

# MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

## ANNUAL BULLETIN NUMBER 7

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Nov. 150 Years of Gloucs. Constabulary  
P.C. R. Barton  
Dec. Social Get Together

1990 Jan. Excavations at Frocester Court  
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Apl. Minchinhampton Video & Quiz  
May Amberley Parochial School  
Mr. M. Sanders  
Sept. Manor of Minchinhampton  
Mr. C. Turk

### Editor's Note

This year our Bulletin contains a series prepared by our Chairman, Cyril Turk, on the early years of Minchinhampton School. He has made full use of the Log Books, for the Girls' and Boys' Schools, and we can look forward to further information on this subject in the future. I have entitled it "An Education Miscellany".

## **An Education Miscellany**

### **Minchinhampton - The First Purpose-built School**

In 1866 serious consideration was being given to the need to build a school for Minchinhampton children. There had been a National School in the Market House in 1816 but with the boys removed to Tetbury Street and the girls left in the Market House, jostling with other activities, it was felt the time had come to have a purpose-built school. At a meeting in the Rectory to discuss this, Mr. Ricardo took the lead by offering an acre of land near the church, and promising to head a subscription list with £330, but it was felt that this was too much to expect and they therefore settled on £200. The Rector, Rev. E. C. Oldfield, then sent a letter to all parishioners inviting contributions and suggesting that the cost of the school would be £1500. In the event, the first subscription list brought in £1200. Now when the school was erected, gas fittings introduced and play grounds laid out, it seemed the probable cost would be £1400.

Building work was started in early 1867 under the supervision of W. Clissold, an architect of Stroud, with the masonry work undertaken by E. Clayfield of Horsley, the carpentry and joinery by H. Harman, the tiling and plastering by D. Newman and the plumbing, glazing and painting by J. Simmonds - all three of Minchinhampton

There was an early snag. The site chosen was where the old manor house had stood. This had been pulled down in the 1830's by Mr. Whitehead with the intention of replacing it by a mansion, but only the cellars and cellar walls had been built when Mr. Whitehead withdrew. The discovery in 1867 of this buried work meant that the excavations for footings for the school were more extensive than had been expected, but fortunately building work was not held up too long.

Many parishioners will remember the school as it was when it was taken down, not so long ago, and may be interested in a description of it in 1868. It is then described as Early English style, with walls of local stone, laid in random courses. There was one room 20 feet wide and 72 feet long, divided by a movable partition into two almost equal parts, one for the girls and one for the boys. An infant room, 28 feet by 68 feet adjoined the girls' room. (In 1886 the infants were placed under their own mistress, Miss Charlotte Hamlett). The classrooms were furnished with desks of the best pine, purchased from the National Society in London. These when lain out in three tiers offered desk, seat and table. A gallery was built which could seat 50 and was movable. Open fireplaces allowed full heating whilst casements to each window gave a constant flow of air. The "gasoliers" for evening light were painted azure blue and picked out with gilding. The separate porches for boys and girls were paved with Staffordshire red and blue tiles, while the boys' porch had a turret with a store room and a tower built over it, with a steel bell. The bell was made by Vickers of Sheffield, whose first peal of bells was made for Chalford Church. Outbuildings were placed at a suitable distance from the school "having regard to ventilation and privacy". Altogether the comment was that "the novel and original features are boldly and skilfully carried out and harmonise well with the general style and purpose of the building".

The school was officially opened in April 1868. At 4 o'clock a procession of children carrying banners, and headed by town notables, preceded by the brass band, marched through the streets to the school where the children were seated halfway down the hall, with leading families and inhabitants. There followed prayers and speeches. Then Major Ricardo, H. D. Ricardo's eldest son, presented the Chairman with the conveyance for the land to be deposited with the town documents. Tea for all, with a bun for the children, followed with the band playing and the ceremony closed with more speeches.

A new school was born.

### **The Girls and Infants Section 1875 - 1886**

Miss Emma Webb had been headmistress of the Girls' National School in the Market House since 1861, and transferred to the newly-built school in 1868. She divided her school into Infants and Six Standards i.e. those stages through which the girls had to pass. Those were housed in two rooms, of which she gave details in 1879 to Dr. Partridge, Sanitary Inspector, who was inquiring into all schools in the area. There was a principal room, built for 140 children, and a classroom for 60, at the reckoning of 8 feet per child. Since the average attendance was 171, more children could be accommodated. The same arrangement was made for the Boys' School a room for 70 and a classroom for 20.

