Education and Social Change for the Children of Chudleigh

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In the 1920s, Chudleigh was a small rural town on the road between Exeter and Plymouth with a population of about 2,000. A strict social order existed. There were three major land owners together with their agents and a number of retired colonels, admirals, clergymen and doctors, all of whom were considered upper class. Mill owners, agricultural contractors, managers, farmers, building contractors and tradesmen, such as wine merchants and jewellers, were considered middle class, and the working class was composed largely of manual workers and lower grade clerical workers. The social classes are defined by members of Chudleigh who lived through the 1920s and took part in an oral history project.[1]

Children of the upper class were educated initially at a preparatory school or at home with a governess. Those of the middle class usually attended an elementary school until 7 or 11 years of age, and those of the working class went there until they were 14. Thereafter, the children of the upper class would generally go to a public school, those of the middle class to a grammar school or other private secondary school, and the working class remained at the elementary school unless they won a scholarship to a secondary school.

During the First World War, the need for a healthier, better educated working class on the basis of national efficiency and productivity was widely discussed. The outcome took shape in the 1918 Education Act (which was a continuation of pre-war trends) and brought about certain aspects of educational expansion and reform. Although many historians see its implementation as 'botched and delayed', a number of measures were put in place. The curriculum was expanded to offer wider opportunities to pupils in both academic and practical subjects. The local authorities encouraged a vocational curriculum in elementary schools, which would 'develop skills in those elementary handicrafts such as woodwork and metalwork which are fundamental to all civilized life'. The Act also gave powers to local authorities to make arrangements to attend to the health and physical condition of the children attending elementary schools.[2] The leaving age was raised to 14 and local authorities were able to offer maintenance grants to students continuing to secondary schools to encourage working class take-up.[3]

This study was undertaken to discover the nature of school life in the 1920s and to assess the degree to which education reform under the Act promoted better life chances, health or indeed social mobility for the children of Chudleigh.

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[1] Devon Heritage Centre, CADAS, 1972–2022, Oral History Project.

[2] '1918 Education Act www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/8-9/39/enacted?view=plain [accessed 28 April 2023].

[3] Peter Mandler, 'The Centenary of the Fisher Act, 1918', *Secondary Education and Social Change in the United Kingdom Since 1945* <https://sesc.hist.cam.ac.uk/2018/06/20/the-centenary-of-the-fisher-act-1918> [accessed 27 April 2023].

Elementary Schools

There were three elementary schools in Chudleigh, commonly known as 'Top School', 'Bottom School' and 'Biddlecombe School'. These were established in the nineteenth century as church schools. 'Top School' was formerly a Baptist School, 'Bottom School' was a Church of England School and Biddlecombe School was provided by Lady Clifford as a Catholic School, principally for the children of estate workers.

By the 1920s, these schools were under the control of the local education authority and the Baptist School had become a council school, but these schools were still associated with their original denominations. There was still religious rivalry in the town. In fact, in 1921, the Rev. E. Spry, a nonconformist minister of Chudleigh, and Mr A. Stooke, a Chudleigh parish councillor, were summoned to Newton Abbot Police Court for passive resistance to paying the education portion of the poor rate. Mr Stooke said, 'I object to paying for education which teaches children to worship the Virgin Mary, to confess their sins to a man….'[4]

The study is limited by the fact that the only records extant are those of the Chudleigh Church of England School (CCES), which was described as a mixed school, built in 1857 with an infants' department constructed between 1859 and 1860 on the same site. Children from the middle and working classes attended the school either until they were 11, 13 (if they left with exemption certificates) or 14 years old.

Chudleigh Church of England School Buildings

The buildings had not been extended since 1890 when the infants' school-room was extended by 20 feet to provide a room measuring 60 × 17 feet. The mixed school could accommodate 199 children and had two school-rooms of 51 × 16 feet and 57 ×17 feet and a classroom of 18 foot 3 inches × 14 foot 1 inch. There were four classes but only three classrooms, and consequently, the two junior classes had to share the large room.

Like so many rural schools, the heating appeared to be inadequate, particularly when the caretaker failed to light the stove in good time. The log book reveals that on a number of occasions, by 10 a.m. every room was below 38 degrees Fahrenheit.[5]

[4] *Western Times*, 20 July 1921, p. 4.

[5] Devon Heritage Centre, Ref. 2562C/L/4, Chudleigh Mixed School Log Book.

