

# **THE HISTORY OF THE GREEN LANES SCHOOLS**

## **SUTTON COLDFIELD**

### **1840-1980**



## **D. J. REDWOOD B. A.**

*TO MARGARET, CORINNE & ALAN*

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Swimming badges awarded to V. G. Blake 1921 & 1922  
*at competitions held in Keeper's Pool, Sutton Park*

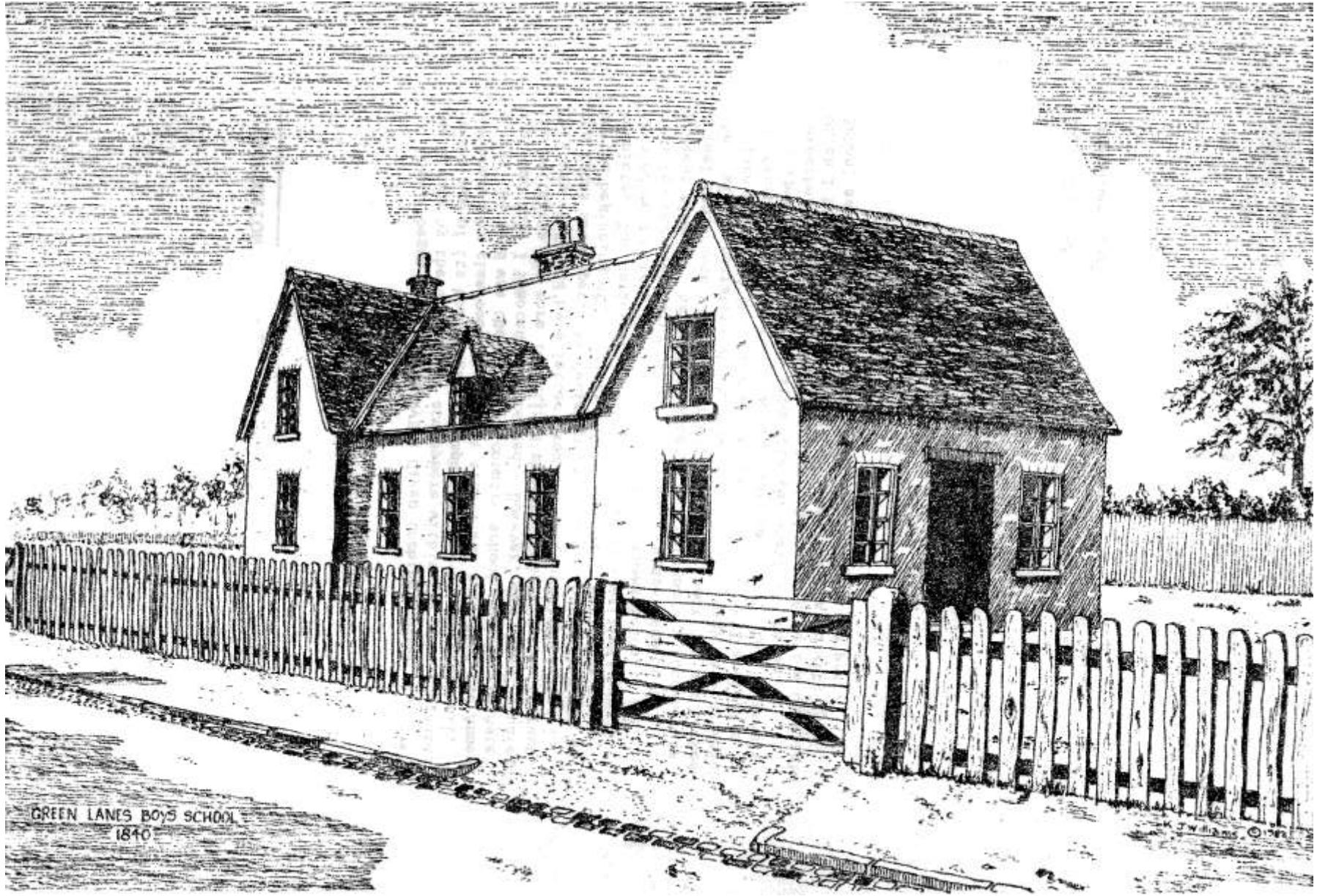
## **INTRODUCTION**

When I began teaching at Wylde Green Combined School in 1975, I was struck by the historical atmosphere within the school, created by the age of its buildings and emphasized by the central hall, surrounded by classrooms. At that time, I was told that the Annexe across the road was the original country school of indeterminate age, and this I innocently accepted. However, the more I studied the buildings, the more I realised that this might not be correct. This was confirmed by a letter from a former pupil published in the local newspaper. My decision to write to that person was to be the beginning of the project which took four years to complete. The variety of sources that I utilised enabled me to trace the story of the Green Lanes School right from its very beginnings, through its many changes and right up to present times. I drew greatly on contemporary accounts, as I felt that these had an intrinsic value of their own, and linked them with a narrative that draws together the many strands I discovered.

If there are errors within the book, I apologise and trust that readers will appreciate that they are the result of inadequate information from material available to me. Nevertheless, it is a part of our local history in Sutton Coldfield that I hope will be of interest to those associated with school who enjoy delving into the past.

D. J. Redwood

September 1982



GREEN LANES BOYS SCHOOL  
1840

## **Chapter 1 Beginnings – Mr. James Cramp 1840 to 1878**

In 1528 Henry VIII granted a charter to his close friend, Bishop Vesey, which established the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield. This action was to mark the start of events which eventually led to the opening of a new School in the Borough in the year 1840. The purpose of this book is to tell the story of that School, which began its life as the Green Lanes School. Changing its name over the decades that followed, it became known as Wylde Green First and Middle School in the 1970s and is now called Wylde Green Primary School.

The Town's first Charter established a system of local government called the Warden and Society, which consisted of a group of people whose purpose was to administer the Chase and Manor of Sutton Coldfield for the benefit of its inhabitants. This body continued to run the affairs of the town until 1886 when a well-known member of local society, Benjamin Stone, became the first Mayor of Sutton Coldfield.

During its existence, the Warden and Society exercised considerable authority and, through its control of the Park, it was also responsible for a substantial revenue. Whilst many of the Corporation, as the Warden and Society were sometimes known, were honest and hard-working men, corruption did exist and, from time to time, allegations were made of mismanagement ranging from felling timber without the majority consent of the freeholders to stocking the Park with strangers' cattle.

In 1792, a Court injunction was obtained by a section of townspeople which prevented the Corporation from disposing of timber produced in the Park and the money from earlier sales was impounded. The lawsuit which followed dragged on for nearly forty years during which time the sum held by the Lord Chancellor increased to £40,000 - a huge amount in those days.

One local person, John Riland, who had been the Rector of Sutton since 1790, felt strongly that the impounded money should be used to provide elementary schools in the Borough and, in 1825, this proposal was accepted by the Court of Chancery. It was decided to build seven free schools which would afford education initially for 120 boys and 120 girls.



The first of these to be built in that year was the Corporation Boys' and Girls' National Town School which could accommodate 50 boys and 50 girls. This was followed, in 1826, by the building of a Charity School in Walmley for 60 children and a similar school in Hill for children residing in that area.

Soon after this the story of Green Lanes School begins for, in the late 1830's, the Warden and Society initiated plans for the building of a Boys' School in a district of Sutton Coldfield, known today as Wylde Green, where there was no provision for educating the children who lived in that sparsely populated place.

On March 21st. 1838, a meeting of the recently formed Walmley School Committee was convened at the Town Hall, then situated at the top of Mill Street. Its members were the Warden Mr. Barker, Mr. Packwood, Mr. Oughton, Mr. Bedford and Mr. Solomon Smith. At the gathering, a series of proposals were put forward which, though primarily concerned with Walmley School, were to play a significant part in the inception of the Green Lanes School.

Firstly, they recommended that Walmley School (which catered for boys and girls) should be used for the education of girls, under the direction of a Schoolmistress. Secondly, they felt *"that the most eligible place for a new School for boys appears to be about the end of Penns Mill Lane on the Birmingham Turnpike Road or as near there as land can be obtained"*<sup>5</sup>. Further to this proposal, they advised that a School and House should be erected and a Master appointed at an annual salary of £40, to supervise the possible 80 boys which the school would be able to accommodate. A plan for the building was to be obtained from the National Society by Mr. Bedford and the Warden agreed to examine the availability of suitable land.

The National Society had been founded in 1811 as *The National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church* and it took over responsibility for schools which had been established by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.). By 1830 it was responsible for nearly 4000 day and Sunday Schools with 300,000 pupils. "National" Schools provided a model for authorities such as the Warden and Society looking for assistance and it would have been a sensible move to approach this body for its advice and current plans.

The next Committee meeting was due to take place on May 4th. but was delayed until the following Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> May, because the report of their meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March had not been officially submitted to the Corporation. They met in the School Committee Room at 11 o'clock and decided that, as suitable land was not available at Penns Mill Lane, they would recommend that "the School be built on a field of land belonging to the Corporation now occupied by Sheffield and No. 2014 on the Commissioner's Plan".<sup>5</sup> In their opinion, this site was "the most convenient for the population surrounding Penns Mill and also for that on the Coldfield"<sup>5</sup> and should therefore be accepted.

At a meeting of the School Committee, respecting the  
Walmley school, held here to day.

Present - The Warden, Mr Oughton, Mr Bedford  
and Mr Packwood.

This Committee recommended that instead of obtaining  
land at the end of Penns Mill Lane as originally  
proposed, the School be built on a field of Land belong-  
ing to the Corporation now occupied by Sheffield and  
No 2014 on the Commissioner's Plan.

Resolved.

That the following be the Report of this Committee  
and that it be laid before the Corporation at their next meeting

"The Committee recommend that the Walmley  
School be appropriated to the education of Girls under the  
direction of a School Mistress.

That a new School and House for Boys be  
erected on a field belonging to the Corporation now occupied  
by Sheffield and No 2014 on the Commissioner's plan, a  
being the most convenient for the population surrounding  
Penns Mill and also for that on the Coldfield.

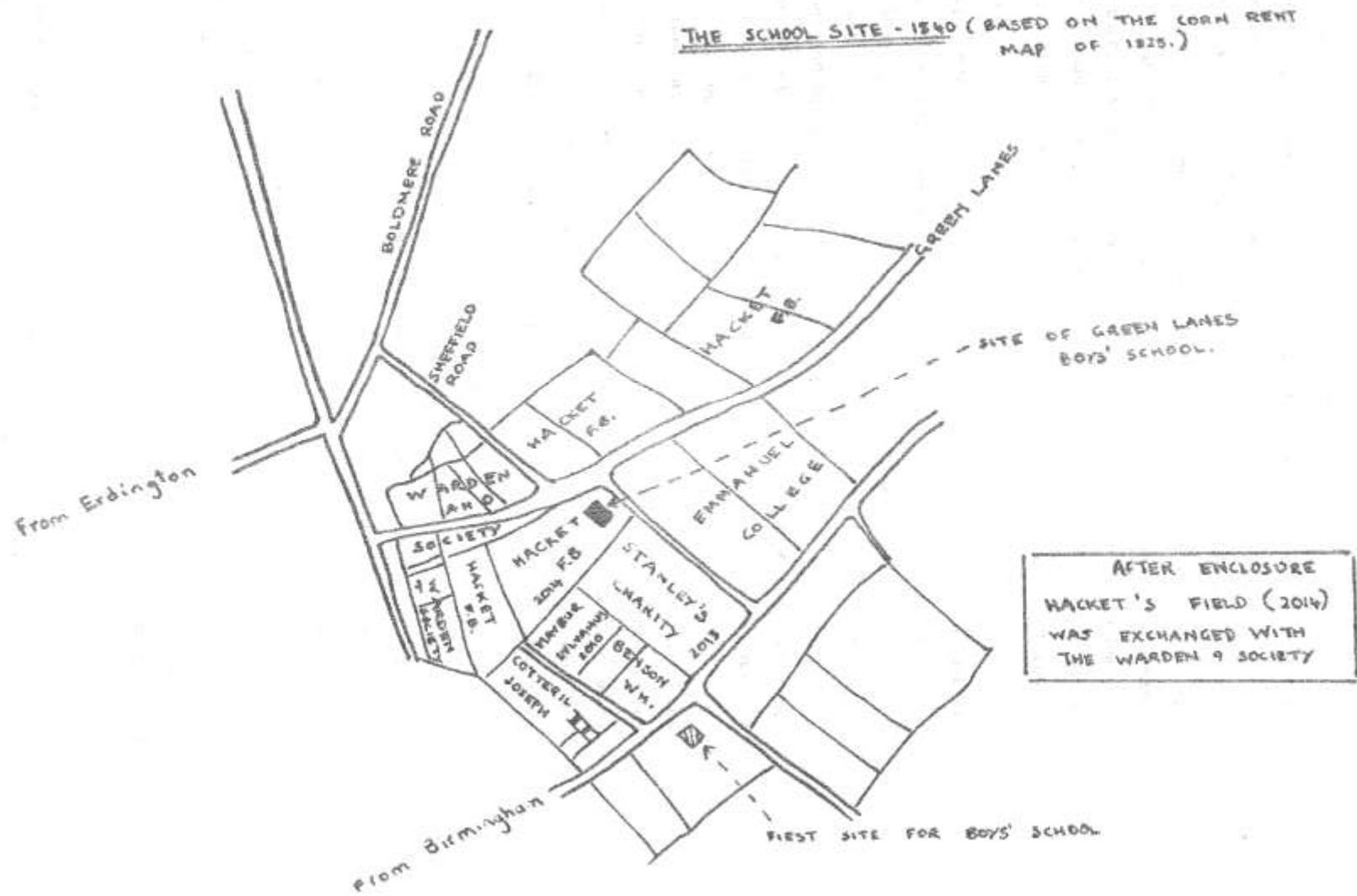
*That a Master be appointed at £40 per ann  
and the school be capable of containing Eighty Boys.*

In the end, nearly a year went by before these plans were given further consideration and, on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1839, the School Committee resolved – *“That an Advertisement be prepared by the Deputy Stewards and Mr. Bedford be inserted in the Birmingham Gazette for Estimates for the Erection of a School according to Mr. Hill’s plan.”*<sup>5</sup>

It is at this point that the story of the School can be traced in the Minutes of a Committee which was established to put into effect the Order of Court for the Application of the Increased Revenue - that is to say, the money which had been held by the Court of Chancery since the Injunction of 1792.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>. 1839, the Committee met in the Moot Hall under the Chairmanship of William Riland-Bedford where they resolved, among other items, *“That the Warden (Henry Grimes Jr.) and Mr. Bedford make some arrangement for sinking the Well for the intended New School in the Green Lane, and that the Warden, Mr. Bedford, Mr. Oughton, Mr. Barker and Mr. Packwood be requested to meet on the spot for the purpose of setting out the ground upon which the buildings are to be erected; tomorrow at ½ past two o’clock.”*

It is not difficult to imagine the journey of these gentlemen along the turnpike road to the scarcely populated district where they intended the School to be built in *“an out of the way sort of place, not far off the Chester Road.”*<sup>38</sup> The involvement of the members in deciding, on site, the layout of the School would have been entirely natural for the School Committee, as it soon came to be called. Once they had performed this task they could now wait for tenders from interested builders.



The advertisement prepared by the Deputy Stewards and Mr. Bedford was not published in Aris's Birmingham Gazette until April 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was quite small and tucked away between several others. It read -

*“TO BUILDERS*

*Tenders from Persons wishing to contract for the Erection of a SCHOOL and SCHOOL-HOUSE near to the Turnpike road between Sutton Coldfield and Erdington, will be received at the office of Messrs. Holbeche, Son, and Willoughby, in Sutton Coldfield, on or before the eleventh day of May next,*

*The Plan and Specification are now lying for inspection at the office of Messrs Holbeche, Son, and Willoughby, where all particulars may be obtained~*

*Sutton Coldfield, April 20th, 1839.”*<sup>52</sup>

The response was rather poor and only two builders put in tenders and then they found it necessary to revise their estimates because the Architect, Mr. Hill, was consulted by Mr. Bedford, after a Committee meeting on May 20th, about the need *“for the alteration of plans of the Ceiling and Chimney and any other alterations which will not take away from the comfort and convenience of the building.”*<sup>10</sup>

The changes to the plans were approved by the Committee on June 1st. and the members resolved that the two builders should be informed that the modified plans were now available at the office of the Deputy Stewards. The revised tenders were then resubmitted and, on June 13<sup>th</sup>, they agreed to accept that of a Mr. Machin who proposed to erect the School and School-house for the sum of £400. They also requested that *“he enter into a contract forthwith and that he be required to complete the same by the 15<sup>th</sup>. of September.”*<sup>10</sup>

No further mention is made of the progress in constructing the buildings and it must be assumed that all went reasonably well for, on 7<sup>th</sup> October, the Committee resolved *“That the Corporation be requested to give directions to the Committee to procure a Master for the newly erected School in the Green Lanes.”*<sup>10</sup> Once that had been given another advertisement was prepared for insertion in Aris's Birmingham Gazette and it appeared on three consecutive Mondays in November, the 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>. This time it was in prominent position on the front page and it attracted a good number of candidates.

## "SCHOOLMASTER WANTED"

*Wanted by the Corporation of Sutton Coldfield, a Schoolmaster who thoroughly understands the most improved system of teaching as practised in the National Schools of this Kingdom. The number of boys will probably vary from forty to a hundred, Salary, forty pounds a year. There is also a Master's House adjoining the School-room, to which will be attached more than half an Acre of Land for the purpose of garden ground. The School is situated in a country district, within a mile of the village of Erdington and within five miles of Birmingham. - Testimonials addressed to the office of Messrs. Holbeche, Son, and Willoughby, Sutton Coldfield, on or before Saturday the 30th of November inst."* <sup>52</sup>

In December, the Committee, now chaired by the Warden, Henry Grimes Junior, examined the testimonials of the 18 candidates and selected 6 for further consideration. Little mention is made of their final choice except in an Index of the Warden & Society Minutes <sup>9</sup> where it states that Mr. James Cramp was elected "*Master of School in Green Lanes*", and he was to be informed of this decision. A small amount is known about him from Censuses, Parish records and a document in the Public Record Office that also gives some details <sup>46</sup>.

He was born in Coventry on November 30th, 1813, the son of a weaver, James Cramp and his wife, Mary.

At the time of his marriage, James was himself a weaver. His wife was a Hannah Reynolds and they were married at the Parish Church of St. Michael's, Coventry in 1838.

<i>at the Parish Church in the Parish of St. Michael in the County of the City of Coventry</i>						
<i>Name and Surname</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Rank or Profession</i>	<i>Residence at the Time of Marriage</i>	<i>Father's Name and Surname</i>	<i>Rank or Profession of Father</i>
<i>James Cramp</i>	<i>24 full age</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Weaver</i>	<i>Warwick Row</i>	<i>James Cramp</i>	<i>Weaver</i>
<i>Hannah Reynolds</i>	<i>24 full age</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>Godford Street</i>	<i>John Reynolds</i>	<i>Cabinet-maker</i>
<i>at the Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church of the same by us, <i>W. Chapman</i></i>						
<i>James Cramp</i>			<i>in the Presence of us,</i> <i>James Cramp</i> <i>Jane Cramp</i>			
<i>Hannah Reynolds</i>						

Around the time of his marriage, James must have started his training at the National Central School run by the National Society. We know that his examination was given by a Reverend Coker in October 1838.

The Thirtieth Annual Report of The National Society, issued in 1841, mentions teacher training in Coventry and gives a hint at the quality of teaching and encouragement that those aspiring to become Masters were given.

*“The method pursued for some years at Coventry, under the judicious direction and superintendence of the reverend secretary, appears to combine some of the advantages of both the training and model-schools. Persons there qualifying for the situation of schoolmaster are allowed to attend the National School, and receive instruction, both general and special, from the master at that school. They are also further assisted and directed by the secretary himself; and, after sufficient attendance, are examined, and being approved, receive from him a certificate of character and competency. This method has produced a class of masters in that neighbourhood above mediocrity, and of course has given confidence to clergymen and others in seeking them.”*

Although uncertificated, and presumably having performed well in his training, he impressed the School Committee when interviewed and took up his duties on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1840, at the age of 26 years.

In the mean-time the Green Lanes School was being furnished. The desks and forms were made by J. Holbeche, another member of the family who lived in Coleshill Street, and the matting was ordered by Mr. Oughton from a Mr. Holt of Bull Street. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Committee agreed to meet again at the School on the following Friday at 1 o'clock to set out the garden. Thus, by the end of March, all was ready. James and his wife, Hannah, were now in residence, the school-room was furnished and the surrounding grounds were being made attractive.

Several histories of the town record the opening of the School. Miss Agnes Bracken mentions that *“the original numbers allowed to Walmley (school) were twenty boys and twenty girls on the clothed list; but in 1840 the boys were removed to a new school built in the Green Lanes, near the Coldfield, where their number is increased by free scholars.”*<sup>39</sup>

W. K. Ryland-Bedford wrote that in 1848 “a new school for boys was erected at the Green-Lanes, near Chester Road, and divine service on Sunday evenings commenced there by the Rector.”<sup>36</sup> and this church link continued for many years.

The latest, and most comprehensive history, was written by Douglas Jones, a former pupil of the Boys’ School himself, and his information draws on a manuscript history of Sutton written by Z. Twamley in 1855.

Twamley’s description of the new school is very interesting, although it does contain some inaccuracies. Despite these, it is quite quoted here in its entirety because it is the only contemporary document relating to the school, apart from official sources. He wrote –

*“Green Lane School, erected in year 1838.*

*Another charity school was erected in the year 1838 in the Green Lanes, very near the outskirts of the Parish of Sutton Coldfield in an out of the way sort of place (which may be truly said of it) not far off the Chester Road.*

*It is situated at such a great distance for boys, whose parents live at Minworth Greaves; and from other parts of the parish; almost at as greater distance from the school; say Peddimore, Wigginhill, Wishaw-lane and Bumble End.*

*The schoolmaster who lives at it, receives a salary of 50£ per annum (besides fire-fuel 5£ or more) for teaching 50 boys or more, 20 out of which are annually clothed. N.B. The School is licensed by the Bishop, as a place of worship.”*<sup>38</sup>

It is quite clear that he recorded the opening of the school incorrectly - it was two years later, in 1840. Nevertheless, his description of the area is very accurate. This part of Sutton Coldfield in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century was sparsely populated. There were few cottages, farms or houses. It is therefore not surprising to learn that several of the boys had to travel great distances to attend the school.

This would particularly apply to those 20 boys mentioned by Miss Bracken who were transferred to the new school from Walmley.



In his final paragraph Twamley states that the Master received a salary of £50. When the school opened, Mr. Cramp received a salary of £40 (as was originally proposed and advertised), for the accounts of the Warden indicate that, on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1842, the Master was paid a Quarter's salary of £10 together with £1-07-6 for fuel. This was commensurate with the salary paid to the Master of the Hill Boys' School.

By 1855, the year in which Twamley wrote his history, the school had a roll of 50 or more boys - a steady increase on the 20+ scholars who attended the school in 1840. Although the number of boys who were clothed by the Corporation may appear remarkably high, it must be remembered that there was a very vigorous campaign by the town to ensure that all deserving cases were adequately dressed for school. The numbers, in fact, are similar in proportion to those in the other elementary schools in the town.

Within a short while of taking the Mastership of the school, James Cramp discovered that the new building was already lacking certain items and the School Committee resolved to procure these. Firstly, there was a school clock, made by a William Brentnall in the same fashion as one at Walmley School. Sometime later, this gentleman was given a contract to maintain all the school clocks. The school also received a bell, and *“two cupboards, and others in the brewhouse; a lid on the boiler; a Trough and drain to the pump; a crane for the fireplace; Hat Rails in the School.”*<sup>10</sup> Later, shelves were built for the Schoolroom, scrapers were put by the doors and doorways were paved.

The trough was a necessity for, as a simple plan of the School drawn in 1872 shows, part of the school building was used for stabling - presumably to house the horses of boys who needed one to travel to and from school, in some cases considerable distances, to attend Green Lanes. The oven for the brewhouse is interesting. This little room was built behind the kitchen and was a Victorian equivalent of a laundry, enabling Mrs. Cramp to deal with the family washing. It was more commonly called the wash house or scullery. Perhaps the oven was to provide more cooking facilities for the Master's wife, in addition to those in the kitchen.

James and Hannah's first child, Amelia Rogers, was born in early 1841.

In an attempt to increase the number of pupils at the School, Mr. Cramp was given permission in May 1840 *“to take into the school the sons of persons resident in the immediate neighbourhood though not in the Parish, to be educated in the regular school classes at a payment of 4d. per boy per week; subject at all times to the control and regulation of the Committee in every respect.”*<sup>10</sup> One month later this was increased to 6d. per boy per week of which 2d. was to be paid into the School funds for the use of pens, inks, reading books etc. Copy books and account books were to be paid for by the Master. The Warden’s Accounts for 1845 give the only entry relating to this practice. It reads *“By Mr. Cramp one-third charge for the schooling of non-resident children at Green Lanes - £1-1-4d.”*<sup>26</sup> This sum of money would indicate that during this year Mr. Cramp educated 3 boys from outside Sutton Coldfield.

After some delay, caused by concern over the way the building was constructed, the architect, Mr. Hill was paid the sum of £24-5-0d for his plans of the school. This dissatisfaction was further evidenced by the decision, in July 1840, to adopt new plans for altering the building. Later that month the work began. Mr. Holbeche undertook the carpentry and a Mr. I. Pratt was employed to do the bricklaying that was needed. Despite this work, problems still occurred with the roof, which was examined and repaired in 1842.

During the period of alterations in 1840, the Committee decided that the boys should assemble on Sundays at the Infant School Room in the Town. It is open to speculation as to whether this was for educational or ecclesiastical reasons.

Break-ins were as much a problem in those days as they are today and the School must have had its fair share because, to improve its security, iron bars were put into the windows early in 1841.

The death of his father, also named James, was a sad occasion for Mr. Cramp and the School was closed for one week on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1841 while he attended to the funeral arrangements. Shortly after this, the School received its first inspection and, whilst the report of the Walmley School was said to be favourable along with the report of the Green Lanes’ School, it seems that the Committee were not entirely satisfied and they noted that the Boys’ School appeared *“to require more superintendence from the Committee than it had hitherto had.”*<sup>10</sup> A report which may have given Mr. Cramp a little concern, coming as it did just one year after he had opened the School.

When the Warden or one of his colleagues determined the period of the harvest holiday, the time would be spent carrying out maintenance on the school buildings. The 1841 holiday was used to whitewash the Green Lanes' Schoolroom and the adjoining schoolhouse was coloured and painted at the same time by a Mr. Browne.

For many years, the Masters and Mistresses at the various schools were subordinate to the Master of the Town School. It was to him that they sent requisitions for school materials and through him that their requests for other items were placed before the Committee for its decision. The increase in the number of schools meant that this system needed to be improved and, in March 1842, the Committee resolved that each of the Masters and Mistresses were to have a book *"to keep an account of the books, stationery and other items received by them for the use of their respective Schools; and that when they send to the Town School for such articles they also send the book to have them entered."*<sup>10</sup> It is unfortunate that these inventories have not survived as they would have yielded some valuable information regarding the educational requirements of the schools in the mid-19th century. The minutes of the School Committee do occasionally record some of the materials requested by Mr. Cramp and his colleagues.

The first set of minutes (1834-1843) show two other items which influenced the Green Lanes' School. Early in 1843, the School Committee accepted a proposal from the *"Ladies' Committee"*. This was to arrange for the regular cutting of the scholars' hair twice in each quarter. Shortly after this, the Committee debated the desirability of accepting the services of a Mr. Colburn in giving 60 singing lessons to children in the schools *"for the sum of 6 or seven pounds."*<sup>10</sup> Mr. Cramp appears to have conducted his own singing lessons, however, and in 1844 he applied for a set of diagrams to assist him in this task.

The first mention of a boy leaving to take up work was in December 1843 when it was resolved that John Jones should be given a premium for clothes of £1-10-0d to go into apprenticeship at an *"approved place"*. The Corporation set great store by their policy of assisting children in entering work, either as an apprentice or in service, and throughout this period the Committee faithfully recorded the names of those children who receive premiums, either for good conduct at school prior to leaving for work or for clothing. John was followed 2 years later by his younger brother, Thomas Jones.

In May 1844, the school roof received more attention and a month later it was agreed to alter the upper windows at the school in order that they would open to provide *“more convenient and effectual ventilation.”*<sup>11</sup> In October Mr. Cramp applied for a shed to be put up *“there being two walls which would form part of it.”*<sup>11</sup> On November 11<sup>th</sup>, the Warden and Society resolved to set up a sub-committee consisting of the Warden, Baron D. Webster, Mr. Oughton and Mr. Packwood to consider Mr. Cramp’s application and to report on this to the next meeting. No decision was recorded, but it is likely that they acceded to the request.

A fundamental change occurred in 1845. It only affected a small number boys but was a radical departure from the system of teaching which had previously existed. The Committee recommended to the Corporation that two boys from the school should be elected *“from time to time to attend the Corporation Upper School (which adjoined Sutton Parish Church) - such boys to be chosen on account of good conduct in the lower schools, and with reference to their abilities for learning and the proficiency which they have made and having been three years in attendance in the schools. It is also recommended that the capitation fees of the boys so sent to the Upper-School, and also such an allowance for books and clothing during the continuance in the said school, as might be thought necessary, be paid by the Corporation.”*<sup>11</sup>

To what extent these recommendations were put into operation is not entirely clear. They do, however, serve to underline the subservient role of the other schools to the Corporation Upper School. Mr. Cramp and his colleagues were probably quite concerned at losing their brightest pupils, their fees & any other allowances in this way.

Two and a half years after the recommendations were put to the Corporation, the first boys were put forward as Candidates for the Upper School. They included John Upton, Thomas Hiley and Ambrose Robinson from the Green Lanes School. After an examination, it was recommended that Thomas be *“translated”* to the Upper School. Subsequently he was given *“the usual allowance for clothes, being elected to the Upper School”*. He was to have been followed in 1854 by William Bellamy, but, at the request of his mother, William was sent instead to the Grammar School. In 1856 William was apprenticed to a Joseph Collier, for the generous premium of £5. Shortly after William entered the Grammar School, he was joined by William Dunn from Green Lanes. The cost of maintaining the latter at the school in 1855 was £1-14-6d.

As the years went by, Mr. Cramp continued to request further items to augment the school stocks. In 1854, he sought permission to obtain 6 copies of *“Descriptive Geography”*. The importance placed on the teaching of Religious Knowledge in the school is emphasised by purchases between 1847 and 1849. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge supplied maps of Palestine and the World, together with 24 copies of the *“Selection of Psalms”*. In the latter year, the school purchased 2 dozen Hymn Books and then 25 copies of *“Catechism, No. 4”*.

During 1848 Mr Cramp sought for, and gained, approval to purchase gravel for the school yard, not a very pleasant surface for boys to fall upon. Once more the school roof received attention and, in the next year, an old fence was levelled, but which one is not known. At the end of the year, on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1848, the School Committee proposed that *“Fireplaces be made in each of the Town Schools, as soon as possible on account of the inefficiency and unhealthiness of the present system of warming them by flues.”*<sup>11</sup>

It is likely that this did not apply to Green Lanes (indeed the schools concerned may have been just the Town Schools next to The Parade) for, back in 1843, the Committee had given permission for the Master, Mr Grant, to have a *“fender guard for the Fire place in the School.”*<sup>10</sup>

The determination of the Committee to ensure that the poorer children were adequately clothed for school purposes, also gave them other problems. Apart from the cost involved, there was the ongoing difficulty of obtaining good quality material and tailors who were prepared to supply the clothing. As early as 1842, the Committee, at a meeting chaired by William Riland-Bedford, resolved that *“the caps for the boys (in all the schools) being inferior ..... be returned to Mr Brockas.”*

<sup>10</sup> He was a local tailor, one of several who supplied the school clothing.

In the same year, the Committee further agreed to procure a stronger material for the boys' trousers and this was to be either a Barragan fustian or a moleskin. Six years later, in 1848, they decided to standardise the quality of the boys' clothes. After due consideration, the members chose a suit of blue jacket and trousers, together with a pair of corduroy trousers, which had been presented to them by Mr. W. Bayliss for their inspection.

At that meeting, July 26, 1848, they decided to approach Mr. Brockas and to request him "to inform the Committee whether he is agreeable to make the suits for the Sutton and Green Lanes Boys' Schools, of the same quality as the approved sample and at the same rate, viz. £1-10-0 per suit, taking the whole schools together, he finding the proper buttons and making good any misfits." <sup>11</sup>

This proposal must have been acceptable to Mr. Brockas and, in November 1848, he was paid £81-3-2 for Suits and Caps. Deducting an amount for caps and any alterations made to suits, the bill indicates that approximately 50 boys from the two schools were clothed by the Corporation in that year. To obtain their suits each November, the boys would march into town and be given their clothing.

As early as 1841, social pressures brought in one interesting regulation affecting those who are applied for the clothing. This was to the effect that no illegitimate child will be eligible to receive this benefit.

3	Green Lane	James Cramp	Widow	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas
		Hannah	Widow	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas
		Amelia P.	Flower	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas
		Magdalene P.	Flower	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas
		Hannah	Flower	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas
		Louise E.	Flower	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas
		Alice M.	Flower	16	St. Andrew's	Mr. Brockas

By the time of the next census, 1851, James and Hannah's first-born, Amelia, had been joined by 4 sisters. These were Magdalene Prime (b. 1842), Hannah (b. 1844), Fanny Elizabeth (b. 1848) and Alice Mary (b. 1850).

No. 1063	Magdalene Prime	James Cramp	Green Lane	School Master	St. Andrew's
4.	Hannah	Hannah			

The Masters and Mistresses of the various schools were requested, in 1852, “to make a return, to be laid before the next Committee Meeting, of the number of children in each School, distinguishing between the Clothed and the Supernumeraries, and also to state the number each for the last three years.”<sup>12</sup> The use of the term supernumeraries is not clear. Perhaps it referred to Monitor or Pupil Teachers. The only mention of actual numbers clothed in the Green Lanes School is in 1853, when the Committee noted “Eight names marked for clothing in Mr. Cramp’s School.”<sup>12</sup> This should be considered against the statement by Twamley that there were 20 boys on the clothed list in 1855.

Many years later, in 1864, the Committee recommended that a notice should be printed regarding the clothing of children. It read -

“If any boy or girl belonging to the Corporation Schools be seen selling or offering for sale flowers, fruit or other articles on Sundays no such boy or girl shall be elected to the School clothing next November.”<sup>12</sup>

The ruling must have been introduced only after considerable flouting of the belief that the Sabbath should be a day of rest.

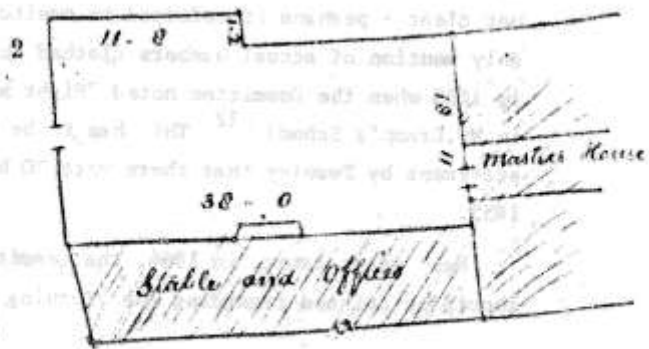
All the schools were affected by the decision, in early 1850, to apply uniform times for morning and afternoon sessions. The members of the Committee decided that schools should be open from 9 to 12 in the morning and from 2 to 5 or from 2 to 4 under previous arrangements (possibly the infant schools) in the afternoon. During the winter months of November to February, however, schools were to be opened at half past one and close at half past three in the afternoon. The substantial journeys made by some of the boys, in order that they could attend Green Lanes, made this a wise decision - they could now avoid travelling home at night along the ill-defined roads and tracks that existed in those days.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1860, the School Committee ventured to suggest “*The propriety of having the boys in the Corporation Schools exercised in drill.*”<sup>12</sup> This was the first recorded mention of a subject, other than the accepted academic lessons, being taught in the schools. In those days, this would have been considered a very advanced innovation and quite a contrast to modern schools where more time and importance is attached to physical education.

II. Are the School Rooms under the same roof as, or attached to, any other Building? (A ground plan of the School Rooms and contiguous buildings must be drawn in the margin, shewing the internal communications.)

II. a. Are the rooms used for any other purpose than an Elementary Day School?

If no, state the nature, and exact times, of such use; and forward a plan shewing the desks and other furniture used, (1) for such purpose, and (2) for the School.



CONDITION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS—

Size of School-rooms for—	Length in feet.	Breadth in feet.	Height in feet from Floor to		Article 17, a.				
			Upper top of walls.	Ceiling-beam if open roof.	Classical Pendants in feet.	Light.	Drainage.	Ventilation.	Office, whether or not open, and whether or not separate.
Boys ....	38	10.11	14.2	7.2	1.000	wood	wood	wood	Yes
Girls ....									
Infants ..									
Class-rooms—									
1st ....									
2nd ....									
3rd ....									

III a. Are the Boys, Girls, and Infants Schools—  
 (i) under the same management?  
 (ii) in the same building?

EARLIEST SURVIVING SKETCH  
 PLAN OF GREEN LANES SCHOOL  
 (HOUSED IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES)



By piecing together, the various extracts from the minutes of the School Committee, it is possible to gain an idea of the layout of the buildings. In addition to the stables, brew-house and shed already mentioned, there was also a committee room and, in 1850, Mr. Cramp was given permission to get the grate for it repaired, or to purchase a replacement. This room may well have been used for the church services that were held at the school and for other associated activities.

When the Committee decided to use a Mr. Pratt to redecorate the buildings, he was asked to paint the sitting room, chambers and staircase. In 1851, they resolved "*that Mr Cooper's plan for an additional room at the Green Lanes' School be referred to the next meeting of the Corporation and explained by Mr Cooper.*"<sup>12</sup> The decision to build was confirmed in the Warden and Society Minutes of 14 July 1851 but, unfortunately, no surviving plans show where it was situated or how large it was. Finally, in 1860, when more decoration was being undertaken, it was mentioned that two kitchens needed to be whitewashed.

This collection of extracts would seem to indicate a good-sized school adjoining a two-storey schoolhouse of fair proportions. Former pupils could just recall these original buildings before they were substantially altered and enlarged at the beginning of the century, when they were ivy covered and set in pleasant surroundings, enhanced by a large garden next to the house.

In fact, as a set of plans drawn in 1903 for an extension to the school show, it was quite a modest house and, in the 1860s, the entire property was insured the sum of £200 - far less than it had cost to build. The ground floor of the house consisted of a kitchen, parlour and a small hall from which led stairs to the two bedrooms. There is no indication of a second kitchen, committee room, or the additional classroom. The latter is not even shown on the sketch plan of the school, drawn in 1872, as part of a Preliminary Statement which the authorities were required to fill in and forward to the School Board in London, the result of the recent Education Act of 1870. The sketch does show that the stables and offices were built down one side of the school. Next to the school room was the pump and this is shown clearly on the 1889 OS map (25" to 1 mile series). Maintenance to this and its accompanying drain was carried out in 1851 and in 1855. Mr. Cramp was also given permission to procure a short ladder for school use in 1852. In the next year, he was given a stool and lid to the furnace, whilst a small gate was constructed to form an entrance opposite the north side of the house.

After they had sought the opinion of the various tenants of the school-houses and finding their *“willingness to burn the Gas”*, the Committee recommended to the Corporation that gas fittings should be installed in the dwellings.

In 1850, the decision was made to replace the existing school bell which had been supplied in 1840. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, it was recommended –

*“that the bell at the Green Lanes School, be put on the roof, it being so hung that it cannot be well heard and also, that the present bell be exchanged for a larger.”*<sup>11</sup>

Matters moved on quite quickly and, in the following month, a *“plan produced by Mr Cooper and marked A”*<sup>11</sup> was accepted and the building of the bell-turret was put into operation. Shortly after this, Mr. Cooper regretted to have to inform members of the Committee that he had found no fallen wood which was suitable for the turret and he was accordingly given the authority *“to take out as much timber as may be needed for this purpose.”*<sup>11</sup> The timber would have been taken from Sutton Park. When completed the turret may have been an imposing landmark, summoning the boys to school and, on Sundays, the worshippers to service.

In October 1851, the first mention was made of giving the Master assistance in his task of teaching the boys. Following a discussion amongst the Committee, regarding the existing situation relating to pupil teachers in schools, a proposal was put forward *“that 2 boys in the Town School, two in Hill School, one in the Green Lanes School, who shall have distinguished themselves as Teachers, be continued on the clothes list, after they have received the usual number of suits, provided they remain in the schools as Teachers.”*<sup>12</sup>

The early pupil teachers at the school are not known, although it is possible that their names occur in the lists of those pupils who were receiving premiums. The cost of providing a pupil teacher at the School is briefly mentioned in the Committee Minutes for October 1863. The allowance for the pupil teacher was put at £1-1-0<sup>d</sup> per annum. These boys would have had a strenuous time at school. Not only were they expected to teach groups of boys themselves, but they also had to continue their own education, normally outside of school hours. They were certainly not have had the support from other agencies that student teachers today enjoy.

In a book containing the Resolutions of Corporation Committees between 1854 and 1872, it is recorded that the School Committee decided to recommend to the Corporation that they should obtain information “*as to the terms upon which Pupil Teachers are Articled by the Government with a view to introducing the system into the Town School.*”<sup>14</sup> Comments in the School Log Books indicate that the proposal was adopted and later put into operation at Green Lanes.