In 1879 when the school was at the minimum government number (attendance 118), the Standards were grouped with 3 to 6 in the charge of Miss Webb, 2 with the pupil teacher Mary Lewis (now in her third year), and 1 and the Infants with the second year pupil teacher Henrietta Essex assisted by a monitor Fanny Essex. As the school grew these arrangements changed. In 1881 Miss Webb took Standards 4 to 6 with 60 girls. Mary Lewis took Standards 2 and 3 with 58 girls. Miss C.J. Hamlett, Assistant Mistress, took Standard 1 with 57 girls, while the 57 infants were with Henrietta Essex.. Miss Webb planned to work sometime each day with Standards 2 and 3, and with the infants who were mainly superintended by Miss Hamlett.

Ladies of the parish came in to help. In October 1875 Miss Mabel Baynes came in on Tuesdays and Thursdays to take reading and dictation; on Wednesday the Hon. Mrs. Eden took reading. Later, Miss C. Baynes appeared regularly on Tuesdays and Fridays to take needlework.

The main help, however, was given by the clergy who, besides visiting the school every week and often bringing visitors with them, also from time to time took part in the religious instruction. The first entry in the School Log Book, on October 1st 1875, reads "The Curate taught Tuesday and Friday mornings". This was to be the regular pattern with the addition that the Rector, Rev. J. Hodson in December of that year came in for Scripture on Tuesday and Thursday mornings adding dictation in 1876, which became Reading in 1877. His work in the school was appreciated; in August 1877, on the occasion of his leaving the parish, the teachers and scholars presented him with an album of photographs, and received a photograph of him in return.

The main concern of the clergy was the Annual Diocesan Examination. As a lead in to this, the curate, Rev. W.A. Scott, in April 1880, examined the upper section of the girls on St. Matthew's Gospel. The examination taken that year, as for many years, by the Rev. C. Audrey, received his enthusiastic comments (and indeed his comments were always fulsome!) "The general tone and order remain unexceptionable and the care and pains that have been bestowed upon the children continue to produce good results, more especially in the Highest Group, where the knowledge of Holy Scripture and the Catechism is really good and intelligent. In the 2nd and 5rd Group there was a little weakness this year in the New Testament subjects and in Catechism.. The infant Group are making good progress."

Relations with the Rectors and Curates continued excellent, with them visiting the school, taking lessons and providing teas on special occasions. The Rev. F A Mather, who became Rector in 1884, made changes that were not always welcome. There was the change made in school fees in June 1885 when they were demanded in advance. Later in the month he altered the Certificate of Merit. Hitherto, the girls in Standards 5 and 6 who passed fully received a large superior certificate. Now, unless they had made at least 350 attendances they would receive only the smaller one, previously given to the lower Standards, who were now to given a smaller, plainer kind. The certificates for Standard 6 would be framed, Standard 5 unframed. A further blow was that those scholars in Standards 4, 5 and 6 who had passed fully, but had not made the 350 attendances would not be treated to the yearly seaside outing. It was hoped that this would improve attendances, but for the first time Miss Webb voiced criticism - "the girls are so often wanted at home".

One of the first entries in the log book is a two-page list of the Needlework to be covered by each class. Continually there are records of the prizes given for this. In March 1879 Miss Mabel Baynes gave prizes to Caroline Simmonds in Standard 6, who received a work-box, and to Jane Harman, who received a writing desk. Miss Webb was moved to write, "These are valuable presents." In 1880 Miss Baynes offered £1 and Miss Pavey 7/6d, Emily Allen and Mary Cox, 6/- each, Annie Hunt and Ellen French 5/- each. Miss Webb was absent in August 1880, having to go to London for treatment for eye trouble, but on her return she took needlework each afternoon, "to make up for time taken from that subject". In June 1881 she was pleased to report that, by request, samples of Needlework and Knitting had been taken to the Royal Albert Hall. When, in May 1878, an examination of 9 girls and 6 boys was held in the school for a medal in memory of Joseph Bowstead, H.M.I. and a member of the parish, the leading girls in the school were Ellen Cooke and Jane Walker, but Annie Bolton won because of her needlework. The other two girls each received 2/6d from the Rector.

