for just a few years.

With such a diverse range of schools that operated at some time during this period of time, a systematic listing has been difficult to implement. The list has therefore been arranged largely by virtue of age and type. The paper contains virtually the sum total of information acquired by the authors, and it will be seen that many gaps remain to be filled. It is hoped that further research will reveal more information in order to make this a more complete document in due course.

The amount of information uncovered has, unsurprisingly, varied widely – from detailed accounts and records at one end of the scale to a single entry in one document at the other. It is fortunate that the preponderance of available information concerns the larger, established, schools. This has facilitated the preparation of a paper that records the salient facts about education in the Parish of Ottery St Mary, including building establishment, governance, teaching, eligibility, etc. Accordingly, the texts for The King's School and the National School provide the most detailed picture of "school life" in the early Victorian period.

LIST OF SCHOOLS IN OTTERY

SCHOOL NAME	LOCATION	PROPRIETOR	TYPE	FROM	TO
1 KING'S	The College		G	1545	1881
2 NATIONAL	Yonder St.		N	1813	1866
3 BOYS	Yonder St.		N	1868	1969
4 GIRLS	Sandhill St.		N	1867	1969
5 INFANTS	Mill St.		CU	<i>1850</i>	<i>1870</i>
6 ALFINGTON	Church Lane		N	1849	1942
7 TALEFORD	Gosford Lane	Mr. E. Jobbins	N	<i>1832</i>	1944
8 TIPTON ST. JOHN	Metcombe Road		N	1843	now
9 WEST HILL	Ottery Road	Mr & Mrs Clay	CU	<i>1850</i>	1876
10 WIGGATON	Higher Barnes		CU	<i>1832</i>	1902
11 CLASSICAL	Colby House, Mill St.	Rev. J. Bounsell	A	<i>1810</i>	<i>1850</i>
12 COMMERCIAL	Sandhill St.	Mr. J. Beedell	A	1826	<i>183*</i>
13 BRITISH	Batts Lane	William Sloman	P	1845	<i>186*</i>
14 ST. MARY OTTERY	North St.	Rev. R. Podmore	R	1850	<i>1863</i>
15 OTTERY ST. MARY	Broad St.	Mr. W. Reed	P	1845	1859
16 ROCK HOUSE	Paternoster Row	Rev. E. Coleridge	P	<i>1810</i>	<i>1840</i>
17 PATERNOSTER	Paternoster Row	Mr & Mrs Baker	P	<i>1841</i>	<i>1850</i>
18 MIDDLE		Mr. Sutherland	P	1861	
21 INFANTS		Mrs. J. Passmore	P	1850	
19 LADIES	North St.		P	1866	
20 LADIES BOARDING		Miss A. White	P	1830	
22 INFANTS	Broad St.	Mrs. Oldridge	P	1870	

Academy	A	Dates in italics are esti- mated
Church Union	CU	
Grammar	G	
National	N	
Private	P	
Religious	R	

THE KING'S SCHOOL

The Ecclesiastical College established at Ottery by Bishop John Grandisson in 1337 was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1545. However, he granted a charter which provided for maintenance of the Church and the school-house by four Governors, being prominent inhabitants, and the payment of £10 a year to a Grammar Schoolmaster, who was to be provided also with a house. The school was originally called "The Kynge's Newe Grammer Schole". The School-house was the middle one of three attached buildings on the south side of the road called "The College".

In 1587 a fire at the top of the town destroyed several houses and the school, the latter being rebuilt by John Haydon of Cadhay at his own expense. It was here that the school continued for a further three centuries, during which time its fortunes varied considerably.

The most successful period for the school was between 1760, after the appointment of the Revd. John Coleridge as Vicar and Master of the School, until his death in 1781. His son, the Rev. George Coleridge had to rescue the school again in 1794, and built up the school to 10 local boys, and 45 boarders, each paying fees of 50 guineas, before his retirement in 1808. His youngest brother Samuel Taylor Coleridge attended the King's School between 1778 and 1782 when he entered Christ's Hospital. A nephew, the Revd. Edward Coleridge was sent to the school at an early age, and later commented that his uncle had gained for the school the reputation of being 'the best in the West of England.'