The occasional references which are made about Mr. Cramp tell us little more about him as a person. Early in 1854 he was given special permission to attend the service at the Coldfield School in Boldmere Road, where he was the organist. It would thus appear likely that the school benefited from Mr. Cramp’s musical expertise. In 1848, the Christmas holiday was extended by further week “*on account of sickness in his house.*”<sup>11</sup> The Master had a very impressive record of attendance and his own illnesses rarely interrupted school life. The 1861 census shows that James, aged 47, and his wife Hannah had their five of their children living with them. In addition to Hannah, Fanny and Alice, there were Charles James (b. 1852) and Arthur Ernest (b. 1854). They also had a boarder staying with them – a Henry Baldwin (aged 13) from Guernsey. These all lived in a modest two bedroomed house! Amelia was living in the High Street.

By 1845 he was receiving the total salary of £55-10-0<sup>d</sup>, including an allowance for fuel of £5-10-0. This figure remained unaltered until 1856 when it was increased by the sum of £5. In 1864, after 24 years of service, he applied to the Committee for further improvement and they agreed that “*in consideration of a long and faithful services his salary be increased to £65.*”<sup>12</sup>

Just before he retired, his pay was again augmented and, in 1875, it stood at £75-0-0<sup>d</sup> and an allowance of £6 for fuel.

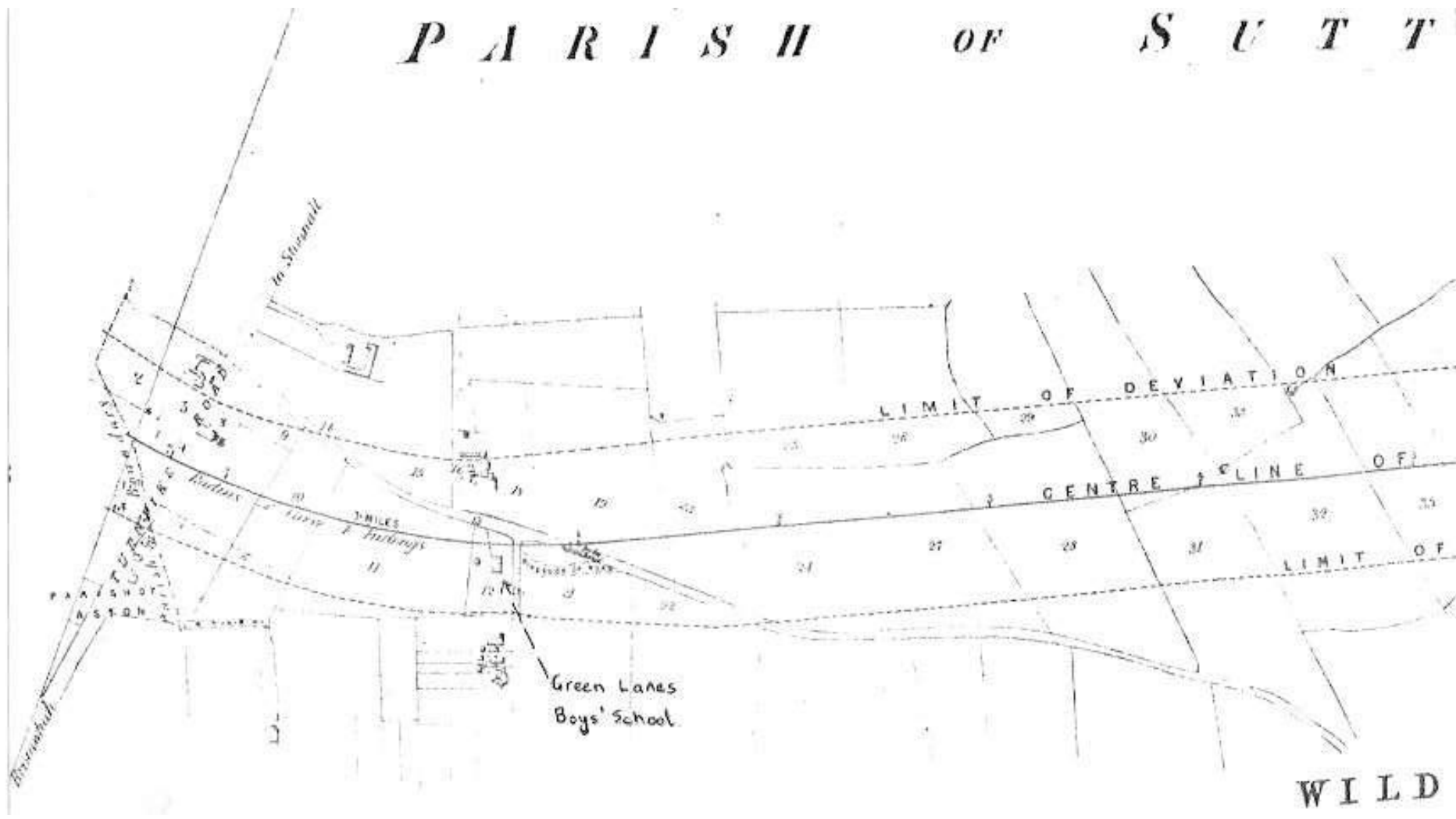
To encourage regular attendance by the boys, fines were levied for absences and, for some parents, particularly those with older sons, this presented a dilemma at peak periods in the farming year. In recognising this, the Committee decided, in 1857, to reduce the forfeit to 1<sup>d</sup> a day for boys who were absent in order that they could be used to meet “*industrial requirements*” and to give “*greater opportunity to the boys to be useful to their parents or employers.*”<sup>12</sup> This decision may have been of benefit to the parents, but it was to be the source of constant irritation to the Masters of the School.

Intermittent examinations were made of the scholars and, in 1847, the Committee applied to the *“Lords of the Committee of the Council on Education, for a periodic inspection of the Lower Corporation Schools.”*<sup>11</sup> The first steps were thus taken for ensuring review of the School’s performance by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate. In 1853, Mr. Bedford agreed to undertake the examination of Green Lanes for the next six months. Some years later, in April 1861, a very thorough report was entered into the Minutes and showed, not only the methods used, but also the conclusions which they could draw from its results.

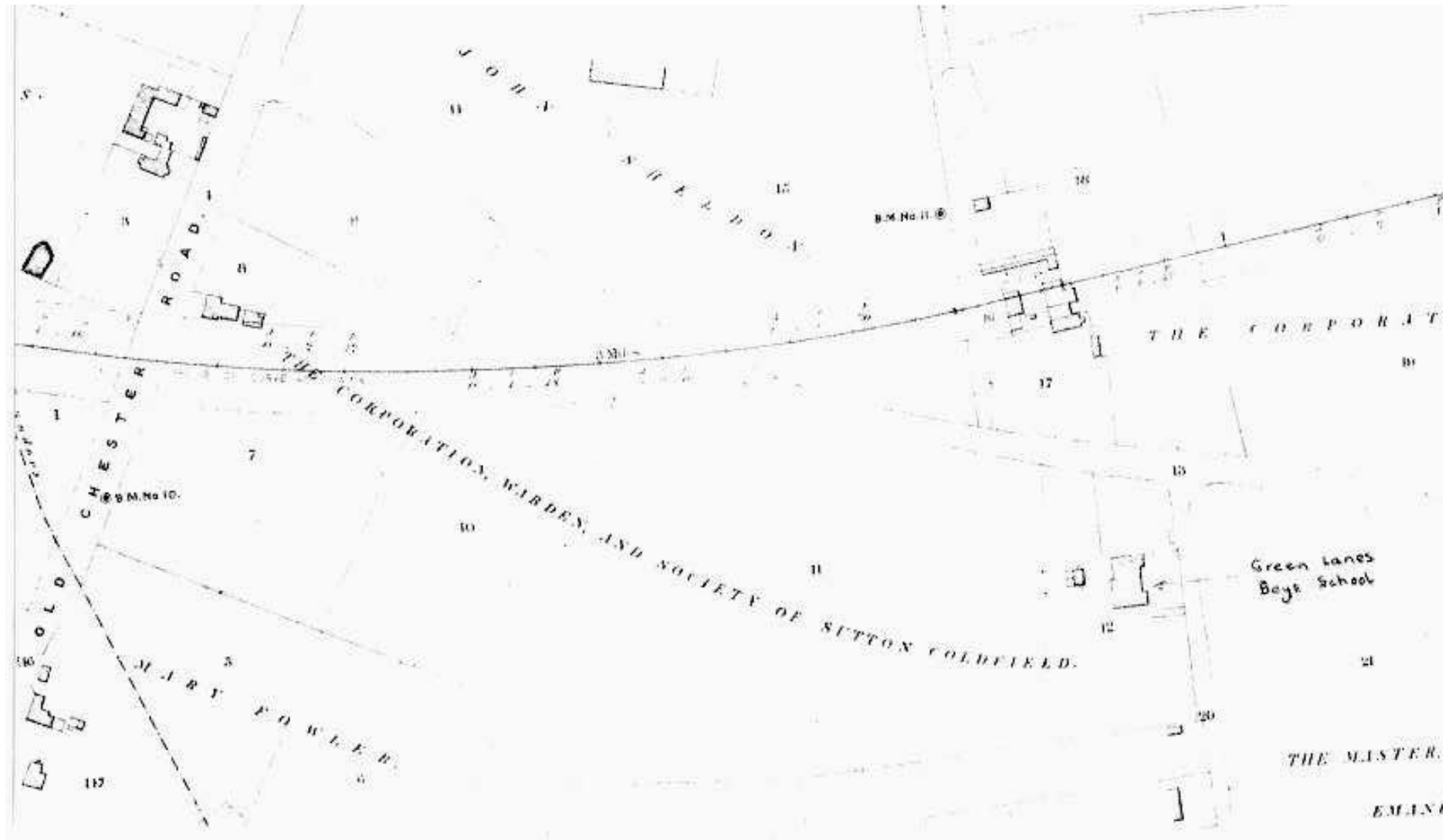
*“In accordance with the resolution of the School Committee, an examination of boys from the three Corporation Schools has been held in the Town Hall on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, the Examination lasted from 9.30 to 1.30. The examiners present were the Warden, the Rector and Mr. Packwood, Revd. J. E. Codrington also briefly lent his assistance. Each of the Masters had been requested to send about 20 boys and from the Town School 18 did attend; but only nine from each of the others: Mr. Cramp and Mr. Lawrence had represented that in consequence of numerous recent removals, they cd. only recommend nine, as qualified for the examination. The subjects of Examination were Reading and spelling and parsing (parsing is the ability to resolve sentences into component parts), Bible History, Writing, and English, Composition, Geography and Arithmetic. They (the examiners) are happy to state that all the schools appear to be fairly and industriously worked.*

*The spelling, however, & parsing were not so good as in the Green Lanes’ School; 3 boys in this school being much higher in this subject than in any in the Town School. In the Green Lanes’ School, on the other hand, the Bible History was not so good as in the Town School.”*<sup>12</sup>

As would be expected, the greatest emphasis was placed on the 3Rs, which would be taught for approximately two thirds of the week, and the only other lessons meriting examination were Bible history and Geography. Other subjects which would have formed part of the curriculum of the school were History, Art, Music and Drill. The formal timetable ensured that, whilst English was well taught, the Scriptures needed more attention from the Master.



The Birmingham, Erdington & Sutton Railway Western Line plan of 1858. If this plan had been implemented then it might have changed the story of the school



1860 Plan of London & North West Railway Co. showing the eventual route of the Birmingham to Sutton Coldfield Railway Line, avoiding the School.

From time to time, items which concerned the school and which were not directly related to the education of the pupils or the running of the institution, found their way into the minutes of the School Committee.

On April 7<sup>th</sup> 1862, for example, they recorded the following entry – *“Mr Cramp having reported to the Committee the inconvenience and danger to the children attending the Green Lanes’ School, resolved that the Warden be requested to call the attention of the Directors of L. and N. W. (London and North Western) Railway to the subject, and to request them to take measures to remedy the evil complained of.”*<sup>12</sup> Although the railway was not due to open for another year, the Warden and Society agreed, on April 14<sup>th</sup>, that the “evil” was dangerous to the children in the District *“unless the level crossing over the Railway at the Green Lanes be protected by the Company placing a gatekeeper there to attend to the crossing.”*<sup>7</sup> It seems likely that, rather than carry this out, the company sought a compromise by building the footbridge over the line linking Sheffield Road to Green Lanes. This is still used daily by children and residents, but the level crossing was abandoned in 1905.

Today, the railway carries a good amount of commuter traffic behind the school annexe but, when it was first surveyed by the Birmingham, Erdington and Sutton Railway Western Line in 1858, it was proposed to build it within a few yards of the old school and this would have entailed a diversion at the junction of Green Lanes and Little Green Lanes. The revised plan of 1860 shows that this proposal was unacceptable and the track was moved to its northern *“limit of deviation”*, which ensured the survival of the school but at the cost of demolishing a farm at the end of Sheffield Road and realigning Green Lanes from the School to Chester Road. This plan was adopted and the line constructed. Chester Road Station was a boon, not only to the local population, but also to teachers who lived at a distance and, later, to participant children travelling by train educational visits.

A year later, Mr. Cramp apply for the school “seraphine” to be repaired. This was a type of harmonium and would have been used for the Sunday Services, as well as for music lessons by Mr. Cramp, who was himself an organist. The decision by the Committee not to repair the Harmonium at the expense of the Corporation in 1865, confirms its dual use of the instrument.

It seems, however, that the Church declined to meet the cost of the repair for, on November 6<sup>th</sup>, the Committee received a bill from a C. Russell repair for the repair of the Seraphine. It cost £4-10-0, a substantial sum in those days.

An angry Mr. Cramp had cause to write to the Committee in September 1866. He applied *“for a drain to take away the water which from the Road floods his cellar. He had to carry 114 buckets of water out of his cellar, which came into it in the course of a few days.”*<sup>12</sup> A sympathetic Committee surely acceded to his request.

During the latter part of the 1860s, further references were made to the subject of clothing. In 1865 Joseph Groves, who attended the School, was refused his annual allocation because he was absent from school for 11 weeks. Two years later the Corporation was recommended to grant an additional 10 suits for boys at the school because the proportion clothed allotted to other Districts in the Parish was far higher and the present number was considered inadequate for the requirements of the local population. In 1868, it was recommended that the shoes of the Green Lanes' Boys should be made by the shoemakers residing in the Parishes of Walmley and Boldmere, a decision which once more demonstrates the concern of the Committee and the Corporation to ensure fair shares, not only to the boys requiring clothing, but also to local craftsmen who could benefit from the additional work.

Throughout the decade school stocks were being continually augmented. New Hymn Books and Prayer Books were requested in 1865, to be followed in 1867 for an application to purchase *“2 of Taylors and 2 of Walkingham's Arithmetics”*. In the next year, a very comprehensive order went as follows -

*“6 dozen ruled copybooks*

*2 dozen Plain copybooks*

*2 dozen Faith & Duty (Gastrells’)*

*2 dozen Collects for Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>.*

*2 dozen Elementary Geography*

*1½ dozen Pen holders*

*1½ dozen Slates.*

*2 dozen boxes slate pencils*

*One gross of steel Pens”*<sup>12</sup>

This list serves to emphasise the importance placed on religious teaching in the school.



Children in modern schools would find it difficult to appreciate that the basic writing materials then were slate pencils and slates. Pens and penholders, too, were superseded by ball-point and fountain pens and now by iPads and computers.

By contrast today's pupils spend far more of their early life in school than children did in the 19th. century. In an article by Riland-Bedford, children had to be six years of age before they could be admitted and be able to read monosyllables. In 1867, The Committee made it quite clear that they disapproved of the current practice amongst the schools which meant that some children were kept on up to the age of 13 and 14 years and, in their opinions, "*The School period should be limited to the age of 12 years excepting in the case of assistant Teachers.*"<sup>12</sup> The 6 years of schooling then, compares with the minimum 13 years which children spend today being educated.

The Accounts of the Warden give some indication of the cost involved in maintaining the School buildings and naturally this fluctuated from year to year, depending on the work which was required to be carried out. In 1842, School expenses were entered as £4-4-3d and in 1846 they were only 8s-6d, Repairs to the building varied from as little as £1-15-11d in 1856 to £63-19-5d in 1852. The school and house received regular maintenance, particularly the whitewashing of the walls. The windows, too, were given attention - new leads were made in 1864 and these were repaired two years later. During this time, the work was the responsibility of Mr. Cooper, who seems to have been what we would have called the Borough Surveyor and Engineer.

The census for 1871, is interesting in that it shows how close the family were. Despite the small number of bedrooms, James and Hannah still had most of their children living with them. Magdalene appears to have had no employment, but her 3 sisters, Hannah, Fanny & Alice, were all "*Dress makers*". Charles was a "*Pianoforte Tuner*" and Arthur was a "*Die sinker*". Amelia, the eldest, was still a School Assistant at a private school in the High Street, Sutton Coldfield, run by a Jonathan Cull. Now, there were 14 boarders. Next door were members of the well-known Holbeche family.

In 1874, a new source of information replaces the Minutes of the School Committee which are no longer available for the period 1868 to 1898. This was the School Log Book whose greater subjectivity enables a clearer picture to be drawn of the day to day running of the School. Unlike Town School, whose Log Books date back to 1826, the first Green Lanes Log Book covering the years 1840 to 1874 has not survived.

The earliest surviving School Log Book begins with these words –

*“This Book was rec<sup>d</sup> by Jas Cramp 16th November.”*

Immediately following this this entry Mr. Cramp recorded the results of the annual Examination by the Warden, it read –

*“Corporation School, Green Lanes, Sutton Coldfield. 1874.*

*The School examined 24<sup>th</sup> July*

<i>Average attendance for past year</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Number presented</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Number passed in Reading</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Number passed in Writing</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Number passed in Arithmetic</i>	<i>20</i>

*Remarks*

*Reading & Dictation good; Arithmetic pretty fair.  
Montagu Webster  
Warden”<sup>1</sup>*

Unlike the Examination held in 1861, this one was confined to the 3Rs and produced commendable results in two of them.

The larger number of pupils now attending the school made it necessary to employ an Assistant to ease the burden of the Master. The first one to be appointed was George Oldroyd who taught at Green Lanes for 8 months and 3 weeks in 1873 for a salary of £35-11-9d followed by a quarter’s pay of £12-10-0 in 1874. When he left, his replacement was Thomas D. Tennant who, for 26 weeks and 3 days’ work, was paid £28-0-6. He was the first assistant teacher to be mentioned in the Log Book –

*“November 16<sup>th</sup>*

*Mr. Tennant resumed his duties this morrow after an absence of 14 days during wh. time he has been assisting his old Master, at St. Stephens, Birmingham.”*

<sup>1</sup>

It seems likely that Mr. Tennant had been a pupil teacher at St. Stephens before coming to Green Lanes. In December, he was allowed four days’ absence to sit examinations in Birmingham and, in January 1875, he found it necessary to take extended leave as a member of his family was *“ill of small-pox.”*<sup>1</sup>

Just as Mr. Tennant gave cover for an absent colleague so, during his absence, he was relieved, firstly by Mr. Cartwright from Sutton School, and then by a Mr. Yeoman, who also taught at St. Stephens. Unfortunately, shortly after commencing at Green Lanes, Mr. Yeoman had “*an accident which he met with, on the Railway at Erdington.*”<sup>21</sup> This misfortune left Mr. Cramp without assistance for several months and he had to struggle on until Mr. Tennant could resume his duties later in the year. For One Quarter and 25 days’ work in 1875, he was paid £17-10s.

The Warden’s Accounts record payments made to two other teachers employed at Green Lanes, one of whom replaced Mr. Tennant.

The other is never mentioned in the Log Book and yet, in 1873, the Accounts list under the heading “*Infant School Mistresses and Assistants*”

*“Mrs. Bartley, Green Lanes, One Year    £10-0-0  
Ditto Ditto    Fuel                    £1-10-0”*<sup>26</sup>

(Prior to this, in 1871 & 1872, The Warden’s Accounts state that an allowance of £10 a year was paid for Green Lanes Infant School)

The lack of supporting material makes it difficult to clarify the role of Mrs. Eleanor Bartley. Her pay was remarkably little compared to the £75 which Mr. Cramp now received. She did get a small allowance for fuel and this would indicate that perhaps she taught the infants in the Committee Room that the School is mentioned as having in 1850, the other two School rooms being used by the Master and his Assistant. It must be assumed that Mrs. Bartley, who taught at Green Lanes until 1850, was appointed to cope with an increase in this age-group which could not be accommodated at the other Infants School in the area,

On 19th April 1875, a Mr. George Davis commenced duties as the assistant teacher and, between then and the end of the Corporation’s financial year in November, he was paid a salary of £28-15-0d for 37 weeks and 4 days’ work.

An Examination was made by one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors, William Scoltock, on July 5th, 1875 when a total of 12 songs were presented to him including such tunes as “*Hurrah for England*”, “*Oh I’m a British Boy*” and “*Away! Away to School*”.

As a reward for this inspection the boys were given a day's holiday at the end of the month. Though the results were like those in the Warden's Examination, the Remarks were more interesting.

*"Reading and Writing satisfactory, Arithmetic pretty fair. There is rather too much talking in the School - The Registers must not be marked on the day of the visit of the Diocesan Inspectors."* <sup>1</sup>

The report, when written into the Log Book, was witnessed by Montague Webster, the Warden.

As the Registers could not be marked on the Diocesan Inspection, it seems that these could not be officially acceptable and so the School was "closed" when these occurred. With no Log Book prior to 1874, it is unclear when these were first undertaken. In her history of Town Primary School, the late Miss M. Henry, a former Headteacher of that School, wrote -

*"In 1854 as Warden, the Rev. W. K. R. Bedford invited the Rev. Nash Stephenson, the founder of the Coventry Church Extension Scheme, to inspect the Corporation Schools, and although his report was repudiated by the majority of the Corporation of the Day, yet his suggestions for a Diocesan Inspection and other improvements, were shortly after adopted. There was a Diocesan inspection every year about May and notice of the Inspection was sent to the school a month in advance, read to the pupils and posted up on the door."* <sup>35</sup>

It is reasonable, to suppose that these Inspections, organized by the Diocese of Worcester, would have included Green Lanes from 1854 onwards.

On November 1st, Mr. Cramp altered the school routine to accommodate Mr. Davis – *"In order that Mr. Davis may leave here by an early train during the winter months, J. Cramp has decided to open school at 1.15 instead of 1.30 as heretofore. J. C. also believes the change will be an advantage to the boys, as it will enable them to get home before night. This change does not interfere with the usual lessons except that they begin and end 15 minutes earlier than stated on the Time Table."* <sup>1</sup>

The illness of the Master in the early months of 1876 meant that the entire teaching load fell on Mr. Davis's shoulders. When he was absent, his brother replaced him and it is not surprising that when Mr. Cramp recorded on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1876, "*the loss of Mr. Geo. W. Davis. whose connection with the school ceased this day.*"<sup>1</sup> It was the same brother, Charles Thomas Davis, who took over.

Throughout this period, the life of the school was plagued by the irregularity in attendance by some of the boys. Bad weather could play havoc. Even in the best of weather, some of the boys faced long and difficult journeys and, in the winter, falls of snow or heavy rainstorms would soon reduce attendances.

Outbreaks of illnesses also took their toll, particularly measles and scarlet fever. Further the Masters of the School were constantly faced by the demands upon the older boys to assist their families during the peak periods of the farming year.

These factors combined made the preparation of boys for the various examinations extremely difficult. The first recorded Diocesan Inspection still surviving was undertaken by the Rev. Edw. I. Houghton in 1877. His report was as follows –

1st. Division

*Catechism. Text fair. Illustration, deficient. Bible some a little.*

2nd. Division

*Catechism. very deficient want regular practice in writing portions.*

*Bible deficient. Xtian Br, Some good.*

3rd. Division

*Catechism - some excellent, Paper work - some very fair, Oral*

*Exam<sup>n</sup> Very good. Prayers Or - Some good.*

*No, on Register 65 No, presented 55*

*Percentage of Merit 14.6 Perc. of passes 50.*

Summary

*The Upper Boys showed much intelligence and passed a creditable examination - Had the results in the two lower divisions been proportionately good it would have been my great pleasure to have congratulated a worthy & venerable fellow - teacher upon a most satisfactory result. Edw. I. Houghton."*<sup>1</sup>

The report prompted a comment from the Master -

*“James Cramp is not surprised at the failure of the 2nd. Division as their attendance has been so very irregular.”*<sup>1</sup>

Over a period of four years there had been a steady increase in the numbers attending the school. In 1874, there were 52. 1875 - 56, 1876 - 61 and, in 1877, it reached 65.

In that year, the report of the H. M. I. Mr. Scoltock, remarked – *“Order Good; Reading well taught. The children answered well in Grammar and Geography. The School as a whole is managed with industrious care.”*<sup>1</sup>

This must have been a very pleasing final report for Mr. Cramp as, on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1878, he was to make his last brief entry in the School Log Book -

*“Ordinary Progress.*

*James Cramp gives up the management of this school, after holding the Mastership 38 years.”*<sup>1</sup>

With these words, Mr. Cramp ended his career in teaching at the age of 64 years. All but one of 39 years as a teacher had been spent as Master of the Green Lane Boys' School, commencing the day the School opened in 1840.

Yet he did not completely sever his links with the old school. Upon retiring and taking up residence in a house, listed in various Sutton Coldfield Directories, as in Coldfield, New Oscott, Birmingham<sup>30</sup>, he became the Visiting Officer responsible for the various schools in the town. This task he continued to perform to the best of his ability until 1890, though not always to the satisfaction of his successors, it appeared. When he finally retired from this job, he continued to receive a pension from the Borough.

The family moved to Fir Tree Grove, described in those days as being on The Coldfield. (It runs parallel to Highbridge Road in Boldmere but has since been redeveloped.) Keeping himself busy, he was also employed as a Registrar of Births and Deaths. Living with their parents, were Magdalene, Hannah & Alice. All three were unmarried and each was described as *“Registrars daughter”* in 1881.

James had also augmented his income, while the Master, as a Census Enumerator. He would have been a very suitable choice, having the professional skills required and the local knowledge needed.

Still working in retirement, James was living in Highbridge Road at the next Census of 1891. He was now described as "*Parish Clerk & Registrar of Births & Deaths*". Both Magdalene and Alice lived with James and Hannah and were still spinsters. Neither appeared to have employment.

A Corporation ledger, 1897-99 <sup>27</sup>, holds the final official records relating to this gentleman. James Cramp was given a Quarter's Pension of £12-10-0 but, in 1898 only, £10-11-9 was paid out for, on March 19<sup>th</sup>, he died at the age of 84 years – a grand old man who had given so much of his life in the service of the Borough. Many a former pupil would have mourned his passing.

Hannah, his wife, predeceased James and died in late 1893.

After their father died, several of the daughters remained very close to each other. In 1911 Amelia (now a widow), Magdalene and Alice lived together in Hazelcroft, Boldmere Road, Wylde Green.

The death of James Cramp heralded a period in the history of the School which, compared to the first 40 years of its existence, can only be described as turbulent. Between 1878 and 1890 the Mastership was held by two conscientious people both of whom left the School quite abruptly.

## Chapter II Mr. William Eden 1878 to 1885

Mr. Cramp was succeeded by a Mr. William Eden who, despite being appointed to the Corporation School on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1878, could not take charge because the Managers of his previous school, St Mark's, had not received a full month's notice. It was, therefore, not until April 15<sup>th</sup> that he was "*favoured with the opportunity of presenting himself to school to which he is appointed.*"<sup>1</sup>

Within two weeks, Mr. Eden produce introduced a "new" subject into the timetable. This was drawing! He noted that the boys were "very desirous of learning."<sup>1</sup> The increased numbers attending the School (70 now on the register) added to the problems he faced. Thus, when the Warden and Mr. Cull called at the school shortly after Mr. Eden had taken over, he quickly pointed out the need for more accommodation if simultaneous teaching were to be practicable. Both gentlemen agreed to consider the matter. At least Mr. Eden could expect sympathy from Mr. Cull. He was well known in the town, where he ran his own school in the High Street, with Amelia Cramp being one of his Assistants. The discussion between the Master and Warden reinforced the likelihood that the additional room, built in 1851, was subsequently demolished.

The Diocesan Examination for 1878 took place only 7 weeks after Mr. Eden took over the School. He was not at all surprised at the poor results and he noted -

*"The books of St John, Judges, the Prayer Book and Christian Year these have not been read eight weeks before the inspection took place, so that Mr Eden hardly knew how to commence the 12 months work in that exceedingly short space of time."*<sup>1</sup>

In that Examination, 5% gained a merit and 52% passed. By the next year, however, 20% were awarded a merit and 80% passed. These results, together with a summary from the Inspector, must have given Mr. Eden considerable, and deserved, pleasure.

In late July 1878, his assistant, Charles Davis, was granted leave of absence in order that he might spend a few days with brother, George, and some friends at the seaside. The boys at the school also enjoyed a pleasurable excursion when the Vicar of Walmley, The Rev. Robinson, requested that those boys who lived in his parish might be allowed to leave school earlier on August 2<sup>nd</sup> so that they could enjoy themselves at a Tea Party which he was holding.



An unexpected visit by Her Majesty's Inspector, Osman Hoiy, caught Mr. Eden unawares in October. The irregularities which the Inspector discovered caused Mr. Hoiy concern. It seemed that Mr. Eden was in breach of the "New Code - Article 12" \*, regarding the marking of the register and the keeping of other official documents.

The Master had not recorded attendances for the morning and afternoon sessions at the feet of the columns, nor had he transferred the weekly totals to the summary. The School Log Book had received no entry since September 16<sup>th</sup> and finally the Inspector noted that *"Two or more boys were found to be habitually employed in teaching nevertheless to be marked in attendance Registers as 'present'. This is contrary to the requirements of Art. 23 New Code."* <sup>1</sup> It is not known whether any further action was taken, but it is likely that Mr. Eden took steps to ensure that these omissions on his part would not occur again.

The winter of 1878/79 was very severe and heavy falls of snow prevented boys from attending, especially those *"living upwards of 3 miles off."* <sup>1</sup> In fact, inclemency of the weather meant some boys spending three or four weeks away from school. This, coupled with outbreaks of diarrhoea and typhus, ensured that attendances were very poor.

During 1878, Mr. Eden was mainly preoccupied with the absence of those boys not affected by the weather or illnesses. The appointment of Mr. Cramp as the Visiting Officer had raised the hopes of William Eden who thought that, because of a visit by Mr. Cramp, boys would improve their attendance at school. In some cases, this action did have some results. Yet, by July, Mr. Eden was forced to comment *"that in one or two cases the parents seem disposed to keep their children away from school with impunity. That for the space of a month or five weeks the lad stays at home working or playing or simply awaits the formal visit of Mr Cramp (officer) when the child complacently puts in an appearance the following day or so. W. Eden is decidedly of the opinion that the prosecution in assistance of this kind would be productive of immense good."* <sup>1</sup>

*\* the word Article (Art) is frequently used in the various documents. It refers to the rules and regulations to be found in Acts of Parliament which lay down how schools were to be administered and classified teachers according to their qualifications.*

He would echo similar thoughts to those on other occasions. What he did notice was that the attendances always improved in late October, this due to the annual distribution of clothing by the Corporation in November to those children eligible through good attendances.

Indiscipline in schools was as much a problem 100 years ago as it is today. In February 1879, the Master regretted *“to have to report that in one or two instances boys had manifested violent fits of obstinacy, for which, however, he has been obliged to inflict severe punishment.”*<sup>1</sup> These must have been blatant cases if Mr. Eden felt obliged to record the action in the Log Book.

During his first two years, the boys made good progress, not only in preparation for the Diocesan Examination, but also for that conducted by Her Majesty’s Inspectors. Of the 39 boys presented for examination in 1878, 33 passed Writing, 31 passed Reading but only 17 passed Arithmetic. By the next year there was a dramatic improvement. All 43 boys presented passed in Reading and Writing, while only 8 failed Arithmetic. The Inspector remarked that all three subjects were well taught, that order was very creditable and the “extra” subjects of Geography and Grammar were passable.

In March of the following year, 1880, the Master was worried about one of his pupils, H. Chipman, whose *“irregularity and consequent disqualification for examin<sup>ion</sup> for several years past had been the means of his receiving an official warning from Mr. Lumby (the Clerk to the Guardians)”*<sup>1</sup>. The outcome of this item is not revealed.

Occasionally the boys would be given half or whole day holidays – for example, after examinations or for the annual clothing. In 1880, after the celebration of Ash Wednesday on February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Church (which would have been St Michael’s, Boldmere), they did not return to school for the afternoon session, and, in June, were given time to go to the Park to witness the Annual Volunteer Encampments. In the following year, 20 of the clothed boys were given permission to attend an Archery meeting being held at Four Oaks Park. This must have caused the boys great excitement.

These pleasures apart, the second half of 1880 was almost entirely taken up by the problems encountered by Mr. Eden because of the departure of Charles Davis who had been the Assistant Master at the school since 1876.

In his own words this meant *“that the entire work of the school now falls upon W<sup>m</sup>. Eden as the Corpor<sup>ion</sup> had made it law that for the future the Assist. Master be done away with and a substitute in the way of a P(upil) Teacher be made. This increases the work most considerably as W<sup>m</sup>. Eden is anxious that the high tone of the School should be maintained (see her Majesty’s inspectors report for 1879) but at the same time is somewhat apprehensive that the sweeping changes already instituted will ultimately affect the general work of the school.”*<sup>1</sup>

In August, he went further *“the heavy burden upon W. Eden’s shoulders is more than he can justifiably bear. To instruct a lad and then to take the sole responsibility of 6 standards – to actually impart thorough knowledge to 6 classes at the same time, W. E. must plainly state that he feels as circumstanced as he now is that he cannot do such work to his entire satisfaction.”*<sup>1</sup>

With 20 new boys joining the school in September, the work load became even heavier and the Master described the assistance of the Pupil Teacher, F. Aldritt as *“very feeble – he being not old enough to receive any responsibility whatever.”*<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, 1880 was an extremely depressing year. It should be considered, however, that he brought this upon himself by being too keen to ensure that everyone including his staff, would obey his instructions and discipline.

The problems he faced were increased by the illness and subsequent death of his father which brought him *“untold trouble and anxiety.”*<sup>1</sup> To enable him to cope with this personal tragedy, the Managers gave permission for the school to be closed from 20<sup>th</sup> of August until 13<sup>th</sup> September. This period also coincided with the annual Harvest Holiday given to the school in order that they might assist parents and neighbours during that busy part of the farming calendar.

Irregular attendances continued to give Mr. Eden concern during the next year. He even resorted to send in some of the older scholars to visit the absentees to discover the cause of their absence and to explain to parents why their children should regularly attend the school. By 18<sup>th</sup> March, the situation had deteriorated so badly that he wrote

*“Notwithstanding many anxious efforts to secure more regularity – there been so greater number of irregular attenders – W. Eden is sorry to say that from one cause or another, there were 36 boys absent from school on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup>.”*<sup>1</sup>

The matter was made worse by the fact that 12 boys in the Upper Division of the School has not made sufficient attendances to enable them to sit the examinations. Mr. Cramp promised the Master that he would give the “irregulars” his immediate attention.

The difficulties facing William Eden were recognized by H.M. I. Reverend H. W. Capel who stated in his reports four 1881 *“that a Pupil teacher or Qualified Assistant Teacher needed to be engaged at once in order to meet the requirements of Art. 32.”*<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Mr. Eden still managed to produce extremely pleasing results. A 92% pass rate in the 1881 examination meant that the Government Grant for that year exceeded the previous year by £4-12-0, even though a lower number, 53 out of a roll of 63 boys, were presented.

The 1881 census shows that the School House was well occupied. William had married Avis Gatticker (b. 1856 in Birmingham) 5 years earlier in 1876. They shared their house with 3 children, all girls. These were Gertrude Amy (b. 1877), Clara Maud (b. 1878) and Ethel Mary (b. 1880).

In the autumn, gales damaged the school. One gale, which began on the Thursday evening and lasted until late Friday morning, affected the school – “scattering the glass from the windows and the tiles from the roof”.<sup>1</sup>

One more of his pupils, John Rhodes, gave Mr. Eden great trouble in 1882. He appeared to be responsible for encouraging younger boys to play truant and the Master had to report *“that he has received several insolent answers from parents, whose children ought to have been at school, & respecting whose attendance W. E. has been very solicitous.”*<sup>1</sup>

Away from these matters, there are some rare glimpses of the personal side of the Master’s life, that add to information from census records. In October 1882, he commented that insufficient drainage to the school (a problem experienced by Mr. Cramp) led him to seek medical advice and the two doctors whom he consulted, Dr. Evans and Dr. Vinrace, informed him that he was suffering from chronic rheumatism brought on by the dampness of the school buildings.

Perhaps these same conditions played a part in the tragedy which affected his family on December. Several of them were attacked by chronic bronchitis and this necessitated Mr. Eden being out of school on many occasions attending to the sick. On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1882, he wrote –

*“ . . . W Eden much regrets to say that owing to the deaths in his family he has been obliged to leave school for short occasions i.e. W. Eden has had to render assistance in advising respecting matters, when relatives have called upon him at the Schoolhouse.”*<sup>1</sup>

No evidence has emerged to clarify whose deaths are referred to here. His wife, Avis and all their known children were still alive at the next census in 1891. Perhaps this referred to other family members.

In the early 1880s, the Master did have some assistance from his pupil teacher, George F. Aldritt, although he originally described the boy as *“feeble”* on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1880. George was paid a salary of £14 13s 4d in 1883, to which was added a bonus of £2 6s 1 and a share of the Government Grant of £1 10s 0d. For instructing George, Mr. Eden received £12 out of the total of £102 14s 7d.

The pupil teacher’s progress in English, Geography and Euclid were examined by the Master in 1881 and he showed *“satisfactory proficiency”* while the H. M. I. felt that *“the P.T.’s papers were well done.”*<sup>1</sup> In 1884 he was still steadily improving, so much so that, in July, he was absent from one week to sit for the Queen’s Scholarship Examination.

He must have performed extremely well, for the Inspector, Rev. H. M. Capel, wrote *“to express his pleasure and specially congratulates W. Eden at the instance of George F. Aldritt’s occupying so creditable a position in the Queen’s Scholarship List.”*<sup>1</sup> In July 1885 Aldritt was informed that he was now qualified under Art. 50 and 52. His brother Wm. B. Aldritt, who was in the 7<sup>th</sup> standard, was top of the list in 1884 after passing the Examination for Admission to the Grammar School at Aston.

A new pupil teacher was now needed and the appointment was J. H. Rastall, a 6<sup>th</sup> Standard scholar who had been a monitor since September 1884. Although he was making satisfactory progress by the following January, in the next month the Master wrote that "*J. Rastall is not accomplishing his studies as he ought to do.*"<sup>1</sup> This was also noted by the Diocesan Inspector who, finding that results were poorer than the previous year, felt that this was in part due to the departure of the previous Pupil Teacher – "*a young candidate can hardly be expected to do the work as well.*"<sup>1</sup> J. Rastall was paid only £6 a year, while Mr. Eden received the same allowance, half that which he had been given for George Aldritt.

The dedication and devotion of the Master to his duties has already been noted. Each inspector gave very favourable reports and pleasing results. In 1883, the Diocesan Inspector felt that school could be classed as "*Excellent*" and, in the same year, the H. M. I. said, "*The School is in good order & the intelligence shown by many of the boys pleased me much.*"<sup>1</sup> All this was despite a new Code which Mr. Eden found "*very trying its provision being so exact.*"<sup>1</sup> The Mundella code of 1882 (see page 60) brought greater regulation into schools and was named after Anthony John Mundella, a Liberal politician. It did introduce one innovation into the curriculum. The school was required to choose a "Specific" Subject for the year and, in 1883, the Master decided that it would be Animal Physiology – a choice which may have been of interest to the pupils, many of whom spent their time on local farms assisting with harvests and other activities.

This dependence on agriculture led yet again to the problem of absenteeism amongst some of the boys. It was a constant headache for all Masters and one of them in a nearby city, Coventry, said bad attendance was "*the greatest evil*" of his school"<sup>41</sup>.

In February 1883, Mr. Eden wrote of the great demand for outdoor work. Many of the older boys were absent "*on account of the majority of the parents being employed as gardeners and labourers and having had an unparalleled season of wet they find it imperative to bring all possible labour into requisition, now that the fine weather has set in.*"<sup>1</sup> In July 1884, boys were "*detained at home in order to go to market or gather fruit or hay-make or to perform some kind of manual labour.*"<sup>1</sup> In October of the same year "*the boys were helping in the fields with their fathers potato digging etc.*"<sup>1</sup>

The section of the School which presented Mr. Eden with the biggest problem involved the boys of 13 years and upwards who occupied the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Standards. Many of the Master's entries in the Log Book during this period were concerned with his constant battle with parents who were *"simply defying the Authority of the School Attendance Committee"*<sup>1</sup> and boys who *"for weeks together are working in the field or following a variety of occupations associated with farm life."*<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cramp, too, earned his wrath - as Visiting Officer he *"could practically do nothing whatever with the irregulars complained off."*<sup>1</sup>

By March 1884, he was *"almost tired of complaining respecting the irregularity of boys in the school."*<sup>1</sup> All this was despite the 1876 Act which made school attendance compulsory. The inability of the Master to find a solution to the problem and the apparent lack of effort on the part of the local authorities to enforce the new Code, meant that Mr. Eden could not prepare boys for the examinations. This not only affected the standing of the school academically, but also the amount of Government grant paid. This was the age of payment by results.