Figure 1: Chudleigh Church of England School

In 1926, HMI commented on the lack of accommodation. Following his visit, a letter was received by the vicar (the correspondent), highlighting matters requiring attention:

> The poor ventilation of the small classroom hopper inlets on a lower level than the windows needs attention and "cross" ventilation should be arranged. Also, attention to the boys' cloakroom.

In July 1927, extensive alterations were carried out. The master's room was partitioned and a new doorway placed in the small classroom to provide a cloakroom. A new coal house was built and the lavatories enlarged. Further minor repairs were carried out the following year to the buildings, and the top portion of the playground was re-asphalted and the holes in the lower portion patched. In 1929, Devon County Council agreed to pay for internal renovations to church schools and certain works were carried out at CCES.

In terms of progress made during the 1920s, there were improvements. The buildings remained essentially inadequate but were renovated, restructured and expanded slightly to provide more cloakrooms and a larger lavatory block. Children took advantage of the stove placed in no. 2 room for the purpose of warming their dinners. These changes went some way towards the provision of a healthier environment.

The Infants' School

The infants' school had sixty children on the books in 1920. Their ages ranged from three to seven years. The principal teacher was supported by two supplementary teachers. The school received a satisfactory report following HMI's visit in June 1926.[6] It reads,

[6] Devon Heritage Centre, Ref 2562C/L/8, Chudleigh Infants' School Log Book.

> The pleasant and effective control of this school continues to be maintained. The teachers are cheerful and skilful. Good progress is being made in reading, writing and number. The classes are properly sectionized and suitable methods used. The physical and recreative activities are fairly well developed but the teachers are handicapped by the absence of a piano. The tone of the school is good.

Figure 2: Chudleigh School, 1920 (courtesy of Chudleigh History Group)

As with other infants' schools, epidemics such as measles, influenza, whooping cough and mumps were a problem practically every year. They were kept under control by the medical officer of health who gave instructions that children should be excluded from school for a number of weeks dependent upon the disease, including those living in an infected house, together with all children under five years of age. In 1929 during a whooping cough epidemic, there were only twenty-four children present after the others were excluded. The children had regular medical checks and treatment where necessary. The log books reveal no infectious skin diseases, which often blighted other rural schools, and attendance figures were generally good.[7]

Of the twenty-one pupils gaining scholarships to secondary schools from the mixed (senior department) at the age of 13 or 14, eleven boys and one girl had passed through the infants' department.[8]

[7] Devon Heritage Centre, Ref 2562C/L/8, Chudleigh Infants' School Log Book.
[8] Devon Heritage Centre, Ref 1562C/A/1, Chudleigh Primary School Admission Register, 1859–1950.

The Mixed School

In January, 1920, the mixed school had 101 children on the books and the teaching staff were: the headmaster, Mr J Webber, who was college trained; Miss Elworthy, a certificated teacher; Miss Robinson, an uncertificated teacher; and Rose Martin, a monitress. Rose Martin was a product of the school, having come through the infants' department before leaving the mixed school at 14 and becoming a monitress.

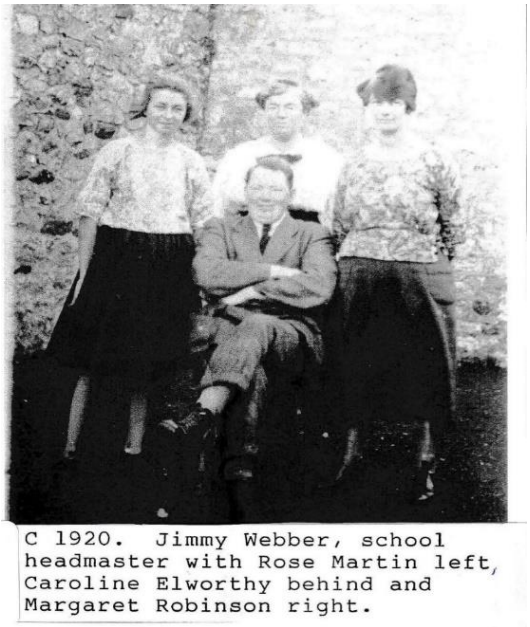

Figure 3: Teaching staff at the Mixed School, Chudleigh
(by kind permission of Chudleigh History Group)

Unlike many other village schools, there was little change in teaching staff during the 1920s and therefore a measure of continuity remained. The teachers appeared to work well as a team. The headmaster was appointed in 1919 and in 1921 Mr J. Leicester, HMI stated in his report that 'the general standard of efficiency has been well maintained. A good scheme of work has been prepared with records of progress regularly kept.' By April 1921, the number of children on the books had increased to 121, with 116 present.