There are no known references to any recognised teaching methodologies or formats, but the following description of the scholastic regime operating in the early 19th century came from the Rev. Edward Coleridge:

"The bell sounded at 5.30 a.m., and the pupils had to assemble in the school room, which was unheated, by 6 a.m. The master entered promptly and took prayers. During the winter months, tallow candles were placed on the desks by melting the ends. Under this personal discomfort, the pupils worked until 8 a.m. If they came ill-prepared and unable to answer questions correctly, this meant a caning on the hand, which the master grimly called 'Yellow Soap for Dirty Fingers'. After breakfast, there was usually time for a game 'at Prison Bars in the Long Walk of the Churchyard, where there were two rows of stately Elms'.

The pupils were back in the school again from 10 a.m. until 12 noon, and dinner was at 1 p.m. There were lessons in writing and arithmetic from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., when old Simmonds, who had a cork leg and wore top boots, was the master. As he had to stretch his cork under his table, the boys used to drop a penknife occasionally into it, when he was busily engaged in looking over another boy's work. On one occasion, so Edward Coleridge recalled, a penknife went by mistake into his sound instep, and 'a grand row ensued'.

Between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. the pupils had to prepare their 'Night Task' (or 'prep', as it is now called), and so to bed. Such was the long forbidding day in the life of a King's School boy in those times, and he got little or no assistance from books or lexicons. He had to rely upon his initiative, and work things out for himself as best he could, which was a daunting task for a young boy."

Dr. John Warren, a former pupil, filled the post of Master from 1808, and it is recorded that the school roll approached 200. The Rev. Sidney Cornish, another former pupil, was appointed Master in 1824, and remained in post until his resignation in 1863, although he continued as Vicar of OSM church until his death in 1873. In the Trades Directory of 1844 the Rev. Augustus Hunt and Mr. Thomas Wyatt are also recorded as being at The King's School.

A decline in the fortunes of The King's School started during the tenure of Rev. Cornish, and is partly attributed to the decline in importance of the traditional 'classical' curriculum. Education in subjects of more practical use was being provided by 'proprietary' schools. The National Census of 1841 showed that there were 24 boys between the ages of 9 and 16 present at the School, with only 16 in 1851 and 8 in 1861. Also the original endowment had become inadequate.

According to the report of the Endowed Schools Inquiry of 1868 the school was then "useless and cannot be said to be doing any work whatever" and that there were only 4 boys in a dilapidated room, and in what should have been the boarders dining room was occupied by two carriages. Finally, in 1881, it is recorded that there were only 3 boys in the school and as the buildings were in a poor state the school was closed. The Rev. George Smith was Headmaster from 1863 to 1881 and, despite the foregoing, apparently had to be persuaded to retire!

However, it should be recorded that The King's School was resurrected in 1896 in a large, early Georgian house facing the east end of the church known as 'The Priory', relocating to its present site in 1912. From 1896, partial funding for the school came from the Local Education Authority and today it is one of the most highly-regarded secondary schools in the S.W. Region.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL

Foundation & Governance

This school, also known as The Parish School, was founded in 1812 in Yonder Street. The Reverend George Coleridge and his wife were instrumental in its founding and took a continuing interest in the day to day running, as did their nephew W. H Coleridge who also assisted. The school was two storeys, reputedly thatched, with the boys upstairs and the girls and infants downstairs. An inscription on the front of the building read, "Train up a child in the way it should go". Whilst sharing the same building the Boys' National School and the Girls' National School were run fairly autonomously. In 1822 170 children attended the school.

School Finances

A snapshot year, 1855, shows that a capitation was paid for each of the schools, the Privy Council made a grant for books, and children all brought in their weekly 'school pence'. Additionally local charities made payments known as endowments. However the largest sums came from the church in the form of annual subscriptions and collections after the sermon. It is perhaps worth commenting that in this particular year of 1855 the capitation was not paid for the Girls' School as the standard was not considered high enough according to the Schools' Inspector.