The whole matter reached a crisis point in June 1885. In his own words – *"Out of say fourteen or fifteen boys – W. Eden has had e.g. four or five present - These would attend on Monday, & on Tuesday you might rely on one half of them to be absent, and in all probability some one or two other fresh faces reappearing."*<sup>1</sup> Preparing scholars for examination was plainly impossible.

It is therefore not surprising that the Mastership of the school was very abruptly terminated in July 1885. The only clue as to the possible move of Mr. Eden is to be found in a log book entry dated July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1885. *"Permission granted to close the Green Lane School on account of W. Eden having to attend a Committee Meeting of the London School Board."*<sup>1</sup> The lack of supporting material makes it difficult to be precise over the reason for the Master's sudden departure from school.

The likely answer is, perhaps, that disillusionment over the failure to eradicate the absentee problem at the school led Mr. Eden to seek employment in London.

His immediate departure would indicate his application for another Mastership was successful. The entire episode underlined the possibility, too, of a breakdown in the relationship between William Eden and the Sutton authorities.

Without doubt, during his seven years at school, he succeeded in raising the academic standards of the school. It was a great pity that his efforts were hampered by the poor attendance record of so many of his pupils and that this issue should cloud the ending of his connection with the school.

A little more information about William Eden can be taken from Census records. If, indeed, he did take a position in London, it did not last. In 1891, he was now living in Northfield which, at that time was in Worcestershire, but today is in Birmingham. He was living in Clap Gate and was described as a Certificated Schoolmaster. With him were his children - Gertrude, Clara, Ethel, Margaret, William and Harold.

His wife, Avis, however, was living in Barker Street, Ladywood, Birmingham with her older unmarried sister, Clara. Avis was working as a dressmaker. Why she was living away from her family, we will never know, but perhaps it was the result of events in the past that clearly affected William.

Interestingly, no further records for William or Avis have yet been found, so we do not know what happened after 1891.



## Chapter III Mr. Charles Davis 1885 to 1891

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1885, the new Master recorded this entry

*"I Chas. Thos. Davis, took charge of this school this morning. Re-opened school after the usual holidays with 48 present."*<sup>1</sup>

It was, of course, the former Assistant Master who had served under James Cramp and William Eden from October 1876 until July 1880. It may have been an emotional moment as he returned to the School, this time as the Master.

Charles came from a teaching background. His father, George Benjamin (b. 1836 in Shoreditch, Middlesex), was himself a school teacher. George moved several times in his early career. In 1851, at the age of 15, he was a Government Grant Teacher in Clerkenwell, London. 10 years later, George had married Emma Jane Dyke from Norfolk and they were living in the heart of the coalmining and steelmaking area of Broughton, Denbighshire in the *Brittish Scool House* (sic - according to the 1861 enumerator). They could only have moved there recently as their 4 children had all been born in Woburn, Bedfordshire with Charles's sister, Mary, being only 1 year old.



Sometime in the next 10 years, George and his family left Wales and moved to Edgbaston, Birmingham where he had been appointed as the *Clerk to School Board*. His eldest daughter, Emma, was a Pupil teacher and Charles's brother, George, was now a Teacher.

Charles was described as an Assistant Schoolmaster in 1881, still living with his parents in Yew Tree Road, Edgbaston along with his brother George, Schoolmaster, and his sister, Mary, Assistant Schoolmistress.

Returning to the Mastership of Charles Davis, it seems that a problem, which still concerns today's teachers, was to give the new Master his first taste of indiscipline quite early on in his time at Green Lanes. He was forced to punish "*several boys for using bad language.*"<sup>1</sup>

A more pleasant occasion came in November 1885. The visit of the Prince of Wales to Erdington allowed Mr. Davis to close the school for the afternoon, in order that the boys could have the opportunity of a glimpse of His Royal Highness. Other enjoyable excursions included a visit to see the Pantomime in Birmingham in January 1887 and a Circus in October 1890.

The Diocesan Inspector's report for 1886 showed that standards had fallen from the peak attained in 1883. The Inspector, C. Jerran Hunt, noted that, although considerable progress has been made under the new Master the school was "*in the second class*". The Master blamed these results once more on the very irregular attendances "*owing to many of the boys being kept at home to gather fruit and pick potatoes.*"<sup>1</sup> By the next inspection, despite losing "*three of my best attenders owing to removal from district*", Mr. Davis made pleasing progress.

In the Catechism and Bible, both Divisions II and III were "*Very Good*", whilst in the study of the Christian Year, Division II were again "*Very Good*" but Division III were only "*Fairly Good*" on their study of the Prayer Book. The Registers recorded 71 boys, of whom 69 were presented for examination.

The summary which accompanied the report stated that the school had made much progress in the last year – *“The paper work of the elder boys might indeed reach higher standard but is yet very creditable as the following analysis will show. ‘Excellent’ 15 perc. ‘Good’ 59 p.c. ‘Passable’ 26 p.c. Not one boy failed. The School is placed in the first class.”*<sup>1</sup> This was a very promising start for Charles Davis.

Progress was impeded by two events in the summer of 1887. Late June was so hot that it was *“almost a matter of impossibility to do a good week’s work.”*<sup>1</sup> The Jubilee Festivities in late July also affected schoolwork, as everyone celebrated the fifty-year reign of Queen Victoria.

The H. M. I. report for 1887 reinforced the progress noted by Jerran Hunt. At the same time, it gave an analysis of the allocation of the Government Grant.

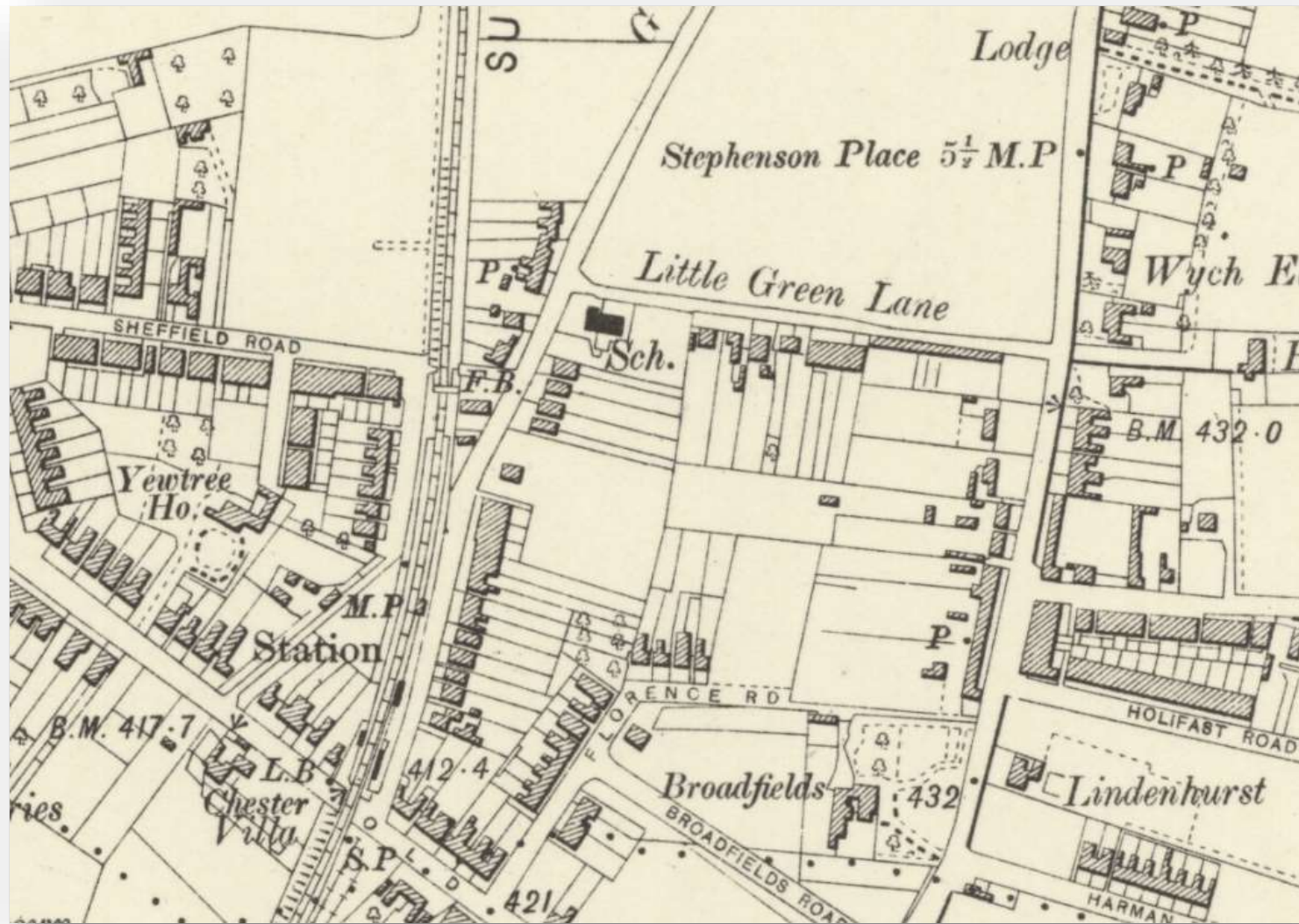
The average attendance of 65 boys gave a total grant payable of £63-4-2 arrived at in the following way –

Fixed Grant	4/6
Merit	2/-
Singing	1/-
Percentage of Passes	7/4
English	2/-
Geography	2/-
	18/10
TOTAL	(per scholar)

A proportion of this grant would be paid to the Master and his Pupil Teachers and the remainder was spent in offsetting the cost of providing education for the boys.

In September 1888, Charles Davis wrote that he found it *“very difficult to work all the standards in so small room.”* Late in April 1889, he commented that he *“feels the want of a classroom very much.”*<sup>1</sup>

**Ordnance Survey Map 1887.**  
**The map shows the new classroom built in 1889.**  
Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland



His representations over this were successful for, on December 2, 1889, he wrote “..... Commenced using new classroom today.”<sup>1</sup> In December of the following year the H. M. I. report stated, “I am directed to request that plans for the new classroom may be forwarded to this office for Their Lordships’ consideration.”<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that this request should come after the new room had been built and operated, but can be partly explained by bureaucratic delays.

According to one source<sup>43</sup>, the plans for this alteration were deposited in August 1889 and the owners of the school were the Municipal Trustees. The Room was built to the north of the old schoolroom and measured 22’ x 20’. The original entrance into the building was repositioned to accommodate the extension.

The new schoolroom was 38’ long and 18’11” wide – this is the length of the two middle classrooms in the current school building (which had a screen between them) and the width of the central hall which now occupies its site. A later Master gave its height as 14’2” (the new classroom was 17’6” high) and its capacity as being 88.6 boys. The additional room could take 55 boys. These figures gave a combined total of 143 scholars for whom places could be provided. The cloakroom shown on the plan of 1903 was added in 1894.

One other item received attention during Mr. Davis’s time and this was the playground which, in 1889, he hoped the Committee might be able to improve as its state was very poor at that time.

Frequent entries are made regarding the careers of the pupil teachers at school. J. Rastall has been previously mentioned. He began his career as a monitor in September 1884 as a replacement for G. F. Alldritt, the School’s first known pupil teacher. Rastall was making satisfactory progress by January 1885 and, later that year, in November, the H. M. I. Report noted that “J. H. Rastall is recognized as a Candidate on Probation (Article 40)”<sup>1</sup>

During the next year, he was out of school suffering from a bout of Quinsy. Sometime during this period, he was joined by a Wm. Edwards. When he was ill for one week in July 1887, Mr. Davis commented that he felt “sure that he (W. Edwards) is not strong enough to undertake the work of P.T.”<sup>1</sup>

Both boys would have been expected to work extremely hard. Not only were they required to teach the various Standards, but they also needed to receive tuition themselves. From time to time these two factors would clash. The School Report for 1887, emphasized that a Pupil Teacher could not serve in a school for more than 25 hours a week. Soon after this, Mr. Davis noted that J. Rastall had not been doing his lessons in a satisfactory way. The Pupil Teachers' lessons were normally undertaken before the commencement of morning school and Rastall was continually reminded of his bad timekeeping. A very sad occasion came for the boy on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1888 - his little brother was burnt to death.

In October of that year the Master wrote -

*"I am sorry to have to report that Wm. Edwards has been absent from school several days and is still away suffering with his Brain. I'm afraid that he has not got sufficient strength to continue his apprenticeship."*<sup>1</sup>

He would appear to have made a good recovery, however, for on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1888, he signed his agreement as a Pupil Teacher, the apprenticeship dating from July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Through failing to reach school until 8.50 on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Rastall was unable to take his lessons during the day for lack of preparation. Despite these sort of problems, his Examinations in that year were good, especially Geography, History and Euclid, whilst Wm. Edwards did well in Arithmetic.

During the early part of 1890, both boys frequently incurred the wrath of the Master for their late arrivals at school. This may have been the cause of the scene between Wm. Edwards and Mr. Davis. The result was the suspension of the Pupil Teacher on May 2<sup>nd</sup> because of his gross disobedience and insolence. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, at a hastily called Special Meeting of the Trustees, it was decided that *"Wm. Edwards Indentures should be cancelled without notice for disobedience."*<sup>1</sup> A sad ending to what might have been a promising career, despite his tardiness. His replacement was a Charles Hooper, appointed on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and who passed his Pupil Teacher Examination in the following September.

J. Rastall seems to have learnt his lesson and, after excellent results when he was examined in 1890, he was informed that he had now “*qualified under article 50 but not under article 52.*”<sup>1</sup> No further mention is made of this young man’s career.

The problems of the irregular attenders continue to exacerbate Mr. Davis as much as they had his predecessor – “*the parents seem to do just as they please*”<sup>1</sup> he wrote in October 1888. It was a waste of his time reporting bad attendances to the Committee as they appeared to pull with the parents, rather than take his side.

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1889, he found that 11 boys were absent from school because they were picking potatoes from a field which belong to a member of the School Attendance Committee.

As the Visiting Officer, Mr. Cramp continue to call at school about his duties, which according to his successors, he hardly performed. In 1886, he was given a new title by the recently formed Sub-Committee of the School Committee, and from May 5<sup>th</sup>, he was known as the School Attendance Officer for which he received an annual salary of £25.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1886, he reported that attendances at the various Elementary Schools in the Borough were very good and he submitted a return of the absentees and irregular attenders to the Sub-Committee.

To combat these absentees, he was given authority to warn parents that they would be summoned before the Committee to explain their children’s absences. The report of the Officer became monthly and was delivered to the Committee for their consideration.

Mr. Cramp made his last call to Green Lanes in his official capacity as Attendance Officer on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1890 and, on September 24<sup>th</sup>, the following letter to the Town Clerk was read out to the committee.

*Boldmere Aug. 1890.*

*To the School Attendance Committee,*

*Gentleman I am sorry to have to ask you to accept my resignation as School Attendance Officer the notice to expire on the 29<sup>th</sup> September next.*

*As you are aware the District is a very large one and I have, of late, found that the walking has been too great a tax upon my strength. It has sometimes been the case that I have had to walk many miles over one irregular child, and with my advancing years, I do not feel equal to the great exertion required in a faithful discharge of the duties appertaining to the office.*

*Thanking you sincerely for the kindness you have always shown me,*

*I am Gentlemen, Your Obed<sup>n</sup>. Servant,*

*Jas. Cramp.”<sup>25</sup>*

The resignation was accepted by the Committee who recorded their sincere regret at the loss of his valuable services. As has been previously noted, he died on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1898 at the age of 84.

His successor at Green Lanes, Mr. Davis, ended his connection with the School on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1891 and, like Mr. Eden, he gave no indication in the Log Book of his impending departure or the reasons which lay behind it. Apart from one entry dated October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1889, when he mentioned that the school was to be closed while he attended the Warwick Sessions, he gives no further details which enlarge upon his personal life. A report of the “*Interim Trustees*” which was printed in the Sutton Coldfield and Erdington Times shows that Mr. Davis resigned by a letter in which he wrote -



*“Gentlemen - having been appointed School Master of the Shenley Fields Cottage Homes I wish to resign the Mastership of the Green Lanes schools . . . .”*

He asked the Committee to allow him to take up his new post on March 1<sup>st</sup> and thanked them for all their kindness to him over the 5½ years during which he had been in their service. The Chairman, Mr. Duncalf, thank Mr. Davis for performing his duties satisfactorily and wished him success in his future career.

Despite his new position, he was still described as an Elementary Schoolmaster in 1891. Now, he and his wife, Clara, were lodging in a house in Lodge Road, Harborne, Birmingham. Presumably this was a temporary move until their new accommodation was ready.

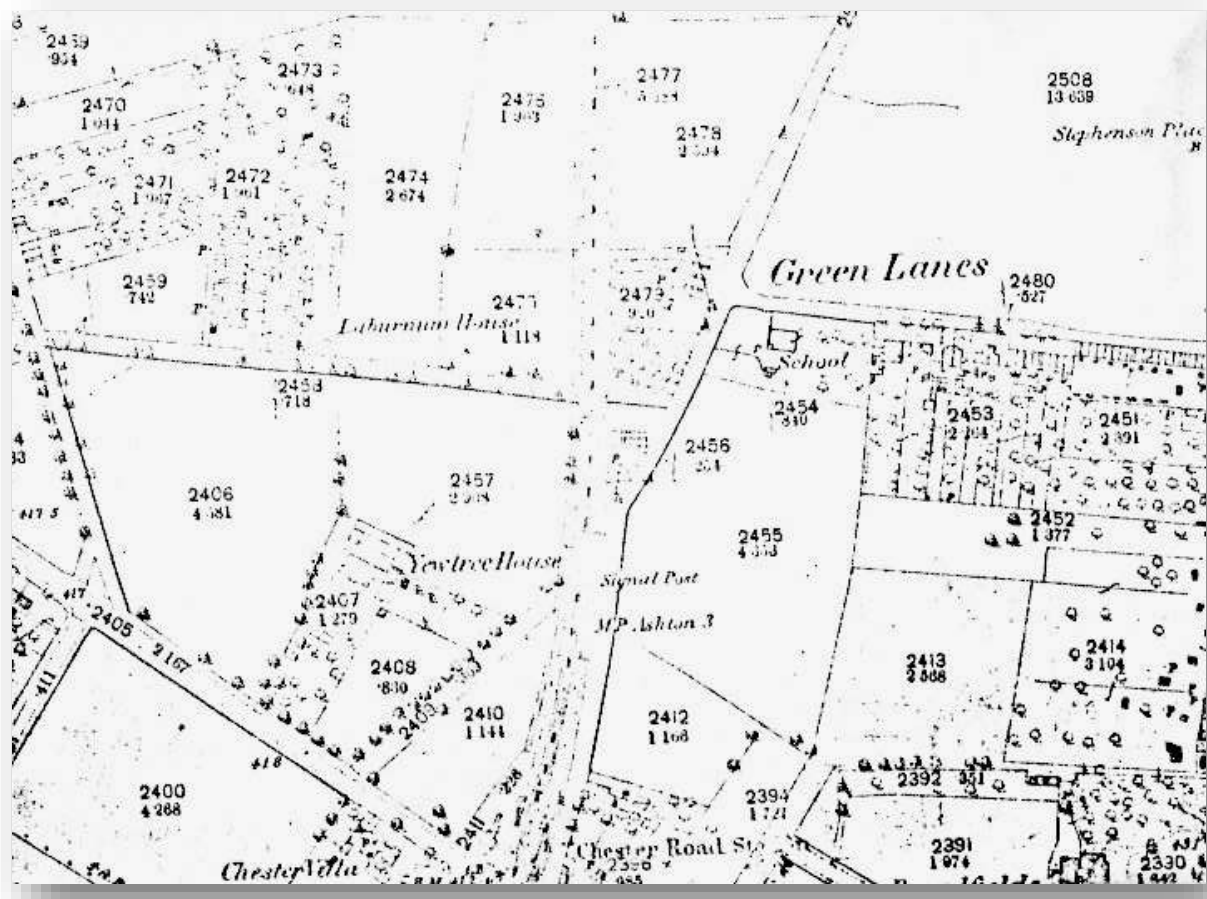
Shenley Fields had only opened in 1887, so Charles was an early appointment. Beginning with 4 cottages each holding 20 children, it grew to a total of 11 cottages with a school and infirmary. Shenley remained open until 1987.



The 1901 Census records him as the Superintendent Cottage Homes while his wife was the Matron. The home had many Foster Mothers and Fathers caring for over 200 young children, classed as Paupers, in the Cottage Homes.

By the time of the next Census, they were living in Middleton Hall Road, Kings Norton. Charles was now, like James Cramp, a Registrar of Births and deaths and his wife (they had no children), was a Deputy Registrar.

While Charles may have severed his connections with Green Lanes for his new position quite abruptly, he nevertheless left behind a school which was once again making good academic progress, giving a sound basis for the next Master to begin his long association with the Green Lanes Boys' School.



Ordnance Survey Map 1889 showing the School and pump (p).  
Much of the surrounding land was used by farmers.

## Chapter IV Mr. Alfred J. Simpson 1891 to 1924

The departure of Mr. Davis heralded the arrival of a new Master who was to have a profound influence on the old Green Lanes School - Mr. Alfred John Simpson. A much loved and respected teacher, he was to oversee the school during a 33-year span as it grew from a small, isolated building with 2 rooms to one of nine classrooms, a central hall and a nearby Manual Crafts Centre, surrounded by urban development. His first entry in the logbook was written on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891.

*"I, Alfred John Simpson, took charge of this school this morning when 67 boys were present. Mr. Ellison (the Deputy Town Clerk) called respecting absentees."*<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Simpson was one of only two applicants for the vacancy, the other being a Mr. Lambert, an assistant master at the Town School. The Interim Trustees interviewed both and decided that the better candidate was Alfred Simpson, whose previous experience was as an assistant master at the Montgomery Street Board School in Birmingham.

Alfred was born in Beverley, Yorkshire on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1864, according to a "Register of Teachers", the son of a Charlotte Simpson, born in Goxhill, North Lincolnshire. No other record for Alfred's birth has come to light and his father remains unknown, too. At the time of the 1871 census, he and his mother were boarders in a house in Railway Street, Beverley.

By 1881, Charlotte and Alfred had moved back to Lincolnshire and were resident in Barton-upon-Humber. Charlotte was a widow and Alfred was described as a "*Pupil Teacher Wes School*". This would probably have been the Wesleyan Day School in the town. Living with them was a Mary Foster who was a Mistress at the same school. It is not known when or why he moved to Birmingham, other than we know he had been employed at the Montgomery Street Board School.

In 1885, he married a Jane Foster, from Malvern, Worcestershire. In the 1881 Census, Jane was living with her mother and her step-father in Leigh, Worcestershire where she was a Pupil Teacher. Possibly she moved to work in Birmingham and met Alfred at Montgomery School.

Alfred and Jane's marriage was registered in Aston. Over the next 6 years they had 3 children – Henry George (b. 1885), Elsie (b. 1888) and Gertrude (b. 1891).

As can be expected, the first few days at Green Lanes were spent by Mr. Simpson and the scholars getting to know each other. The new Master was pleased to report, after only short while, that "*Work has gone smoothly.*"<sup>1</sup>

Shortly afterwards a new pupil was admitted to the school – a seven-year-old boy named Riley. The circumstances relating to the child gave Mr. Simpson some concern as he had never been to school before and "*consequently can do nothing. His parents requested he be not in the slightest pressed, and state, that he will not be able to attend regularly, owing to his delicate health.*"<sup>1</sup> It is not difficult to imagine Mr. Simpson's feelings regarding the situation!

A Foresters' Fete held in Boldmere adversely affected attendances in May. This is one of several entertainments which over the years were attractive alternatives to boys seeking an opportunity to avoid the daily routine of school.

Each year the boys attended '*treats*' given by the Mayor for those children who were at the various Corporation Schools. The venue for these were Sutton Park. In 1893, it coincided with an extra school holiday given to celebrate the marriage of the Duke of York and Princess Mary of Teck.

Considerable efforts were taken to ensure their successes. In 1894, for example, waggons arrived at the school at 1 o'clock to transport the boys to the Park where they joined with other Schools to proceed to Blackroot Pool. Here, on a fine day, they all had a thoroughly good time.

When the 1891 Elementary Education Act became law, the decision was made to abolish the collection of School Subscriptions. Mr. Simpson took this opportunity and started a Savings Bank with fourteen deposits made on the first day (1891).

The new year commenced with 69 boys on the register and, shortly after the term began, the School Manager, the Reverend Albert Smith, tested three recent arrivals from the Infants School on the Coldfield (in Boldmere Road).

He found them deficient for their age and yet, within a week, Mr. Simpson was recording the entry of three more scholars who, in his opinion, were even worse. In fact, the Master despaired of being able to present them for Examination. The influx of pupils soon brought the numbers up to 86.

One of the oldest boys, in Standard VI, caused great difficulties in November when he refused to obey commands and the Master had to send him home.

He noted that the *“boy is exceedingly obstinate and nothing but what might be considered by some an excess of corporal punishment would have brought him to his senses. Persuasion which has occasionally affected him, was utterly fruitless today. The order was given was to take his pen off his desk.”*<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps fortunate that he was not the *“delicate boy”* Mr. Simpson had accepted the previous year.

By 1891, Alfred and Jane, together with their children, Henry, Elsie and Gertrude had a servant, Harriet Lane, living with them.

The members of the School Committee decided, in April 1892, to request the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company to lay on piped water to the Schoolhouse and the out-offices. The task of keeping the latter clean would now have been made much easier than using the old pump and carrying the water in buckets.

Inside the school, it appears that the standards of education achieved by Mr. Davis were, if anything, being improved and the Diocesan Inspection reported that it was a *“thoroughly “Excellent” School. The boys are well taught and well mannered, take an interest in their work, and answer with correctness and intelligence.”*<sup>1</sup> The quality of the Report was such that the Committee took the rare step of writing to the Master to congratulate him upon the result of the Examination.

The Report of Her Majesty’s Inspector for the same year, noted that *“the boys are under very good discipline and take interest in their work.”*<sup>1</sup> The boys were only *“fair”* in many of the subjects tested, although their Recitations were well known, and thus was *“with some hesitation”* that the Inspector recommended the higher Principal grant based on the results of the Examination for 1892.

In the following year, the Inspector commented adversely regarding the lack of a cloakroom and the provision of apex ventilation and insisted that under article 85(a) of the Mundella\* Code that these had to be provided at once.

The cloakroom was begun promptly and, in January 1894, Mr. Simpson commented that it was not quite ready as he had expected. It was built to the north end of the classroom opened 5 years earlier, and was finally completed in April, while the old lead lights were being replaced. (Presumably these were in the School Room.)

The numbers continued to rise and, with the admittance of "25 fresh scholars" <sup>1</sup> in September 1893, the average attendance was now 105. On Clothing Day, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 33 boys assembled at the School and walked to the Town School to receive their new suits. The Municipal Charities Committee recorded in their Minute Book that there were 35 in the following year.

So that Mr. Simpson could teach the various standards, he received assistance from Monitors and Pupil Teachers. A monitor would have been an older pupil who, after one year, could become apprenticed to the school as a Pupil Teacher.\*\*

The Sidwell brothers, Walter and John, began as Candidate Pupil Teachers, in January 1894. In April, Walter was given the greater part of the week for private study to prepare for the Pupil Teacher Examination which was held on April 14<sup>th</sup> at Albert Road Board School, Aston. Mr. Simpson commented that the neglect of Geography and History in his schooldays were a great disadvantage to him. In July another pupil teacher, Charles Harper, sat the Scholarship Examination for admission into Cheltenham College.

*\*A. J. Mundella, who has been previously mentioned, was a Minister for Education under Gladstone. He was responsible for making school attendance compulsory to the age of 10 in the 1880 Education Act.*

*\*\* It is interesting to note that Pupil Teachers were expected to receive 7½ hours instruction per week, in addition to taking 5½ hours a day teaching groups. Prior to 1900 they were expected to train for 5 years as an apprentice but, after this date, due to the raising of the age for Indentures, this was reduced to 2 years. At one time, Masters received payment for instructing Pupil Teachers, but by 1900, this no longer applied.<sup>34</sup>*

The Sidwell brother achieved success and the Municipal Trustees, who were by this time responsible for the running of the Schools, directed that they both be articulated as Pupil Teachers from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1894 and each of their salaries was increased by £2-10-0 per year to take this into account. Charles Harper, too, gained success and entered College in January 1895.

Unfortunately, this left the Master short of assistance and he was given permission to make enquiries for a Pupil Teacher or, failing that, to advertise in the papers. The Rev. C. R. Bedford was given the responsibility by the Trustees of ensuring that the Pupil Teachers were receiving their lessons.

When the Inspector examined the school in July 1895, Mr. Simpson recorded the titles of the Recitations he submitted to be performed by the various standards. They included "*The Voice of Spring*" by Standard I, "*The Might of the Armada*" by Standard III and "*Lady of the Lake*" by Standard IV, V and VI. The school was judged "*Excellent*" in Drawing and, not surprisingly, 3 boys gained 2 year scholarships to the School of Art in the centre of Sutton.

Four weeks after entering the School (October 1894), the boys of Standard I received the attention of Mr. Simpson.

He decided to teach arithmetic in 3 Divisions -

*7 boys who could not make figures;*

*11 boys who had to be taught to add up with one finger on a line &*

*14 boys who were of average Standard I ability.*

*Reading, too, was taught at 3 levels -*

*5 boys who did not know their letters;*

*18 boys who were able to use Chambers Infants' Reading Cards &*

*9 boys of average ability.*

The Inspector's Report for 1895, notified Mr. Simpson that his grant for the following year would be a total of £117-11-0, representing a sum of just over £1 per scholar. Out of the subjects on the timetable two, Drill and Object Lessons, were not intended as subjects for Examination.

The vacancy for a pupil teacher prove difficult to fill and, in April 1896, the Committee agreed to appoint a Monitor to assist the Master but this did not prove satisfactory to Mr. Simpson. In June, he applied for an Assistant to cope with the increased numbers attending the School, mainly due to the considerable number of houses now being built in the Wylde Green area. Following an interview between the Master and the Municipal Charities Committee, his request was accepted, effective from October 1<sup>st</sup>.

In the event, the new Assistant was not appointed until October 26<sup>th</sup> and turned out to be his own wife, Jane, who was transferred from Town Girls School to fill the vacancy. She was undoubtedly needed as the numbers on the Register were now over 130.

A former pupil recalled that her maiden name was Barber and she had once lived in Birmingham Road at the end of Green Lanes where her sister kept a private school. [A study of census and marriage records does not appear to confirm this memory. Available records show that Jane's maiden name was Foster and that she married Alfred. A Miss Barber was another teacher at the school from 1907-12.]

Throughout the year, Mr. Simpson gave considerable attention to the problems amongst the boys of Standard 1 and, in his own words, it was a "*constant grind*." He had to order Reading Charts and a 1<sup>st</sup> Primer.

In addition, he used a ball frame and together these indicated "*the work to be done here, which ought to have been done at an Infant School. Most of the boys come from Infant Schools but of Infant Training they certainly have had none.*"<sup>1</sup>

The inadequacy of toilet provision at Green Lanes needed immediate attention, in the opinion of the Inspector. This did not happen and further action did not take place until November 1896.



An Inspector of Nuisances sent notices regarding the state of the privies to the Municipal Charities Surveyor, requiring their conversion to water closets. The Committee having agreed, this was put into the hands of a builder, John Wood, who completed the work at a cost of £29-9-0.

Sickness, even death, affecting the smooth running of the School. The Medical Officer sent a circular to each school in September 1896 warning Masters and Mistresses not to admit children sent to school with a sore throat - a sign of diphtheria. On 18<sup>th</sup> September, one lad, Percy Chambers, died from the disease. The outbreak continued to rage for some months, playing havoc with the attempts of the Master to teach the boys.

At the end of the year one young boy, John Gurney, fell over in his garden, cutting his knees slightly. Lockjaw intervened and, within two days, he died, causing much sadness within the school.

When another boy entered Green Lanes in February 1897, he gave some amusement to Mr. Simpson. According to the Master, Samuel Hall had been driven in "*somewhere*" by the Visiting Officer and, "*While his mother was admitting him or giving particulars, he looked thoroughly scared as though preparing to run.*" Such a state did not last long and, within four days, Mr. Simpson was able to note that the lad appeared "*to be losing his fear.*"<sup>1</sup>

Academically, although the school continued its good work, (the Diocesan Inspector was very complimentary about the progress of classes taught by the pupil teachers) there were some difficulties noted by the Government Inspector.

The decision by the Borough to widen Green Lanes, commensurate with the increased building activity in the area at the time, exposed the boys to some danger from passing, albeit horse-drawn, traffic and it was deemed necessary to fence the playground. This work cost the total of £19-7-6.

During the dark winter afternoons, Art lessons were taken from 2.00 to 2.50, the artificial light being considered inadequate for the boys to be able to draw with care.

In this way, Mr. Simpson was able to continually improve the standard of work and the boys' attainments were noted as being "*creditable, particularly in the class Subjects, Object lessons being a strong point.*"<sup>1</sup> In fact the drawing achievements of the scholars resulted in the teachers being paid a bonus of the £11-2-0 in 1895.

The management of the School underwent a change in January 1898 to conform with a recent Act of Parliament. This led to the formation of a School Sub-committee of the Municipal Charities Committee. There were now to be no more than 7 members and, initially, these were Messrs. W Adcock, W.C.R. Bedford, S. A. Taylor, J. W. Davis, T. Hayward and R. H. Burman.

Shortly after this Mr. Adcock, noted by Mr. Simpson as one of the newly appointed Trustees, visited the school to inspect its conditions. The recently appointed Sub-Committee soon altered arrangements for paying the salaries of teachers. From May 1898, all salaries were to be paid out at the Clerk's Office on the first Saturday of each month between the hours of 10 and 12.30.

A ledger, discovered in the Sutton Coldfield Local History Library Archives, conveniently recorded salaries paid out to the School teachers during this period. Alfred Simpson received a basic salary of £92, but this was boosted by Government grant, bonuses and fuel allowance to a total of £129-18-4.

His wife, Jane, received £61-4-10. The two Sidwell brothers, Walter and John, were paid £27-4-8 and £27-12-4 respectively.

This same ledger recorded in the final pension payments made to the School's first Master, James Cramp, who had died on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1898.

The teaching careers of the two Sidwells continued to develop. Walter terminated his engagement in May 1898, with the sanction of the Rev W. C. R. Bedford. There is some confusion over this situation, because he is again mentioned, possibly in error, as having to confine himself to teaching Standard I for some weeks past (December 1898).

His brother, John, completed his apprenticeship on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1898 but, upon being appointed as an Assistant Master to Green Lanes at a salary of £55 per year, he remained at the school until August 31, 1899. At an earlier date, the teachers and scholars had presented him with a gentleman's Travelling Bag *"as a small token of esteem and with best wishes for his future success."*<sup>1</sup> He entered Saltley Training College, presumably to become Articled, and was replaced by a Mr. W. T. R. Pollack, lately an Assistant Master at Cumbrae Public School. He only remained a short while, until December 1899, and his salary was recorded in a Borough Ledger as being £17-0-8 *"for two months' salary and 35 days' work."*<sup>27</sup>

The Diocesan Report for 1898 was a highlight in the story of the School. The inspector was particularly fulsome in the praise which he gave to the boys' singing which *"was a revelation of what can be done in a national School when the teacher possesses both capability and enthusiasm. I have heard no such singing anywhere in the Worcester Diocese. The School holds a high position in the A Class"*<sup>1</sup>.

It was a proud moment for Mr. Simpson.

The interim period between the departure of Mr. Sidwell and the arrival of Mr. Pollack required a timetable alteration and thus it was that Object lessons were given to Standards I, II, III together in order that Mr. Simpson could cope. During his short stay, Mr. Pollack did commit a cardinal sin in the eyes of the Master. On one day, the morning attendance for Standard II had been marked in the wrong direction and, to rectify this, the Assistant Master then proceeded to put a stroke in the proper way. The result was that the boys' attendances appear to have been crossed out. In view of the seriousness of the error, it is not difficult to imagine the scene which would have followed the discovery of it by the Master. No doubt, Mr. Simpson also reminded the unfortunate Assistant that they were working under difficult and trying circumstances which were the result of the lack of pupil teachers at that time. This situation had led to the School Committee reducing his salary by £12 a year but, on his appeal, they had agreed to give him his former salary of £92 on condition that he taught future pupil teachers free of charge.

From an entry in the March 1900 minutes of the School Committee, it seems likely that Mr. Pollack left the school under a cloud. Mr. Simpson sent a letter of complaint to the Committee in which he referred to statements made by a Mr. Rutherford, an Assistant Master at the Town Boys' School. This gentleman was concerned about the treatment given to Mr. Pollack before his departure from Green Lanes and the way his successor, Charles Stanton, was transferred from the Town Boys' School. After a thorough debate, Mr. Simpson was informed that the statements of Mr. Rutherford were unfounded, that the Committee had full confidence in the proper treatment of his subordinates by Mr. Simpson and they hoped that he would be receiving an apology from Mr. Rutherford.

No more was said of the incident, but it does show the undercurrents which existed in the school system in Sutton Coldfield.

As the school moved into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century so it seems that external events increasingly forced their way into school life. The events of the Boer War were followed with keen interest by many of the boys, especially those who were studying the Victorian era. The relief of Ladysmith was the occasion for an afternoon holiday, but not before the scholars had listened to a short account of the siege "*with cheers for the leaders and soldiers and the singing of God Save the Queen*"<sup>1</sup>. Shortly after this another half-day holiday was granted, in May 1900, when news filtered through of the relief of Mafeking.

When a new Assistant Master joined the staff on November 26<sup>th</sup>, it could not be known that this was the start of a career at the school which was to last 32 years. Allen "Bunk" Jones was to become a legend and a hero to his pupils and the despair of his superiors. The School Log Book shows that he was born on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1873 and attended Long Melford National School in Suffolk. He matriculated from the University of London in 1891. No more is known of his career until his appointment as an Uncertificated Teacher was made by the Committee on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1900.

Research through public records tell us a little more about "Bunk" Jones. He was born in Ysceifog in Flintshire to Henry and Anne (nee Parry) Jones. His father was a Schoolmaster in St. Asaph in 1881 and the family lived in the National School House.

Allen was the 6<sup>th</sup> eldest of their children and he had 5 younger siblings. It would have been a very crowded residence with 13 living there. Altogether Henry and Anne were to have 15 children during 31 years of marriage, but 4 had died by the time of the 1911 Census. Several of the children appear to have followed their father and became teachers, too.

His pathway into teaching is interesting as he, like many Welsh persons, were prepared to move to England to develop their careers. London, Suffolk and Warwickshire represented quite a journey through his long service as a teacher.

About the time that Mr. Jones was appointed to Green Lanes, he was boarding with a widow, Caroline Baldwin and her daughter, Caroline Florence, herself an Assistant Teacher, in Jockey Road, Boldmere. 10 years later, the three of them were living in nearby Boldmere Road.

Allen Jones was a short, stocky man with a full beard and a fiery temper. Yet the way he conducted both himself and his classes endeared him to the scholars. Many former pupils remembered him with considerable affection.

His daily journey from 139 Boldmere Road, near St Michael's Church, earned his nickname and was a source of endless amusement to the "Boldmere Boys", as one gang within the school was known. Leaving his arrival to the last possible moment - boys who accompanied him on his race against time knew that they ran the risk of incurring Mr. Simpson's wrath for being late - he would rush across the railway footbridge from Sheffield Road and arrive in the playground as the bell sounded, chased by the group of laughing, chattering boys. In this way, he had gained his nickname of "Bunk".

Within the school, Allen Jones spent most of his career teaching the boys of Standard II where it was probably felt that he could do the least harm to their education as the children progressed through the classes. While the boys settled down to silent reading at the beginning of the day, Mr. Jones would seat himself on the front desk and perform a daily ritual. After adjusting his clothing, the Assistant Master extracted a pair of folding scissors from his pocket and would proceed to snip away at his worn grey jacket to improve its appearance.

He also suffered from an incurable sweet tooth and, if he spied anybody chewing, he would creep up behind the offender and request the remainder of the toffees *“and he would dump them in the wastepaper basket .... But if you went for your sweets at playtime they had gone. He would have them in his locker”*<sup>51</sup>, wrote one former pupil who fell foul of this ruse.

Eccentric behaviour, such as this, meant that, although they could never forget, the boys could not begrudge “Bunk” the sweets which he acquired in this stealthy way. Naturally these anecdotes only accumulated as Mr. Jones continued his long association with the school. As the years unfold, so, too, will further stories regarding his personality and teaching ability.

Shortly before Christmas 1900, the School Committee met and sanctioned the purchasing of items of furniture. They included a teacher’s travelling desk costing 15s 0d and a high chair for 8s 6d. Possibly these were required for the new Assistant Master who was certainly needed as there were 146 pupils attending the School by January 1902, 26 of whom received suits at the annual clothing day.

In that year, the Inspector commented on the difficulties caused by these numbers – *“The school accommodation is at present insufficient for the average attendances. The attendance should either be reduced or the accommodation increased.”*<sup>1</sup> Thus the first steps were taken towards the eventual rebuilding of the old School.

The Inspector also demonstrated a more pleasant side to his nature during his unexpected visit to the School in June. He soon realized that the Master had intended to close the School for the afternoon to celebrate the Declaration of Peace in the Boer War. He therefore kindly agreed to curtail his inspection and, after examining records, books and the Drill lessons, he permitted the boys to leave early.

Around this period, the 3 Simpson children were still living with their parents, assisted by a servant, Rachel Raybould. Henry was now old enough to work and was a die sinker and tool maker.