In July 1926, the inspector wrote:

> The tone of the school is admirable and the headmaster and his staff do thorough and systematic work. Owing to the inconvenient character of the accommodation, 2 of the classes are rather large and there are 3 standards in each of these classes. The headmaster has sectionized his class and scholars are being trained to do useful private study. A good supply of literary books has been obtained. A notable feature is the class study of standard books. The attainments in essential subjects reached a good standard. The scholars read aloud in a class manner. The composition exercises are ample in length and workmanlike and are carefully corrected by the teachers. Handwriting is good. The spelling is not so good. In the English subjects, the scholars possess useful information and can draw rational conclusions. Arithmetic is taught on practical lines. The scholars calculate quickly. Useful handwork, including carpentry

is done. There is a good garden in which experimental work is done by both boys and girls. Opportunities for games have been provided. The two assistants are giving valuable help.

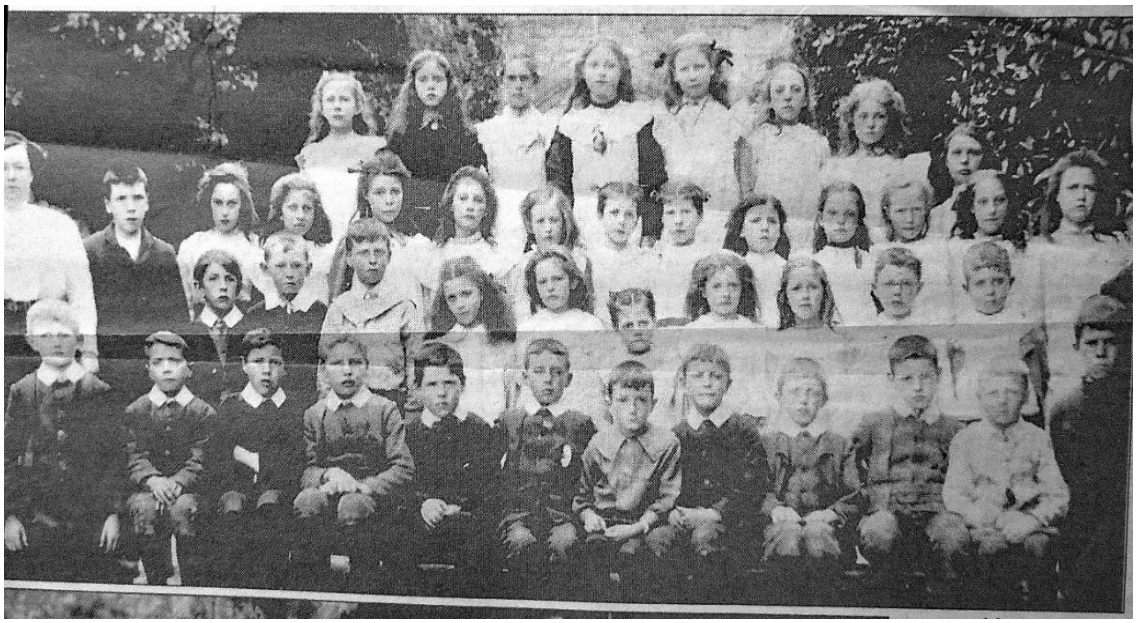

Figure 4: Miss Elworthy with her class.[9]

Expansion of the Curriculum

Under the 1918 Education Act, local education authorities were required to introduce schemes for the progressive development of education in public elementary schools, which should include 'practical instruction suitable to the ages, abilities and requirements of the children' and advanced instruction 'for the older more intelligent children'.[10] Consequently, steps were taken by the Devon County Council Education Committee (DEC) to expand the schools' curricula across the county in line with the policies imposed by the Board of Education. DEC provided organisers and instructors in a number of practical subjects to establish certain lessons or to advise teachers on those already taking place.

In February 1920, a drill instructor visited CCES and told the boys that only one school in Devon could beat them. Later that year, cookery classes commenced. Six girls from the school and twelve girls from the council school took part. They were visited by Miss Davis, the domestic organiser. There was already a school garden at the school and in March 1920, the DEC's horticultural instructor visited the school to inspect the garden and was very pleased with the organisation and teaching of the subject to both boys and girls. In 1922, woodwork classes commenced for the boys, and the following year a sewing class commenced for the girls.

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[9] *Mid Devon Advertiser*, 25 February 2005.