Loss of original National School

In May 1866 a fire raged in the area of the town where the school was situated and it burnt to the ground in the lunch hour. Fortunately no one was hurt, but everything was lost. After a two week hiatus, alternate accommodation was found in Broad Street, again a two storied building and the children returned to schooling. The National Society provided books and apparatus to replace those burnt.

Having lost the original National School, plans were made for a replacement, or rather replacements, with a new school for each sex.

Foundation of new National Schools

The site for the new Boys' School (the same as the one occupied by the previously burnt down school) was conveyed to the Vicar and Churchwardens by The Feoffees in 1867. The building was paid for by Sir John Coleridge. The school, which opened in 1868, was to be under the management of the Vicar of the Parish and a committee of managers. This comprised men who donated £10, or were subscribers of at least a guinea a year. They had to be members of the Church of England.

In March 1867 the girls moved into a new purpose-built school in Sandhill Street. Again infants were accommodated with the girls. This building was also paid for by Sir John Coleridge. A separate school for infants was opened in Jesu Street in 1877.

Premises

Detailed knowledge of the original National or Parish School is slight, but there was a schoolyard. Shown on the Tithe Map (1843) and the school appears to be part of a terrace of houses, with the school teacher living next door. This arrangement ceased with the fire and building of new premises which made no provision for an adjoining teacher's house. The new school was a detached building with a slate roof.

Considering there were upwards of one hundred children in a room in the original school, it is no wonder there were comments in the School Log about overcrowding. Whilst the warmer months found comments on overheating the reverse was true in the winter months with ink frozen in the ink wells at times. On January 17 1867, the boys' teacher reports in the Log Book, 'Weather still very cold – Gave particular attention to the reading this cold weather – as writing is altogether out of the question.'

Admissions criteria – eligibility – and attendances

Admissions to the schools can only be commented on from 1863, as records prior to this are not available. The Log Book show children as young as two or old as thirteen joining the Girls' School. Entry points in the school calendar seem to have been very flexible, with new children or returners arriving frequently throughout the year. The accompanying 'school pence' if forgotten, was reason to send a child home during the school day to collect it and return.

Many of the children were from poor families. A teacher might send a child home for being dirty or 'ragged'.

Attendance varied throughout the year. If the weather was severe then the school was described as 'thin' or 'poor'. Similarly better weather led to absences connected with the agricultural round – planting or harvesting potatoes, picking peas, haymaking, bird scaring or picking whortleberries on East Hill. Any distraction in the town – a circus, fair, visiting military detachment – meant absenteeism. Sometimes official holidays were given on these days as it was known the children would not come to school. Guy Fawkes Day was such a problem that a Head Teacher arranged with the boys that school would start early, not stop for lunch and then finish early enabling them to take part in the festivities.

Absenteeism without cause could lead to expulsion. The Girls' School teacher 'dismissed a child for irregular attendance' on June 19th 1863.

Occasionally a parent visited the school and arranged for a child to be away for a spell if they were needed at home or to work. On 25th October 1869 two girls were admitted who would attend morning school only as they were making lace in the afternoons.

Children as wage earners

Whilst lacemaking was an important source of income in the town and outlying villages, it was not the only source of income for children. Ottery had a large silk mill which employed both boys and girls. The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (1868) comments that, 'there is an extensive silk factory, chiefly for the manufacture of shoe ribbons and handkerchiefs of excellent quality – employs about 400 hands.'

The 1841 census shows 186 silk workers altogether, 34 of these children (boys and girls), the youngest aged 6. Children in factories worked very long hours and in 1833, 1844 and 1847 Factory Acts cut hours and increased hours of education given. Some evidence indicates silk mills skirted round some of the laws brought in to protect children by claiming that silk mills were less injurious to health than cotton mills. Cynically it might be said that this was more to protect the parlous state of the silk industry than children's health. It does not appear that the Ottery factory had any provision for learning, such as a school room.