Living in the old School-house presented difficulties, especially because of its size and limited living accommodation for the 6 occupants. To make some improvements, Mr. Simpson applied to the Municipal Trustees for permission to fix a bath in one of the bedrooms, adding that he knew where one could be acquired for the sum of £2-10-0. Following an investigation by the Chairman and the Committee's Surveyor, they allowed the installation.

Sutton Coldfield's Educational system underwent considerable change in the way it was administered during the period 1903-05. In January, the School Sub-committee of the Municipal Charities considered a letter sent to them by the Town Clerk, Mr. Thomas Holbeche, regarding the recently passed 1902 Education Act.

The General Purposes Committee deemed it desirable that the various Schools, Schoolhouses and furniture *"now the property of the Trustees of the Municipal Charities, should be handed over to the Local Education Authority under the new Act, subject to such financial arrangements as may be necessary"* <sup>16</sup>. The Trustees agreed that this resolution should be adopted but with the stipulation *"that moral and religious instruction would continue to be given as had been originally laid down in 1817"* <sup>16</sup>. (This was the year that the Warden and Society had applied to the Court of Chancery for the increased revenue of the Corporation of Sutton Coldfield to be used for the building of the town's first Charity Schools.)

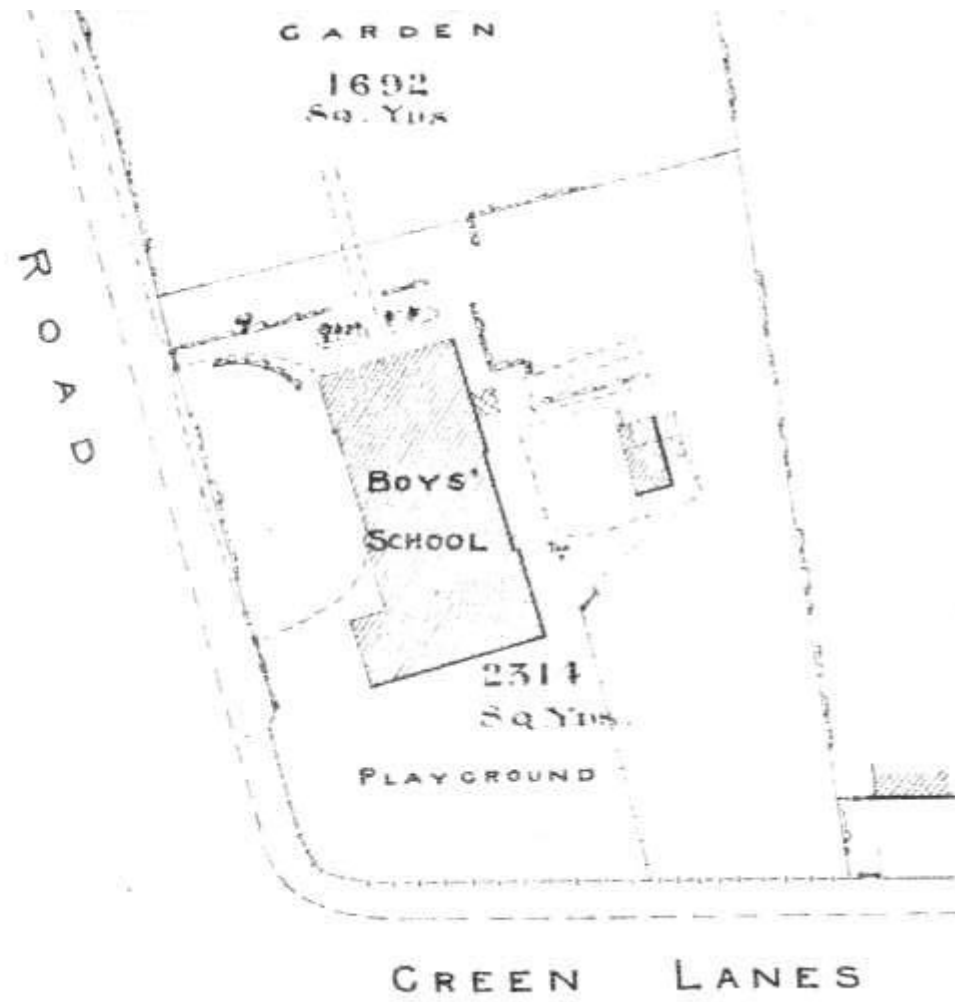
The newly-formed Education Committee held its first meeting at the Council House on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1903 and one of its members was Alfred Simpson who represented the Sutton Coldfield branch of the National Union of teachers. At that first session, he was further elected to serve on two sub-committees viz –

The Elementary Schools Sub-Committee

The School Attendance, Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee.

One of the first recommendations brought before the full Committee by the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee was a request for an additional male assistant at the Green Lanes School. Although this was not approved at the time, an appointment was made in October when a Mr. Frederick Mayo joined the staff at an annual salary of £65.

TOTAL QUANTITY  
4006  
Sq. Yds.



MUNICIPAL CHARITIES PLAN C. 1903

Between 1903-05 the control of the Elementary Schools passed from the Municipal Charities Committee to the newly formed Sutton Coldfield Local Education Authority. This plan is one of a series drawn up at that time. The outhouses containing the Toilets can be seen and the layout of the gardens and paths. Until the classroom was added in 1889, the schoolroom and adjoining house made a symmetrical plan.



During the change-over in administering the Borough's schools, the Municipal Charities School Committee still exerted some influence and in October 1903 they requested that the Trustees put a ventilator into the School (carried out in the following January) and, in September 1904, they were informed that overcrowding at Green Lanes had necessitated the formation of a first Standard at Boldmere Infant School to relieve the situation. 156 boys attended the School, although, according to a diagram at the back of the Log Book, the recognized accommodation was for 143 children within 1162 sq. feet of teaching space provided by the old Schoolroom and the adjacent Classroom.

The Government Report for the year 1903 confirmed the overcrowding but differed on the recognized number. In his own words, *"There seems to be some doubt as to the accommodation the School affords but with the average attendance of 150 it is obviously very full .... The average attendance must not exceed 128 which the school is recognized as providing accommodation"* <sup>1</sup>.

When the Inspector returned in November there were 160 boys present but already the decision had been taken to ascertain the correct recognized accommodation. Due to a disagreement between Mr. Simpson, who believed that the correct number was 143, and the Inspector's figure of 128, the Committee requested the Borough Surveyor, Mr. Titley, to produce the plans of the School and to give his opinion on the disputed number. While he registered his concern regarding the overcrowding, the Inspector reported his feelings over the teaching of Physical Training, which, in his view, did not appear to be based upon the *"Model Course"*. He therefore asked that *"an alternative scheme set out with sufficient details to make it intelligible may be without delay, be submitted to the Inspector for approval"* <sup>1</sup>.

It is not surprising to learn that, early in 1904, the Sub-Committee, having studied the situation at Green Lanes, recommended that the Architect prepare plans for the extension of the School to provide 100 additional places. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, these were placed before the full Committee with the request that, at a cost of £1050, they be approved. Although the Council itself agreed to these proposals in May 1904, the minutes of their meeting recorded that the Board of Education could not approve them until after the schools had been formally transferred to the Sutton Coldfield Education Authority.

This transfer was, at the time, a matter of some controversy. In fact, the Education Committee received a petition signed by over 500 inhabitants protesting that, if the Corporation Schools were to be transferred then the scheme of 1825, under which the Elementary Schools had first been built (*despite these plans being mooted in 1817 they were not implemented until eight years later*), would be overturned.

Additionally, the system by which the pupils themselves aided in the teaching within the schools and known as Dr. Bell's system would no longer exist. (*Dr. Bell first used his monitorial system in Madras. Its success was taken up by Joseph Lancaster in this country & developed to suit the schools which then existed*). The Committee refuted statements made in the petition and resolved to place the matter before the Board of Education in London.

Now the matter passed into the lengthy period of legal argument, discussion and negotiation between the various interested parties, and it was not until 1905 that all the schools were finally transferred to the Sutton Coldfield Local Education Authority.

While these matters took their course, other items of interest were recorded in the various sources. In June 1904, the Education Committee detailed the salaries paid to the staff at the School. Mr. Simpson was to receive a revised salary of £170, from which £15 was deducted as rental for the schoolhouse, which his family occupied. Jane Simpson and Alan Jones were both paid £75.

The attendance rose to 171 with an average of 93% coming to school each day. Mr. Simpson's pay was further boosted by two allowances. For keeping the school clean, he received a quarterly payment of £1-10-0 and, for its heating, another £2 every three months.

A few of the items of correspondence between the Master and the Town Clerk regarding the running of the School still remain and serve to show the relationship between them. In one letter, it can be seen that Mr. Simpson had responsibility for fuel payments, requisitioning cleaning equipment and stationery items and for reporting maintenance items needing attention.

Another letter reveals that it was necessary to inform H. M. Inspector when the school closed for occasional day holidays. Accidents to children have always needed careful attention and Headteachers are required to inform the authorities of any action taken to deal with the more serious. One boy, who dislocated his shoulder during the lunch hour, needed the assistance of 2 local doctors to “*administer Chloroform, the lad was so excitable and nervous*”<sup>21</sup> wrote Mr. Simpson to the office in 1905.

In May of that year, the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee resolved that the Teachers should send in their Log Books for inspection at their next meeting. In Mr. Simpson’s book, they would have found a neat and precise presentation – an accurate account of the weekly events within the school. At the same time, Mr. Simpson reveals from time to time his own thoughts and these give a more personal view of the development of the school.

In 1862, the then Master, Mr. Cramp, had expressed his concern over the provision of unmanned level crossing at the end of Sheffield Road which could cause danger to the boys crossing the new railway line. However, in August 1905, steps were taken to remove the “*evil*”, as Mr. Cramp had referred to it. The Municipal Charities Trustees assented to a plan which entailed removing the level-crossing and continuing Marsden Road down to Chester Road.

The original plans to enlarge the Boys’ School, drawn up in 1904, were re-examined by the Sub-Committee who studied the accommodation provided at all the Schools. Thus, it was in this way that, in addition to extending the Boys’ School, the first formal steps were taken to build an adjoining Infants’ School to cater for 100 children at an estimated cost of £1000. The story of that school is the subject of another chapter and will only be referred to as it affects the history of the Boys’ School during this period.

The amended plans for the Green Lanes Boys’ School, the result of recommendations made by the Board of Education’s own architect, were approved on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1905 and, at the same time, it was decided to give the entire building a hot water heating system costing £115.

The formal notice seeking permission for the work was filled in and presented to the Town Council on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the architect, E. F. Titley, holding himself responsible for its satisfactory completion.

The builder chosen to undertake the work was G. T. Stephens who gave a tender for £1122 10s 0d. To this was added the following –

*“Lighting present School with Gas ..... £31-10-0*  
*Architect’s Commission ..... £57-14-0*  
*Contingencies ..... 2½% ..... £28-17-0”*<sup>18</sup>

The Borough Surveyor was asked to prepare a scheme for the asphaltting of the playground, after it had been extended, and for building a shelter. It was likely that this was partly due to a comment made by the Inspector the previous year, when he wrote that the School *“is without artificial light of any kind. The playground is not properly drained”*<sup>18</sup>. The cost of adequately preparing the playground was noted as being £150-11-9, the work being carried out by the Birmingham and Midland Counties Val de Travers Paving Co. Ltd.

A dangerous fireplace within the school needed urgent action in November 1905 and, sometime after this, a fireplace (perhaps the same one) was bricked up by Mr. Stephens for the sum of £3-15-0. New furniture arrived and Mr. Simpson received a stock cupboard, although he nearly lost 3 forms which were to be given to the Walmley Infants’ School.

Eventually the Sub-Committee changed its mind and the benches were taken from the Town School instead. Late in 1906, gas fittings, costing £55-5-0 were fitted in the School-House.

Mr. Mayo, who had been appointed three years earlier, resigned in 1906, writing to Mr. Simpson from Western-Super-Mare, where he was staying in a convalescent home. The reason behind this remains hidden but it is likely that the resignation was on grounds of ill-health. His replacement was not appointed until July 1<sup>st</sup> – Mr. Clarence Perry, who had trained at Saltley College between 1904 and 1906.

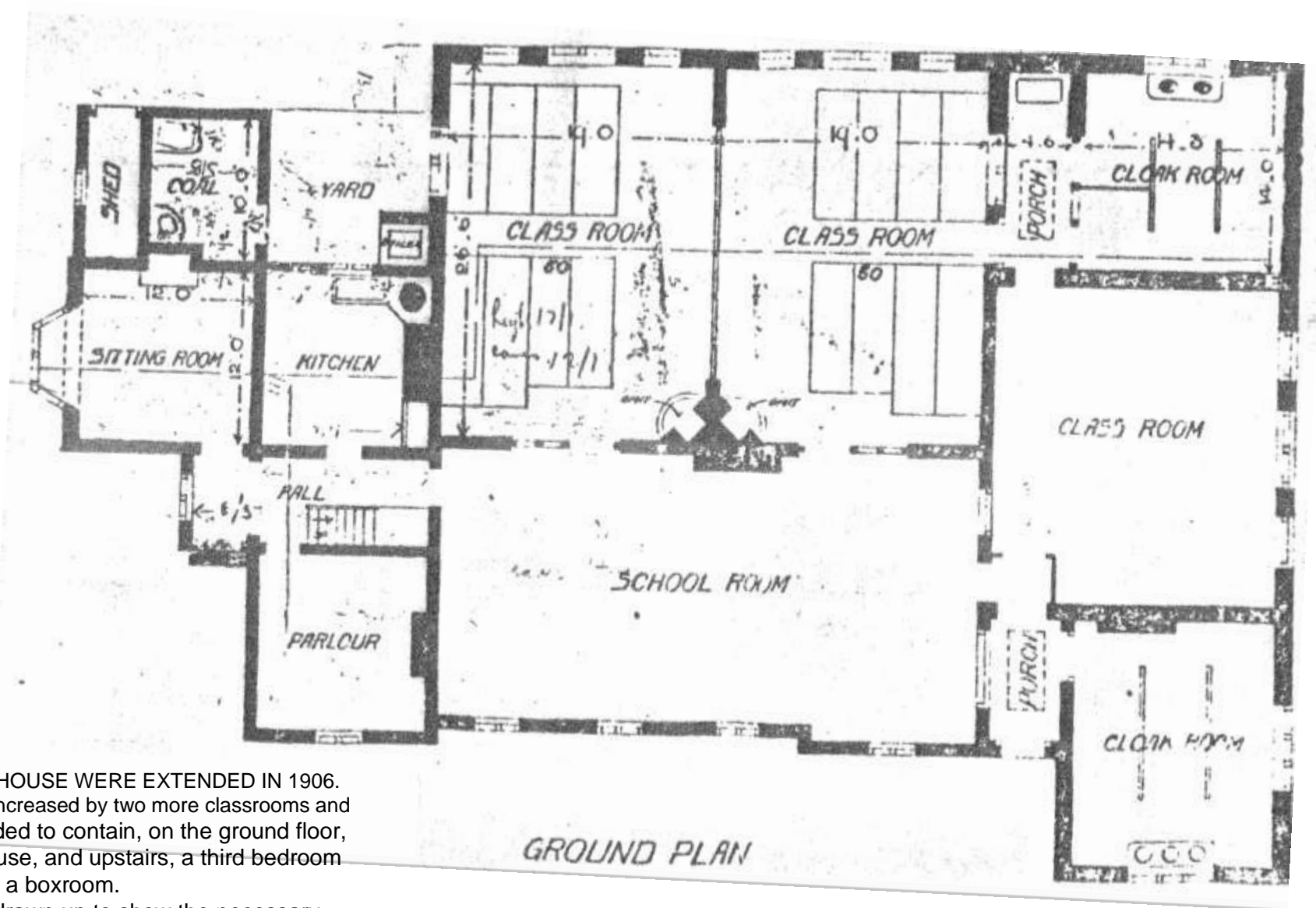
Mr. Perry commenced duties on 9<sup>th</sup> July but created an unfortunate record for, two days later, Mr. Simpson wrote, *“The Managers, feeling confident that Mr. Perry is using their appointment as a convenience, have cancelled the appointment”*<sup>9</sup>. Not until September was this ill-fated teacher replaced – his successor being Mr. Ainslie Ensor B.Sc., a graduate of the University of Birmingham.

At the beginning of May 1906, the builder, together with two of his workmen, called at the School to commence the work. Mr. Simpson was asked if he could vacate the house and outbuildings by the following Monday, which caused difficulties as the Simpsons had nowhere to live. It was therefore arranged that during the alterations to the house, Mr. Simpson (who is now referred to as the Headmaster) would be paid rent at the rate of eight shillings a week until he could return. The whereabouts of his temporary accommodation during this time is not known, although it is conceivable that he and his family may have stayed with his wife’s relatives.

The plans and other items, including correspondence between the builder and the planners, have been preserved. These help in understanding the development of the school since it was built in 1840.

The earliest surviving plan of Green Lanes (1872) does not indicate the additional room built in 1851 and a study of the detailed 1906 plan does not appear to support the theory that this room was built as an integral extension of the original Schoolroom. Its fate is a matter of speculation. A Municipal Charities plan, circa 1903, shows the school following the 1889 enlargements and the cloakroom added in 1894. The land available for extending the building was substantial.

At the time the Schoolhouse consisted of parlour (12’ 3” x 10’ 4”) and a kitchen (9’11” x 11’ 11”) with a central hall leading to 2 bedrooms of similar dimensions. After the building work, it included a sitting room and a coal shed, and a third bedroom and box room upstairs. The school received two more classrooms on its western side, capable of seating a further 100 pupils.

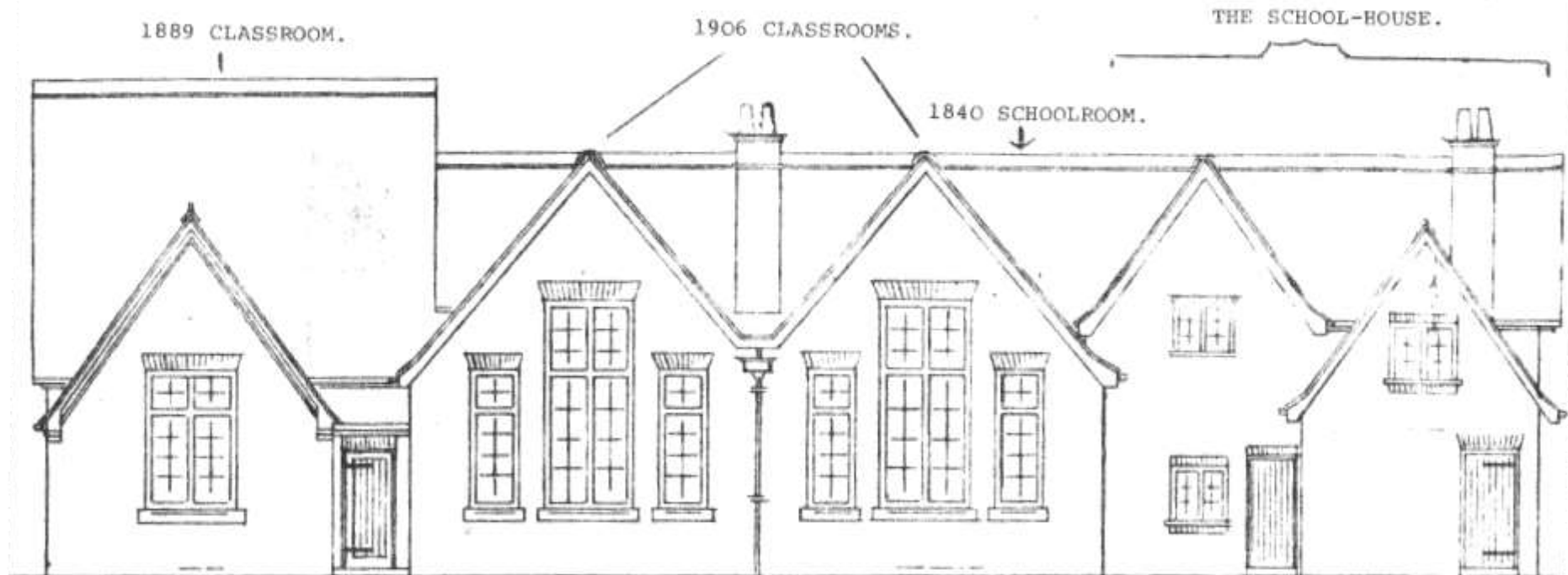


THE SCHOOL & SCHOOL HOUSE WERE EXTENDED IN 1906. In that year, the school was increased by two more classrooms and the adjoining house extended to contain, on the ground floor, a sitting room and coalhouse, and upstairs, a third bedroom and a boxroom.

This is part of the plan drawn up to show the necessary building work.

# *GREEN LANES SCHOOL.*

THIS IS THE CLASSROOM SEEN FROM THE PLAYGROUND,  
AFTER THE WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 1906.



*SOUTH ELEVATION*

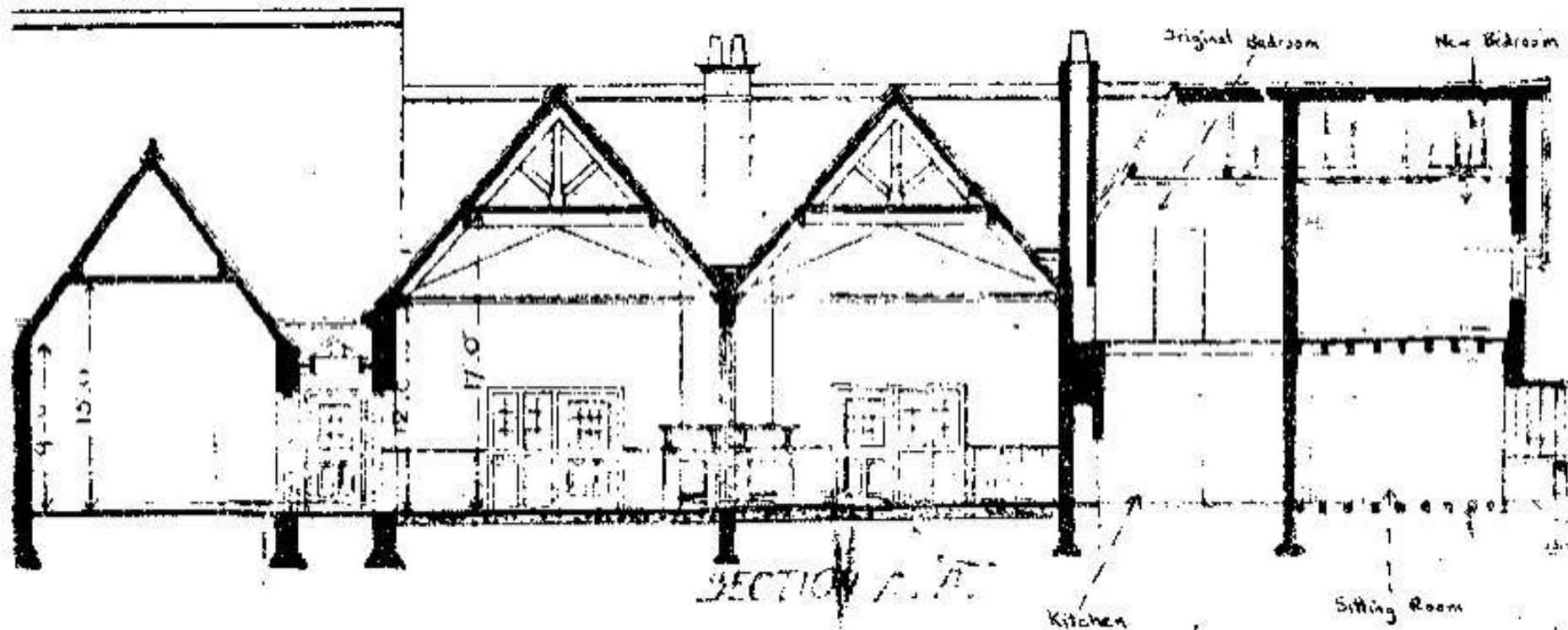
What the 1906 plan establishes clearly, is the size of the original buildings. Careful measuring of the present school revealed that the central hall was 18'11" wide - the exact width of the old schoolroom. An examination of the external brickwork along the playground showed that the brick used in 1906 is of poorer quality to that used in later extensions. This brick was used for the two central classrooms on the western side which for many years had a dividing screen between them.

These rooms, together, were the exact length of the original school (38' 0"). It is interesting to note that, despite the lack of any visible evidence, (apart from the roof, perhaps) the original school remains at the heart of the present building.

The builders proceeded with the construction throughout the summer but even so, it was found necessary to extend the summer holiday for the boys by two weeks because of its non-completion. On August 1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Simpson wrote "*Builders anxious to get into the Schoolroom*"<sup>1</sup>. Even on September 17<sup>th</sup>, when the school reassembled, there were still some unfinished items; the new furniture had not arrived and asphaltting of the playground had only just begun. The Committee authorised the painting of the school as the builders neared the end of their work. The furniture arrived in July, but additional pieces were required, including 6 dual desks, 14 dozen Number discs (for the cloakroom pegs), one pair Steps and one Teacher's chair. The building period lasted a little under 5 months. A chronology of Plan No. 1690, the Borough's reference number for the extensions, can be found in the Sutton Coldfield Register of Plans Deposited (Volume 4). The "*Form of Notice of Commencement*" was sent on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the damp course level was reached in early June and the work completed on October 26<sup>th</sup>. George Stephens, the builder, lived in nearby Western Road. He received payment in stages as the work progressed.

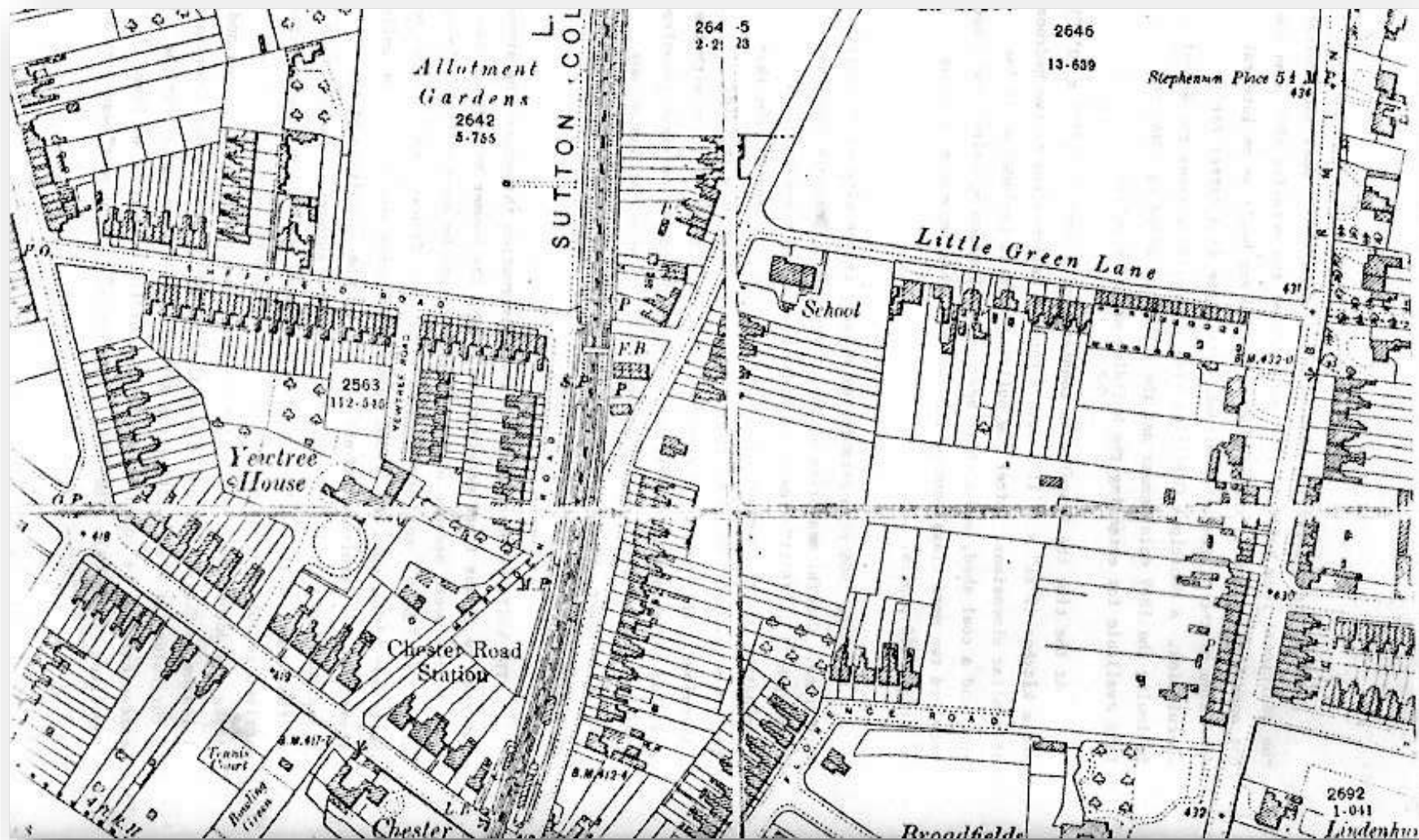
Within days of the completion, some desks arrived which were "*a great benefit forming practically a new class for which there is, unfortunately, no teacher. Application will be made immediately for this drawback to be remedied*"<sup>1</sup>. The Board of Education now recognized the school as providing accommodation for 228 pupils. There were in fact 181 boys on the register. The additional pressure was put upon the School's resources by the need to absorb boys had previously attended the Osborne Road School in Erdington. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1907, the Headmaster received applications from 16 boys to be admitted because their previous school, Osborne, was said to be overcrowded.





### THE 1906 EXTENSIONS

This cross-section shows the two classrooms built to increase the accommodation of the school by 100 pupils. Except for the heating apparatus and chimneys, these rooms remained the same in the 1980s. A study of the adjoining schoolhouse indicates the small proportions of the kitchen & bedroom, before the sitting room and extra<sup>79</sup> bedroom were added.



ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP 1904

This shows the extent of recent urban development which led to the need to extend the School in 1906

By 11<sup>th</sup> January, this had risen alarmingly to 40 boys and the Education Committee had to move quickly in response to Mr. Simpson's plea for additional staff.

They sanctioned the transfer of Miss Florence Wilson from the Walmley Girls' School. The numbers continued to rise. In March, there were 224 on roll and, by September, there were 237. Even with the new rooms, the School was still overcrowded.

Miss Wilson took charge of Standard II, but remained only three months before being replaced by Miss Gertrude "Polly" Clegg, a small well-dressed and formidable disciplinarian. She was feared and respected by all those she taught.

Miss Clegg, who lived in Erdington, first applied to teach in Sutton Coldfield in November 1904 and, after several items of correspondence, much of it concerned with the salary she expected to receive, she commenced teaching at Town Girls' School in 1905.

A file reveals this correspondence and contains a form, No. 75, which Miss Clegg was required to complete on being appointed to the Authority. From this it can be seen that, after spending some years in Birmingham, she qualified as a teacher in 1903, having been a pupil teacher at Aston Lane Juniors' School. At the age of 22, she commenced teaching at Green Lanes.

Miss Clegg was born on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1885 in Bolton, Lancashire to Thomas and Eliza Clegg and baptised in a Wesleyan Methodist Church. Her father was an Insurance agent and Gertrude was 1 of 10 children.

By the 1901 Census, most of the family had moved to Johnson Road in Erdington. One brother, Thomas, was a School Teacher (Student), a sister, Amelia Jane was a Music Teacher while Gertrude, now 16, was recorded as being a School Teacher (Pupil Teacher).

By 1911, Gertrude was a "Visitor", residing with a family named Bird in Yew Tree Farm, Reddicap Heath.

## NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT OF TEACHER

In Schools maintained by a Local Education Authority, the Consent of the Authority is required under Section 7 (1) (c) of the Education Act, 1902, to the appointment of all teachers, and should be indicated on this form by the signature or counter-signature of an authorised Officer of the Local Education Authority.

Name of School Sutton Coldfield Town Corporation  
 Local Education Authority } Sutton Coldfield Town Council Number 16625

1. Name of Teacher in full? Gertrude Clegg

(If a married woman, state also maiden name.)

2. Exact date of birth? February 6<sup>th</sup> 1885

3. Qualification—

(a) Certificated? If so, give registered number.

(b) Provisionally certificated?

(c) Assistant? Say whether under Art. 50 or 51 (a), (b), (c), or (d). Art. 50.

(d) Provisional Assistant (Art. 49\*)?

(e) Additional Teacher (Art. 68)?

4. (a) Name of qualifying examination? Kings Scholarship 1903

(b) Place where examined? Hope St. Birmingham.

(c) Date of examination? Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> 1903

5. (a) Date on which engagement in this School began? March 1<sup>st</sup> 1905

(b) As Principal or Assistant? Assistant

(c) In which Department employed? Girls

6. In what School last employed? Aston Lane Juniors' Sch. Aston.

Date of entering and leaving? July 1900. - February 28<sup>th</sup> 1902

7. If formerly a Pupil Teacher, in what School and when? Aston Lane Juniors' Sch. Upton

Upton. 1900-1903.

Date 29 Jan 1905

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Correspondent.

Address Connell House

FORM 75 – completed by Miss Clegg when she applied for a teaching position in Sutton Coldfield.

At the time of writing the History in the early 1980s, there were still some pupils who remembered being taught by Miss Clegg. After entering school and being received by Mr. Simpson, one former pupil remembers being *“introduced or more correctly stood before Miss Clegg who was to be my class mistress. She turned out to be a stern, unrepenting steadfast lady, and what she said she meant. She wielded a short cane about 30 inches long and her usual method of punishment was to hold the culprit’s wrist against her leg above the knee, and whack the hand hard up to a dozen times. When walking around the classroom examining our written work, if punishment was called for, perhaps an ink blot or a crossing out, she used a cane across the back of our necks, not unduly hard but it stung badly. She had some unruly boys but there was never any doubt who was in charge. All in all she was a good teacher, but I really cannot say that class times were happy times”*<sup>51</sup>.

Another pupil recalled that her use of dictation for written work closely followed by the cane for anyone who erred, meant trouble for the poor spellers.

Undoubtedly, the formidable Miss Clegg made her impact felt on these boys who had the misfortune to be members of her Standard and one suspects that most of them were pleased to escape her clutches at the end of each school year. Miss Clegg remained at the school for several years.

With the commencement of the new academic year in July 1907, it became apparent that the pressures on the accommodation of the school were to increase as the population in the Wylde Green area expanded.

It was necessary to admit a few infants into the Boys’ school to alleviate overcrowding at Boldmere and a census was taken within the district to establish whether an Infants’ School should be built in Green Lanes. It was proved that there was such a need and the story of that school is to be found in another chapter.

The growing suburb exerted other pressures upon the school and throughout this time, the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee received numerous requests for the use of the school buildings. These included a Dancing Class, a Badminton Class, and Band of Hope meetings, all of which were turned down.

The Reverend Bevis Thompson was more successful and was given permission to use the premises, firstly for a series of Sunday services a payment of 4/- for each one and, later, for social events held on Saturday evenings for which a charge of 6/- was made.

During 1907, the Health Inspector of the County Council agreed to talk to the boys on a theme of *“fresh air”* (January) while a group of 35 lads were taken in May to an Exhibition being held in Birmingham. The first official mention that swimming was part of the School’s curriculum was made by Mr. Simpson on July 26<sup>th</sup> when he stated *“The swimming test at Keeper’s Pool was held this afternoon. 5 boys swam the necessary two breadths to obtain a medal”* <sup>1</sup>. As the pool had been opened in 1887, it is likely that it had been used for some years and was quite an occasion for those who participated.

Boys who were fortunate to survive Mr. Simpson’s inspection of their work, could leave school five minutes early, march over the railway bridge, along Sheffield Road and down Boldmere Road to the Park. Once they arrived at the open-air pool, they were given a 30 minute lesson. During their time in the water, they would receive tuition from an Instructor who *“would have a stout pole about 4’ long and fastened on the pole were a pair of men’s braces, he would walk along the side holding you up now and again, he would let you down so under you went”* <sup>51</sup>, a past pupil remembered. Techniques such as this enabled Green Lanes to produce several exceptionally good swimmers, who helped to bring back to the school trophies and certificates, in increasing numbers over the years.

As the school grew it had to learn to cope with more pupils leaving the district, going to Grammar Schools, entering other educational establishments or taking up work. With only four teachers, inevitably classes had to encompass more than one standard at times. Mr. Simpson organized the School as follows –

<i>Standard V, VI and VII</i>	-	<i>Mr. Ensor</i>
<i>Standards IV and II</i>	-	<i>Mrs. Simpson</i>
<i>Standard III</i>	-	<i>Miss Clegg</i>
<i>Standard I</i>	-	<i>Mr. Jones</i>

These arrangements were short lived, as Mr. Ensor left in October 1907 to take up a position on the Junior Staff at the Birmingham University Day Training College. He was replaced by a Miss Barber, who took charge of standard II (mentioned previously – see page 62). This left the oldest boys in the care of the Headmaster until the appointment of Mr. A. E. “Crump” Hughes, another member of staff who was to leave vivid memories in the memories of those he taught.

Mr. Hughes was considered a very strict disciplinarian, but his keenness in sport won the respect of the boys. He was born in 1881 and Mr. Simpson noted his address as 209 Woodend Road, Erdington. For much of his career at the School he taught the top Standards of 13 & 14 year olds and *“was well known for his straight arm swinging box on the ears, but if you were quick it did give you time to duck and made him miss”*<sup>51</sup>.

1908 was significant in one small way. The first time since Mr. Simpson had overseen the School there was, on July 22, a perfect attendance. This was helped by one lad in particular – Harry Cross. Between July 1901 and June 1909, he never had a days’ absence and, for this record, he was given a prize of a silver watch and a book.

The early part of 1909 could have seen the end of Harry’s record, for there was *“one of the worst epidemics raging in the neighbourhood that this district has experienced for many years. Measles, Chicken Pox, and Ring Worm in Standard 1 (three cases) are playing havoc with the percentage of attendance”*<sup>1</sup> recorded Mr. Simpson.

Meanwhile, the Education Committee, realising that additional accommodation would be needed at the School, approved the recommendation of its Sub-Committee that plans should be prepared by the Borough Surveyor for the further enlargement of the school. 244 boys now attended Green Lanes Council No. 2 School which had a revised accommodation of 214 (February 1909).

The final steps which, with the building of the adjacent Infant School on the site of the old school garden, were to transform and replace the building erected in 1840, were about to be taken.

The Sub-Committee Minute Book <sup>22</sup> reveals statistics which assist in appreciating the situation within the school in the early 1900s. The following table, for example, is an Analysis of its capitation expenditure between 1905 and 1908.

Green Lanes Boys School	Cost of Books, Stationery etc.			No. of Children on Register on last day of Sch. Year			Cost per head		
	1905 & 06	1906 & 07	1907 & 08	1905 & 06	1906 & 07	1907 & 08	1905 & 06	1906 & 07	1907 & 08
	£20-18-6	£23-3-7	£53-19-9	146	157	221	2/10¼	2/11¼	4/10½

The upsurge of both pupil numbers and capitation is remarkable, but the various factors behind this have already been examined. The virtual doubling of the per capita grant is unusual. It is possible that this was catching-up exercise after several years in which the grant was held down or it may have been an attempt to give Mr. Simpson realistic monies to purchase new books and equipment to cope with the increased numbers of scholars.

December was important in that it saw the opening of the Green Lanes Infant School and, as a member of the Committee, it is likely that Mr. Simpson played his part in determining the type of school it was going to be. It was also the month in which the Headmaster recorded his first personal observation of the quality of teaching as exhibited by Allen Jones. In passing comment on the satisfactory results of his tests on the 3Rs throughout much of the school, Mr. Simpson had to except Standard III from the statement adding that this was due to *“Mr. Jones being apparently incapable of taking any standard above Standard II”* <sup>1</sup>.

Over the years there were many similar statements made about “Bunk” Jones.

Preliminary sketch plans showing how the school was to be enlarged were submitted to the Board of Education towards the latter part of 1909. This was followed by a visit to the Board’s Office by Education Committee Chairman Councillor Bayley, and the Deputy Town Clerk, Mr. Ellison.