[10] '1918 Education Act', <www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/8-9/39/contents> [accessed 28 April 2023].

During the 1920s, DEC organised courses for teachers in relation to the expansion of the school curriculum. In July 1923, two of the teachers attended a lecture/exhibition in country folk dancing. They went on to establish a school troop, which performed at local community events. In 1928, the headmaster attended a course in woodwork at St Luke's College.

The teachers were keen to obtain a piano so that the pupils could engage in musical and dance activities and so the headmaster purchased a piano with the hope that certain fundraising events could cover the cost before it was handed over to the managers. In 1928, the first science apparatus granted by DEC arrived. Teachers could then demonstrate the relationship between science and gardening. In line with the Board of Education's recommendations that schools should utilise the local environment for study, the boys were taken to the historic Belvedere Castle on the Haldon Hills where there was a splendid view of the river Exe. Instead of having a drawing lesson in the classroom, sketches were made of the castle and the mouth of the river.

The headmaster was keen to expand physical activities such as drill and sports. In September 1920, the physical training organiser visited the school in connection with the proposed Schools' Football League in the mid-south-east area of Devon, for which the Cable Football Shield would be presented to the winners. The school won the shield on three occasions during the decade. In February 1928, one boy was selected to play football for the Devon Community Team. The boys were also successful in cricket, and in 1926 the girls travelled to Paignton to take part in the final of the Devon Schoolgirls' Netball League against Dartmouth.

Figure 5: Drill lessons (*Mid Devon Advertiser*).

Healthcare

The school had a good record of attendance. In 1928, for the month of February, the school was placed at the top of the South Devon area for 94.5% attendance. The schoolchildren were inspected regularly by the nurse, the dentist and the doctor. A number of parents appeared to

resent the intervention of healthcare officials. Parents would attend the school when children had health checks and there were many objections to the dental inspections.

During 1929, progress was hampered by outbreaks of scarlet fever. In October, a case was identified and the school was fumigated. The county medical officer of health visited the school on three occasions during the school year to assess the situation and issued a number of exclusion orders.

The headmaster took every opportunity possible to provide a healthy environment for the children. Children were taught outdoors whenever the chance arose, whether that be a sporting activity or a nature study lesson. The park was used for football and cricket and from 1923 onwards, boys were instructed to swim in the river Teign.

The Church, the School Managers and the Wider Community

The headmaster, the teachers and the managers were an integral part of the church. The headmaster, Mr J Webber, was clerk to the Parochial Church Council. He was also Scoutmaster to the local Chudleigh troop of Boy Scouts in 1920.[11]

Schoolboys were enthusiastic members of the church choir and practised regularly. Mr Webber enjoyed a good relationship with the school managers who gave their support. They made regular visits to the school and took a keen interest in the children. In July 1925, one of the managers gave the infant pupils a wireless concert in the afternoon. There were a number of school trips and parties provided too. There was always a Christmas concert, together with a New Year's party when the pupils sang songs, recited poems and were given a bun and a bag of sweets. Prizegiving each year was held at the vicarage and a school concert was held at 'The Elms', the home of one of the managers. In June, the school 'treat' was held at Whaddon, the home of another manager.

As a Church of England school, a religious ethic was followed. The Bishop of Crediton visited the school from time to time. Each year, pupils entered the Bishop Phillpott's Prayer Book examination. In 1921, eighteen pupils entered with one gaining a first-class prize, six a second-class prize and nine a third-class prize with two passes. Pupils took part in certain church services, such as those on holy days like Ash Wednesday, when the children would file down to church, and on other occasions such as Armistice Day. Each November, children would buy poppies and then on Armistice Day at 10a.m., the whole school would assemble in the large room and were addressed by the headmaster. Prayers were said and hymns were sung. At 10.40a.m., the children would march to the war memorial where they took part in a united service. Then the national anthem was sung and the children would lay a wreath (which had been made in school) at the foot of the memorial.

The school was very much part of the town. Schoolchildren were encouraged to take part in community activities and in October 1920 a concert was held in the town hall when a troupe from the junior department performed 'The Madcap Months'.[12] A jumble sale was held at the

[11] Ibid., 30 January 1920, p. 3.
[12] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 20 October 1920, p. 3.

school annually in aid of the local Nursing Association and the girls performed an operetta to raise funds for the same cause.[13] A Conservative Fete was held in June 1925, during which children played their part in a watch competition. Several folk dances were also performed by some of the children.[14]

School prizegiving took place in the town hall in May 1928. Class prizes were given together with a special prize for conduct, scripture, gardening and woodwork. Also, captains' badges were given for boys and girls. Prizes were also awarded for the Bishop Phillpott's competition. When one of the pupils died, children and teachers subscribed to a wreath and attended the funeral, with the schoolboys acting as bearers.