Whilst the silk industry declined from 1860 with cheaper imports, this was not the end of the industry as a newspaper article from 1873 shows:

At a meeting of the Lambeth guardians a letter was read from a firm of silk and lace weavers at Ottery St Mary, stating they were in want of 300 hands, and if the guardians had any spare available labour they would be glad of a reply. The letter went on to state that there were cottages in the village where the children could be lodged and looked after by the superintendents of the mills. Girls were required between the ages of 11 and 16, the wages to commence at 4s per week with a prospective increase with age and ability. It was resolved that the letter should be referred to the superintendent of the parish schools, who might prepare a report stating the number of children who were fit and willing to go as an experiment.

24 January 1873 - Western Daily Press - Bristol, Bristol, England

Further research is needed to find out if this import of child labour came to pass, but it surely comments on how children were viewed at this time, that they would be brought in from poorer districts and presumably forgo an education that their new contemporaries would be getting.

By 1880 the Silk Mill was bankrupt and the 1881 census shows it uninhabited.

Relying on the School Log Books for information means relying on a particular head teacher or their stand in. Some teachers give more mention to individuals than others. Lacemakers are only detailed by a few and no record at all is made of silkwormers.

Curriculum and the School Day

As might be expected concentration was on the 3Rs. Much emphasis was also placed on religious knowledge. Both boys and girls regularly went to the Parish Church to celebrate various Saints Days and notable events in the church year. Weather had to be fairly severe to prevent these excursions, which records show were a test of teachers' patience in terms of obedience and general behaviour in church and en route. On days which were religious holidays the children attended church in the morning before having the afternoon off. Pupils were also expected to attend church on Sundays.

Children had homework, which was carried out on their slates. This was almost without exception connected with their religious knowledge. In school they used pen and ink as well as slates, although possibly in the early days of the schools it was slate only.

Girls spent time on needlework, and this seems to have been to the detriment of their other learning. Whole afternoons were spent on sewing and if this coincided with a morning in church, then no academic work at all would have taken place that day. Working on items for the clothing club was frequently commented on in the Log Book. This appears to have raised funds for the school. On October 15 1869 three pairs of socks were sold that had been knitted by the girls. Girls went to Honiton to be examined in needlework and weeks prior to this were busy preparing items to submit for inspection.

Work that was not up to standard led to the class being kept in at lunchtime, or after school. School inspections led to much anxiety for the teachers. As funding for the school was linked to results, much overtime by staff and pupils took place. Children might come into school 'before breakfast' to prepare for the Honiton examinations.

Teachers

The boys were taught by men and the girls and infants by women. Each school also had pupil teachers and monitors, who assisted with the teaching. The pupil teachers were seemingly chosen from promising pupils in the school. They received instruction outside of the school day from the teacher (an instance is recorded as this being at 6am) and occasionally went away to improve their teaching skills. They sat examinations in Honiton to be graded. Occasionally they are referred to as being in apprenticeship. The teachers were also graded, and we find for example in 1864 Emma Shutt signing herself as a 'Cert'd Teacher. 2nd class. 2nd year'.

The Pupil Teachers occasionally had difficulties gaining respect from the pupils and keeping order in class. However if the teacher was absent through illness they had to take on that role of authority, and endeavour to keep control. The teacher from the other school might check up from time to time, but mainly they were on their own. This was a large responsibility for a young person not much older than some of the children they had under their charge. Not all Pupil Teachers made the grade and they were either asked to leave or realised they were not cut out for the role.

The teachers were extremely strict. Boys were caned frequently, often for what today would be considered minor or trivial offences. Caning more than one boy was not unusual. On October 4 1866 the Boys' School master comments, 'Caned nearly half of the 2nd class for careless dictation this afternoon –'

The girls were also punished, but the method is seldom mentioned. Certainly the teachers ruled with a rod of iron, and a child could be dismissed from the school purely on the teacher's say so. Certificated Masters and Mistresses taught at the Ottery Boys' or Girls' Schools. Truro Training College seems to have supplied three female teachers over a nine year period. An inspector comments in a report that the lack of teacher continuity affected the improvement of the Girls' School.

Mr Shapland was teaching and living in the adjacent school house by the time of the 1843 Tithe Map. Both John Shapland and his wife taught in the school and were paid £50 per annum in addition to the house and garden. A National School Mistress in Ottery fourteen years later would be paid £35 per annum, which did not include accommodation.