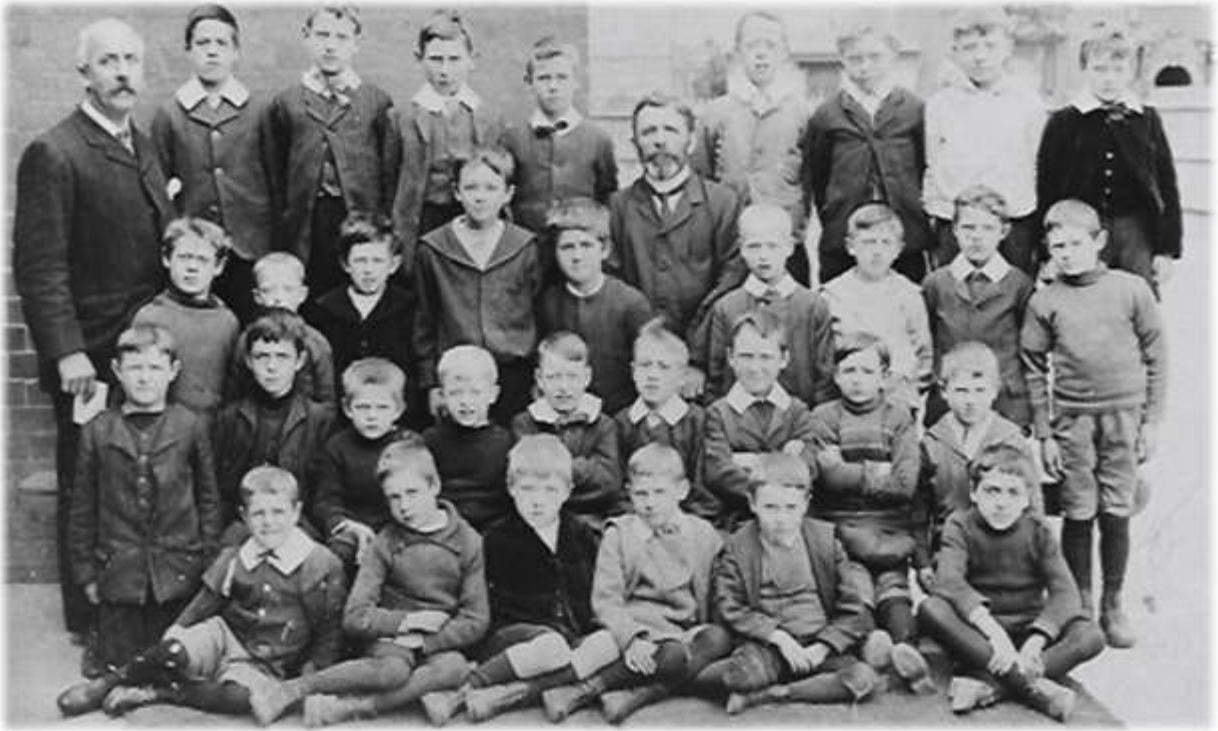
A representative of the Board, Mr. Kingsford, raised again various points which had previously been aired in a letter to the Authority. Firstly, there appeared to be insufficient playground accommodation for a school which would have up to 500 boys. Secondly, they wished to be informed of what school accommodation there would be for all the children in the district and, finally, how the proposed Boys' school would be organised.

In reply, the Deputation stated that by taking a portion of the Infants playground there would be a playing space of 29.54 sq. ft. per scholar – a fraction under the minimum of 30 sq. ft. required by regulations. With regards to school provision within the area, this information had already been forwarded to the Board. The Deputation was not clear as to what was needed in terms of the school's organisation as they were intending to provide the school with about 150 vacant places. Mr. Kingsford explained that they were unhappy with the school designed for 500 boys. In the Board's view, the ideal unit consisted of 1000 pupils housed within 3 departments – 350 boys, 350 girls and 350 infants. A school of 350 boys divided into 7 classes or Standards made provision for the different periods of school life. He therefore suggested that, for these reasons and others, the Committee should reconsider the matter.

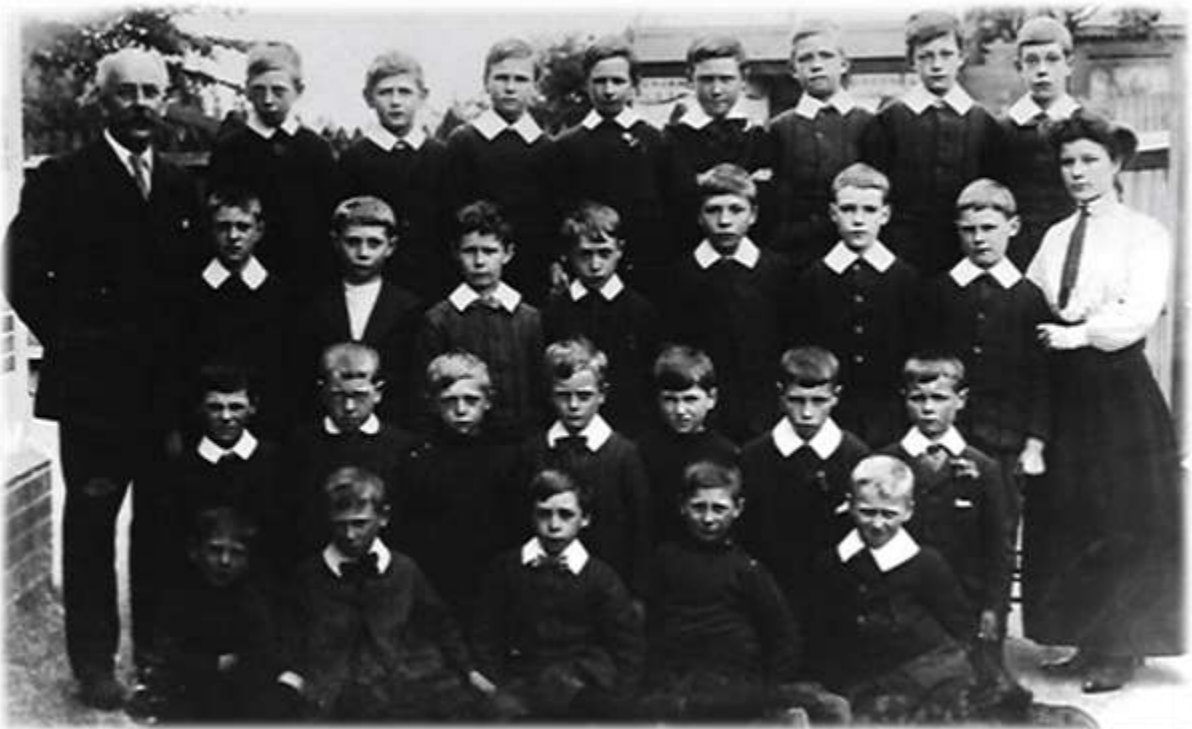
While this was being undertaken, Mr. Simpson visited St John's School, Ladywood in April to discover how they coped with 500 boys within their school. The visit proved useful and he was asked to join Councillor Bayley and Mr. Ellison when they had a further interview with the Board in Whitehall.

The discussion resulted in a compromise and the revised plans showed that the enlarged buildings now provided for 450 children. By November 1910, the detailed Drawings and Specifications were ready for final approval and, once this was obtained in January 1911, tenders were invited for the work.

In July 1910, young Sydney Thornett showed the benefit of the lessons held at Keepers Pool by being the first pupil from School to win the Swimming Challenge Cup. On the academic side, another boy, E. Page, obtained a County Minor Scholarship which pleased the Headmaster greatly, too.



**Mr. Simpson and "Bunk" Jones with a class of 1910?**



**Mr. Simpson and Miss Clegg - 1913**

A Mr. Trevitt, who lived in Wylde Green, sought to brighten up the School's environment by donating Narcissus and Tulip bulbs, sufficient, so Mr. Simpson calculated, to provide each of the boys in Standards IV– VII with 3 bulbs to plant each. An eventful year ended with a rather nasty experience suffered by Miss Barber *“while coming to school down Green Lanes she was overtaken and stopped by a cyclist who snatched her wrist bag and escaped. Naturally she was unnerved.”*<sup>1</sup>

1911 was a very busy time, as the rebuilding the school drew closer. In January, it was agreed to raise Mr. Simpson's salary from £200 to £220 per annum as compensation for moving out of the School-house. Just after this, Mrs. Simpson was taken seriously ill with congestion of the lungs and the doctor found it necessary to attend her twice daily. Six weeks after her illness began, March 31<sup>st</sup>, she attempted to recommence teaching duties, but the effort proved too much. Despite Mrs. Simpson's poor health, they vacated the building *“after a residence of twenty years and one month, the change being the result of the impending building alterations.”*<sup>1</sup>

Their new house was within easy walking distance, at no. 663a Chester Road, near Florence Road. It was called Vailima (Robert Louis Stevenson wrote Vailima Papers and others utilising that name). In the 1911 Census, Mr. Simpson stated that he and his wife had been married for 26 years and had 3 children. Of these three, Elsie & Gertrude were still living with them. Alfred was described as a Head Teacher Council School employed by the Borough Council, Jane as an Assistant Teacher and Elsie was a Stenographer and Typist Clerk at the Gas House Manufacturer's Office. Gertrude appeared to have no employment.

Mr. Simpson's problems were increased in school by the continuing poor teaching delivered by “Bunk” Jones. In May, as part of an oral composition lesson, he wrote on the blackboard *“The land we live in is an island and is called Holland.”*<sup>1</sup> When called upon to justify this statement by the Headmaster, he replied that *“although he did not exactly understand it, he had obtained it from the Reading Book.”*<sup>1</sup> Prior to this error, he had attempted to teach an object lesson without an “object” and, whilst taking a lesson on a typical flower, he was seen to be *“shuffling through a number of phrases about sepals, petals and anthers without knowing what he was describing.”*<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for his superior, but perhaps to the delight of his charges, Mr. Jones was to continue with all his faults for many years, reaching probably his finest moment, when he wrote the following line on the board – “ *Swallows build their nests on the ground and then put them in position.*”<sup>1</sup>

The upheaval, caused by the construction work, resulted in an extended summer holiday and the school did not reassemble until 18<sup>th</sup> of September.

It had been impossible to begin earlier and, only after a great deal of persuasion, had it be possible to get the builders to release six rooms for use. Desks were washed, moved into rooms and teaching started. This did not last long and, within a few days, they closed so that the central hall could be given a block floor. With no heating, temperatures hovered around 50° F. so Mr. Simpson was pleased that numbers were maintained and that colds were few. In the last week of October, desks were moved into new rooms and the heating apparatus put on for the first time, warming the classrooms on the north side. Another month passed before the entire system operated and then the freshly painted radiators did “*not add to the healthiness of some of the classrooms.*”<sup>1</sup> By the end of the year the work was virtually finished and the playground had been asphalted.

A walk around this part of the school in the 1980s, when this book was being written, revealed that very little had altered in the past seventy years and the scholars of 1911 would have had no difficulty in recognizing the building they once knew so well. The classroom floor was still blocked, the heating system virtually unaltered in appearance (although by then it was oil-fired) and the dark-brown glazed tiles still abounded throughout the building. Some things had changed. The dais from which the headmaster once surveyed his assembled school had been removed from the end of the central hall where it used to be. The Headteacher could no longer look out onto the hall from his or her office as that window had been boarded up and the office was now part of a much larger staffroom. The vaulted ceiling of the hall now had a suspended ceiling installed underneath it. The cellar steps leading down were worn but with the change in fuel, the large bunkers beneath the school no longer housed coal, but discarded furniture and other items collected over the years.

The efficiency of Mr. Simpson in recording items of interest within the school log book provide the exact measurements of the rebuilt school. These can be found in the last few pages of the first logbook – <sup>11</sup>

*‘Dimensions of Class Rooms and Accommodation’*

*Central Hall 71’ 3½ x 18’ 11½*

*Class rooms – South Side West End of School.*

No. I	20’ 0½ x	25’ 7”	- Accom.	55
II	20’ 1½ x	25’ 7”	- “	50
III	25’ 4½ x	18’ 7”	- “	50
IV	25’ 4” x	18’ 8”	- “	50
V	25’ 0” x	21’ 8½	- “	55
VI	20’ 6” x	21’ 11”	- “	45
VII	23’ 4½ x	21’ 11½	- “	45
VIII	20’ 5½ x	22’ 0”	- “	45
XI	25’ 0” x	21’ 11½	- “	55
				<u>450</u>

Classes today are limited, in the early years to a statutory maximum of 30 pupils, and reluctantly go above this number in older age groups. It is therefore remarkable that these class sizes were considered suitable for rooms of such dimensions.

Past pupils would need no reminding of the regimented lines of dual desks which confronted them as they entered the classrooms ready to tackle the daily routine of lessons.

The furniture arrived in various consignments. One popular item amongst the boys was the Museum Cupboard, the paint of which was still fresh and, according to Mr. Simpson, “*evidently dispatched from factory in haste*” <sup>1</sup>.

At a cost of £20, the piano came from a well-known local maker – Rileys of Constitution Hill in Birmingham.

The Headmaster took the opportunity of a new school year to reorganize the classes and these were -

<i>Class I (a)</i>	<i>18 boys - Mr. Simpson</i>
<i>Class I</i>	<i>47 boys - Mr. Parkes</i>
<i>Class II</i>	<i>47 boys - Mr. Hughes</i>
<i>Class III</i>	<i>47 boys - Mrs. Simpson</i>
<i>Class IV</i>	<i>46 boys - Miss Clegg</i>
<i>Class V</i>	<i>48 boys - Mr. Jones</i>
<i>Class VI</i>	<i>47 boys - Miss Barber</i>

This gave a total of 300 scholars, in a school with a capacity for 450 boys.

Miss Barber left shortly after this, in August, to get married and, after certain changes had been implemented, a Mr. H. Townshend took charge of Standard V.

It will be recalled that, back in the early days of the school, the Masters experienced difficulties with truants and, whilst Mr. Simpson did not appear to suffer the problems to the same extent (due, perhaps, to the efforts of the Borough's Visiting Officer), he does mention one boy whose case seems extreme. In the logbook, he wrote the following – "*The boy James Fisher brought by his mother (19<sup>th</sup> of January 1913) who states that he is an inveterate truant. During last week's bitter cold and heavy snowstorms this boy was sleeping out 'under a hedge' so he says*"<sup>1</sup>. What became of James in later years is not mentioned and it is to be hoped he came to terms with school.

By now, the country and the school were moving inexorably towards the Great War and there were several staff changes resulting from this. Towards the end of 1914, Mr. Townshend and Mr. Parkes departed and were replaced by Mr. James Breeze, Miss French and, on a temporary basis, a Miss Deaman.

The committee, realising that they could no longer expect Mr. Simpson to continue the daily maintenance of the school, as he had formerly undertaken, appointed a Mr. & Mrs. Ellis as caretakers, for which they were paid a weekly sum of £1. Upon Mrs. Ellis agreeing to scour the boys' cloakroom weekly, this was raised to £1-5-0. She remained caretaker into the late 1930s.

They applied themselves to their task with much enthusiasm causing an owner of a house in Green Lanes to complain about the amount of smoke issuing from the chimneys. When the Borough Surveyor investigated, he discovered that the fires were being incorrectly backed up and, upon firing, "*caused large volumes of smoke to issue from the chimneys*" <sup>18</sup>. Through implementing changes in the firing procedure, the nuisance was eliminated.

Mr. Simpson found himself dealing with another domestic problem when the Local Water Inspector discovered that the school was consuming excessively large amounts of water. After a period of careful monitoring, the Headmaster concluded that there had to be a serious leakage somewhere. Investigations by plumbers, and later the Borough Surveyor, eventually found that there was a faulty stop-tap and that the latrines in the Infants' School was serviced with water going through the Boys' School meter, leading to greater quantity being recorded than the school was using.

The charitable contributions made by the Corporation underwent a change and, although the pupils still received a school continuation payment, like that made in the previous century, the decision was taken to discontinue the making of Charity Clothing in the Borough's schools after 1913. This was in part due to alterations which had been made to the system giving sewing lessons within Girls' schools.

The final phase of construction work at the Green Lane School commenced in December 1913 when the Education Committee decided to study the provision for the teaching of manual crafts at the various schools. After due consideration, the Sub-Committee recommended, in April 1914, that a leasehold site in Green Lanes, opposite the Boys' School, should be acquired for the erection of a Manual Craft Centre. The leasehold on the land was purchased for a total of 82 years at a cost of £125 from the parties concerned, whilst it was estimated that the building would cost £650 and it would require a further £100 to equip it.

Eleven tenders were submitted and that of Hardy and Mander as recommended for acceptance, perhaps because, at £549, it was virtually the cheapest. This recommendation was not accepted, however, and the Committee chose the tender submitted by a Mr. Williams for £546-5-10, which included fencing costing £29-13-9.

The work began and, by March 1915, Mr. Clarry, the Borough Surveyor, reported that the Centre was “*progressing satisfactorily... building now being about windowsill height*”<sup>18</sup>. By April, the roof timbers have been fixed and roofing commenced. It was at this point that the work slowed down, material shortages due to the war may have been the cause, and, not until the end of September, did the Committee report its completion.

The Centre, opened on 4<sup>th</sup> October, was manned by the recently appointed Instructor, Mr. Joseph William Pemberton. He was initially paid £90 a year and, with his Derbyshire upbringing, he brought to the School his own sense of humour and methods of discipline. He was born in Glossop and had been a joiner, living in Barnsley in 1911. “Pemby” was required to keep pupil registers and several of these have been preserved and form part of the Sutton Coldfield archives. Craft lessons were of 2 hours’ duration and there were normally 20 boys in each session. Without tools and materials, the lessons could not begin immediately and this gave an opportunity for Mr. Simpson and Mr. Pemberton to discuss the best way to organize the groups. This done, most of the materials now arrived, the lessons started in earnest on October 11<sup>th</sup> and, a few days later, the Headmaster wrote “*The Manual Instruction Classes seem as though they will work smoothly.*”<sup>1</sup>

Apart from those staff changes previously mentioned, one of the earliest effects of the war came in February 1915, when the school closed because of a lack of fuel for the heating apparatus and the open fires.

Later in the year, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Breeze were given permission by the Education Committee to be released from school duties when necessary to undertake ambulance work in Birmingham, as members of the St. John’s Association. Subsequently, in October 1915, Mr. Simpson recorded their early departure so that they could assist with an ambulance train which was arriving at Selly Oak. In January 1916, Mr. Breeze was enlisted into the Royal Medical Corps and left to go to Chatham Hospital. (It is not clear when he returned to the School after leaving in 1914.) His colleagues, Messrs. Townshend, Hughes and Pemberton, travelled to Sutton in December 1915 to enlist under Lord Derby’s Scheme (\*see next page), but the latter was found to be unfit and was rejected.



The eldest boys at the School wished to show their patriotism as well and, after several weeks of hard saving, they were able to purchase for Green Lanes, a framed portrait of the King and this was accepted on behalf of the School by Councillor Bailey. Whilst he was there, he unveiled a "Roll of Honour" which contained the names of about 170 scholars, and over the years, this board became a source of pride to the pupils.

When Mr. Townshend was called up in February 1916, the Education Committee did consider an appeal against this but, after seeking advice from the Inspector, they went no further. Mr. Hughes, who was also called up, reported to Warwick where a medical examination classified him as IVb and he returned to school, never to be recalled.

It was decided for the first time to keep the schools open on Trinity Monday in June 1916 and so a traditional holiday enjoyed for many years lost a little of its excitement. In July, the boys were encouraged to subscribe to the War Loans Saving Association and, initially, the sum of £14-3-0 was deposited.

Two of the staff married during this time and could remain at the School, something which was not allowed in neighbouring Birmingham. Miss Molyneux (Molyneau?) became Mrs. Seaney and Miss Clegg married Mr. Thomas Parkes, a former teacher at Green Lanes, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917. Mr. Parkes had signed up in late 1915 and had joined the Royal Engineers prior to his marriage. He later became a Captain.

As an oasis within all the turmoil, "Bunk" Jones continued, seemingly unaffected by events around him, to exasperate his Headmaster. Back in 1912, he taught his class that 3ft. sq. = 3 sq. ft. and, after several similar clangers, Mr. Simpson felt he must intervene "*as prevention is better than cure took the lesson myself. He ("Bunk" Jones) cannot be depended upon for anything*"<sup>1</sup>.

*\* Lord Derby was appointed Director-General of Recruiting on 11 October 1915. He brought forward a programme, five days later, often called the Derby Scheme although its official title was the Group Scheme, for raising the numbers. Men aged 18 to 40 were informed that under the scheme they could continue to enlist voluntarily or attest with an obligation to come if called up later.*

*The War Office notified the public that voluntary enlistment would soon cease and that the last day of registration would be 15 December 1915.*

In 1914, Allen Jones attempted to unravel the mysteries of fractions by dividing 238 apples into quarters and, with assistance from the class, came up with the answer of 59 quarters and two apples left over! Mr. Simpson's comment was "*No reliance can be placed on this teacher for any subject.*"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jones surpassed himself with another gem in February 1917, when he wrote on the blackboard that the Upper Avon was so called because it "*flowed through the hilly and high country of Warwick*" but that it became the lower Avon on flowing through the low and flat district past Bristol. "*This distinguishes them from the Salisbury Avon*". The Headmaster was short and to the point – "*He (Mr. Jones) is altogether incapable.*"<sup>1</sup>

A rare sense of humour was displayed by Mr. Simpson in the log book on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1917, when he recorded "*during the week the school nurse has conducted a hair raid*"<sup>1</sup>! It was an interesting week in another way, as the school was visited by two old boys – H. Tombs, who had served on H.M.S. Benbow in the Falkland Island fight and then the Battle of Jutland, and R. Benwell, who had recovered from being gassed at Ypres. Their tales were listened to with great enthusiasm by a group of boys eager to know what the war was really like.

The boys were given a holiday in early October 1917 to assist in potato picking and the Chestnut Harvest, although the weather was rather poor. This occupation of helping at harvest time was the subject of attention by the School Attendance Officer, Noah Batchelor, in the following year.

He visited a potato field at Stonehouse Farm, Boldmere during school time and discovered, amongst others, 12 boys from the School picking potatoes. After pointing out to the owner, Mr. Fellows, that this was illegal, the boys were stopped, sent home and told to report back to school that afternoon.

Mr. Pemberton took it upon himself to assist his budding craftsmen to enter competitions organized by such periodicals as "The Boys' Practical Aid". Such was their success, that, in one national competition, the School won the first three prizes. Mr. Simpson also recorded the departure of a Mr. Bowen who had been on the staff for one year. His inability to obtain suitable accommodation in Sutton, was a reason for his applications to secure a post with another authority. He left to become Headmaster of Eardisley County School near Hereford.

The 1000<sup>th</sup> War Savings Certificate was purchased in February 1918, to be followed shortly after by fund-raising activities as part of Aeroplane Week. During this, members of the War Savings Association were taken by Mr. Simpson to the Boldmere Parish Room for a lantern lecture entitled "*War on Land*". The Vicar kindly acted as lanternist and the Headmaster was the reader.

The school closed in March so that the staff could go to the Council House to alleviate the workload imposed by the issuing of Ration Cards. The teachers of both the Boys and the Infants Schools were called upon again in July to help the Food Department out of their difficulties.

Society today expresses its concern at the antisocial activities of a minority of the young people and a scheme, launched in 1918, shows that this was just as much a problem in those days. The Curate of Emmanuel Church took scripture lessons with the eldest scholars in an attempt "*to stem the tide of juvenile criminality in the Borough.*"<sup>1</sup> Whether he achieved any success is not mentioned.

As the end of the war neared, Mr. Townshend and Mr. Parkes returned on leave and were able to recount their battlefield experiences to the boys. Mr. Parkes, as a member of the Royal Engineers Special Company gave them an insight into the unpleasantness of war when he spoke on "*the manipulation of gas on the battle-field*".

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, Mr. Simpson was at the Office discussing with Mr. Ellison, the Deputy Town Clerk, the number of children absent from school with influenza. During their meeting, the two were informed that the first gun had been fired signalling the signing of the Armistice and with it the end of the First World War. Without delay, Mr. Simpson hastened back to Green Lanes, assembled the boys and told them the good news.

After the National Anthem song, the boys cheered lustily for the army and navy. A former pupil remembered the great excitement of the usually severe Mrs. Parkes as she rushed about the rooms getting the boys out on the playground, revealing her true feelings now that it was all over.

A celebration was held on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1919, when the boys went to Town Gate to be presented with a victory medal of aluminium and a folder of tickets. These were for use on the nearby fairground, followed by tea in the old Crystal Palace, adjacent to Sutton Park.

Other signs that the War was over, came as old faces returned. In January 1919, Mr. Townshend resumed his duties *“either until the Local Education Authority offers him a reasonable remuneration or until he is successful in obtaining a situation under an authority that remunerates their teachers more favourably”*<sup>1</sup>. (He subsequently gained a post at Holy Trinity School in Bordesley, where he had once been a pupil teacher).

Mr. Breeze, too, returned in March 1919 but stayed only until October, when he left to become a student at St Catherine’s College, Cambridge as part of a scheme entitled *“The Higher Education of Ex-Service Men.”*

Swimming lessons recommenced in June and took place from 3-4 o’clock each Thursday at Keepers Pool and the first session attracted 97 boys, nearly 40% of the total on register.

A local decorator, T. Haynes, placed a tender of £116 for the redecoration of the exterior of the school. This was undertaken during the summer holidays and Mr. Simpson was so pleased with the result, that he commented *“The School looks now as though it belongs to an Education Authority”*<sup>1</sup>.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said about the interior and, in 1920, the Inspector noted *“The rooms have not been repainted or distempered since the school was reconstructed in 1911 and the bare walls of the Classrooms are now much disfigured and cheerless. There are no pictures on walls of the classrooms”*<sup>19</sup>. He requested that the Committee inform him what steps will be taken to remedy the defects. The cost of the work, which included some repairs, was put at £140.

Miss Wright, a member of the local Anstey College for Physical Education, visited the school in 1921 to finalise details for students to take classes for Physical exercises. Later that year, permission was given for boys to leave school at 3.05 one evening each week to participate in Games.

The invitation of the Erdington Schools Cricket Section to join their Association was the stimulus for the formation of a cricket team to represent the school and was greeted with great excitement by the boys.

It was to be the start of a period of unparalleled success in all forms of sport which lasted well into the next decade.

Boys in the highest standards were able to visit the Picture House in Sutton in June 1921 to see the "Duke of Connaught's Visit to India", together with highlights of the visit by the Prince of Wales to the Duchy of Cornwall and the State Visit of the Japanese Crown Prince to this country.

1921 was an unusual year to Mr. Simpson. In February, he completed 30 years' service at the school and celebrated by closing the School early and taking the boys to see the British Industries Fair at Castle Bromwich.

In contrast to this, in July he was served with a summons. It was alleged that he had assaulted and beaten one of the boys but, after his appearance in court, the case was dismissed. The magistrates remarked that "*Mr. Simpson has strictly done his duty*"<sup>1</sup>.

During the year, the Authority decided to wire the School for electric lighting, the work being carried out by the local Electricity Department at a cost of £62-10-0. The Headmaster noted "*The Electric Light has superseded the gas system and its installation should prove advantageous*"<sup>2</sup>. Long winter afternoons would now be much brighter and no longer would art lessons need to be taken earlier in the day to gain sufficient light. In the 1980s there were still some of the old gas lighting brackets around school, reminders of how the school had been lit for so many years.

The first Log Book, begun by James Cramp in 1874, received its final entry in July and, in the new book, commenced in September 1921, Mr. Simpson began with a brief resume of his predecessors. His knowledge of those days was enhanced by the arrival, in December, of a former pupil aged 83 years. He had attended the original school in the 1840s and the two of them spent an enjoyable time immersing themselves in the reminiscences.

As the Headmaster drew nearer to his retirement, he allowed himself the occasional indulgence as was shown by an entry in January 1922. He wrote – *“Weather still hard and attendances still very bad - I have never before experienced such a fortnight of wretched attendances. The children seem weaker, or more pampered, than they were, who attended the old school”*<sup>2</sup>.

He did add that the reason for the increased absences was thought to be *“that the stamina of the children has been affected by the privations due to the War”*<sup>2</sup>.

The memories of the earlier pupils were a great help in showing what school life was like in the 1920s. The day would begin with a whistle, after which the boys would line up in ranks to march into school to the hall. Following assembly, monitors for each class would be announced and, having been presented with their MONITOR badge, they would then lead their class into the classroom.

During the day, the monitors would assist teachers by doing a variety of tasks, including filling the ink wells from a stone jar, running messages, distributing and collecting books and materials.

Over the years, some alterations had been made to the curriculum. Lessons included the 3Rs, of course, and there were also Arts, Woodwork, Nature Study, History, Geography, Singing, Physical Education and Swimming subjects.

The desks altered little, being double ones with attached seats. Discipline was much stricter and the boys knew the penalty for erring. Nevertheless, most would agree that it was a happy school, much respected by local rivals in the sporting encounters - football, cricket and swimming, in particular.

In the first year that it joined the Erdington League, the School Football team won the Championship, to the delight of all. In 1923, after an undefeated season in which they scored 66 goals and conceded only 7, the team won the League Shield, a Knockout Competition and a Challenge Shield.



Mr. Pemberton and Mr. Simpson with a class of 1920



Mr. Hughes, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Clinton with the 1922-23 Football Team

Competitive spirit was to be found in playground games, too, including marbles, tops, five-stones, top-cat and spinning hoops (This was often the remains of an old cycle wheel rim, propelled by the 18" length of dowel rod.) "Cap it" was a popular break time activity. One boy would form a leapfrog back and, as each lad jumped over, he left his cap on the "back". It is remarkable how much the boys were prepared to put back into the school in so many ways. This ranged from selling their entire allocation of Armistice Day poppies to raising money to buy a leather travelling bag, butter dish and silver knife to present to the fearsome Mrs. Parkes (nee Clegg) who left the school in April 1922 after 15 years' service. The boys would also take it upon themselves to organise end of term concerts at Christmas and these were invariably boisterous and joyous occasions.

Mrs. Simpson retired in September 1923. She had been a member of the staff since 26<sup>th</sup> October 1896, but now her age was beginning to catch her up. At an emotional ceremony organized by the staff, she was presented with a lady's silk lined leather Travelling Case – "*a very useful article and handsome*"<sup>2</sup> - said Mr. Simpson.

In another entry, the Headmaster recorded the adventure of one 9-year-old pupil. On his way to School he had jumped from a moving train, fallen on the platform at Chester Road Station and seriously injured himself. Despite this, he picked himself up, walked to school and lined up in the playground before going into class. It was only after Prayers, that Mr. Simpson noticed that he seemed unwell and he decided to send the boy home in a taxi under the care of Mr. Clinton. After examination by the doctor, he was diagnosed as having "*injury to the tissue of brain*"<sup>2</sup>. It was expected to be at least six months before he regained his normality!

Mr. Simpson had by now decided to retire and, in November 1923, he received his final visit from His Majesty's Inspector, Mr. E. H. Carter. The Inspector found that the school was run on "*common-sense lines*"<sup>2</sup> and it had a good record for sound work. The number of boys attending the school had, however, diminished from 313 in 1916 to a present average of 187 and this meant that some of the rooms were not in use. There were areas which, in his opinion, could be improved but he commented on the neat and careful writing and drawing and was impressed by the singing in one class. It was quite a satisfactory final Report.



At their meeting, in January 1924, the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee accepted, with regret, the resignation of Mr. Simpson with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March. The position was advertised and, in February, a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, the Mayor and Councillors Willmott and Terry met to consider Mr. Simpson's replacement. The Education Committee resolved, after discussing the applicants, that –

*“Mr. William Islwyn Prothero be appointed Headmaster of the Green Lanes Boys’ School from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1924 at a salary according to Scale and Subject to 3 months notice on either side of terminating the engagement”*<sup>19</sup>.

To the Headmaster, the days must have passed quickly as retirement approached. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1924, representatives of the Sutton Teachers presented Mr. Simpson with a solid silver salver *“artistically made in the form of a Tudor Rose and an illuminated address on his retirement from his position as teacher representative on the Education Committee for the last 21 years”*<sup>33</sup>. The salver was a sincere token of the esteem in which his colleagues held him.

On the next day, Mr. Simpson attended his last Education Committee meeting where many tributes were paid to him. In reply, Mr. Simpson thanked them for all the consideration and kindness with which he had been received by the Committee and the way he had been able to play a full and meaningful role in it as a representative of the Sutton Coldfield branch of the National Union of Teachers. He concluded his remarks with the hope that his successor would be similarly treated. This, he was assured by the Chairman, would most certainly be the case. Finally, *“the whole of the Committee wished him very much happiness in the term of rest lay before him”*<sup>19</sup>.

Mr. Simpson's final day as Headmaster of the Green Lanes Boys' School was an emotional time, as well as being an historic occasion for all those present - staff, pupils and guests, together with Mr. and Mrs. Simpson. Alfred Simpson had steered the school through 33 long years, seeing it change from a 19<sup>th</sup> century village charity school into a large, modern, Elementary School in the post Great War period.

From running the institution with the assistance of pupil teachers, he left it with a staff of 5. When he first came to the school there were 67 boys and, when he departed, there were 216 boys on the register (in 1914, the numbers stood at 326).

He had known difficult, sad times but there had also been many happy and enjoyable occasions. All those who encountered him, grew to love and respect him. He had personality, drive, sincerity and a steadfast belief in all he did. His departure was the end of an era, a proud period in the story of the school.

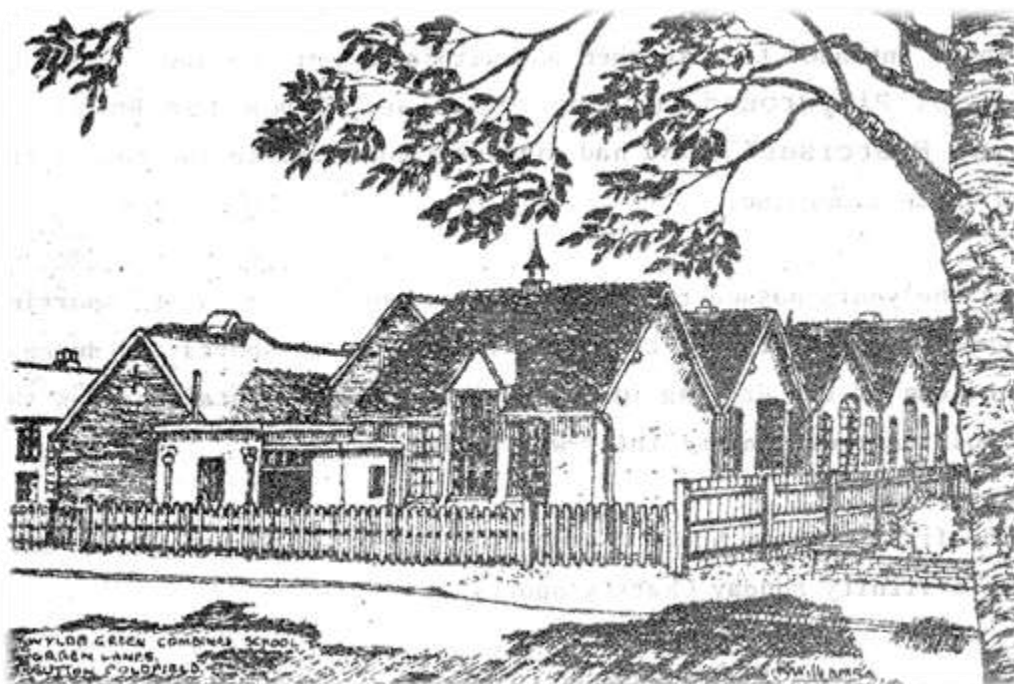
His last entry in the School Log Book helps to draw his time as Headmaster to an appropriate end –

*“March 31<sup>st</sup>. 1924. This afternoon Mr. Ellison, on behalf of the scholars & staff, presented the retiring Headmaster with a beautiful and valuable gold and platinum watch chain, handsome walking stick, and album, containing the names of subscribers and sketches by scholars.*

*In addition to the scholars at present on the register, representatives of the old scholars also representatives of the Teachers who have left, were present.*

*Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>. March 1891 – March 31<sup>st</sup>. 1924 Monday”<sup>2</sup>.*

On leaving the School, Mr. Simpson and his family continued to live in their house in Chester Road until 1931.



## Chapter V Mr. William I. Prothero 1924 to 1938

William Islwyn Prothero, appointed in February 1924, was to be the last Headmaster and, like his predecessor, his personality and character were to be a dominant feature in establishing the type of school his pupils would attend.

He was born on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1888 in Mynyddyslwyn, Monmouthshire to a farmer, Henry and his wife, Margaret. By 1901 he was a School Board Teacher and still lived with his parents, 10 years later, working in an Elementary Council School.

It was stated that he received training in the early war years, 1914-16, but his teaching career then paused as he entered the Royal Flying Corps. The National Archives show that he became a 2nd Lieutenant during his period of service which was from 1914-1922 which is slightly at odds with notes from the school log book.

His first teaching appointment after demobilisation came when he commenced duties at Arden Road School in Saltley. During his time at Green Lanes he lived in Roughley, Sutton Coldfield, at a house called Brynawelan in Weeford Road.

On his first day, he set down the existing organisation of the classes –

<i>“Std. VIII &amp; VII</i>	<i>23 &amp; 27 myself, with Mr. Morgan (student teacher)</i>
<i>Std. VI &amp; V</i>	<i>47 Mr. Clinton</i>
<i>Std. IV</i>	<i>41 Mr. Hughes</i>
<i>Std. III</i>	<i>44 Miss Devis</i>
<i>Std. II</i>	<i>42 Mr. Jones.”</i> <sup>2</sup>

It was not long before the boys realized the direction in which Mr. Prothero intended to take them and, within a month, he *had “Marked out School Playground for the organised Games for Physical Training Exercises”* <sup>2</sup> and had wire netting fixed to the top of the boarded fence alongside.

As the years passed, the reputation of the School in its sporting achievements was to grow spectacularly. His love of sports and success was to be one of the driving forces behind the fundamental changes that the school underwent in the inter-war period.

The first of many honours came from the entry of the school into the Town's Trinity Monday Charity Sports.

*"440 yds Boys (10-16 Open)        1st. A. Beacham  
    2nd. J. Whodcoat*

*Schools Challenge Cup Relay Race – 1st. Green Lane Boys  
    2nd. Hill Boys*

*Schools Challenge Cup Tug of War - 1st. Green Lane Boys  
    2nd. Hill Boys."*<sup>2</sup>

The Headmaster considered the results splendid, particularly as these were the only events entered by the School and was followed, in July, by a Runners-up position in the Inter Schools Sports of the Erdington District. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, 55 boys and members of staff had a very enjoyable and innovative day when they *"journeyed to Wembley in a reserved corridor coach, leaving Chester Road at 7.50 am & reaching Wembley at 11 am.... The behaviour of the boys was splendid"*<sup>2</sup>. This was the first of several trips which Mr. Prothero sought to encourage, as a means of broadening the boys' experiences.

During the Autumn Term, the patience of the Headmaster was tried when the Medical Officer informed him that three boys were to be excluded from school for Ocular Treatment. The reason for this turned out to be that they had not paid for their glasses and Mr. Prothero could not accept this as being sufficient reason for their exclusion.

One old scholar, William George "Pat" Gavin, visited Green Lanes in November 1924 and, before an audience of boys from Standards V to VIII, he described *"in a very lucid and interesting manner his experiences while on an Icelandic Fishing Voyage during last Midsummer Holiday. Boys keenly interested and thoroughly enjoyed his recital."*<sup>2</sup>

No doubt Mr. Gavin (who later owned a highly-regarded shop, dealing in beautifully crafted furniture made by himself, in Birmingham Road, Wylde Green) felt much pleasure in returning to his former school which he held in great esteem.

A request by the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee led to a visit by Councillor Brassington to observe the difficulties of keeping the teachers' room adequately heated.

During his inspection, he commented adversely on the lavatory being in the Teachers' Room, for, in his opinion, this "*was a very bad arrangement and most insanitary, a cheerless and uninviting room*"<sup>2</sup>. His feelings impressed his colleagues on the Committee and, in February 1925, an electric radiator was installed at a cost of £4-15-6.

In the same month, a Police Constable called at the school and complained that there was an excessive emission of smoke from the Heating Chamber. Mr. Prothero believed that there was no justification for this, smoke being due to a recent stoking of the furnace, and any smoke which was to be seen was gone within a short time of the visit.

The fresh stoking was certainly needed as the classroom temperatures at 1.50 p.m. on that day were between 48° in classes VII & VIII to 52° in the remaining rooms – bitterly cold for all of them.

Changes in the running of the school were vigorously pursued by Mr. Prothero and one of the classrooms was used for the teaching of science, while the Manual Craft Centre was still a very important part of the School curriculum. Visits continued and Mr. Clinton took a party of 28 boys on an instructive outing to the printing works of Messrs Saxton in Erdington. (October 1925)

Early in the year, the H.M.I. Report was received and the Inspector, Mr. Carter, noted that the work and organisation was being developed on sound lines. Schemes of work have been prepared and examinations were very thorough.

The School Library was being improved and a reference library was being established for the staff to use. Mr. Carter could not avoid a comment on the progress made in Physical Exercises. "*These are thoroughly up-to-date and are appreciated by the boys, who enter into them with real vigour and zest*"<sup>19</sup>.

Twelve years after Mr Pemberton had open the Manual Craft Centre he was still in charge, and, despite giving his craftsmen some uncomfortable moments occasionally when they misbehaved, his efforts were greatly appreciated. In recognition of this, the boys and staff made a special presentation to him of a handsome pipe in 1927, *“for the valuable help he has always given in making and repairing sports equipment, Science apparatus, Schools Honours Board & picture frames etc.”*<sup>2</sup>

This was similar to a ceremony held two years previously for Mr. Hughes when he was given a case of two pipes as an appreciation up all he had done for the boys in Cricket, Football and Sports.

Mr. Hughes was described as *“a tall, lean, very pale and cadaverous looking man”*<sup>51</sup> who had joined the staff in December 1907. He was known to be a patient man until provoked and then, in his anger, occasionally used a cane with such force on a boy that it broke.

His colleague, Mr. Henry Leigh Clinton, had been born in Wolverhampton in 1891 and it was recorded that he received his training at Dudley Day College between 1912 and 1914. The 1911 Census states that he was already a School Teacher.

He was remembered as being neatly dressed, quite often in black jacket and pinstriped trousers. He was not very tall and was easy to recognise with his bald head. Urged on by Mr. Prothero, he played an active part in the sporting successes of the school and he is to be seen on many old photographs. As he lived at Shenstone Lodge, Shenstone he could make use of the railway to travel to and from Green Lanes. (Shenstone Lodge was later converted into a residential special school.)