Drawing also appears in the log book. In May 1877 there was a list of the successful candidates in an examination, supervised by the Rector and Curate, for Drawing set by the Science and Art Department. 37 children were presented amongst whom 7 gained drawing-board prizes - among them Fanny Essex and Mary Lewis - 5 gained certificates - among them Henrietta Essex and Jane Harrison - while 6 also got certificates in Geometry. All the others were marked satisfactory. Another list for March 1879 gives 25 candidates successfully presented - among them Mary Lewis and Henrietta Essex

(both Pupil Teachers) and Fanny Essex - all three passing in Free Drawing, while Caroline Lovell carried off a prize.

Singing was regularly recorded as a subject in which H.M.I. was concerned. Hence every year there is a list of songs to be sung before the Inspector. So in November 1878, Percival Baliner, H.M.I. heard:

TRIOS -	We are spirits, blithe & free The Gypsies live a life of ease
SONGS -	The Fire Brigade Goodbye to Summer
ROUNDS -	If I were a Cobbler Glide along my bonnie boat

The infants presented two rounds - A boat to the ferry and Goodnight to you all - and songs with exercises - A little bird in a warm nest in a tree and A neat little clock in the centre it stands. Quite a concert. Does anyone now know these songs?

There was, in fact, a school concert usually at Easter. One such on Easter Monday 1879 had fifty children singing in "Glees and Choruses" with a few boys and girls singing duets. It was a success "in spite of stormy weather" and "many hearty encores bespoke appreciation", and the school profited to the extent of £5/8/0d. When building work was done on the school in 1880 the Rector decided that a school concert should be held to help the Building Fund. The boys and girls had singing lessons after 4.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the concert made £12. In February 1881 a School Glee Club was formed, meeting on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.00 p.m. "Which the senior teachers attend". In July 1884 the Rector brought in some ladies to hear the children "sing from sight, especially the infants".

Other subjects, of course, were not neglected. Miss Webb refers once or twice to the weekly examination, taken sometimes by herself or the senior Pupil Teacher, and often by the Rector or Curate. These other subjects are always commented upon by the Inspector, not always favourably. The report in 1879 reads, 'The school is as usual in excellent order, singing is good and needlework very commendable. The Standard Examination shows very great recovery from the misfortunes of last year in Writing and arithmetic. The subject in the first and seconds, and more particularly in the seconds, is very creditable. In the fourth Standard there is some weakness in Notation and in the fifth Standard tho' there is clear evidence of teaching, there is some deficiency of quantity. The Infants, tho' carefully taught, are hardly as advanced as Infants often are in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Some additional lighting in the Schoolroom is very desirable. The Gallery in the Classroom is worn out. Maps of Scotland and Ireland and a small globe are needed".

Some comment is necessary. The "misfortune" of the previous year was due in part to Miss Webb having to take charge of the Boys' School while awaiting the arrival of the new master. She commented after her three weeks there that "on the whole the behaviour of the boys has been very satisfactory. There has been no rudeness nor disobedience of any kind". Her other comment on the misfortune was "The difficulties of running a large school with inefficient and youthful Pupil Teachers". All the subjects adversely

commented upon were eligible for grant aid, which fell from £120/6/0d. in 1877 to £112/3/0d. in 1878.

Lighting to the Gallery was the building work done in 1880 A classroom belonging to the Boys' School had been adapted and taken over by the girls, giving more room for Standards 1 and 2, Extra windows for the Standard 1 room had much improved the whole building, and the Gallery (Infant Room) had been newly seated. The following year Miss Webb obtained the approval for herself or "Any other Certificated Teacher" to use a detached classroom.

"Excellent order", this is a recurrent phrase in H.M. Inspector's report. In 1876 there is praise for "organisation and discipline"; 1879 "order and general tone excellent"; 1884 "The school is in a highly efficient condition". Miss Webb seems to have maintained her discipline by praise (the successful children are always recorded); by taking part in the work of the school; supervision, help and living with the Pupil Teachers; having senior pupils with her at functions, teas and outings, and without severity. Unlike the Boy's School where thrashings are regularly reported, in the Girls' School there is only one instance of punishment. In February 1882 Fanny Smith was punished for disobedience. (Miss Webb writes "child" so she is one of the younger ones.) Pamela Latham had been questioned about the matter and Fanny's mother thereupon "beat" Pamela. The managers took a hand and threatened to "take proceedings" unless Mrs. Smith made "a satisfactory apology to them" which she duly did in writing.