THE BOYS' SCHOOL

On 24th June 1868, the boys occupied the new school built for them by the Church Authorities on the site of the National School which was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1866. This, though somewhat larger than the Girls' School, also consisted of a schoolroom and classroom, the latter

being fitted with a gallery.

THE GIRLS' SCHOOL

On the 13th March 1867, the girls and infants moved into the new school built by Sir John Coleridge in Sandhill Street consisting of a schoolroom and a classroom, which was fitted with a gallery.

Before 1866 the Girls' School took the infants of both sexes from 3 years old and the boys transferred to the Boys School at 6 years old. This arrangement continued until the new Infants School in Jesu Street was built and occupied in 1877.

ALFINGTON NATIONAL SCHOOL

This school opened in 1849 and was built by Sir John Taylor Coleridge at the same time as the building of the Chapel of St James and St Ann and a vicarage. The Coleridge estate was to be responsible for the maintenance of the church and school.

Miss Mary Wilkins was on the census in 1861 as School Mistress living in the school house, and Miss Emma Fencott taught for ten years, leaving in 1876, residing in the school house. The school closed on 23rd December 1942.

TALEFORD NATIONAL SCHOOL

This village school was also known as Escot School. Opened to serve local people, including the families on the Kennaway estate at Escot, it is believed the first premises were located close to the entrance to Escot House in about 1830. A school was then built at Taleford by Kennaway.

Teachers

Edmund Jobbins appears on the census returns from 1841 to 1871 as a School Master at Taleford. In 1871 he is stated to be living in the School House, but this is probably because more address details appear in this census, and it is likely he had been in the School House since 1841 at least. In 1861 his daughter Mary, aged thirty one, appears as a school mistress, so possibly she also taught at the school at that time.

This school was in operation until 1943, when the pupils were transferred to schools in Ottery, but the building survives as a village hall.

TIPTON ST. JOHN NATIONAL SCHOOL

This school still exists, some of the original school buildings are still in use.

Foundation and Governance

Tipton School was another arrangement where church and school were built at the same time. Sir John Kennaway was the person responsible for Tipton, and arranged for nearby cottages (and land) to be rented out to provide an income to support the school. The church, St John's, was consecrated on 29 April 1840 and records state 'Tipton School in union with the National Society

30 June 1841.' The school was managed by the Vicar of Ottery St Mary and the Minister of St John's.

Premises

It was originally a two storey building with the Infants occupying the upstairs room.

WEST HILL CHURCH UNION SCHOOL

In December 1870 a meeting was held in Ottery St Mary Town Hall to discuss future provision of additional school accommodation throughout the parish by voluntary subscriptions. Sir John Kennaway had given a site for a new school close to St Michael's Church. This was to accommodate sixty children and have a teacher's residence. This was not however the first West Hill School as Kennaway had already provided a cottage with schoolroom attached at Breaches. The cottage was shown as being occupied by John Clay on the Tithe Map Apportionments of 1843 and it was his wife Elizabeth who was shown on the 1851 census as school mistress. They lived there with their two children. They are still there in 1861 and in January 1871 John died there, the Parish Burial Records entry showing his address as "Church Union School, West Hill". It is thought that Elizabeth might have been the only teacher to work at the school during its time at Breaches.

WIGGATON CHURCH UNION SCHOOL

Foundation and Governance

The school in the hamlet of Wiggaton was created from an adaptation of an existing building, paid for by landowner Sir John Kennaway in the early 1830s. He also purchased a cottage opposite the proposed school building at the same time.

In July 1845 the school and cottage opposite were purchased From Sir John by Bishop Coleridge, Mr Justice Patteson and Mr F G Coleridge for £75 and conveyed to the Vicar of Ottery St Mary.

School Finances

It appears that Kennaway when setting up the school purchased the cottage opposite to rent out to provide an income to be used to help fund the school's fabric and Mistress's pay. Records show that frequent repairs were carried out to the school and cottage, and rental income was certainly needed as, 'the payments of the Children being inadequate to the maintenance of the Mistress.' Other monies had to be found from time to time and, for example, in 1846 Bishop Coleridge donated £1 towards repairs, whilst 17s 6d raised from the sale of two poplar trees was also donated to the school upkeep.