Fundraising was an important feature of school life both in order to aid various charities and also the school itself. In December 1925, a concert was performed in aid of the annual outing and prize fund. The infants, juniors and seniors each put on a play with musical accompaniment by schoolchildren on the piano and violin. The children were trained by the teachers and in all 117 children took part in the production.[15]

In December 1928, Mr J. Leicester and Mr Coulthard, HMIs, visited the school and expressed a wish to see a rehearsal of the school concert in the town hall. They were absolutely delighted with what they saw and earnestly congratulated Miss Robertson and Mr Webber on the splendid way in which the children performed and the admirable way in which all the costumes had been made. A profit of £12 6s 4d was made from the concert. £10 was given to the renovation fund and the remainder to the children's treat fund.

Empire Day celebrations were held on the vicarage lawn. An entry in the school log book reads:

> The children were assembled and registration carried out. We then proceeded to march to the vicarage lawn, arriving about 2.45pm. Nearly 100 parents and friends were present. After the children had saluted the flag and sung national songs and empire songs, the Vicar spoke to them, followed by Mr R Moyle who gave an admirable address to the children. Miss Ellis (manager) very kindly presented the Eastchuch Gift prizes to 8 boys and girls. She also presented the Cable Football Shield to the captain of the team. This was the third time it had been won by the school. The proceedings terminated by the singing of the national anthem and cheers for Miss Lord who very kindly gave each child a bun.

The headmaster used his best endeavours to provide his pupils with an awareness of the wider world beyond the boundaries of the Chudleigh parish. There were a number of children whose horizons were rather narrow but the school provided them with aspirations by taking them on a variety of visits, some of which were to sites of historical and scientific interest. Pupils were encouraged to exhibit at local shows in the area. Children put entries into the local flower show; the girls entered their needlework and the boys entered their garden produce. At the Chudleigh Horticultural Show, there were classes for needlework, knitting and handwriting for children from elementary schools.

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[13] Ibid., 14 December 1928, p. 2.
[14] Ibid., 12 June 1925, p. 3.
[15] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 18 December 1925, p. 3.

In 1922 the school won the first four prizes in the handwriting competition and also in needlework and knitting.[16]

Progress Achieved in the 1920s

A perusal of rural church school log books shows that CCES compares well with others of the same size. HMIs commented that the school had reached a good standard. The school had strong sports teams which were successful in interschool matches for boys and girls. The schoolwork was being developed satisfactorily on modern lines. However, it would appear that the curriculum was limited in 'advanced instruction', but HMIs deemed the school efficient and well run. Six children passed a scholarship to a secondary school in the first two years of Mr Webber's leadership.[17]

Lessons in cookery – a new innovation by the Devon Education Committee for elementary schools – provided girls with the knowledge to provide a healthy diet for the family, and lessons in needlework led some of the girls into a career of dressmaking. The boys gained a rudimentary knowledge of horticulture and carpentry, which gave them more flexibility in their choice of occupation. The interschool sporting activities and other competitions that necessitated travel around the county broadened the horizons of many who would otherwise have never left Chudleigh.

School Leavers

At the beginning of the century, a large number of girls left CCES to go into service because of a lack of an alternative. In the 1920s, far fewer did so. Girls instead became dressmakers, shop assistants, assistant teachers, etc. Communications became easier so girls worked in Newton Abbot as well as Chudleigh. Others left school and stayed at home to help their mothers. A greater number of girls went on to secondary schools.

As for the boys, there was no significant change in the lower-paid occupations such as trade assistants, farm workers, errand boys and quarrymen. However, there were greater opportunities for high achievers to be awarded scholarships.

Education was valued by the middle class and even some of the working class. The nature of secondary schools changed locally with the opening of Newton Abbot Secondary School, which had a wider curriculum than traditional secondary schools and appealed to a growing middle class.

A continuation of schooling became available in Chudleigh for the first time in 1920. Evening classes were first advertised in September 1920. They were to be held at CCES and subjects taught were reading, composition, arithmetic, drawing and brushwork. Enrolment was open to people over 14 years of age.[18]

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[16] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 31 July 1925, p. 2.
[17] Ibid., 8 July 1921, p. 3.
[18] Ibid., 17 September 1920 and 26 November 1920, p. 3.