Miss Webb also ran an evening school for the senior scholars. In 1876 this was held for 40 nights, Monday and Fridays, from 7.30 to 8.30 p.m. for a fee of 1/- for the session. It started with 12 scholars. The Rector was so satisfied that he gave "Tea and a pleasant evening enjoyment" to all the night scholars. The Evening School seems to have been continuously successful, having 34 scholars in 1877. This year, though, the evening sessions were seriously disturbed. On August 10<sup>th</sup> Miss Webb reported that boys played pranks and made hideous noises about the schools, stones were thrown in through open windows, doors were tied up so that it was difficult to open them. At the same time the Drum and Fife Band, practising in the school made such a "deafening noise" that lessons were suspended and needlework taken instead. She also said that "it is a common thing for the floor of the Girl's School to be shaken by the force of the drums". The Evening School attracted a grant of £9/7/0d in 1876, £11/19/0d in 1877 and thereafter it drops out of the record.

### **Some Episodes Recorded**

December 5<sup>th</sup> 1875

The girl whose job it was to light the school fires put the hot, dried wood upon a chair whilst she cleaned out the fireplace. There must have been some spark still in the wood, which ignited (after she left, says Miss Webb). Wind apparently blew upwards through the floor, so the fire didn't spread. As it was, the chair was completely burnt to a "skeleton", the floor burnt through and the joint "injured".

January 4<sup>th</sup> 1876

A late Christmas Entertainment. The schools were prettily decorated. Two trees were provided, one in each school. Some 500 scholars, teachers, parents and visitors came. The girls sang a selection of songs and the Drum and Fife Band played in the Boys' School. Each of the teachers received a present. Children who had made at least 250 attendances were given two presents, the rest received one, and everyone had buns and oranges. (The Boys' School Log book simply records the latter).

November 11<sup>th</sup> 1877

Police Sergeant Sampson removed his two children from the school. He objected to the Attendance Officer calling upon him, claiming that as a Police Sergeant he was exempt from the laws applying to agricultural labourers.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1879

Mrs. Ricardo of Gatcombe Park gave a supply of milk, both last week and this, for those children who stayed to dinner. She also provided warm articles of clothing for the most thinly clad infants.

July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1880

The Volunteer Camp was held in the Park adjoining the schools. Many of the children were late, having gone there on their way to school. The attendance at one time had been reduced by 50, and the afternoon was made a half-holiday because of the "Review". The Camp was a constant problem.

November 11<sup>th</sup> 1880

The school year changed. It was now to begin on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

August 8<sup>th</sup> 1881

"Bownham Fete". There was a holiday on Monday because of the "general festivities in the neighbourhood" but the following day much of the school was late because of the late hour both parents and children had gone home on the Monday.

June 6<sup>th</sup> 1884

A list of newly admitted children, whom Miss Webb is sure she will have to class as exceptions in the examination because they "know nothing", "have defective powers", "weak intellect", "are very dull" and "very delicate".

January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1885

Mrs. A. Plane arranged lectures in Longford House on Model Cookery. Teachers attended Monday and Wednesday evenings, and Pupil Teachers on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Pupil Teachers

In 1875 when the School Logbook opened it showed a school with 150 pupils and a staff consisting of the Mistress, Miss Emma Webb, the only qualified teacher, with four pupil teachers; Mary J. Essex in her fifth year, Charlotte J. Hamlett and Sarah J. Jeffries both in their fourth year., and Elizabeth Smith in her third year. These four, who had taken what was the main avenue into the teaching profession for working class children, would

have been apprenticed as teachers somewhere between the ages of 14 and 19, often starting as monitors in their last year at school. They would hope, at the end of five years apprenticeship and much study, to obtain a final training in a college, such as the Home and Colonial College in London, and then to receive a certificate which would be confirmed after two more year apprenticeship.