In charge of these long serving teachers, including Mr. Jones, and others, such as Mr. Haywood who spent a shorter period at the School, was the tall, powerfully built Mr. Prothero. The stories of this Headmaster are many and the memories of his former pupils enabled the author to recall the image he presented to those who were taught by him. (I was particularly grateful to the late Douglas V Jones, a local historian and a former pupil, for being allowed to draw on extracts from books written by himself, recalling Mr. Prothero and his personal memories of the School.)

'The Gaffer', as the Headmaster was known, was a man to be respected and would move around the school in crêpe soled shoes ready to pounce on any boy who deviated from the expected behaviour pattern. Arithmetic and sports were the foundation stones on which he planned to build the education of each of his charges.

All the boys were expected to play their part in the sporting life of the School, whether it was in ball games, athletics or swimming.

His alert eye and his dexterity with the cane were often in evidence, and anyone caught by his guile in disarming suspects before extracting their confession could expect swift punishment.

Yet even 'Gaffer' Prothero could err and thereby show a human side. One day, while taking the boys to Sutton, he turned around to tell off some boys who were not looking where they were walking and promptly collided with a tree himself.

On another occasion, he lost his sense of decorum and dashed around the school ordering the boys to witness a sight they would never forget. There, over their heads, was the huge R101 airship, lit by the sun as it drifted across the sky on a test flight.

The sporting successes of the school made the majority of the pupils proud to belong to Green Lanes. Results which had been proudly recorded by Mr Simpson in the twilight years of his career were rapidly superseded in the latter part of the 1920s. After he had marked out the playground, Mr. Prothero approached the committee and was successful in obtaining a grant of £10 for purchasing items of sports equipment.

In June 1925, the Tug of War team, which used to practice in Sutton Park near Boldmere Gate, won the Challenge Cup for the second successive year and, in the following month, the school held its first Annual Sports using the playground.

Events were to include less serious items such as Pillow Fights, Blindfold Boxing and Obstacle Races. Later in the year, the school ran two football teams which, in their opening fixture against St. Thomas, resoundingly beat them 6-1 and 6-0.

The boys who went swimming now attended Erdington Baths on Friday afternoons where they received instruction. The charge of 1d per boy a visit was met by the Committee. On 28<sup>th</sup> September 1925, although unsuccessful in two other events, they succeeded in winning the Senior Championship Event in the Erdington Swimming Section Sports.

The names of the boys who participated in teams during these years would always be remembered by their peers, many of whom hero worshipped the players. Frank Langley, a swimming Captain and champion swimmer; Vic Palfrey, a footballer who later played for Wolverhampton Wanderers and Nottingham Forest; Vic Blake and Harold Spencer, who had trials for Aston Villa.

These are just a few of those who achieved later success after representing their school in the interwar period. They stand proudly in the many photographs taken during this time, wearing their green jerseys with white collars and cuffs, completed by a gold badge. It is not difficult to visualise them reliving “battles” against their local rivals such as Ryland Road, Paget and Moor End Schools.

One of the more interesting incidents to occur was the fate of a full Corporation refuse wagon which had been parked overnight in the school playground. When Mr. Prothero arrived the following morning, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1925, he found that it had subsided into the main sewer having broken through the inspection cover. Embarrassed officials apologised as they struggled to remove the vehicle from its resting place, overseen by the Headmaster. (A similar incident occurred in the early 1980s when a refuse wagon drove over wooden rail sleepers that covered the former WW2 air road shelter entrance in the playground and broke through them.)

The difficulties which his predecessor experienced with “Bunk” Jones soon became a problem which Mr Prothero sought to resolve. In the Log Book on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1926, the Headmaster wrote “.... *I have spoken to Mr. Jones repeatedly concerning the unsatisfactory work and discipline, but he ignores all reprimands and suggestion...*”<sup>2</sup> Shortly after this, he communicated his opinions to the Education Committee and they decided to send a copy of the letter to Mr Jones for his observations.





A Swimming Team from the 1920s



The 1927 Athletics Team

## SCHOOLS SWIMMING.

### Green Lane Boys Sweep The Board.

JULY 18th. 1931

### KEEN RIVALRY.

The Erdington Elementary Schools Athletic Association held their fourth annual gala at Mason Road baths on Friday, and there was keen rivalry between the various schools for the championship cups, presented by Dr. Featherstone and Mr. W. J. Davis.

Green Lanes had a very successful evening for they secured 16 points out of a possible 16. In the girls' school events, Paget Road and Sir Josiah Mason's tied for first place with eight points each. Mr. F. T. Grainger presided and the prizes were presented by the president of the Association (Councillor R. R. Gelling).

#### Results.

The following were the results (schools being allocated the following letters: R, Ryland Road; O, Osborne Road; M, Moor End Lane; S, Slade Road; C, Church of England; H, Hastings Road; T, St. Thomas; G, Green Lanes; P, Paget Road; F, Fentham Road; J, Josiah Mason's; B, Birches Green):—

Two widths, boys under 11: 1 J. Loat (G.)

Boys' novelty race: 1 O. Trigg (C.), 2 —, Norris (R.)

Girls' novelty: 1 J. Grant (J.), 2 N. Leitch (H.)

Girls' diving: 1 B. Kelly (C.), 2 E. Mills (P.), 3 D. Oldroyd (J.)

Boys' diving: 1 F. Langley (G.), 2 L. Edmonds (C.), 3 R. Clay (T.)

Two widths, girls under 11: 1 B. Goodfellow (H.), 2 R. Cattell (P.)

Two lengths, girls: 1 B. Kelly (C.), 2 E. Mills (P.), 3 A. Turnock (F.)

Two lengths, boys: 1 F. Langley (G.), 2 N. Isaac (T.), 3 —, Warren (S.)

One length, girls under 12: 1 B. Smith (J.), 2 J. Talbot (R.), 3 E. Holt (M.)

One length, boys under 12: 1 W. Lewis (G.), 2 A. Hartwell (C.), 3 M. Workman (T.)

Old boys' race: 1 E. Curtis (G.), 2 F. Satchwell.

Girls, novices: 1 D. Dixon (F.), 2 B. Smith (J.), 3 J. Talbot (R.)

Boys, novices: 1 W. Lunn (G.), 2 L. Price (P.)

Relay race, girls: 1 Paget Road, 2 Fentham Road, 3 Sir Josiah Mason's Orphanage, 4 Moor End Lane.

Relay race, boys: 1 Green Lanes, 2 Slade Road, 3 Moor End Lane, 4 Ryland Road.

Old girls' race: F. Chinn (F.), M. Norris (C.)

#### The Officials.

The officials were: Chairman, Mr. F. T. Grainger; judges, Mr. A. Walker and Mr. P. Sutton; warters, Mr. Leon H. Johnson and Mr. J. A. Simpson; stewards, Misses Warner, Brockas, Eaton, Lewis, Harrison, Redgate, and Whitworth, Messrs. Prothero, Hughes, Brown, Hector, Cornforth, Barker, Lockie, Merwich, Sutton, McDonnell, Stoppard, King, Jones, Clinton, Airdrie, Harrington, Mackin, Fox and Bishop; chairman of swimming section, Mr. J. Oldroyd; hon. joint secretaries, Miss Cartwright and Mr. M. L. Taylor.

## GREEN LANES SCHOOL

### Sports Attract Record Entry.

### BIG ATTENDANCE.

The seventh annual sports of Green Lanes School, Wyld Green, on Saturday showed a marked advance on all previous years. There were more scholars taking part, there was a bigger and more representative gathering of onlookers, and the standard reached in the various events was equal to that of previous years.

For the first time this year the sports were held on the ground of the Erdington Hockey Club in Beech Hill Road instead of at Boldmere, as in previous years. The staff of the school were to be congratulated on the expeditious manner in which an ambitious programme was carried through.

#### Mayor Present.

Among those present during the afternoon were the Mayor and Mayoress of Sutton Coldfield (Councillor and Mrs. J. A. Oldbury), Alderman G. F. Pearson, W. T. Harrison and T. H. Cartwright, Councillors E. G. Harcourt, J. Busby, W. Moss, J. J. Ogley and W. Cobb, Mr. H. J. Thomas, Canon E. W. Brown (vicar of Boldmere), Rev. W. Matthews (Emmanuel Church), Mr. Thomas Ellison (formerly deputy Town Clerk of Sutton), and Mr. A. J. Simpson (a former headmaster of the school).

Refreshments were served by the following ladies:—Miss W. Davis, Miss H. Davis, Mesdames Walker, Wilson, Chapman, Norgrave, Haines, Rubery, Mynest, and R. Wood.

The excellent organisation of the sports and the general efficiency of the school were commented upon by the Mayor at the close of the sports, when both the athletic and swimming prizes were presented by the Mayoress.

The headmaster (Mr. W. I. Prothero), in returning thanks to the Mayor, also voiced his appreciation of the assistance given them by Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, Messrs. Cox, Whodcoat and Taylor, and Messrs. G. Stephens in equipping the field, and to the Erdington Hockey Club.

The officials for the sports were:—Referee: Mr. H. Taylor. Judges: Mr. J. R. Oldroyd, Mr. W. G. Estevan, and Mr. W. F. Bishop.

#### The Results.

The results were:—One Lap (senior):—1 G. Spencer, 2 W. Meddings, 3 E. Palfrey.

Throwing the Cricket Ball (senior):—1 A. Cottrell, 2 B. Palfrey, 3 G. Spencer.

Football Race (ages 8-10):—1 D. Brangington, 2 T. Page, 3 A. Gilbert.

Back Race (20-25):—1 W. Chandler, 2 K. Phillips, 3 R. Hunter, 4 T. Dawson.

Senior High Jump:—1 Cottrell and Palfrey (tie), 2 Spencer. Height 4ft. 2in.

50 Yards Hurdle Race (8-10):—1 W. Groom, 2 D. Brangington, 3 Hockinson, 4 D. Timmins.

100 Yards Senior Championship:—1 G. Spencer, 2 A. Cottrell, 3 B. Palfrey.

Back Race (8-10):—1 W. Wells, 2 W. Wilson, 3 V. Nargent.

Back Race (senior):—1 W. Meddings, 2 B. Warren, 3 R. Jones, 4 D. Phelps.

100 Yards (10-12) Championship:—1 J. Jones, 2 I. Painter, 3 J. Johnson.

Senior House Relay:—1 Yellow House, 2 Blue, 3 Green.

OCTOBER 10th. 1931

## THE SUTTON COLDFIELD

### NEWS FREQUENTLY

### CARRIED REPORTS OF SPORTING SUCCESSES

### AT GREEN LANES

### DURING THE 1920's

### AND 30's.

Not unexpectedly, “Bunk” Jones rose to the occasion and continued in the manner to which his willing pupils were accustomed. It was therefore not surprising, that in the following May, matters once more rose to a head. It seems that Mr. Jones had drawn a diagram on the blackboard to show the method of finding the volume of a rectangular prism. Of course, when questioned by Mr. Prothero, it became apparent that the teacher had no idea how to find the answer.

After an exchange of words, Mr. Jones left school during the afternoon break, without permission, leaving behind an irate Headmaster to puzzle how best to solve the situation.

The Education Committee would receive letters on a variety of matters from Mr. Prothero in which he sought to put forward ideas, seek approval for action or acquaint them with the continuing successes of the sports teams. He suggested that they should consider the Exhibiting of Scholars’ Work (which was turned down by the Head Teachers’ Association) and Open Days at the School for parents to visit, this idea being approved by the Committee.

In June 1926, in reply to another of his letters, Mr. Prothero received a congratulatory message from the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee expressing their pleasure on hearing that Green Lanes had won the Erdington Schools Athletic Association Championship Competition.

Later in the year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sports were held in the field loaned to the School for the occasion. There were 13 events, which attracted 340 entries, as well as *“Musical Chairs, Fathers’, Mothers’, Sisters’, Infants Races, Old Boys’ Tug and 100yds. Scratch, Inter Class Tug and Relay”*<sup>2</sup>. Over 500 people attended and, despite poor weather, thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The School and the Headmaster, like so many in the country, could not escape the effects of the unrest and General Strike of 1926. Mr Prothero took the afternoon off on May 6<sup>th</sup>, to take his daughter to the Children’s Hospital. He found his journey difficult because of the disorganised traffic conditions.

In the following month, he stated that there had been no swimming since April, there being no coal to heat the baths.

Throughout this period, the boys were constantly reminded of the pride felt by the teachers in the British Empire and, through lessons, speeches on Empire Day and other activities, they learnt to take part in a "*feeling of national greatness*"<sup>2</sup>. Thus, visits to the Empress Cinema to see "*India Today*" and to the Town Hall to watch a "*Masque of Empire*", performed by pupils belonging to a local private school, helped to inculcate these ideas within the boys. Unfortunately for them, the play was spoilt by being seated at the back of the Hall and they could hear very little clearly.

In order that he could initiate a library, Mr. Prothero approached the Education Committee, in late 1927, to request assistance in the form of a grant. After due consideration, a total of £50 was allocated for all the schools and Green Lanes received £7. Adding this sum to the £14 which had been raised at the Sports Day, enabled Mr Prothero to commence the lending library and the first books were ordered in February 1928.

When a severe gale in that month blew down the covered playground shelter and took a ventilator off the roof of one of the classrooms, little of the timber could be salvaged and local builders, G. T. Stephens, replaced the shelter at a cost of £44-12-0. At about the same time, other repair work was implemented and, for £210, the school was painted, walls were repaired and snow boards were replaced.

One of the classrooms was fitted with a hopper window into the hall to improve ventilation, but the decision to extend the scheme to other rooms, was delayed until its effectiveness has been ascertained.

The football team won the Erdington Schools Football Challenge Shield in March 1928 and that they were rewarded with new jerseys and shirts, purchased with money from the Annual Sports Fund.

1929 was a year of continuing sporting achievements and, in retaining the Challenge Shield, they equalled the School's performance of 1922 to 1924. These were the season's results –

	Played	Won	Lost	Drawn	Goals For	Goals Against
1 <sup>st</sup> XI	16	13	2	1	68	31
2 <sup>nd</sup> XI	16	13	1	1	105	19

In June, Mr. Prothero wrote that the school had played its final cricket match having won four and lost four – *as usual the batting was weak, while bowling and fielding were exceptionally good*".<sup>2</sup> The Annual Schools Swimming Competition held in Sutton Pool on 30<sup>th</sup> July led to Green Lanes winning the cup for the third successive year. (They were to win it again in 1930.)

The year's swimming achievements received a further accolade when they were minuted in full in the Education Committee Minutes for October. They were "*pleased to be able to congratulate the Staff and Scholars of that (Green Lanes) School on the successes gained in the various Swimming Competitions in the District which, amongst others include –*

*18 silver medals for boys swimming ½ a mile awarded by the Erdington Elementary Schools Swimming Association (this compares with Slade Road 12 Orphanage 11 Ryland Road 7 Moor End Lane 3 Osborne Road 1.)*

*17 nine lengths Certificates awarded by the Birmingham Elementary Schools Athletic Association to Boys swimming 300 yds.*

*32 one length Certificates awarded by the Erdington Schools Sw. Ass.*

*One boy (E. Curtis) won the three lengths championship of the Birmingham Elementary Schools.*

*The Sutton Schools Championship Cup.*

*The three lengths Championship Birmingham Schools."*<sup>20</sup>

What Mr. Prothero could not know was that the Committee members, even as they were congratulating him on these achievements, were taking the first steps towards closing the school, as part of their deliberations on the reorganisation of the Borough's schools.

Surrounded today by IT ranging from whiteboards to tablets, it is difficult for pupils to imagine a time when items such as the radio were being introduced into the School for the first ever time. This happened in 1930, when the Headmaster requested permission to purchase a *“Wireless Installation”* for the Boys’ School.

Initially, the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee acceded to the approach, but put their recommendation to the full Education Committee meeting held on February. These gentlemen noted that payment would be required *“for the cost of wiring in the first instance and the small amount of current consumed”*.<sup>20</sup> Further, it was considered that *“the Lectures in such Subjects as Geography and History would be of considerable educational value”*.<sup>20</sup>

Although the wireless set was installed in March 1930, there seems to have been some teething difficulties and it was not until May that Mr. Prothero could write –

*“The School Wireless Set now functioning – School commenced listening to Monday afternoon’s B.B.C. Talks to Schools.*

VI VIII *Listening to the Transport Talks.*

IV V *Listening to the History Talks.*

II III *Listening to the Literature Talks, while on*

*Friday afternoons VI & VII will listen to the Geography talks....”*

*The School Wireless Set has been purchased with the proceeds from last year’s School Sports. It is the B.B.C. School’s design and was built by Mr. Clinton. It is hoped to increase the number of Loud Speakers from the present One to Four when funds permit. This will obviate much changing rooms for the lectures.”<sup>2</sup>*

There were two other fine achievements in that year. In late March, the School’s Saving Association had saved a total of £500 in a four-year period. At a time of severe recession and unemployment, it was a magnificent sum. So, too, was the selection of Frank Langley for the Birmingham Elementary Schools Swimming Team at Victoria Road Baths in Aston 19<sup>th</sup> September. He represented the city against teams from Walsall, Wolverhampton and North Birmingham and was one of only four boys in the team.

Since reaching a low of 205 boys on the register in July 1923, (there had been 326 scholars in 1914) the numbers were gradually increasing and, in July 1930, there were 237 pupils with a 92% attendance record. The peak was reached in 1934 when 318 boys attended the school. Increases in the school population meant an increase in its teaching staff. Apart from the nucleus of long serving teachers, there were several appointments over the years which were for relatively short periods.

Some of these included –

Mr. R. Newman	September 1924 – December 1925
Mr. E. Hayward	May 1926 – May 1929
Mr. R. E. Airdrie	September 1924

and Mrs Prothero, the Headmaster's wife.

One of these, Mr Hayward, was a young teacher who let no doubt in the minds of the boys he taught of his feelings regarding the tragedy and loss of life caused by the Great War.

A new tradition commenced in 1931, with a visit to the Alexandra theatre in Birmingham to see the Pantomime, Cinderella. Over 160 boys and all the staff travelled by train in reserved coaches and their behaviour was "*exemplary*".<sup>2</sup> The next year, saw a visit to see Robinson Crusoe, travelling by Midland Red Bus and, in the following January, it was "*Little Red Riding Hood*". All these visits were well supported.

Each year, as boys left the school, some to further their education, others to seek employment, outstanding achievements were recorded on the Honours Boards on display in the Hall (there were also framed photographs of the various teams, as well as the cupboard containing the School Museum) and in the log book.

An entry on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1931 is of particular interest and showed that Mr Prothero had just "*received notification that Douglas Jones (a well-known local historian) has passed the entrance examination at Aston Commercial School*".

The Open Days suggested by Mr. Prothero in 1926 had now become established and the one held in 1932, introduced a new feature to exhibit to the parents. This was a *“Room of Home Made Models, which was a fine show indeed, the majority being Meccano. Much time and ingenuity had been spent in the construction of the Models.”*<sup>2</sup> The innovation was an excellent opportunity for the boys to display their skills and for parents to see the finished products.

Yet, perhaps, the greatest changes within the school during the year came in members of staff. Two new teachers joined – Mr. J. S. Coane, in charge of Standard III, and Mr. S. Fry who joined to cope with the increased numbers. The former teacher was a replacement for Mrs Winifred Devis, who resigned at the end of December 1931. She had served for 13 years and a presentation was made to her of a travelling rug, a token of esteem from the boys and staff, an event reported in the Sutton News.<sup>23</sup>

One year later, on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1932, the longest serving teacher followed Miss Devis into retirement. Allen “Bunk” Jones, who first joined the School in 1900, had dashed across the Sheffield Road Bridge for the final time. An uncertificated teacher, his mannerisms, his dress, his idiosyncrasies and his inadequacies as a teacher had served to delight his charges and dismay his superiors throughout his long service. Despite all the pressure brought to bear upon him, the little bearded Welshman never changed and the school lost a personality it would never replace. The Education Committee *“placed on record their appreciation of his loyal services”*.<sup>20</sup> The staff and boys collected a sum of money and with it purchased a suitably inscribed Westminster Chimes clock. Thus, it was, at the age of 59 years, that Allen Jones passed out of the school’s story and into retirement.

The replacement for Allen Jones arrived on January 9, 1933 – Mr. W. H. Harris, who transferred from Minworth Council School. He was a 42 year old teacher who lived in Erdington. Another long serving member of staff departed in April – Mr. Pemberton who had operated the Manual Centre across the road from the main building since it opened in 1915. The Derbyshire-born craft teacher did not move far. He became the full-time head of the Sutton Manual Centre, situated above Town School. The successor was a Mr. Jones who remained at Green Lanes for just two years.



One other change of staff occurred in 1933, due to the numbers at the school (305). The Education Committee considered that the headmaster and his six assistants were insufficient and Alexander Maddison was appointed in July of that year.

An opportunity arose for the School to make a permanent appreciation of the benefits and privileges which they had enjoyed over the years as members of the Erdington Schools Athletics Association. An appeal to the parents raised sufficient money to purchase two Challenge Shields – one for Junior Boys' and the other for Junior Girls' Competitions and these were presented to the Swimming section. In another triumphant year, Green Lanes won the Sutton Championship Cup and the Erdington Schools Percentage Swimmers' Shield which they shared with Hastings Road by teaching 41 boys to swim during the season.

These successes persuaded the Committee to allow the School to have two Sessions per week at the Erdington baths for swimming instruction. In the following year, Mr. Prothero compiled the table showing the progress which have been made in swimming during his Headmastership.

YEAR	NO. OF BOYS ATTENDING	HALF MILE SILVER MEDALS	TWO BREADTHS BRONZE MEDALS	NINE LENGTHS CERTIFICATES	ONE LENGTH CERTIFICATES
1926	30	None issued	9	9	11
1927	30	"	16	16	22
1928	30	22	14	17	13
1929	60	18	36	17	32
1930	60	13	21	16	20
1931	60	5	13	4	9
1932	60	11	30	12	34
1933	60	17	38	23	43
1934	60	25	64	25	45

The experiment with opening windows, conducted in 1928, may have been the deciding factor in the recommendation of the Committee to improve the unsatisfactory ventilation in 6 of the classrooms. At the cost to £24, new opening lights were fitted. Another item receiving additional expenditure was of benefit to the boys in a more academic way. The School obtained approval to purchase Science Apparatus costing £17-5-0. A new boiler was installed, together with the necessary lagging and an automatic damper regulator, for the estimated sum of £63 as the existing boiler was found to be quite inadequate.

In June 1934, Mr. Prothero was able to inform the Education Committee of the successes of 3 scholars who passed the Entrance Examination of King Edward's High School which, at that time, was situated in New Street, Birmingham. These lads were probably among those who watched a Lantern Lecture given by a Reverend J. D. Badger, who had served as a Missionary in New Guinea. Many parents joined the 250 boys who attended and a collection raised £3 for the Mission.

The School took part in the Jubilee Celebrations of 1935 to commemorate the 25-year reign of George V and, at 1.30 p.m. on May 6<sup>th</sup>., the boys assembled at Boldmere Gate. Each one was given, in an envelope, a Jubilee Medal, Tea Tickets and two Amusement Tickets. Next, they marched to the Pageant site where they helped to form the letters G & M in conjunction with children from other schools. Unfortunately, there were some fainting casualties and even an epileptic fit caused by too much standing.

Nevertheless, Mr. Prothero wrote that they all had *"a splendid tea, tastefully laid out & with an abundance of dainty cakes, the best tea given to school children I have ever seen. Needless to say, they all did justice to it"*.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, they went to the Crystal Palace Amusement Grounds and many remained late into the evening for the Firework Display.

The boy who had suffered the epileptic fit "died", according to a rumour circulating amongst his classmates. Despite this, he managed to turn up to School, as usual, later in week!

Persuasion by Mr. Prothero meant that the Committee allowed the purchase of additional physical training apparatus. At the cost of £22, Green Lanes was provided with 6 Swedish Benches and a 5 section Vaulting Box. The members also decided to carry out a request from the H. M. Inspector and, to stop the storing of cycles in the cloakroom, they had installed racks under the playground shelter.

Sadly, the supremacy of the School in the Senior Championship events of the Erdington Swimming Association came to an end in 1935. A disqualification in the Team Race event meant that they were not even runners up, having been the winners for seven consecutive years. The Juniors did salvage some pride, winning their shield for the third year running.

# GREEN LANES BOYS' SCHOOL

"OPEN DAYS."

## EXHIBITIONS OF WORK

The interest taken by parents of scholars attending Green Lanes Boys' School, Wyde Green, was shown by their attendance at the school on Wednesday and Thursday, the annual "open days", when opportunity was afforded for them to inspect the buildings and to see the work that is being done.

Members of the Sutton Education Committee and Town Council were among the visitors, and there were many expressions of gratification at the high standard of the work, which represented many of the subjects in the curriculum. Work that was of exceptional merit were the drapery exhibits, plasticine modellings (in which there were some clever flower studies by the younger boys) and the handiwork and woodwork. In the singing, both junior and senior boys maintained good tone and balance, while in physical exercises, movements were carried out with a precision and rapidity which was alike pleasing to the onlookers and staff. The exhibition of work done by the boys at home was most praiseworthy.

On Thursday there were also "poised games" between present and past scholars.

The excellence of the work reflected the greatest credit on the headmaster (Mr. W. I. Prothero) and his staff.

### Activities Reviewed.

The headmaster reviewed to the visitors the various activities sponsored by the School, and referred to the many scholastic and sporting successes that had been gained during the past twelve months. He also referred to the excellent spirit which existed between the boys and members of the staff, and expressed the opinion that in view of the number of boys who would benefit from having secondary education it was necessary to increase the secondary school accommodation.

On Thursday evening the following swimming awards were presented:

Erdington Schools Cup:  
Erdington S. C. medals: Langley, Puffrey, G. Busby, Grace, Humphries, Lennox.

Boldmere Cup and medals: Langley, Busby. Silver medals: Puffrey, Phipps, Lennox, Humphries, Grace.

Bronze medals: Meddings, Barker, Panton, Burns, Warren, Johnson, Felton, Trevelyan, Lennox, Blandford Sparkes, Crabbe B. Puffrey.

One Length Certificates: Warren, Felton, Lennox, Blandford, Woodcock, Meddings, Sparkes, Painter.

100 yards Championship: (Birmingham) Birmingham Team medal.

March 19<sup>th</sup> 1932

Further reports taken from the Sutton Coldfield News and relating to Green Lanes Boys' School.

## GREEN LANES SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

Green Lanes School, Wyde Green, must surely be a source of great gratification to the powers that be in Sutton, for, quite apart from the number of scholarship successes gained by boys, there seems to be present in the school a praiseworthy spirit of esprit de corps.

Scholastically and in the realm of sport, the school has gained many distinctions. Successes have been gained by boys who have qualified to enter the Grammar School and a number of Birmingham schools, and other features during the past year were the annual sports, the Savings Association in which over £100 was saved last year, making a grand total of £700, a school wireless set, considerable prowess in swimming, and visits of social and educational value to a Birmingham pantomime and the British Industries Fair.

March 19<sup>th</sup> 1932

One member of the School contemplated retiring in 1935, after 30 years as caretaker, during which time she had kept the building in first rate condition. Just before Mrs. Ellis took retirement, she was asked again to continue until a replacement could be found. In appreciation of her long service, the staff and pupils presented her with a tea service.

At the same presentation, in December 1935, Mr. Maddison, who had been at the School for three years, was given on an oak bookcase, subscribed on behalf of the Boys and Teachers, a present to both himself and his future bride. After his marriage, he moved from Chester Road to Bretby Grove in Erdington.

When Mr. Fry left two months later, to take up an appointment in Kent, he received an inscribed silver cigarette box to take with him, a memory of the four years he had served at Green Lanes, his first post since completing his training at Exeter.

Later in the year, the boys were encouraged to collect parcels of suitable items to present to Garrison Lane Junior Mixed School in Birmingham. The 35-40 parcels were to help that School's jumble sale and, with the proceeds, to purchase a Christmas tree for children.

The time was fast approaching when the Boys' School would close. Throughout the 1930s, despite the efforts and successes of Mr. Prothero, the steps were being taken to close the school and, having combined it with the neighbouring Infants School, to replace it with a Junior Mixed School. It comes as no surprise that, during the final 12 months of the old school, as the new buildings went up in Cofield Road, Boldmere, Mr. Prothero determined that it will be a memorable time.

In September 1937, the entire School visited Bertram Mills Menagerie in the Park. Demonstrating his skills as a mathematician, the Headmaster noted that there were *"46 horses, six elephants, a dozen lions, one zebra, and a dozen Shetland ponies - a poor Menagerie"*.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the Christmas festivities, the boys were given another treat when the arrival of the necessary materials allowed the start of *"stick and potato"* printing in Art lessons.

Traditionally, the end of the term was characterised by impromptu concerts, the Christmas letterbox sorted and delivered by the “*School Postman*” and afternoon teas. The last Party, held on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1937, was a magnificent occasion. The hall, which still had its vaulted roof then, was decorated with holly and bunting and desks were arranged so that all the 240 boys could sit down together to tea. *“Items of entertainment were provided by the School Pipe and Percussion Bands, plays & sketches by various classes, by the singing of Community songs & Carols”* wrote Mr. Prothero. The tea was prepared and served by Mrs. Prothero and her daughter, together with Mrs. Clinton, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Airdrie, Mrs. Coane, Mrs. Ellis and a Mrs. Bennett. The new year was ushered in by the final Pantomime Party to Alexandra Theatre, attended by 180 boys.

The numbers attending the school were beginning to decrease quite rapidly. The peak had been reached in 1934, when there were 318 pupils, now there were 240, and Mr. A. E. Davies was transferred to the Victoria Road School in April 1938. The remaining teachers determined to ensure that the final months would be memorable. Mr Clinton and 30 boys from Senior Class III gave a demonstration of Pipe playing to the Midlands Schools Instrumental Music Association at their request, on 12<sup>th</sup> May. It was a proud moment for them all.

In June, Mr. Prothero noted that, during the seven years in which the Junior Shield of the Erdington School Sports had been up for competition, Green Lanes had won it four times and being runners-up twice. It was, in his words, *“a record we are very proud of, and which shows what can be done in the school, despite the lack of playing field and with no opportunity of preparing for the events, just the tradition of the old school and Green Lanes grit and determination to win”*<sup>2</sup>. Shortly after this, the school gained its last award when, in the Birmingham School Sports held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, a Green Lanes boy came third in the Junior Sprint.

The final outing was a trip to Dudley Zoo, the expense being met out of school fund. The school closed on the afternoon of 6<sup>th</sup> July and 225 boys, together with 100 parents, travelled on the *“Green Lanes Special Train”* to Dudley. *“Here a most enjoyable and constructive five hours were spent - the Pets Corner, the Monkeys and the sea lions proving most popular”*<sup>2</sup>.

Time now passed quickly and, as staff and pupils prepared themselves for the closing days, a special evening was held on July 22<sup>nd</sup> attended by the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs. Bigwood, together with other guests including Alderman Willmott. The Pipe and Percussion bands provided a Musical Programme and the boys impressed all those present with their alertness, keenness and smartness as they were presented with the Swimming Awards gained by themselves. The Mayor, in his speech, congratulated the School on its wonderful record *“and said it must be with very great regret to me (Mr. Prothero) that the School was being broken up”*.<sup>2</sup>

It was more anger than regret that the headmaster felt at the closing of the school. In his fourteen years, he had made it a place of which parents, teachers and children could be justifiably proud. Undoubtedly its sporting achievements dominated its story during this time, but there were many other successes in the academic fields, in music and craft. Above all, Mr. Prothero instilled in those boys a respect and love for the School and the willpower and determination to succeed. Just two years short of its centenary, its fifth Master wrote the final record in the Log Book.

As children prepared to join new schools or go out to work and teachers to take up other appointments or to retire, Mr. Prothero signed his name at the end of his last entry.

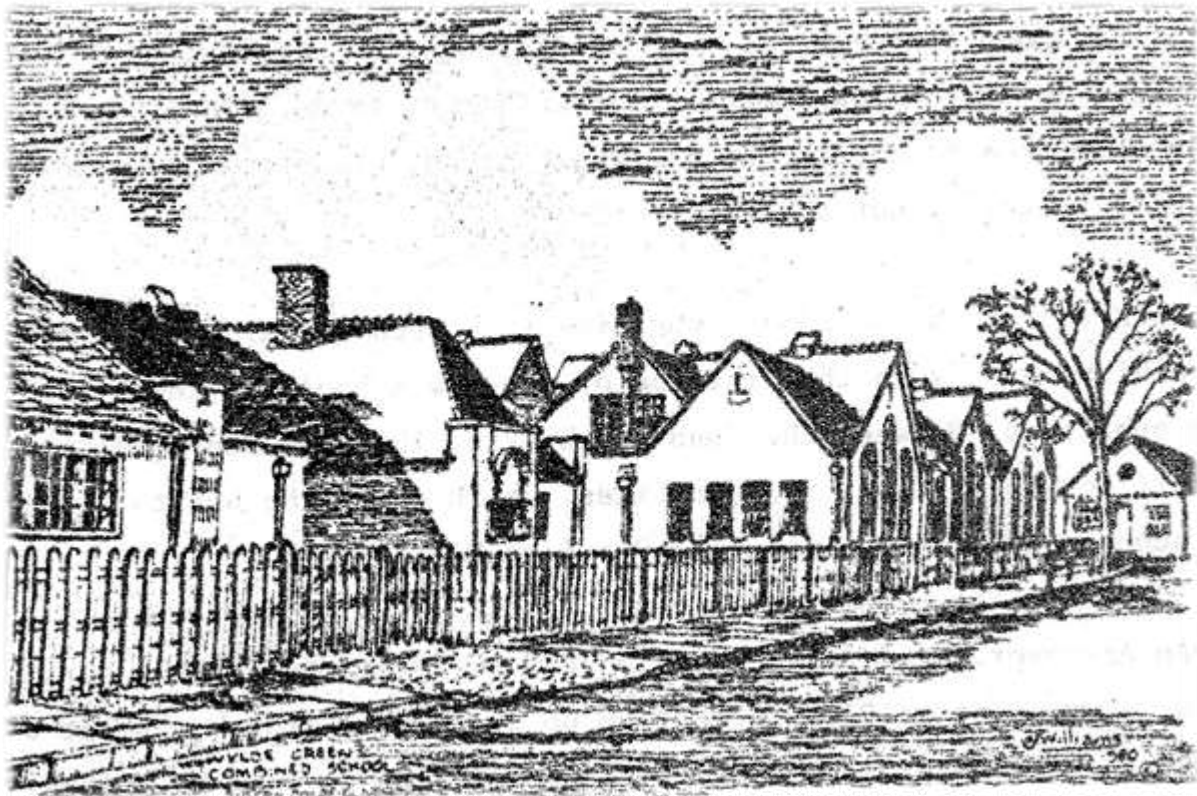
*“28<sup>th</sup> July 1938. Green Lanes Boys School closes down on reorganisation and I transferred to Hill Boys School, the “reward” for fourteen years faithful service.*

*William I. Prothero.”*<sup>2</sup>

The story behind reorganisation of the Schools in the Boldmere District is the subject of another chapter. The only teacher who remained from the Boys' School staff to join Miss Freeman, the Headteacher of the new Green Lanes Junior and Infants' Mixed School, was Mr. Maddison. He remained until July 1940 before severing his connections.

Mr Prothero stayed Hill Boys' School until his retirement in 1953. During the Second World War, he was closely connected with the Sutton Coldfield 495 Squadron of the Air Training Corps and joined it at its inception in the role of Flying Officer.

Two years after his retirement, he moved to Caerllwyn, Morfa Nefyn in Caernarvonshire, accompanied by his wife. He was to stay there until he died in February 1971 at the grand old age of 83. Many of his former pupils were saddened to hear of his passing which signalled the end of an era at Green Lanes Boys' School and which finished so prematurely in 1938.



The School in 1980 as seen  
from Little Green Lanes

## **Chapter VI The Green Lanes Infants School 1909 to 1929 & Mrs. Florence Harriet Hardman**

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1905, the recently formed Education Committee, concerned over the need to provide adequate accommodation for the provision of Elementary Education in the Borough, proposed, in addition to extending four existing schools, to build three new ones. One of these was to be the Green Lanes Infants School. It was designed –

*“to accommodate 100 children (and to) be built on a site adjoining the Green Lanes Boys’ School, which will serve for young children living between the existing Infant Schools at Walmley & Boldmere, at an estimated cost of £1000”<sup>18</sup>.*

A Sub-Committee proposed that the Architect should be chosen through a competition among those residing in the Borough. An application was made, at the same time, to the Town Council for authority to be given to the Education Committee to obtain the necessary plans, elevations and specifications needed to carry out the work.

In November, the Board of Education in London forwarded notices of intention with regards to the erection of the new school and these were formally published. Between then and March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1906, the Sub-committee received 12 sets of plans for Green Lanes, which was to be built at the same time as schools in Victoria Road and Reddicap Heath.

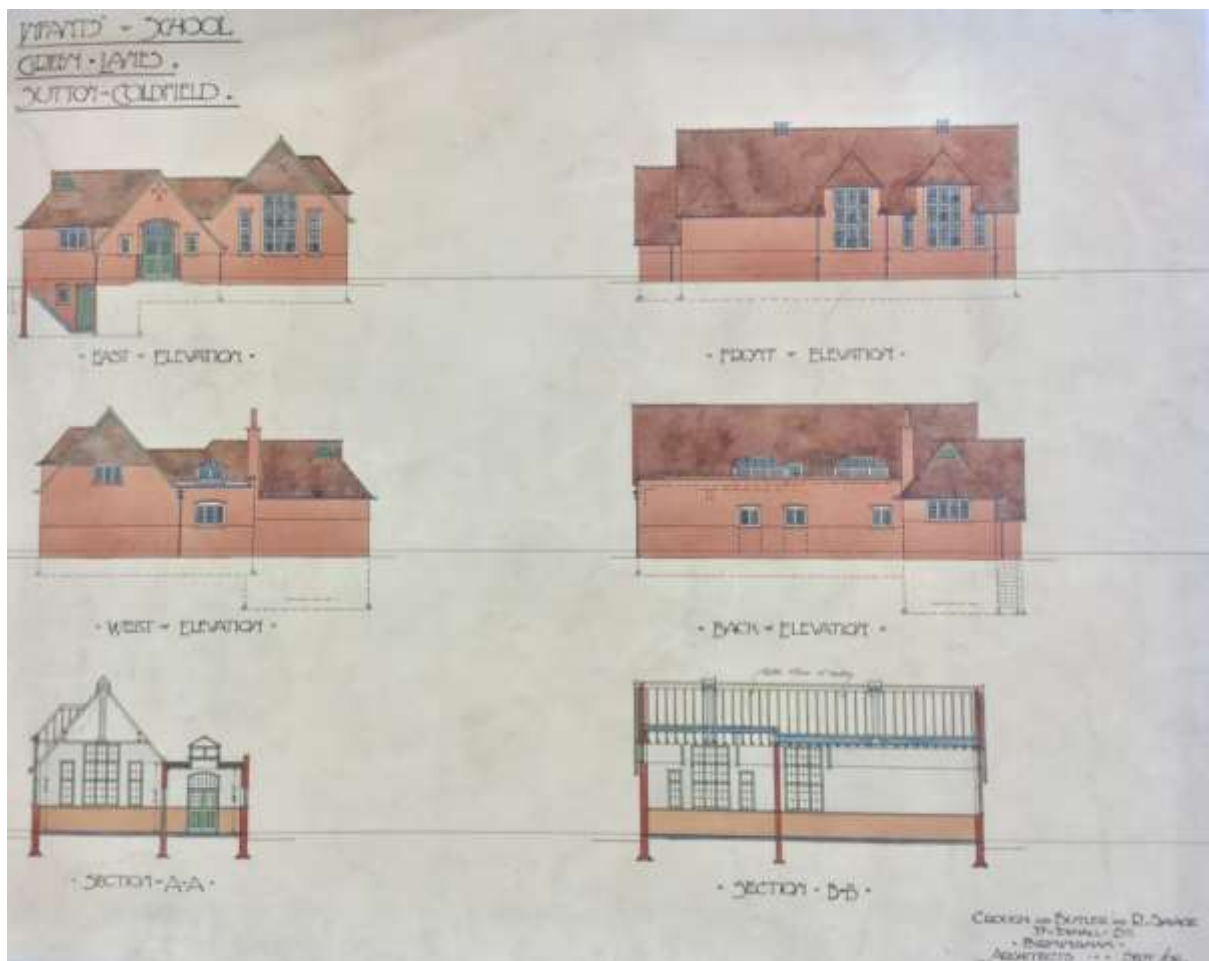
An Assessor, Mr. J. A. Cossins, awarded two premiums for the various plans. The first went to Plan No. 1 drawn up by Messrs. Crouch, Butler & Savage and the second premium went to Plan No. 11 put forward by Messrs. Buckland & Farmer, who received £5-0-0 for their work.

The Sub-Committee accepted Plan No. 1, subject to modifications put forward by themselves with the advice of the Assessor.

No further action was taken on the building the School for over 18 months. At a meeting on 21<sup>st</sup>, October 1907, it was decided to take a census of children before proceeding with a decision to build.