Secondary Education

At the beginning of the century, other than the elementary schools in Chudleigh and its environs, schools were private. These school had a narrow academic curriculum. Most of the boys' schools were predominantly boarding schools and some offered a limited number of places for day boys.

Chudleigh (Pynsent's) Grammar School was an endowed school opened in the late seventeenth century. Its governors were appointed by the Parish Council, the Board of Education and the Pynsent Educational Foundation. Boys were prepared for the universities and naval and military cadetships. The foundation offered scholarships to boys who had attended an elementary school in Chudleigh.

The oldest school in Newton Abbot was known as Newton College, which was established in 1861, and by the 1880s was set in 20 acres of grounds with a chapel, library, gymnasium, swimming pool, tennis courts, cricket pavilion and sanatorium. It was open only to sons of professional parents.[19] (By the 1920s, this might have changed, as the son of a wealthy mill owner/farmer from Chudleigh was admitted). Its focus was to prepare boys for entrance into Woolwich and Sandhurst and boys could join the Newton College Company of Officers' Training Corps.[20]

Wolborough Hill School was described in advertisements as 'A Preparatory School for the Public Schools and Navy'. The Grammar School (for boys), was advertised as an establishment for 'the Preparation for Business, Professional, Preliminary, and Civil Service'.

Newton Abbot High School was open for the 'Daughters of Gentlemen'.[21] Several girls from Chudleigh went to St Hilda's in Exeter. It was a private school for day girls and boarders. The girls would be prepared for the School Certificate Examination. In addition, the school offered instruction in pianoforte, needlework and elocution. Secondary schools for girls were usually designed to groom girls for membership of the middle class through the pursuit of academic success and feminine accomplishments.[22]

In the early twentieth century, most boys from Chudleigh, on leaving an elementary school, would go on to either the Grammar School in Newton Abbot or to Chudleigh (Pynsent's) Grammar School. By 1912, only five pupils remained at the latter and at a meeting of the Devon Education Committee, the matter of the closure of the school was discussed. It was suggested that the school should continue until the planned Newton Abbot Secondary School was ready, when pupils from Chudleigh could be transferred.

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[19] Rowena Forster, *Knowles Hill School: A History from 1904 to 1995* (1995), p. 20.
[20] *Western Morning News*, 18 July 1928.
[21] Roger Jones, *A Book of Newton Abbot* (Ex Libris Press, 1986), p. 114.
[22] Penny Summerfield, 'Cultural Reproduction in the Education of Girls' in *Lessons for Life*, edited by Felicity Hunt (Blackwell, 1967), p. 167.

Figure 6: Chudleigh (Pynsent's) Grammar School

The increased powers given to county councils to raise a rate beyond 2d in the pound to fund secondary education gave rise to the building of the Newton Abbot Science, Art and Technical School, which was opened in 1904 and was financed by Devon County Council. It was a day and evening school and adjoined the Passmore Edwards Public Library in Bank Street. Its mission was to provide 'A Thorough and Progressive Education for Boys and Girls'. The school was divided into four departments, namely science, technology, art and commerce. The curriculum appealed to middle-class parents as it provided pupils with a sound education and skills for their future occupations. Of the practical subjects, both boys and girls could take Royal Society of Arts examinations in typewriting, business knowledge and commercial arithmetic or Board of Education examinations in model drawing, magnetism and electricity. Fees were two guinees per term.[23]

Figure 7: Newton Abbot Science Art and Technical School. The left-hand half shows the library and the right-hand half shows the Science, Art and Technical School

[23] *Exeter & South Devon Advertiser*, 2 January 1909, p. 4.

In October 1904, a pupil teacher's centre was added, which provided facilities for young people to receive instruction so as to qualify for entrance to a teachers' training college or to obtain posts as assistant teachers. Thirty students were enrolled.[24] The success of the pupil teacher's centre led to a demand for the recognition of the school by the Board of Education as a public secondary school. This was granted provisionally and the school was known as Newton Abbot Secondary School (NASS). The headmaster of the Grammar School was concerned about the possible competition from the secondary school. [25] Evening classes were also run, covering a range of practical and academic subjects. Some reflected the rural nature of the area such as the course in agricultural chemistry, which comprised twenty lessons at a cost of 10 shillings.[26] In 1909, it was reported that there were eight scholarships open to pupils attending NASS and seven scholarships open to scholars attending an elementary school; the latter were awarded by the Devon Education Committee.[27]

As the numbers of pupils grew, the accommodation was considered deficient and in order that the Board of Education should continue to keep the school on the fee grant list, Devon Education Committee needed to build a new school and equip it. It was agreed that the Urban District Council would fund half of the building costs.[28] The new NASS building, situated in the Exeter Road was opened in 1915[29] and the renovation of the former Science, Art and Technical School building was sanctioned by the Devon Education Committee.