Mary Essex was nearing this final stage. In late June 1876 she was invited to attend the Home and Colonial College to sit the Queen's Scholarship Examination. Success here meant being maintained at a normal school for a further two or three years. She duly went to London on early July, accompanied by Miss Webb, who went with each Pupil Teacher to their examination. In December she learnt that she had passed and would enter the college. Such a successfully completed apprenticeship justified a special event. Teachers and older scholars subscribed to a fund, a silver watch was purchased and presented to her by the Rector who, with Miss Baynes, arranged a tea for the subscribers and all had "a very enjoyable evening".

Sarah Jeffries carried on to her fifth year, satisfying the Inspector in his examination, though in 1876 he felt that her spelling and map-drawing were weak, and in 1878 he reported her as "fair" with a need to attend to Geography. However, six months previously she too had gone to London with Miss Webb, and had already been notified of her success in the Queen's Scholarship. Her career, however, was to be cut short. On June 4<sup>th</sup> 1880 the logbook reported her "very ill in the Girls' School House" and on June 20<sup>th</sup> she died. On May 8<sup>th</sup> H.M.I. had visited the school and found the registers not marked at noon, but added "Miss Webb was absent attending a late P.T. of the school who lay dying".

Charlotte Hamlett was to stay in the school. In 1878 she was listed as "late P.T. Assistant Mistress" and as responsible for Standards 2 and 3. She temporarily took over the whole school when the resignation of the Boys' school Master meant that Miss Webb took over that school for three weeks. In January 1879 the Rector obtained permission from the Principal of the Home and Colonial College for her to take her certificate in the school. In fact, she sat for it in Cheltenham Training College, passed successfully and in May 1881, shown on the staff list as Miss Hamlett, and in August 1886, when the Girls' and Infants' Schools were separated she became Mistress of the Infants' School.

Henrietta Essex followed the pattern. In October 1878 she was a first-year articled Pupil Teacher and by December 1883 had become Assistant Mistress. In 1884 she learnt that she had at last passed her certificate. Unfortunately this meant that the school was overstaffed, so she had to cease to be Assistant Mistress of Minchinhampton School.

Senior girls were presented for the Drawing Examination of the Science and Art Department. Among those successful in 1877 and winning prizes were Lucy Baker and Mary Lewis, certificate earners were Henrietta Essex and Fanny Essex. These, with others, would certainly have been Monitors and have been specially taught, and all became Pupil Teachers, Fanny and Lucy being presented as candidates for Pupil Teacherships in 1878.



The Pupil Teachers' time was fully occupied. They lived in the Schoolhouse under the supervision of the Mistress. Each of them learnt to teach by taking responsibility for a class under Miss Webb's supervision. Their formal education came through evening study. Monday to Friday from 6.30 to 9.15 p.m. was given over to secular subjects with Miss Webb. Tuesdays were devoted to Scripture, and here the Rector sometimes came in. In 1880 he took them for one hour on Tuesdays for Prayer Book work, and on Fridays for preparation of Sunday School sermons.

In the previous November he had taken them from 9.00 to 9.45 a.m. on Tuesdays whilst the Curate took the Scripture section in the School. In August 1880, when Miss Hamlett was preparing to take her certificate, he taught her Divinity each Saturday morning from 10 to 11.00 a.m. Summer months saw an extension of study time - 6.45 to 7.45 a.m. each day - though there were slight breaks. In April 1878 evening lessons were cut to two hours because the Pupil Teachers wished to attend Church services each night during Holy Week.

All this was for certificate purposes. There was the need also for teaching qualifications so we find them in October 1879 preparing lessons to be given before the Inspector and writing out tickets for the Needlework Examination. School functions also required their time. In March 1880 one hour of each lesson time was taken up with singing to prepare for the Easter Concert.

There were reliefs though. In August, when the school was closed for three weeks, the older teachers spent a week in London at the Rectors expense. In July 1882, along with eight of the most satisfactory scholars, they spent a week in Weston Super Mare; this was an annual event. As a special treat they went in July 1886 to the exhibition in London. This time the money came from a collection for the annual trip and from "liberality of the Rector and Mrs. M. Baynes" which enabled eleven pupils to go with them.

### **Sources**

The early Log Books of Minchinhampton Schools.