# The Crouch & Butler Plans for Green Lanes Infants School 1906



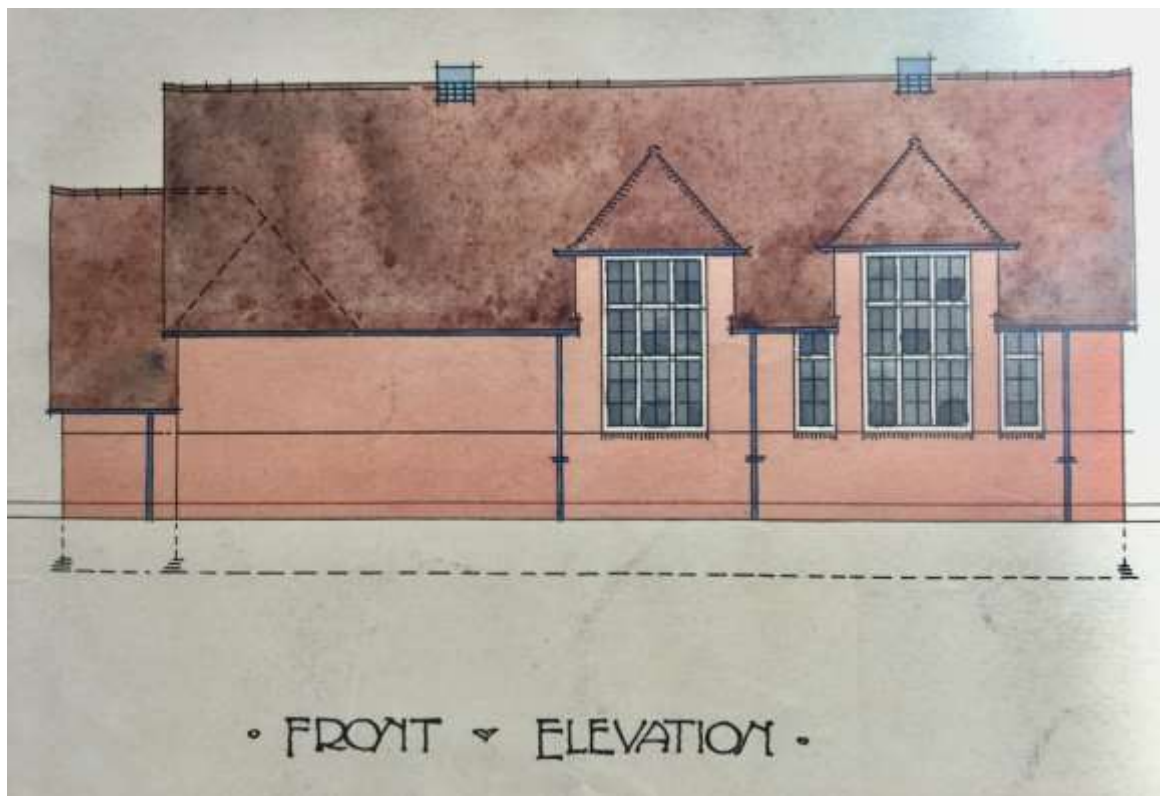
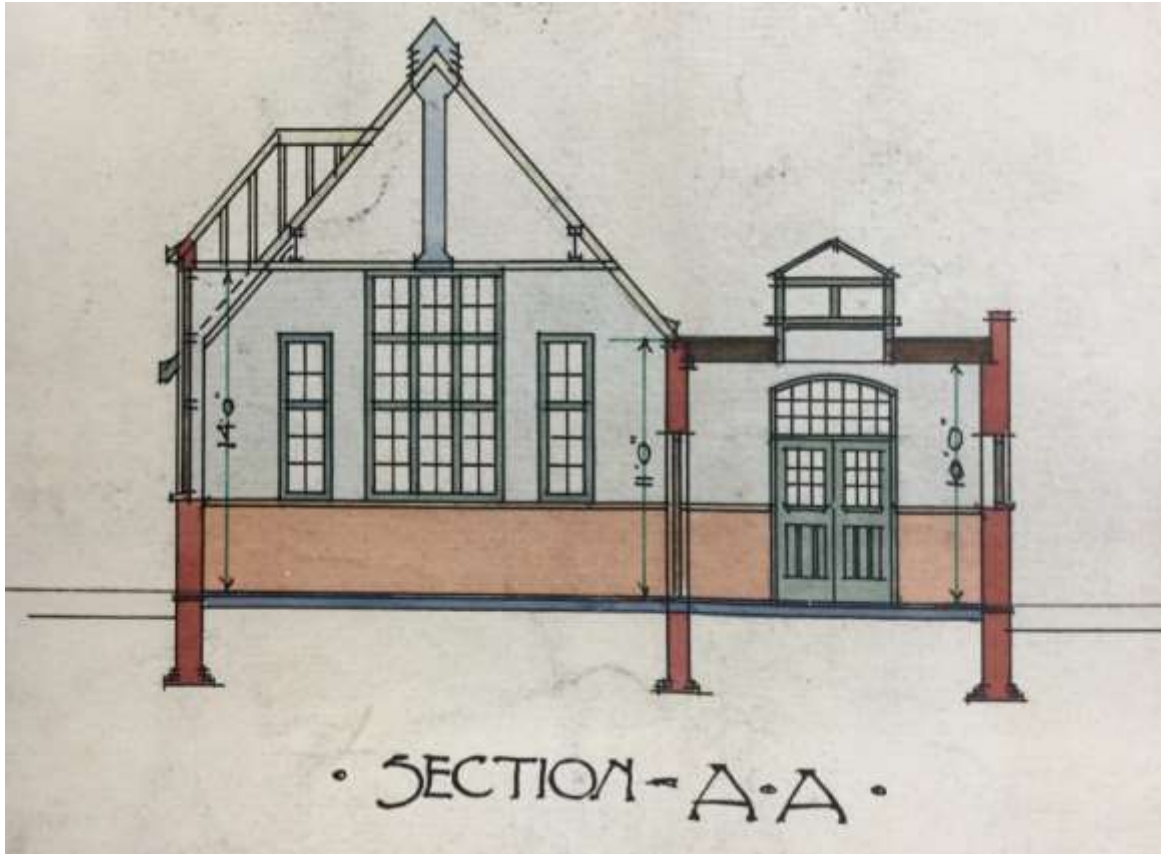
INFANTS' SCHOOL  
GREEN LANE,  
SUTTON-COLDFIELD.



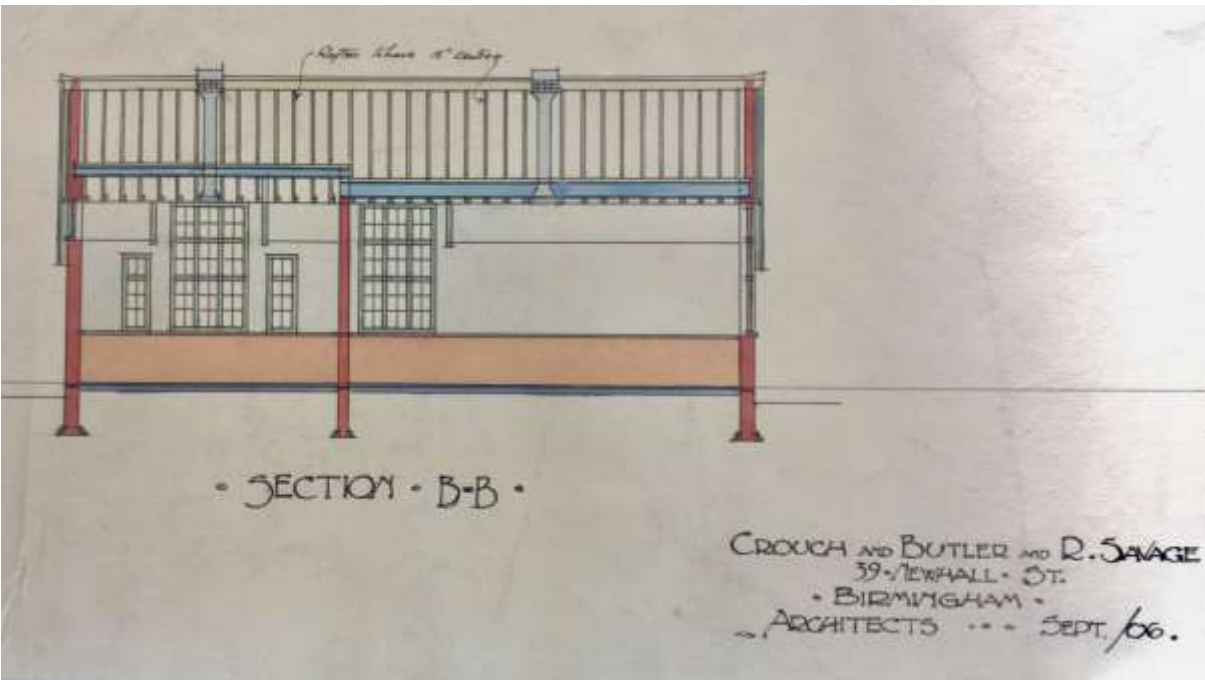
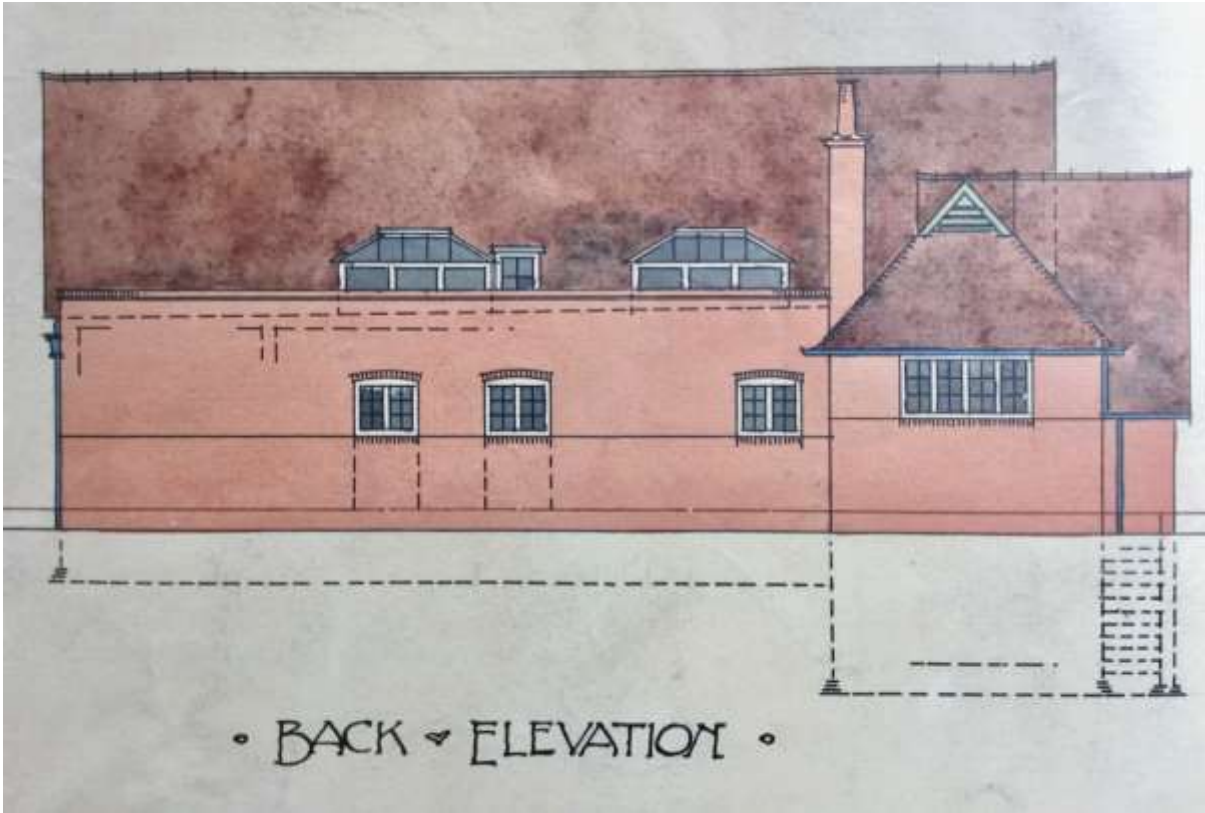
◦ EAST ELEVATION ◦



◦ WEST ELEVATION ◦







A Report drawn up on 12<sup>th</sup>, December 1907, was submitted to the Committee on 24<sup>th</sup>, February 1908 and it was based on the Census undertaken by Thomas Ellison, the School Attendance Officer. It was full and contained much statistical information to reinforce his considered opinion that, not only should the school be built, but that it should also be larger than had originally been intended. Mr. Ellison discovered that the 662 occupied houses in the district had a total of 727 children. He broke these figures down as follows-

<i>Attending Public Elementary Schools in the Borough</i>	254
<i>Attending Public Elementary Schools outside the Borough</i>	59
<i>Attending Private Schools &amp; receiving instruction in some other manner</i>	93
<i>Absent through sickness etc.</i>	4
<i>Not attending any School</i>	36
<i>Between 3 &amp; 5 years of age, not attending any School</i>	118
<i>Under 3 years of age</i>	<u>163</u>
<i>TOTAL -</i>	<u>727</u>

This led him to estimate that, from these children, at least 125 children would be likely to attend the Infant School and, because of his recommendations, the Sub-Committee decided that the Architects should be instructed to prepare new Plans to accommodate 200 children and to include provision for future extensions.

This decision meant several further items needed attention. At a meeting of the Buildings Sectional Sub-Committee, 7<sup>th</sup>, April 1908, the Architect, Mr. Bulls, submitted sketch plans of the school which were accepted.

There were some amendments and, three weeks later, instructions were given for the new plans. It was agreed to pay 2½% of the estimated cost and 1½% for quantities as compensation to the abandoned plans, which were still available to study at Sutton Coldfield library at the time of writing this book. They show that it was intended to have a classroom for 60 children and another for 40 alongside. These were sited to the north of the Marching Corridor and Teachers' Room.

Future extensions would be placed on the other side of the school. In the new plans, the Marching Corridor was to be extended and all the classrooms, there would now be four, were to be built on the south side of the Corridor. The teachers would also be provided with their own toilet. Underneath the Teachers' Room was the Heating Chamber, together with an adjoining coal store.

Fresh notices regarding these alterations were published, a requirement of the Board of Education, to whom the revised plans were submitted, to receive their provisional approval by June 1908. This was sufficient to allow the Committee to instruct the Architects to prepare specifications and quantities and to put the building of the School out to tender.

At a later meeting of the Education Committee, in September, the members were given the opportunity to review the Tenders submitted. Out of the total of 17, there were 8 local builders. Of the remainder, 7 were firms in Birmingham, Aston & Handsworth and the other 2 were firms in Walsall and Blackheath. The cheapest was for £2293 the most expensive was priced at £2671. In the end the tender supplied by the local firm, Davis & Son, for the sum of £2359 was accepted. To cover the cost of the work, commissions and other items, it was recommended to apply to the Local Government Board for sanction to borrow £2600.

Approval for the loan was granted by December, the money to be repaid in 30 years, and additionally, further approval was sought to borrow £160 to provide furniture. When this was granted in the following April, it was for only £157, however.

No mention is made of the building progress in the Committee Minutes, although a Register of Building Plans does indicate that the foundations had been laid and inspected by 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1909.

In September 1909, they accepted the tender of Fisher's School Furniture Co. of West Bromwich to supply furniture at a cost of £86.10s. This was only enough to furnish one room, the other was to be fitted out later. During the meeting, the members decided to open the school to pupils from December 1<sup>st</sup>, but only to those who were at least 5 years of age.

They also proposed that the Headmistress of the Boldmere Infant School, Mrs. Florence Hardman, born 25<sup>th</sup> July 1877 in Birmingham, would take over that responsibility at Green Lanes Infant School, accompanied by her assistant teacher, Miss Daisy F. Burdett, Assistant Article 50.

Just before the school opened, the cleaner was appointed – Mrs. Ellis, at a wage of £14 a year. She served in this capacity for many years, and together with her husband, she was also responsible for the cleaning of the adjacent Boys' School. In 1911 they were paid a total of £52 for their duties.

With these words, Mrs Hardman began the Log Book –

*“Dec 10/09 Stan.1 boys were sent here from Boldmere on Monday to relieve that School which was overcrowded. Miss Derbyshire was transferred here on that day as a teacher for Stan.1. H.M.I. Mr. Green visited the school on Wednesday and Mr. Adcock came to check the registers on Thursday. Mr. Carty (Visiting Officer) called on Tuesday re. absentees. We had two cases of S. Fever. Both children have been sent to hospital – Av. in atten. 118.5”<sup>3</sup>.*

The rapid intake of pupils indicates the pressures which the Boldmere School had suffered over the previous few years. With the new Infant School officially opening on December 1<sup>st</sup>, by December 20<sup>th</sup>, the date of the monthly Education Committee meeting, the minutes recorded 90 children in Infants Department supplemented by 56 Standard 1 children. The latter group were retained in Infant Schools only in exceptional circumstances.

Even after this transfer, there were still 120 children in the Boldmere School in accommodation for 144. The overcrowding had been considerable and the inadequate accommodation in the neighbouring Boys' School, now, added to the difficulties.

Several items arrived at the school to help equip the building. The piano, purchased from W.S. Riley, cost £20 whilst the furniture, desks and chairs, ordered in September from Fishers, were delivered.

£10 was spent on Pictures to display in the classrooms while cleaning materials costing £9-15-4 were amongst other objects purchased from Loan 46 of the Loan Account.

The official name for the School was announced early in the New Year – Sutton Coldfield Green Lanes Council School No. 2a.

In March, Mrs. Hardman examined the two classes to establish what progress was being made and, generally, she was highly satisfied and was *“particularly pleased with the singing and brush drawings of Stan. 1 boys”*<sup>3</sup>.

April brought a new class, 111, into the School and the Headmistress commented that they were those *“who know nothing”*<sup>3</sup>. An uncertificated Assistant, Miss Bovett, was appointed for a period not exceeding 3 months to take charge of the class, for which she received £10.

Its first official closure, on the afternoon of May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1910, was due to a proclamation by King George V, and it remained closed on the following day because the Boys School was being used for the County Council Elections. There were other holidays, too. On 24<sup>th</sup> May, they celebrated Empire Day with appropriate lessons and patriotic songs, before closing at noon, and on July 8<sup>th</sup>, the children enjoyed themselves at the local Sunday School Treat.

Mrs Hardman found progress in reading and writing continued to be satisfactory, though difficult, since she was teaching children who, by age, should have been already at the Elementary Schools. 30 desks were delivered to be used by Standard 11, who were retained for the time being, until they could be moved to the Boys' School when its accommodation allowed.

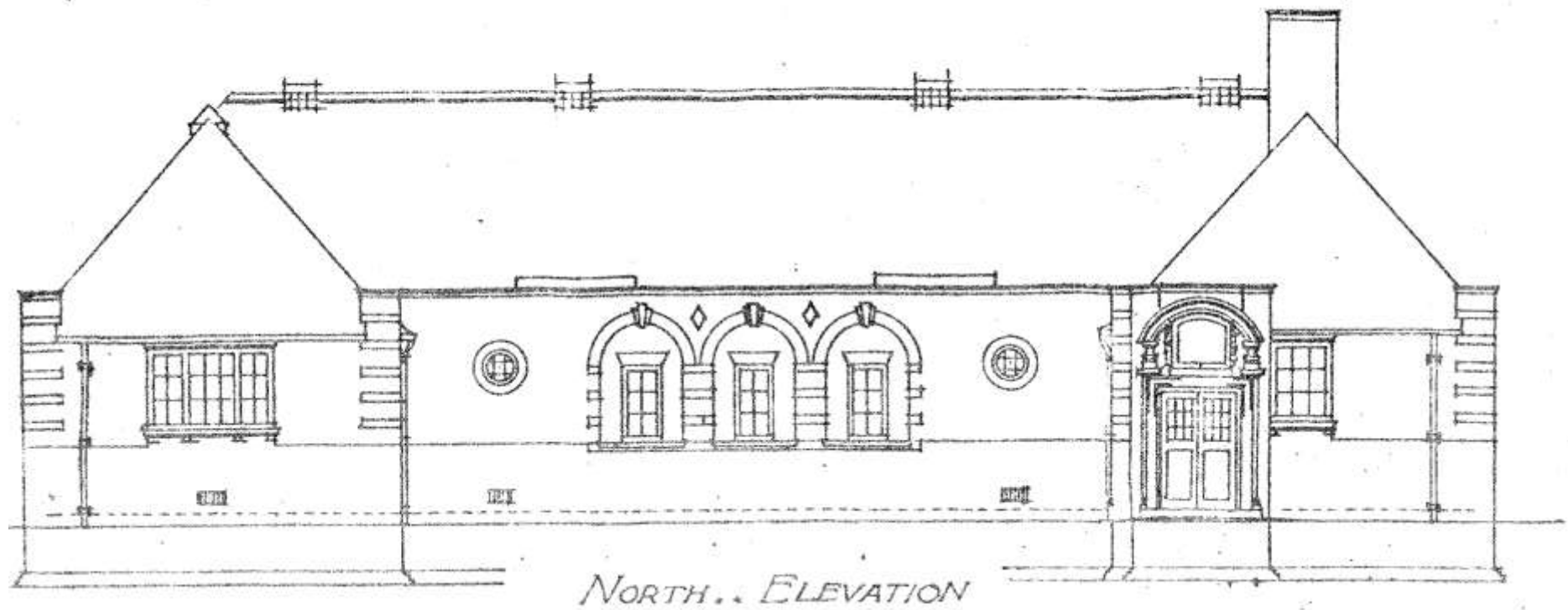
School Years at this time commenced on July 1<sup>st</sup> and, in 1910, Mrs. Hardman admitted 19 children from the Boldmere, and one from the Walmley, Infants Schools. The Summer Holidays began on July 29<sup>th</sup>, after prize-giving by Miss Betty Willmott, and ended on August 29<sup>th</sup>. When the children returned, Miss Bovett have been replaced by a Miss Janet M. Sweetinburgh at an annual salary of £45. An additional teacher was appointed in October. She was Miss Lillian Burdett, a Supplementary Teacher at Maney Infant School and she now joined her sister on the staff of Green Lanes.



*NEW INFANT SCHOOL LITTLE GREEN LANES  
SUTTON COLDFIELD*



The view from the playground when the School opened in 1911



The Infants' School in 1911 – the view from Little Green Lanes

When the School closed on December 22<sup>nd</sup> for the Christmas Holidays, the Mayor and Mayoress called on the children to “*give them a little treat*”<sup>3</sup>, which, in the following year, consisted of 2 buns and two oranges for each of them and helped to make it a very enjoyable time for them all.

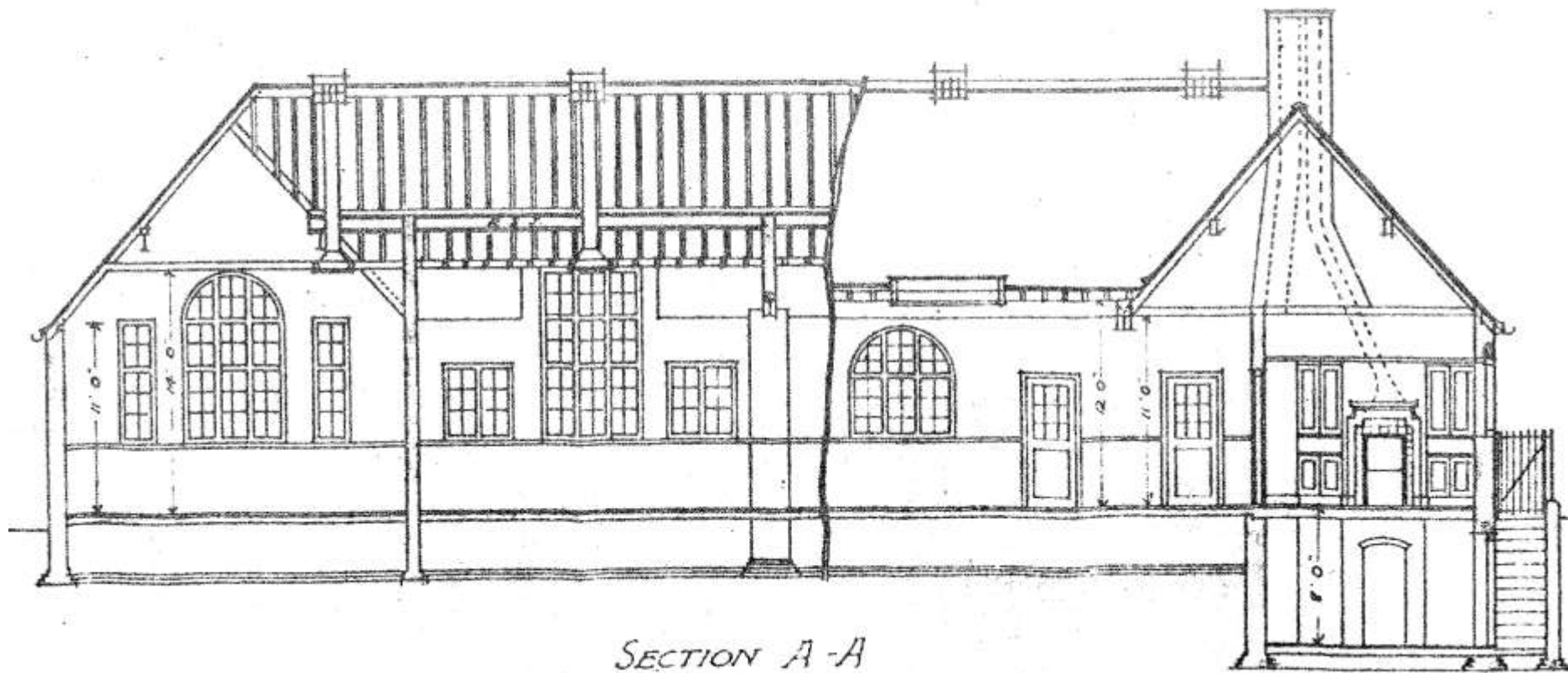
Those older boys who had been retained in Infants, gave concern to the Board of Education who approved their retention but asked that the Education Committee provide out-offices for the Standard 11 boys who were over eight years of age. The cost of this, together with the moving of a shelter in the playground, was estimated to be less than £50 and the Committee sought, and obtained, permission to utilise part of the £114-10s-9d remaining from the loan which had financed the erection of the building.

In February, the children went to Boldmere Parish Room to rehearse an “*Entertainment*” which they performed shortly after. Further festivities followed in June to celebrate the Coronation and all the children were giving a week’s holiday.

Miss Derbyshire became a Certificated Teacher in April 1911 after passing the Board’s Examination, whilst her colleague, Miss Sweetinburgh, resigned her position on August 1<sup>st</sup> and the vacancy remained unfilled.

In the new School year, 43 boys moved to the neighbouring Boys’ School and, in September, the Standard 11 boys joined them in the recently enlarged building. The Committee recorded 186 children on the register and, with an average attendance of 175.3, this gave an extremely pleasing percentage of 94.3%.

It is interesting to note how extremes of temperature affected the school. In July, the Managers ordered the closure of the buildings because they thought “*it bad for the chn. to be at school during the great heat in the middle of the day*”<sup>3</sup>. (This compares with June 1976, the year of the “Great Drought”, when temperatures of more than 100<sup>o</sup> F. were recorded in the mobile classrooms.) By contrast, the fierce snowstorms of January 1912 caused so many children difficulty in reaching the school that it was closed after more than two days of continuous snow. Out of 197 children, only 52 struggled in on one day and Mrs. Hardman had to abandon marking the registers. The continuing poor weather seemed to affect the Headmistress and she was away for one week in February, her duties being taken by Miss Derbyshire.



The Infant School – 1911. The class rooms can be seen on the left, while above the cellar is the Teacher's Room.

On the academic side, progress continued to be good and Mrs. Hardman was very pleased with the interest the children displayed in Nature Study. Near the end of the school year, an exhibition of the children's work attracted more than 100 parents. The vacancy on the staff, made by the departure and temporary non-replacement of Miss Bovett, was filled in 1912 by Elizabeth Heapes, an Uncertificated Assistant.

The prizes for that year were purchased by the Head Teacher, who left school early one afternoon to go to town to obtain them and to get needlework materials.

The Inspector, Mr. E.H. Carter, and his assistant, Mr. Webb, visited in November, with the latter remaining all day to see the work performed by the children. Another visitor in that month was Dr. Flewitt, the Medical Officer, who examined 54 children over a period of two days.

Christmas 1912 was a very happy time. Just before the end of the term, the Standard 1 children wrote a composition on what they would like for a Christmas party. Mrs. Hardman found them all very interesting and "*quite original*". Whether their ideas had any influence will never be known but it was a lovely occasion.

A Punch and Judy Show was followed by a visit from Father Christmas, who gave each child a toy from the tree. After this, there were sweets and oranges for all. The finance for the treat came from money raised at their last concert and was greatly helped by a gift of £1 from Councillor Cartwright.

Towards the end of January 1913, Mrs. Hardman entered the Report of Inspector Carter. He had noted, on his earlier visit, that the children seemed very happy and took an interest in all their lessons, particularly games and storytelling.

In the 3Rs, the children were well advanced in Reading and had simple ideas of number. Art and Craft subjects, referred to as "*manual occupations*" by the Inspector, were criticised for being too rigidly taught – children were given too little free expression in drawing and were not allowed to discover for themselves how to make their models.

In her various entries, Mrs. Hardman showed a conscientious approach to her duties, spending time in each class to ascertain the progress being made by the children. Usually, this was related to the basic subjects but, in June, she listened to the singing of the children and noted that the Upper Division knew 11 songs and the Lower Division knew 14 songs.

When Class 111 brought toys and other items to school, they could operate a shop much to the pleasure of the children. The additional use of a pair of scales and weights added to the interest, giving a style of lesson which has provided children with educational and enjoyable experiences for countless generations.

The Great War, beginning in 1914, affected the Infants' School in slightly different ways from its neighbour, the Boys' School. A group of refugees from Belgium were housed in the Wylde Green district and, in November, a collection by the Infants resulted in a handcart being filled with potatoes, cabbages and parsnips, along with other vegetables, as well as jams, rice, cocoa and sugar. It was a welcome surprise for these homeless people. The local hospital benefited from a similar collection two years later.

From time to time, a lack of coal to heat the school premises interrupted the routine and this, together with the appalling weather suffered throughout the country during the early months of 1916, meant that academic progress was hampered. A blizzard, on March 28<sup>th</sup>, was so severe that only 8 children struggled in and, not surprisingly, they were sent back home.

The teachers, too, were affected by the War, although in different ways. Miss Heapes was allowed time off to spend with a friend, later to become her fiancé, who was home on leave. In September 1916, Miss Derbyshire said goodbye to her fiancé as he left the front. All the staff spent two days in March assisting the Food Control Committee at the Council House in the issuing of ration books.

The children's help was sought in other ways. By closing the school for two weeks in the autumn of 1917, the older pupils could pick potatoes. In the following March, they travelled to Sutton to see an aeroplane, with the hope that this would spur them to greater efforts in the Aeroplane Week which was being organised at that time.

The conclusion of the War came at a period when many of the staff and children were struck down by illness. Only half of the scholars were attending and so the schools closed by order of the Office. In Mrs. Hardman's own words "*the influenza was rampant*"<sup>3</sup>. Then, as the Headmistress finished her entry, a messenger arrived with the wonderful news –

*Peace has just been declared –  
10.45 A.M.*"<sup>3</sup>.

During the war years, the Education Committee confined most of its attention to the maintenance of the buildings and the appointment of teachers, whilst the Sub-committee dealt with a wider range of matters.

When Miss Asenath Derbyshire entered college in September 1914, her place was taken by her sister, Frances, who was transferred from the Hill Boys' School. This appointment was for one year until Asenath returned as a Certificated Teacher and at a salary of £84. No sooner had this occurred, than Frances did the same and entered college.

Another pair of sisters were also involved in the early days of the Infant School. Daisy Burdett, who had been at the school since it opened, was transferred to Boldmere Girls' School on February 1918 and she was replaced a temporary basis by a Mrs. Helen Bloomer.

Daisy's sister, Lilian, had been on the staff since 1911 but she resigned in 1916 in order that she could devote her time to nursing her mother who was poorly.

The Committee obtained, and accepted, a tender from a Mr. J. W. Wood, a resident of Four Oaks, to paint the interior of the building for the sum of £22-10-0. This work was undertaken during the summer holidays 1914 and, at the same time, the playground of both Schools was "*Tar painted and dressed with Limestone Dust by the Val de Travers Paving Co.*"<sup>18</sup>.

The Elementary Schools Sub-Committee was often approached with applications from individuals and groups wishing to hire the premises. When the nearby Emmanuel Church opened on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1909, the School was used in connection with this occasion.

The Boys' school, of course, had for many years been used as the place of worship, there being no local church other than Boldmere. A neighbour of the School asked for the permission of the Sub-Committee to utilise the Infant School for a Social Evening which he planned. The members decided that the Boys' School would be more appropriate, however.

Mrs Hardman sent several requests to the Sub-Committee. One of these concerned the provision of a picture rail in the School, whilst another was to alter the hours of the afternoon session in the winter of 1916/17 and permission was granted to open at 1 o'clock and close at 3 o'clock.

The declaration of peace recorded by Mrs. Hardman was celebrated in the following year. On July 19<sup>th</sup>, Peace Day, the children decorated the classrooms with flags, but this was the only act performed. At the end of the month, tea and sports were held in Sutton Park and this allowed them to join in a celebration of Peace.

On the Armistice Day of 1921, the entire school observed two minutes' silence and most of the children wore poppies – the money raised from their sale being for the benefit of dependants of soldiers and sailors killed in the War.

During that year, the first links were made with the nearby Anstey College of Physical Education. In June, two Students visited the School and undertook drill on Tuesday and Thursday. This would have been taken on a playground which was in very poor condition. Mrs. Hardman had fallen badly as result of it and was absent for 2 days recovering. As these arrangements with the College were successful, an extension of the cooperation came later when one class visited the College to be taught there.

Patriotism was very much to the fore and, each year, Empire Day was celebrated by appropriate songs and lessons. The children would then be taken to King Edward's Square to hear the Royal speeches.

In 1923, a large Union Jack was sent to Green Lanes to use on Saturdays and, in June, there was a novel experience for the Infants when they listened to the speeches on a gramophone.



Mr. Frost, the current Inspector, gave a very full report following his visit to Green Lanes on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1924. He noted the decrease in numbers now attending. In 1911, the average attendance was 181 but there had been a steady decline and now there were only 96 on the register, with one classroom being unoccupied. He considered the standards of teaching good and recognized that number work was organised on sound and practical lines. Mr Frost was particularly pleased by the relationship between the teachers and pupils.

Sometime after this, the classes were given a short talk by a missionary, who had recently been working in China, and they thoroughly enjoyed the interesting curios that she brought along.

The post-war period brought a steady increase in the salaries of the teachers. When Asenath Derbyshire had returned in 1915 to the infants School, she received a salary of £84. However, on the departure of her sister, Frances, in 1921, her replacement, Mrs. Marchil Kemp, was appointed at a salary of £241-10-0d.

Mrs Hardman received a letter that year from the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee calling her attention to the frequency of absences amongst the staff of four assistant teachers. Three years later, Miss Margaret Keeling obtained promotion as the Head Teacher of the Boldmere Infant School and this appointment must have given considerable pleasure to Mrs. Hardman, who had held that position prior to taking charge of Green Lanes.

When the children returned to the afternoon session on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1925, the school was closed early so that the infants could visit a show of wild animals. In September, Mrs. Hardman commented that the teachers were still operating from copies of the timetable because an official one had been at the Education Office since April 24<sup>th</sup> awaiting the signature of the Inspector.

One of the longest serving members of staff commenced teaching at the school in 1925. Her name was Miss Winifred Walker and she remained in the Infants Department until 1946, one of a few teachers who taught for more than twenty years at the Green Lanes Schools.

In December 1926, the parents were entertained to a Cantata "*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*" performed by their children. The 130 who attended were also able to enjoy dancing and physical exercises performed by a class and conducted by a student from the Anstey Training College.

Two members of the Education Committee were visitors during a wet and stormy week in November 1928 and they were most impressed to find over 80 children drinking special bottles of milk for lunch. The milk, which was pasteurised, and supplied in sterilised bottles, cost each child a penny and straws were provided.

Mrs. Hardman sent in her resignation on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1929 and asked that it take effect from following August 31<sup>st</sup>. It was reluctantly accepted and the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee agreed to convey "*an expression of Mrs. Hardman's long services*" to her. She wrote her final entry in the Log Book on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1929, four months short of 20 years' service as the Head Teacher. She wrote –

*"We close school this (Thursday) afternoon for the summer holidays. Many chn. are still absent ill. I am resigning & my resignation takes effect August 31<sup>st</sup> next. So this is the last time I shall sign this book. Av. in attn. 76.*

*Florence H. Hardman"*<sup>3</sup>.

With the retirement of Mrs Hardman, so passed an era in the history of the Infants' School. She had watched over the school from its early beginnings and had seen considerable change in both numbers of children attending and in the type of education they received. She was a conscientious Head Teacher who was most concerned for the well-being of all her pupils.

Unfortunately, as she grew older she seemed to be struggling against increasing illness and probably her retirement came as a time when she was looking forward to passing on the responsibility to a younger person.

Florence Harriet Hardman had been born in Birmingham around 1866. She had married a Harry Edmund Hardman.

Her birth name has not yet come to light as no marriage details have been discovered other than they married in 1896. They had one son, Jack Harry, who was born just before Christmas 1897 in Handsworth, then in Staffordshire.

In 1901, the family were living in "Fernlea", Boldmere Road, not far from Boldmere Infants School, where Florence became the Head Teacher. Her husband, Harry was then employed as a Hardware Merchant's Clerk.

By the next census, in 1911, they had moved to another property in the same road. Their new house was called "St. Louis". Harry had now been promoted to Manager, but interestingly, Florence was described as a Teacher, not Head Teacher. They had sufficient income to have their own domestic servant.

Harry died in 1935, leaving his money to his son. At the time of his death he was living in Kynance, Wylde Green Road. No mention is made of Florence being a beneficiary.

Florence lived until 1949 and her death was registered in Weston-super-Mare.

There is little doubt that her influence on the Green Lanes Infants School in its formative years was fundamental to its importance as a place where children could be assured of good teaching standards within a warm, friendly atmosphere.



Miss Derbyshire and Mrs. Hardman 1915



Infants School Classes circa 1919

## Chapter VII Miss Ellen Freeman 1929 to 1957

The decision by Mrs. Hardman to retire meant a search for her successor, although no mention of this is made in the various minutes.

The confirmation of Miss Ellen Freeman, who took over as Head Teacher on September 1<sup>st</sup>, did not occur until the Education Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1929.

The Log Book entry was –

*“September 2<sup>nd</sup>. School reopened today after the Midsummer Vacation. I, Ellen Freeman, have been appointed as Head Teacher on Mrs. Hardman’s retirement”<sup>3</sup>.*

She was a member of the family which played a considerable part in shaping the educational system within the Town in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The father, Harry Freeman, had been born in Feckenham, Worcestershire, his wife, Lydia, in nearby Redditch. Harry worked as an agent for the Prudential Assurance Company.

Ellen Freeman’s parents had 10 children but 3 had died by 1911, The other 7 still lived with them in Duke Street, Sutton Coldfield.

Ellen’s brother, Harvey, became the Director of Education for Sutton Coldfield, while a sister, was Headteacher of Reddicap Heath Infants School.

While Miss Freeman settled in, gradually introducing her own philosophy, life in the building continued along similar lines to those implemented by Mrs. Hardman, her predecessor.

Since the school had opened, it had been lit by gas, and even in the 1980s a reminder of this could be seen on the wall near the Secretary’s office. Here one gaslight had been left in what was by now a corridor. In 1929, it was the Teachers’ Room and the old light was situated next to the chimney breast, which once held the fire that heated the room. Later alterations have since changed this part of the building.

Back in 1925, Mrs. Hardman had complained that, because mantles and burners had not been replaced, the gas could not be lit. Four years later, mention is made of the need to renew the mantles and glasses, and this may have begun a chain of events which led to their replacement.

In July 1931, at a meeting of the Schools Sub-Committee, an application from Miss Freeman was considered for the installation of "*Electric Light*" prior to redecoration. The estimated cost of this was put at £35-12s-6d and it was recommended to the full Committee to accept the Tender of the Corporation Electricity Department. Both the redecoration and the electrical work took place during the summer holidays and helped to improve the atmosphere within the building, which in winter would have seemed quite dismal under the lighting provided by gas.

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1930, there was a visit by the Inspector, Mr. E. Glasgow, and his subsequent report was entered into the Log Book after a copy was delivered to Miss Freeman on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Unhappily, she did not agree with some of his observations and on the following day a lengthy letter, attacking some of the points made in the Report, was written by her and presented to the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee. Both Report and the Head Teacher's letter were minuted in full.

Mr. Glasgow indicated that since it's last inspection the school had had a complete change of staff and that the Headmistress had been in charge for nearly a year. Miss Freeman stated that, as she had been appointed in September, she had been at the School just six months and for only the latter part of the current School year.

The Inspector expressed concern that older boys had to remain at the school while the girls could transfer to Boldmere Girls School and, during his visit, he found 24 children over the age of 8.

The Headmistress pointed out that the average age of Standard 1 children about to be promoted to the Senior School was 8 years and, in her experience, this was quite normal.

The bulk of the Inspector's attention was focused on the 3Rs where he found that Arithmetic was too restricted in its scope. Reading was fluent, but perhaps not fully understood by pupils and writing progress could not be ascertained because there were no exercise books. In addition to this, he thought that there was a lack of attention and effort.

Of great concern to Mr. Glasgow was the tradition of Physical Exercises to be taken solely by the students of the neighbouring Anstey College. While he appreciated that there was some benefit to be gained from the practice, it was his opinion that a complete severance by the teachers from the subject was not in the best interests of the demeanour and bearing of the children, which he felt to be deficient.

Miss Freeman accepted his criticism on Arithmetic and promised a more comprehensive syllabus in the new school year but she felt that Reading was "*quite up to the Standard*".