Devon County Council provided a well-equipped secondary school in the district for 210 students with excellent chemistry and physical laboratories and playing fields.[30] Pupils now had the opportunity of taking the senior certificate examination with matriculation at 16 years and the higher certificate at 18 years of age. The school offered its students a range of subjects of both an academic and practical nature. In 1915, Edward Napper of Chudleigh won a special prize for building construction.[31] However, it was not free unless a scholarship was awarded. Towards the end of the decade, the Devon Education Committee agreed to an increase of about £2,000 mainly to cover the cost of extra teachers.[32] More free places were also offered. One Chudleigh boy to take advantage of a scholarship was a postman's son who left at 18 with honours in the Oxford Higher Certificate examination and went on to St. Luke's College, Exeter and became a teacher.[33]

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[24] Rowena Forster, *Knowles Hill School: A History from 1904 to 1995* (1995), p. 7.
[25] *Western Morning News*, 20 December 1907.
[26] Ibid., 24 October 1908, p. 8.
[27] *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette*, 7 August 1909, p. 6.
[28] *Western Times*, 22 June 1909, p. 4.
[29] Roger Jones, *A Book of Newton Abbot* (Ex Libris Press, 1986), p. 114.
[30] Rowena Forster, *Knowles Hill School: A History from 1904 to 1995* (1995), p. 23.
[31] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 16 July 1915, p. 3.
[32] Devon County Council Minute Book, Quarterly Report, 21 June 1917.
[33] Rowena Forster, p. 44.

Figure 8: Newton Abbot Secondary School
(photograph by permission of Andrew Turnbull)

Entrants

A comparison was made between pupils from Chudleigh progressing to secondary education in the decade 1910–20 and the following decade. In the former decade, twelve boys left (three were awarded a 'Pynsent' exhibition and nine were fee paying). Two girls went to private schools. In the 1920s, there was a notable increase in school leavers going on to secondary education. Twenty-nine boys left CCES, thirteen of whom were awarded scholarships. Eleven girls left; five went to NASS (one of whom won a scholarship) and another scholarship girl went to a school in Plymouth with the remainder going to other private secondary schools.

In general, members of the working class viewed a secondary education with caution and even the middle class tended to value education for their sons rather than their daughters. This, of course, was not purely a decision based upon wealth or social status. Mr Tapper, a farmer in Chudleigh sent his two daughters to NASS, whereas his three sons assisted on the farm when they left school at 14. On the other hand, Mr Brooking, the Station Master sent his daughter and two sons to NASS.

Scholarships

In April 1915, at a meeting of the governors of the Pynsent's Exhibition (formerly the Pynsent Educational Foundation), it was reported that five boys were holding scholarships at NASS, their fees and maintenance paid.[34] In 1917, the governors of the 'Pynsent' Exhibition awarded four scholarships to Chudleigh boys but only two of them took advantage of the scholarships awarded.[35] There were no equivalent opportunities for girls at that time.

The CCES log books reveal that the total number of school leavers having won scholarships in the period 1920–29 was twenty-one. Therefore, a third of the successful pupils failed to take up the offer of a scholarship. One explanation for this could be the influence of the rigid class structure. Some working-class families perceived secondary schools as middle-class institutions; in fact, they thought them to be 'above their station' and they feared they would feel like displaced persons.[36] The other factor could be one of financial constraints. This matter was a concern of the governors of the Pynsent Educational Foundation when discussing the future of Chudleigh boys transferring to NASS. It was felt that the train fares to Newton Abbot might place an added burden on families and prevent the boys from taking up their places.[37]

Of the thirteen boys who won scholarships in the 1920s, ten were from working-class families, as were the two girls who were awarded scholarships. In 1923, the annual fees for NASS became £10 10s, except in special cases.[38] 'Pynsent' scholarships to the value of £10 were awarded to Chudleigh boys whose parents required assistance to educate them at NASS.[39] The costs of the train fare could have been covered by the charity but no detailed accounts exist. The two boys awarded a 'Pynsent' scholarship, a labourer's son and a widow's son, took up their places at NASS. All the other children who won scholarships awarded by Devon County Council were from 'better off' working-class families such as an engine driver and a postman.[40] The term of the grants under the Pynsent Foundation were for 3 years. However, those awarded by the Devon County Council varied. In 1920, Irene Norris the monitress from CCES won a scholarship to the teacher training centre, NASS for 2 years. The following year, Frederick Wills won a scholarship to NASS for 5 years.