Premises

It was probably a cob building and had been whitewashed. Distinctive pointed windows and a door are remembered. Comprising two storeys, the upstairs being living accommodation for the teacher, who also had use of the downstairs schoolroom outside of the school day.

Admission criteria – eligibility – and attendances

Local children would attend this school. Many small children in rural areas did not attend school if the distance was too great, and a school in this hamlet probably enabled Wiggaton area infants to attend school, when they might not if they had to walk into Ottery St Mary, about a mile away.

Teachers

Frances Perriman, a widow aged twenty nine years with three daughters, is listed on the census of 1851 as Schoolmistress living in Wiggaton. She is still there in 1861, with now four daughters. By 1871 she has moved into Ottery St Mary and is living in Mill Street with her daughters, working as a dressmaker.

No records exist of this school and the building has been demolished.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

The British School (sometimes referred to as the British and Foreign School) opened for poorer children and partly supported by subscription, was built in 1845 in Batt's Lane. There were 80 pupils in 1850 when William Sloman and his wife were in charge, but by 1856 the Master was Mr John Godfrey and the Mistress Miss Fanny Godfrey.

By 1870 the British School was no longer mentioned, and would appear to have ceased in the 1860's. However, just before 1870 the Baptists established a chapel and school in Batt's Lane, and in 1878 built a new Chapel one beside the one already in use. The deed conveying the site for the Baptist Chapel (later the Fire Station) also comprised a building stated to have been a schoolroom. It is evident therefore that the chapel established before 1870 was held in the former British School which, when the new Chapel was occupied, became the Sunday Schoolrooms.

The Chapel bears the date 1878 on the foundation stone, and it is clear that the schoolrooms were provided with a new facade to match the style of the new Chapel. The old school building was derelict for many years, but used as commercial premises in the 1970's, and has now been converted into private dwellings.

CHURCH UNION INFANTS SCHOOL

An Infants school, described as a Church Union school, is recorded in the Directories from 1850 to 1870 inclusive, in the last of which its location is given as Mill Street. It would undoubtedly have closed after the School Board was formed or at the latest when the Board opened the new Infants school in 1877.

The designation "Church Union" so far as Devon is concerned is found only in the parish of Ottery. Three schools were so called, the one in Mill Street, and the Infants Schools at West Hill and Wiggaton. At West Hill the school was built onto a cottage, and on a site owned by Sir John Kennaway, therefore no doubt provided at his expense, and at Wiggaton the school was provided by him. The inference is that all three schools were provided by him, and that the designation has a significance associated with his known Low-Church tendencies, and perhaps represents an early attempt to bridge the gap between Church and Chapel which had such a harmful effect on public education in its early days.

OTTERY ST MARY SCHOOL

A successor to the Boys Boarding School, named the Ottery St Mary School, was opened by Mr William Reed in 1845. The Western Times of Exeter reported on 12th July 1845 'The premises are noted as having been devoted to educational purposes for many years and having of late been

considerably improved by the erection of a NEW SCHOOL.' This is believed to be the one known today as the Old Convent, although it does not appear on the Tithe Map published in 1845.

In 1859 William Reed moved his school to Taunton, and indicated it would be called Fullands School.

ST MARY OTTERY INFANTS SCHOOL

This school is said to have been built and supported by the Reverend Richard Podmore who was Curate at Ottery from just before 1850 and who lived at St. Andrew's Cottage, Butt's Hill. The school he built in 1850 is the small stone building attached to the house on its south end. A tablet in the wall is inscribed "St Mary Ottery Infant School AD 1850". It was reported that 80 children attended the school.

The school seems not to have survived the departure of the Curate for by 1866 there was a Ladies School at St. Andrew's Cottage.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

This school opened in 1861, conducted by Mr Sutherland, and an advert from July of that year stated that it will take day boys and boarders.

In January of the following year, 1862, advertisements in two different newspapers stated:

'Pupils are thoroughly prepared for the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, as well as for those of the Army, Navy, Civil Service, &c.'