Of those children who went on to NASS with the help of a scholarship, H. Osborne, L. Doble[41] and A. F Snell were successful in the Oxford Local Examinations, and H. Baker passed the matriculation examination.[42] Of the fee-paying children, S. Osborne was successful in passing the Oxford Local School Certificate examination with second-class honours, which gave him exemption from the London Matriculation[43] and T. R. Osborne was successful in a competitive examination for entry of aircraft apprentices in the RAF.[44] The

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[34] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 30 April 1915, p. 3.
[35] Ibid., 28 December 1917, p. 3.
[36] Devon Heritage Centre, CADAS, 1972–2022, Oral History Project.
[37] Ibid., 5 April 1912, p. 5.
[38] Devon County Council Minute Book, 1922.
[39] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 1 August 1913, p. 3.
[40] Devon Heritage Centre, Ref 1562C/A/1, Chudleigh Primary School Admission Register, 1859–1950.
[41] *South Devon Weekly Express*, 4 September 1931.
[42] Ibid., 19 January 1934, p. 3.
[43] Ibid.,23 January 1931, p. 3.
[44] Ibid., 22 December 1933.

two girls who went on to St Hilda's School, Marjorie Vaughan and Bessie Hellier, were both successful; the former passed the Cambridge Junior Local examination and the latter, the Cambridge School Certificate examination.[45]

Career Opportunities

A study of the 1939 Register was undertaken to ascertain any changes in status of the pupils recorded. However, given the external circumstances in operation such as the financial crises of the interwar years and the start of the Second World War, the results are blurred. Also, by that time, most of the girls had become housewives and so their husband's status was used. Comparing the pupils from CCES of 1910–20 with those of the 1920s, the number of general labourers, miners and clay workers remained the same, as were the small tradesmen's assistants. The number of female shop assistants increased as did the number of non-manual workers and the type of occupation changed as pupils did not necessarily keep to the occupational categories of their parents. Some became firemen, policemen and nurses. Perhaps another aspect of the reforms that had a positive effect was the health measures put in place, judging from the amount of sport the pupils did at school and continued to do so in community sporting events.

The opening of NASS clearly provided opportunities for the children of Chudleigh. However, a rigid class structure was still in evidence. The 'old boy' network operated within the public schools and the status of a school affected a child's future career prospects. A case in point was brought up at a Devon County Council meeting where it was reported that two former pupils of NASS, sent as candidates for assistant clerkships at the Admiralty were unsuccessful due, Mr Vicary hinted, to the fact that they had not been educated at a grammar school.[46]

As to the children who had attended NASS or other secondary schools, the majority of those who could be traced acquired a slightly higher status than that of their parents. Boys went into commerce, farming, joined the teaching profession, the police force, the armed forces (as officers or warrant officers) or the civil service. One boy remained in Chudleigh as a solicitor's clerk. Of the working-class scholarship boys, a miner's son became a market gardener, a chauffer's son and a labourer's son both became police constables, and a carpenter's son a civil servant. For the single girls, some drifted into teaching, nursing or clerical work in the interwar years. By 1939 most had become housewives. Career opportunities for married women were limited due to the formal and informal marriage bars. One Chudleigh girl had married and still had an occupation. She was a piano teacher. As far as can be assessed, most of the former secondary school girls had maintained their original class status.

[45] Ibid., 23 January 1931, p. 3.
[46] *Western Times*, 7 June 1918.

Conclusion

In spite of the education reforms and the benefits they brought to the classroom, there was no significant change in social mobility until after the Second World War. However, the expanded curriculum at CCES gave young people more flexibility in choosing a job other than remaining in the same occupational category as their parents, and provided them with greater skills needed for their adult lives. The health initiatives and measures also had a positive effect.

The secondary schools offered an academic tradition that maintained the status of the middle-class pupils. The new NASS attracted many more children from Chudleigh than had previously attended other private schools thus providing an advanced education. The extra scholarships awarded to the working-class boys provided them with a much broader education than the elementary education previously available. It enhanced their career prospects and gave them opportunities that their parents never had.