In case there is any doubt, the name of the school refers to the school's object "to provide an Education specially adapted to the requirements of the Middle Classes"

No record has been found as to how long this school remained in operation.

COMMERCIAL ACADEMY

The following advertisement appeared in Trewman's Exeter Flying Post on 29th June 1826:

Commercial, Mathematical & Drawing Academy, Ottery St Mary, Devon.
Under the Patronage of the Right Hon. Lord and Lady Rolle, Sir Thomas Dyke and Lady Acland,
Sir Stafford Henry and Lady Northcote, and Sir John and Lady Kennaway.
Mr Beedell begs to return his sincere thanks to his Friends for the past favours; and respectfully
informs them, that his SCHOOL will RE-OPEN on
Monday, the 17th July, 1826 - Dated Ottery St Mary June 22nd

THE CLASSICAL (INDEPENDENT) ACADEMY

An Independent School was in existence for many years at Colby House in Mill Street. In the early 1800's its principal was the Reverend Richard Houlditch, and he was followed by the Reverend John Bounsell, who advertised his school in Trewman's Exeter Flying Post on 26 November, 1818:

The Rev. J. Bounsell, Dissenting Minister of Ottery St Mary, wishes to take under his care at Christmas next, a limited number of YOUNG GENTLEMEN who will be boarded and instructed in the Latin and Greek languages and a liberal course of English Education. The utmost attention will be paid to the health, the improvement, and the morals of the pupils.

The census of 1841 shows the Rev. Bounsell as still being the occupier of Colby House with his wife Edith, servants and 14 pupils; he is described as a Clerk and a Schoolmaster. In 1851 the property is shown as unoccupied.

ROCK HOUSE SCHOOL

In the early part of the 19th century (probably in the first decade) the Reverend Edward Coleridge, Vicar of Buckerell, ran a private school at Rock House (now called Sandrock House) in Paternoster Row. Rock House was originally formed from the stables attached to 'the Great House' which was pulled down around the end of the century.

PATERNOSTER SCHOOL

The 1841 Census show that 11 boys between the ages of 8 and 15 were boarding at Paternoster School. Mr. & Mrs. Baker were shown as the proprietors. There also appear to be 5 girls. The 1851 Census shows John Baker still in Paternoster Row, but working as a printer, with four of his children at home, plus a servant. There is no mention of his wife and he is not stated to be widowed.

LADIES SCHOOL

A reference is made in local literature to "A Ladies School at St. Andrew's Cottage" in North Street was listed in 1866.

LADIES BOARDING SCHOOL

Pigot's Trade Directory of 1830 includes a reference to **Anna White**, who was shown as the proprietor of a Ladies Academy in Paternoster Row.

MRS OLDRIDGE'S SCHOOL

The existence of "Mrs Oldridge's School" in Ottery appears in two accounts. The first is a letter supplied by Frank Elliott of Wimbledon, written in 1926, in which he refers to the school thus: "I remember when I was only two years of age going to Mrs Oldridge's school in Broad Street (and later to **Miss Carnell's school** at the top of the town)."

The second one is a batch of material supplied by John House of London, in which he mostly described the Great Fire but goes on to say “Some years afterwards I stayed with my grandmother, Mrs. Oldridge, in Broad Street

INFANTS SCHOOL

A reference is made in local literature to “An Infants School run by **Janet Passmore** in Mill Street in 1850.”

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

1. National Census Returns for 1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871
2. “Historical Notes on Devon Schools” – published by Devon County Council in 1982
3. “Long Ago in Ottery” - published by Roy Packer in 1983
4. “Ottery St Mary” published by John Whitham in 1984
5. Newspapers:
Exeter & Plymouth Gazette, 1827, 1856, 1862, 1874
Exeter Flying Post, 1807, 1818, 1826, 1842 1853, 1859, 1862
Western Times (& Taunton Courier) 1834, 1845, 1861
6. Devon County Trades Directories of 1823, 1830, 1839, 1844, 1850
7. South West Heritage Trust documents: Refs. 2253 C/EFL7, 3327A-4/PI 1, 3327 A-1/PE 5, 1253/EFL1, 961M-5/F/74