Upon taking over at the School, she had discovered that exercise books had not been used for at least 5 years and this situation was to be altered in the future, as she agreed with Mr. Glasgow on this point. In her view, the Report gave a misleading impression of the number of physical exercise lessons taken by the students as they only took 1 lesson each week with a class and, from now on, this would be confined to Standard 1 children.

Her central criticism was that the Inspector seemed to wish radical changes to take place in a short period of time. Miss Freeman, on the other hand, considered it best to continue prevailing arrangements until the advent of the new school year as the many alterations in routine and method which she wished to implement were, in her opinion, best introduced slowly in order to be the most effective.

The controversy over the Report was, to an extent, considerable. No other one had ever met with such immediate and forthright comment by a Head Teacher. The final outcome was never documented, apart from the Sub-Committee expressing their complete confidence in the recently appointed Head Teacher.

Shortly after the matter had been aired, the School was furnished with new items for the "*Babies Room*" and this may have assisted Miss Freeman in her efforts to reorganise the curriculum and teaching methods within the school, and to bring them in line with good practice in other Schools.

As part of her policy, she arranged for both herself and her two colleagues, Miss Lewis and Miss Walker to visit Loxton Street Infants' School to examine their work. The departure of Miss Lewis, who possessed a Bachelor's Degree in Science, in July 1931 is curious. Mr. Glasgow, in his Report, felt that her qualifications and natural ability pointed in other directions than the Babies class for which she was responsible. This was strenuously denied in her letter to the Sub-Committee in which Miss Freeman pointed out how much support her teachers had given her in implementing new ideas.

She considered Miss Lewis most suitable for her task. Nevertheless, whether by coincidence or not, Norah Lewis left the School shortly after this episode.

Attendance at the School slowly rose in the 1930s and, although statistics are available in the library archives, it is difficult to show fluctuations in the school population because, between 1920 and 1937, the end of the school year was altered twice. Prior to 1920, children transferred to the Senior Departments at the end of June but, in 1921, this was altered to March, and, in 1937, it was finally moved to July, where it remains today.

By studying the records of the numbers attending at the start of the calendar year, it is possible to illustrate more clearly the changes over the years. In January 1910, the School had 142 children on the registers and this rose to its greatest number (until the advent of the Second World War) in the following year when there were 206 scholars attending. By 1924, the numbers had declined to 110 and, apart from a slight rise between 1927 and 1929, remained near that level until 1933 when there was a noticeable increase to 141 girls and boys. (See also Appendix II)

From this date, the numbers grew steadily and never again were there only two teachers and a Head Teacher to educate the infants. These greater rolls meant reorganisation and, early in 1934, the Standard 1 children were divided into two classes, as were the youngest ones.



Even while this was undertaken, decisions were already being made which were to fundamentally alter the existence of the two schools in Green Lanes. On 28<sup>th</sup> February 1934, at its monthly meeting, the Education Committee agreed that the present schools would *“be used for accommodation of Junior Mixed Scholars and Infants residing in the district south of St. Michael’s Church Boldmere”* <sup>20</sup>. For some time, the viability of the two schools have been closely examined and the decision to build new institutions in Cofield Road, Boldmere was to prove the death knell for the Green Lanes Schools as they were constituted at that time. In 1934, this was still a few years away from reality and is examined in greater detail later.

Alterations to the timetable made in the 1930s illustrate how the school moved with the times. Five minutes were added to the morning Physical Training period at the expense of the playtime and resulted in both lessons and break being of 15 minutes’ duration. Just one month after this, October 1934, Miss J. Dickinson, the County Organiser for Physical Training, visited the School and watched the longer lessons, although it is not known how she viewed them. In 1935, the last periods on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3.00 p.m. to 3.45 p.m. were amended. Previously Classes 1 & 11 had used the time for Library Books, Group Reading and Reading Expression. Now the first 30 minutes were used for exchanging books and, in the last quarter hour, children either had Percussion Band or the opportunity to experience educational and manipulative practice with the Sense Training Toys.

The arrival of two buses one afternoon in June, heralded an exciting time as the staff and children were transported to the gardens of Councillor Mrs. Lowe who had invited them to tea.

As they did not return until 6.45 p.m., it was a very pleasurable occasion. So, too, were the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of 1935 when, in a day to remember, the children joined in the activities arranged for them in Sutton Park.

Miss Walker visited Somerville Road Infants School to see their work in July, while Miss Freeman travel to Rookery Road School in Handsworth to view an Exhibition of Handwork. Miss Brown, who had joined the staff in 1932, left in 1936 to travel in Africa after she had been granted four months’ leave of absence.

Mrs. Hardman had written the first entry in the Log Book in December 1909 and it was finished by Miss Freeman in July 1936, when she stated that the school was breaking up for the Midsummer Holidays. The new Book recorded on its first page that the term began on Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1936 when there were 130 children on the books with an average attendance of 117.6.

Coronation Year, in 1937, provided another opportunity for the children to indulge in an enjoyable time. The Mayor and Mayoress came to the School in May and distributed Coronation souvenirs. This was followed by an extended holiday in which further festivities took place in the Park, although poor weather hampered these.

Hygiene within the buildings was improved by the installation of an automatic flushing tank for the lavatories in 1936 and received attention next year at a cost of £15. The boiler, too, was brought up to date and The Sub-Committee spent £64-13-0 on its replacement.

During this period, the teachers prepared themselves for the approaching reorganisation. Miss Walker and Miss Freeman were amongst 43 teachers from Sutton Coldfield who attended a Refresher Course on Dramatic Play at Llandudno run by the Board of Education. In their own words, they felt *"it was a privilege to go"*<sup>3</sup>. July 1938 saw three members of staff attend a Practical Arithmetic Exhibition.

The end of the Green Lanes Infants Council School as a separate entity came on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1938. The school closed with 178 children on the books, 29 years after opening. Miss Freeman wrote the final entry –

*"We break up today for the summer holidays and this is the end of Green Lanes Infants as such. Reorganisation is taking place and this department is being incorporated in Green Lanes Junior School. 12 children have left to attend Mason's Orphanage School (in Erdington) and two go to private schools."*<sup>3</sup>

During its lifetime, over 1000 children passed through the school, receiving their education under the guidance of two Headteachers, these being assisted by no fewer than 21 teachers.



Infant Classes in the 1920s

## Chapter VIII Green Lanes Junior and Infants Mixed School

### Its inception

In 1929, the year in which the first Headmistress of the Infants School, Mrs. Hardman, resigned and retired, the initial steps were taken towards the eventual amalgamation of the Green Lanes Infants and the Green Lanes Boys Schools.

At a meeting of the Education Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1929, a Sub-Committee reported back to the main body. This group was set up in response to Circular 1397 of the Board of Education received by the Corporation in September of the previous year. The encyclical required Sutton Coldfield, along with other Local Education Authorities, to submit to the Board a programme of Educational development within their schools following the recommendation of a Consultative Committee which had presented the Hadow Report. The Hadow Committee, which published its conclusions in 1926, believed that secondary education should be provided for all children and that there should be a minimum leaving age of 15 years.

To achieve this, it was felt desirable for there to be a break at 11 years so that all children could begin a new stage in their education. To gain a greater benefit from these proposals, it was suggested that Senior classes should be no larger than 40 and Junior and Infant classes reduced to a maximum of 50 children.

The Sub-Committee having "*given long and careful consideration to the question of reorganisation*"<sup>24</sup> decided that the "*accommodation was insufficient even with the present Scholars up to 14 years of age and the inclusion of these up to 15 years of age, makes this quite impossible*"<sup>24</sup>.

At the same Education Committee meeting, a report from the Town Clerk was presented with certain, unminuted, proposals and these were recommended for adoption. It seems likely that they were subsequently submitted to the Board of Education before the end of the year, as had been requested. By February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1930, the Board had replied and commented on the scheme presented to them.

The Board suggested that the Green Lanes Schools should be used as a Mixed Senior School which they felt was a viable alternative to converting and adapting Boldmere Girls School as a Senior Girls School. They recommended *“the possibility of extending the present Green Lanes Boys’ School by the addition of two or three classrooms & adapting the premises for use as a Senior Mixed School for the district”*<sup>20</sup>.

Statistically, this suggestion was feasible. In the Boys’ School, there were 9 classrooms and in the Infants School there were 4 more rooms. If each could accommodate 40 scholars, then this gave a total of 520 places. The suggested figures of children who would attend the new Mixed Senior School were 235 boys and 209 girls, a total of 444 pupils. This allowed a surplus of 76 places for future expansion.

The Committee, however, was not in favour of this option for several reasons. They were against mixed Senior classes, especially as the leaving age was being raised to 15. There were other difficulties, too - the need for separate playgrounds for boys and girls, the unavailability of a new site for the Infants School, the need for a room to teach Science and Domestic Subjects and the problems of providing accommodation for midday meals.

Although no further response appears to have come from the Board at this time, the Reorganisation Sub-Committee was not disbanded. In December 1931, its members met with His Majesty’s Inspectors to further discuss the question of reorganising schools in the Boldmere and New Oscott Districts. Not until 1933 was the subject seriously considered again by the Sub-Committee who felt that the matter should be reopened and, to this end, they appointed a sectional sub-committee to submit another Scheme.

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1934, the Sub-Committee presented its proposals in the form of a wordy report. After an assessment of the present situation regarding school accommodation in the Boldmere and New Oscott area, they were *“of the opinion that a new block of buildings for elementary school purposes should be erected in the vicinity of the present Boldmere Girls and Infants Schools”*.<sup>20</sup> They further suggested the building of new Senior Girls and Senior Boys Schools to the rear of the existing Boldmere Schools.

The building of these schools would mean the closure of the New Oscott (Princess Alice Orphanage) School together with the Boldmere Girls and Boldmere Infants Schools. It also meant that the earlier plans put forward by the Board of Education to turn the Green Lanes Schools into a Senior Mixed School were finally abandoned.

The Sub-Committee felt it would be best if the *“existing Green Lanes Schools .... be used for the accommodation of Junior Mixed Scholars and Infants residing in the district south St. Michaels’ Church Boldmere”*<sup>20</sup>.

Later in that year, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1934, notice was published of the proposal to erect new schools at Boldmere and, in January 1935, sketch plans were placed before the Board of Education for the provision of school accommodation in the Boldmere District. These plans clearly showed the intention to reorganise the Green Lanes Schools into a junior mixed and infant department.

It was not until July 1938, that further mention was made of the work needed to adapt the old Boys and Infants schools. The Education Committee met and approved the plans. The agreement of the Board of Education was then sought for the necessary expenditure incurred in the alterations. The Committee voted to accept the tender of a Mr Blackband at a later meeting with an estimated cost of £1361. The plans showing the modifications are now in the care of the Birmingham Education Committee.

The plans are interesting as they show quite clearly how the two separate schools were to be amalgamated. The intention was that the former Boys School would become the main teaching block whilst the Infants School was intended to have more specialist facilities. The staffroom was improved by the addition of a better toilet, leading off the room. The Headteacher’s room received a new fireplace. There were to be 6 classrooms plus a *“Babies”* Room. This consisted of the two classrooms built in 1906 and separated by a screen, but its name was soon changed to the Infants Playroom.

The classroom nearest the open cloakroom, and formerly used as a Science Room, became the Girls and Infants Cloakrooms with the help of moveable cloak rails and it was provided with a glazed screen at the entrance to the main Boys cloakroom.

A covered way was built to join the two buildings together, doors removed and refitted to allow this and, opposite the Boys' cloakroom, there were to be toilets for the girls and the infants. Fencing which once divided the playgrounds was removed and a brick screen wall built to provide a degree of privacy to the outside boys' toilets.

In order that a passage could be provided into the old Infants' School, the teachers' room lost its doors and fireplace (although their remains could still be seen in the 1980s) and the former Marching Corridor was to be used as a Music Room. It was intended that the four classrooms should each have a distinct use. The end room was to be an Art Studio; the two central rooms with a dividing screen were to become Arithmetic and Nature areas while the remaining room, later converted into the school kitchen, was to be for handwork lessons.

These, then, were the main alterations proposed for the new School. As might be expected, there were several other smaller items, including a door and steps leading from the Infants' playroom into the playground. It was also intended to utilise the Boys' Hall, the site of the 1840 Schoolroom, as the Assembly Hall - the focus of the School which could constantly be under the eye of the Headteacher, whose room had its window still looking out onto the Hall.

It is not clear to what extent all these ideas were implemented. The opportunities afforded by the "*Specialist*" rooms would be ones which would have been warmly welcomed by teachers in the days when it became a Combined School as they struggled to make the most of the craft, science and domestic science facilities crammed into the old Manual Craft Centre across the road. This building was used for other purposes for several years after the new School was formed.

The final mention by the Committee of the work undertaken at Green Lanes came on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, when they minuted that "*the work is in progress and on completion the school will be recognized as providing accommodation for 428 juniors mixed and infant children*"<sup>21</sup>.

Interior Photos of the Manual Crafts Centre



1924



Mr. Pemberton with class 1920



## Chapter IX Green Lanes Junior and Infants Mixed School

On Thursday September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938, the Green Lanes Council School No.2. opened with a roll of 182 children, drawn from the old Infants & Boys Schools and a number from Boldmere Girls School. The staff were –

<i>Ellen Freeman</i>	-	<i>Head Teacher</i>
<i>Alexander Maddison</i>	-	<i>Certificated Teacher</i>
<i>Winifred Walker</i>	-	<i>Un-Certificated Teacher</i>
<i>Dorothy Jones</i>	-	<i>Certificated Teacher</i>
<i>Beryl Hughes</i>	-	<i>Certificated Teacher</i>
<i>Mary Townrow</i>	-	<i>Certificated Teacher</i>

The first few weeks were hectic as children and staff settled into the new classrooms, necessitating the moving of books, cupboards and equipment. The chaos was further increased by the decision to close the Infants Department building at the end of September. This was due to the threat of war which was now beginning to loom over the country and it upset the arrangements which had only just been put into operation.

October 19<sup>th</sup> was the day on which the Boldmere Schools were officially opened and the Green Lane School closed for an Occasional Holiday.

Even though the old buildings had needed improvements for some years to co-locate the Junior School, the builders did not arrive until January 1939 to carry out the work. Consequently, the school continued to suffer further upheaval and the timetable was altered.

In consultation with the H.M.I., Miss Loveday, the Infants were to go home at 3.30 p.m. and the Juniors at 4.00 p.m. An outbreak of chicken pox affecting 25 children did not make matters easier.

The alterations continued during the early part of the year, the cloakrooms being decorated in February, for example, and it was finally all completed by March 31<sup>st</sup> when there was a return to normal timetabling. Some items were still outstanding and, in May, pictures and staffroom furniture were delivered. The removal of the Teachers' Room in the former Infants building to provide access to the classrooms, meant that the staff and Headteacher utilised the rooms from the Boys' School.

Across the road from the main buildings, the Manual Centre had been left disused for nearly a year following the reorganisation. At an Education Committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1939, its future was discussed and it was decided to let the Centre *“for religious meetings subject to the tenancy being given up on short notice in the event of a national emergency”* <sup>21</sup>. As this happened on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, when the premises were occupied by the Air Raid Precautions Authority, the arrangements may not have been implemented.

Thus, the School played a small part in the war effort. When hostilities ceased, the Education Committee used the building for a Handicraft Centre until pressures in the Junior School for increased accommodation led to it being taken over once more for educational purposes.

The first academic year for the Junior and Infant School ended on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1939, shortly after the school sports had been held. During the week, the children had been given a taste of the troubled years which lay ahead. All of them were taught how to fit and remove their gas masks by the staff - the threat of war was rapidly becoming a horrifying reality.

## **The War Years**

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, the teachers assembled at school but no children attended as war had been declared. The installation of the telephone during the holiday allowed a rota to be initiated by the staff, one of whom remained on duty for each session during the week to take telephone messages and deal with enquiries.

During the next week, every home was visited and parents were invited to send their children each morning so that they could have their milk. These arrangements continued for several weeks but were slowly refined and extended. When the Infant children came for their milk, for example, they stayed to read to their teachers and the Juniors were given the opportunity to change books in the school library. Additionally, two members of staff travelled to the Princess Alice Orphanage (now replaced by a retail park) to teach the Juniors who lived there.

By the end of the month, assignments of work and circular letters were distributed to the older children, while infants who did not come in for their milk received a home visit. Nine of the boys did 2 hours of gardening one afternoon and a photograph of this activity apparently shows that some of this work was performed in a neighbouring garden.

Variations were made to the arrangements in October. The infants were organised into four groups and these took it in turns to meet at two houses, one in Lime Grove and the other in Green Lanes. Similar centres were set up for the Juniors and, by late October, 14 houses were in use.

Normal school recommenced on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, by which time the trenches for the air raid shelters were usable, although incomplete. The numbers were increased by a decision to transfer the Junior aged children from the Princess Alice Orphanage. There were 68 of these, together with 12 children who had been voluntarily evacuated. Despite the entrances not being finished, the pupils tested the trenches in early November and had constant gas mask drill.

The Pastor of the Chester Road Baptist Church approached the Education Committee in December for permission to use the buildings on Sunday afternoons for Sunday Schools but the Committee denied the request, giving no reason for the decision.

The winter of 1940 was very severe and, on 29<sup>th</sup> January, the snowfall was so heavy that only 31 children arrived and, after consulting the Office, the school was closed. When Wednesday came the numbers were down to 23 and the school closed for the remainder of the week. The attendance figures recorded –

*“No. on books 287      Av. in attend 29      10%”<sup>4</sup>*

By the next Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 90 struggled in but their efforts were in vain for the school could not open due to insufficient heating coke. Lost days were made up to some extent in May when the Government cancelled the Whitsun Holiday and education continued during the week. As the war progressed, more evacuees were admitted to the School. Twenty-one children came from the Sheringham branch of the National Children’s Home Orphanage in June.



Digging for Victory!



Late 1950s Infant Class?

No more were mentioned until July 1944, when a further 25 were received. To assist with the increased numbers, an evacuated teacher, Miss Olive Warton from Turnham L.C.C. School in London, joined the staff. When she departed, in December 1944, her place was eventually taken by a Mrs. Hilda Ricketts, formerly of Monson Road Infant Dept., London.

Meanwhile, 1940 continued to be a year of turmoil. The summer holiday was curtailed and the new academic year commenced on August 12<sup>th</sup>. During that week, there were two air raids and, as a result, attendances on the following days were affected. The night-time raids also meant delays in beginning the morning sessions and, when these raids occurred, then school did not open until 10 o'clock. At the end of August, there was a further week's holiday and on their return the children were, like many others throughout the country, thrown into the war as an increasing number of air raids began to influence school life even more.

Every one of the raids that happened during the school day were recorded by Miss Freeman in the Log Book. During mid-November, the school opened on three days at 10.00 a.m. and, on a Wednesday, the afternoon session did not start until 2.30 p.m.

The trenches were occupied at these times in that one week –

<i>Monday</i>	<i>12.5 p.m. – 12.40, 3.5 p.m. – 4 p.m.</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>12.45 - 2.25, 4.5 - 5.5 p.m.</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>9.45 a.m. - 10.25 a.m.</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>4.00 p.m. - 4.40 p.m.</i>

Miss Freeman undertook a simple statistical exercise connected with the raids and calculated that during the fortnight, November 22<sup>nd</sup> to December 6<sup>th</sup>, the children would have spent 9978<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hours in school in total and of that, 572 hrs. 52 minutes were spent in the trenches.

The constant upheavals caused the opening hours to be amended at least twice. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1940, the sessions were 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon, 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. but, in May 1941, the hours were altered and the morning session lasted from 9.30 to 12.30 while the afternoon session began at 2.00 and ended at 4.00 for the Infants and 4.30 for the Juniors.

Life in the trenches was an indelible experience for both staff and children. The underground shelters were built in a zigzag form and ran the entire length of the main playground. Each entrance was covered by giant wooden sleepers which, when removed, revealed concrete steps leading down into the refuges. The decision to build the trenches was taken in July 1939 and it was designed to provide accommodation for 200 children (a number which was grossly exceeded) at a cost of £660. The only improvement, which apparently was made, came in October 1941 when the Board of Education approved the expenditure of £110 to provide electric lighting in them, the cost being met by a 100% grant from the Government.

Whenever an air raid siren sounded out its warning, the entire school would leave the building to enter the shelters. The wooden planks were removed by members of staff and replaced once the children were inside. A former teacher, who taught at the School during the war years, recalled that they were *“ill-it, cold and damp – bare - with just narrow wooden benches on which we sat, along the walls”* <sup>51</sup>. Practices enabled the children to familiarise themselves with the conditions and the place which they were expected to occupy.

The teachers carried with them a haversack, containing a torch, a bag of sweets and the registers, while the children would take their coats and gas masks. Once inside, they were counted and checked. To keep their minds off the activity above them, the classes would hold simple *“concerts”* which would include songs and nursery rhymes, poetry, riddles, jokes and items of news. Younger children would have their stories told to them as reading was difficult, particularly before lighting had been installed.

When the “all-clear” sounded, the children would either return to their classroom or were dismissed to go to their own homes. On one occasion, the “all-clear” was not heard and it was only after some delay that Miss Freeman gave Mrs. White, one of the teachers, permission to enter the building to telephone the Office. She was quickly informed that they had missed the signal!

Remarkably the children, as they so often are, were extremely sensible. No one showed fear or caused any problem of discipline and so the periods spent underground were less difficult for the teachers than they might have been.

Apart from their experiences down the shelters, there were many other reminders of the war which they had to face and come to terms with, not least when hearing of the death of someone near to them.

The School participated fully in raising funds for the War effort. Children were issued with National Savings Cards which contained an ugly face of Hitler, marked into squares. By purchasing stamps, the pupils were encouraged to “*Stamp out Hitler*”. In Warship Week, held in December 1941, they raised £262-7-0 in savings.

One year later, the classes received a visit from a Mr. Ralph who was employed by the Ministry of Supply. His purpose was to tell the children how they could support a “*Books for the Forces*” drive. May 1943 saw a truly magnificent effort when a grand total of £551-14-0 was raised during the Wings for Victory Week. Even now this figure would be considered a very creditable target.

In 1944, a goal of £200 in one week was set for the sale of Saving Stamps and Certificates. Not only was this objective reached, but when the money was added up it came to a staggering £781-6-0! Since the visit of Mr. Ralph, books for the forces had continued to be collected and when the campaign closed, in June 1945, the grand total stood at 22,004 volumes.

All these statistics served to underline that the Green Lanes Junior and Infant School played a very full part in Sutton Coldfield’s contribution towards the support of the Armed Forces. As an indirect consequence of the war, a new scheme was introduced into school life in November 1943.

Workmen had arrived in the previous July to begin alterations to the cloakroom in preparation for school dinners. The first meals were served on November 9<sup>th</sup> and, to assist with the distribution of the food, three members of staff were on duty each day together with three helpers. The number of meals served in the week were –

<i>Tuesday</i>	94
<i>Wednesday</i>	109
<i>Thursday</i>	117
<i>Friday</i>	109

The meals were not cooked on the premises but were delivered each day in containers from a central kitchen (the school's own kitchen was still several years away). The arrangements were quite successful, apart from one day in May 1944, when, to the children's dismay, the food did not arrive until 1.30 p.m. and this necessitated a ten-minute delay to the start of the afternoon session.

When Victory came in 1945, the School closed for two days in May to celebrate the Victory in Europe and two days were added to the autumn break for the Victory in Japan.

It was not until June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1946 that the school fully celebrated the Victory. A happy day for all the children including this programme:

*Thanksgiving service at Emmanuel Church*

*Milk and long play*

*Punch and Judy show*

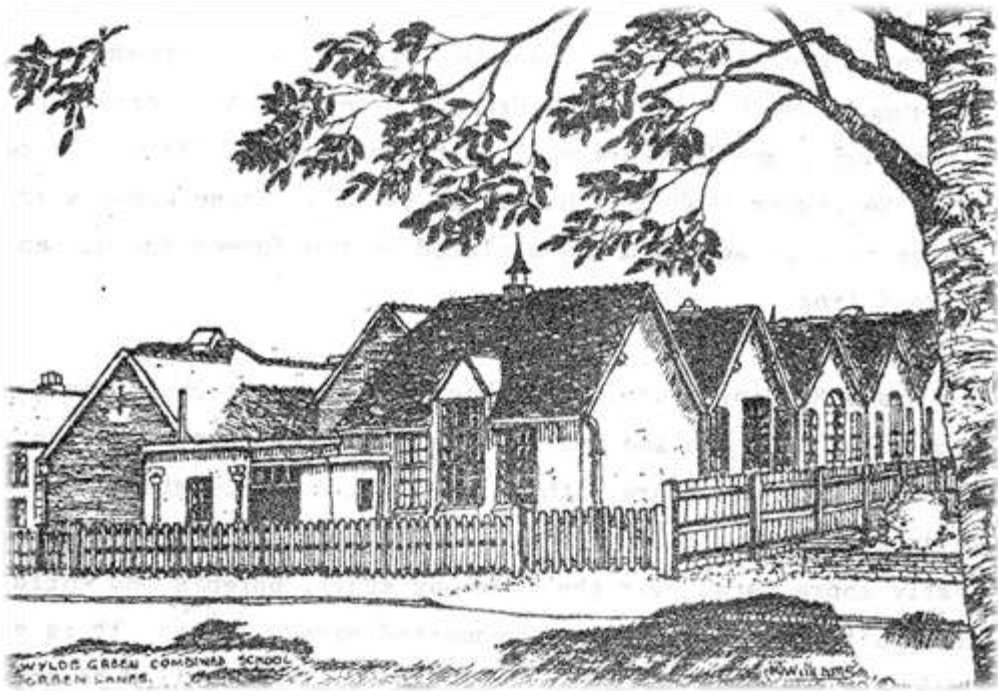
*Fancy Dress Judging by the Mayoress - Mrs. Gibb*

*Fancy Dress parade in the playground*

*Victory Tea.*

The end of the day symbolised the conclusion of the School's involvement in the Second World War and, as things began to return to normal, the memories of those times spent in the trenches, gas mask drills and other daily reminders of the dangerous times which they had shared, gradually faded in the minds of the staff and children.





Sketch by Ken Williams



Mr. K. Elliott with a 1950s Class

## Chapter X The Post-war Years

The new era in the story of the School began with the ending of the hostilities. As the years passed, greater changes occurred amongst the Headteachers, staff, curriculum and many other facets of school life than had taken place in the previous 100 years. One sign of this was the retirement of Miss Winfred Walker, a teacher who had begun her links with the school back in 1925 under the leadership of Mrs. Hardman in the old Infant School. Her departure was a sad loss to all.

One classroom had been used throughout the war as an Emergency Food Storage Room and, in 1947, workmen decorated it, removing another memory of the conflict. Shortly after this, an Occasional Day's Holiday celebrated the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Phillip.

In contrast to modern practice, decorating tended to be undertaken during the holidays and the hall was painted during the 1948 Christmas break while the classrooms were decorated in the summer vacation. The closure of the New Oscott School at Princess Alice Orphanage and the subsequent transfer of 34 children to Green Lanes imposed a greater strain on the buildings. 10 years earlier, there had been 184 on the registers but, by September 1949, this had risen to 455. These numbers required 13 classes to cope and Form 1 was placed in the former Manual Centre, across the road from the main building.

Mrs. J. Redding, the first School Secretary, took up her duties on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1950 and she was able to give the school a smooth and efficient administration necessary with so many children now attending.

Like all her successors, she played an invaluable role and they have all been greatly appreciated over the years by staff, parents and children for their calm proficiency and their warm-hearted personalities. It is said that nobody is indispensable but this could never be applied to school secretaries who are a credit to the schools and to themselves.

The title of Deputy Headteacher came into being around this time and the first holder of the post at Green Lanes was a Mr. Kenneth Elliott. He joined the staff in September 1946 and departed in March 1951 to become the Headteacher of Minworth School. He became a much-respected figure in Sutton Coldfield and later served for many years as the Headmaster of Falcon Lodge School.

The Scholars were given two opportunities to see members of the Royal Family in the early 1950s. The Juniors walked to Jockey Road and cheered as the Princess Royal passed by in November 1950 and, in May 1951, they were taken to see Princess Margaret who was visiting the British Industries Fair at Castle Bromwich. The death of the King in February 1952, was marked by a week of special prayers and the oldest children travelled to King Edwards Square on February 8<sup>th</sup> to hear Princess Elizabeth proclaimed Queen.

A significant occasion occurred in July 1952. One Thursday afternoon, the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Sports of the Sutton Coldfield Sports Association were held at Princess Alice. One of the organisers recalled that the morning was spent digging the pit for the long jump, filling it with sand and then having to return it to its original state at the end of the day. This is a far cry from the sports days which for many years were later held in the beautiful surroundings of the Wyndley Leisure Centre with its admirable facilities.

Unfortunately, the results were not recorded in the Log Book so it is not known how successful the athletes were.

The terrible flood of 1953 brought an immediate response from the pupils and they collected gifts of clothing and money for the victims. In mid-February, their kindness was rewarded by visit from the Mayor who thanked them for raising £36-17-6 towards his Appeal.

Much of the first half of 1953 was devoted to the happiest of events which took place - the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. The celebrations began in March when nine children were taken to Sutton Park and helped to plant trees in the Coronation Coppice, now a beautiful mature area of woodland overlooking Longmoor Pool.

Rehearsals took place over the next few weeks for the school's part in the Coronation Pageant, the dress rehearsal being held on the Pageant Site in Sutton Park in May. The Queen was portrayed by a pupil from Green Lanes School. Shortly after this, the lovely Coronation beakers were distributed to the children. The festivities, held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, were slightly spoiled by poor weather but this did not prevent the children from the various Schools travelling to the Park to participate in the Infants' and Juniors' contribution to the entertainment. Afterwards tea was served in the old Crystal Palace, where Wyndley Leisure Centre is now sited. From all accounts, everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable time and also gave their parents a splendid parade at the School. In the middle of the month, 473 pupils went to the Pavilion Picture House, which was situated at the junction of Gravelly Lane and Chester Road, where they watched the film "*A Queen is Crowned*". It was a special treat, the cost being met out of School Fund.

At the end of a hectic term, a Doctor Brown and a Mrs. Lane came to present a beautiful reference Bible, a gift from the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations in Sutton Coldfield and designed to commemorate the Coronation.

Unluckily for Green Lanes, Mr. Chester departed on July 24<sup>th</sup> having been on the staff since April 1951. He had been the Deputy Headteacher, following Mr. Elliott, but had now gained promotion to become Headteacher of Hill Boys School. Interestingly he followed a former Headteacher of Green Lanes Boys School, Mr. Prothero, who had recently retired from Hill School after a long and distinguished career.

A fire in the boiler room after school in May 1954 brought the fire engine racing from the station but, by the time they arrived, the situation was under control and they only needed to satisfy themselves that all was safe. The new playing fields were used for the first time in 1955. They were originally situated partway down Green Lanes and the boys of Form 1 could now play cricket, the first of thousands of children who would walk to and from the school for their games lessons over the next few years, before a playing field was provided adjacent to the school. Placed where houses once used to be, it is not surprising that the present field has sometimes revealed old foundations. The first field later became a small housing estate.



1953 Coronation Pageant in Sutton Park  
and in the School Grounds



Miss Ellen Freeman retired from her position as Headteacher on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1957 after spending 28 years in charge of a school which went through great upheavals. At the outset, there were a little over 100 children in the Infants School, but by the time she left the numbers had risen to more than 500.

This increase also meant more teachers, which in turn led to a larger turnover in those members of staff and this was a process which was to accelerate as the school moved towards the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Miss Freeman's retirement was sad for both children and staff to whom she had devoted so much of her time.

The arrival of Miss E. H. Slarke in September 1957 heralded a change of emphasis in the school ethos, and she introduced many innovations into school life. These ranged from introducing a new uniform to the placing of flower boxes along the walls of the building to enhance its appearance. In fact, Floral Art Competitions became a tradition through the Headteacher's interest. Miss Slarke was a keen member of the Soroptimists' organisation and this, together with other activities, led to increased diversity in the projects undertaken by the children.

In her first term, pupils brought in used toys to donate to refugees and they took part in a special Assembly. A repeat of this project was held over a ten-day period in March 1960. Just after this, the children took an active part in World Children's Day. They had a talk given by the Co-Secretary of the Sutton Coldfield branch of the United Nations Association. The School Prefects, a system introduced by Miss Slarke, arranged an exhibition of foreign stamps, posters, dolls and souvenirs. Others wrote to children in several countries to offer them appropriate greetings. When a similar venture took place in the following year, parents were invited into the Junior Hall to see an Exhibition of work. This was based on a project and included written material, art, plans and models which illustrated the life of the children at home, school, in the neighbourhood and in the country. The entire display was later packed, sent to London and forwarded to an overseas school in India, Africa or Latin America.

Coinciding with the exhibition, Miss Slarke gave a talk entitled "*Education in a Primary School for a World Community*" which was a resume of a lecture which she had previously given to a group of teachers in London.

In July, a display of books road needed for the School Library encouraged 38 parents to purchase ones in which their child's name was entered on presentation label.

A discussion, following a visit by local school meals organisers, led to a decision to build an on-site kitchen. The interior of one classroom was to be rebuilt while the two adjoining rooms were to provide a Dining Hall. In September, after a meeting of the architect, builder and School Meals Organiser, work commenced on the facilities.

The first meals cooked and served on the premises were eaten by the children on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1959, ending the system which had operated since 1943 in which meals were cooked at a central kitchen and transported to Green Lanes.

John J. Potter, a former pupil of the school, was installed as Mayor of Sutton Coldfield in 1960 and, at his invitation, an excited group of 12 scholars accompanied Miss Slarke to the Mayor's Parlour on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1960. After touring the Parlour, Council Chamber and Committee Rooms, they were shown the Insignia and Civil Plate belonging to the Corporation. To round off the afternoon they were treated to some refreshments.

In return, the school, which was now officially known as Wylde Green County Junior and Infants School, presented the Mayor with a silver letter tray in April 1961. The money to purchase it was raised by pupils and it was inscribed –

*“Presented to the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield by the pupils of Wylde Green County Primary School to commemorate the Mayoral year of Councillor John J. Potter, a former pupil of the school.”*

The academic year had been very successful and, through an entry into a national “*Safety First*” Art and English Competition, the children gained five awards, including First Prize. The presentation of these was made in December 1960.

During Miss Slarke's Headship, the staff of the school saw many changes, not only in the new emphasis within the curriculum, but also amongst themselves. Since the war, an ever-increasing staff saw constant changes as new members joined and others departed to further their careers.

Miss Joyce Brown, who had come to Green Lanes in 1945, left in 1958 while her colleague, Mrs. F. E. Roe, left in 1959 after 12 years' service. When Mr. R. Barlow, the Deputy Headteacher, departed in 1960, he was succeeded by Mr. B. H. Parker, who became Headteacher of Orpington School in 1963.

Miss Slarke moved from Green Lanes in April 1962, having been Headmistress for just under five years, a much shorter period than her predecessors. Yet this only highlighted a trend in education since the Second World War.

Whereas at one time it was not unknown for teachers to remain at one school for their entire career (and there are examples of these at Green Lanes – Mr. James Cramp and Mr. Allen Jones), now there is much greater mobility of teachers within the various establishments.

The change has come about through more promotion prospects, together with an increased number of teachers, many of whom feel that experience gained in a variety of schools helps to improve the quality of their teaching. In this respect, Miss Slarke highlighted this transition and it is not surprising to find that there were four further changes in the leadership of the school during the next twenty years.

Miss Slarke's successor as Headteacher of Wylde Green County Primary School was Mr. Thomas Lawson who took up his duties in April 1962. Like his predecessor, he was responsible for several innovations. Cycling Proficiency Tests were introduced and children were given the training for these as early as May 1962.

In September, the Home and School Association was instituted at an inaugural meeting held in the hall and attended by nearly 200 parents. Within a few weeks, they provided a magnificent stage with curtains, pelmets and entrances designed to fit into one end of the hall. (a feature of the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in 1980 was the decision to re-erect the curtains by the Home and School Association after they have been kept in storage for several years).

The size of the school made it difficult to see the children performing and the Harvest Festival was repeated three times to accommodate as many as possible.



Staff members were able to visit an Infant School in Bilston to see for themselves sets of arithmetic apparatus, invented by Cuisenaire, which were being used by the children. Its subsequent introduction into Wylde Green was one of several changes which were to affect and alter the curriculum and teaching methods used by the staff. Workmen returned to move the screen, which had been used to provide a partition at one end of the school where the girls' cloakroom had been placed in a classroom back in 1938, and they rebuilt it in the annexe so that two classes could be taught there.

The door which once gave access from the large cloakroom to the girls' cloakroom, became the entrance to a stockroom built behind giving much needed storage space. Despite these alterations, more teaching rooms were required and the Dining Room was utilised.

The worst weather since 1947 arrived in a blizzard which gripped the country in 1963. It affected the outside toilets, freezing pipes, and all the children had to make do with the internal toilets which were intended for the youngest children. The toilets were later fitted with heaters to prevent a recurrence.

The stage was used to good effect. In April 1963, "*Snow White*" was performed over several nights and other productions followed in the next few years. An open shed in the junior playground was partly enclosed to store the stage blocks. More rooms were needed and first one "terrapien' classroom, and then another, were squeezed in on land behind the annexe.

One relatively short-lived tradition introduced by Mr. Lawson involved a week's visit to Paignton. The first of these, in 1963, included 43 children and 5 staff. Educational trips by the entire junior school began in 1964 when 280 children, 130 parents and all the teachers visited Chester. A trip to Wicksteed Park filled 10 coaches and must have been a tremendous undertaking.

Mr. Lawson was startled by a telephone account which he was sent in June 1965, for it showed that a call had been made to Londonderry at 8.10 p.m. on 7<sup>th</sup> of May. Despite efforts to trace its source, the mystery caller could not be discovered and the GPO kindly agreed to deduct the charge.

The layout of the buildings at the time of the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary incorporated a series of alterations over a long period of time with the last major changes being made in the Summer Holiday of 1965. The Headmaster's Office was re-sited in what had been the stockroom for the Infants' School, whilst the art and craft materials were now stored in the old office. Power points were installed in each of the rooms – just in time as the school obtained a television in early September.

Repairs made to the Junior Hall included renewal of the high windows on the south side. What had once been the entrance to the infant school (and its impressive sandstone portal can still be seen from Little Green Lanes) was converted into an office for Mrs. Rimmer, the secretary, who was paid 3s 9p per hour when she joined the school in 1959.

She had to endure the continued use of the entrance by visitors until the large doors were replaced by a window and brick wall. No longer did the Headmaster and secretary need to share the same office as they were obliged to do when it was sited at the other end of the hall.

The cramped, inadequate staffroom was enlarged by absorbing the former office now that it was no longer in use. The window overlooking the Hall from which all the Headteachers could view the movements and activities of their charges was boarded up, along with the fireplace, and the whole room redecorated (March 1967).

Mr. Lawson applied for a year's leave of absence and, when this was granted in 1966, he left to undertake a period of study. The task of running the Primary School fell to his deputy, Mr. W. Jones.

The Home and School Association (H.S.A) purchased blackout curtains for the canteen costing £100 and major alterations were made to the kitchen. The work took all of the Summer Holidays, as well as the first weeks of the Autumn Term, to complete and arrangements were made for meals to be cooked at Tile Cross and transported to Wylde Green. Once a serving hatch had been fitted, the kitchen was redecorated and the dinner service was resumed.

At the end of his course, Mr. Lawson did not return to Wylde Green but decided, instead, to take a post as a lecturer at Coventry Teacher Training College. While his successor was being appointed, Mr. Jones continued as the Acting Headteacher until November 1967 when Mr. John Stones, the new Head, commenced duties. Mr. Jones remained as Deputy until 1969 when he was appointed as Headteacher of Shuttington County Primary School.

It had been obvious for several years that Wylde Green could not continue to accommodate the numbers now attending in satisfactory conditions. By April 1967, there were 563 children on the registers. Plans were therefore implemented for the building of a new school in Berwood Road, just off Penns Lane, to alleviate the overcrowding in Wylde Green. While Penns County Primary School was being constructed, its Headteacher, Mr. R. Ledger, was offered facilities at the old school as his base during the early part of 1968. At the end of the Spring term, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 135 children were transferred along with their teachers to Penns School. In the log book Mr. Stones recorded – *“Many expressions of regret were voiced and Mr. Ledger and his staff (all from this school) were given our best wishes and assurances of our active help whenever this was called for”*.

The Summer Term began on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and Wylde Green now had 433 pupils, 11 full-time, 4 part-time teachers and the Infant helper, Mrs. McMinim. Already the staff were preparing themselves for another educational change as the Sutton Coldfield system was changed over to First and Middle Schools which meant that the age of transfer to secondary schools would now be for children of 12 years. Mr. Stones was heavily involved in the preparation of a French audio-visual Course designed to assist colleagues making ready for the requirements of the Middle School pupils. He was also Chairman of two important committees – the Curriculum Development Group and the Sutton Coldfield Teachers' Centre Management Committee.

A successful venture by a group of children and staff was a weekend spent at Bakewell Youth Hostel in 1970. Other items of interest in that year included the fitting of false ceilings to the Main Hall and the Annexe classrooms, plus a visit by the author of the Bobby Brewster series, H.E. Todd, who talked to the children about writing books and telling stories.



Miss Slarke and staff circa 1960



Mr Stones and staff circa 1970

Wylde Green School acquired one of its most valuable assets in 1972 when, with the money raised by the H.S.A. and supplemented by an interest-free loan from the Borough and Charities Education Sub-Committee, they could purchase a minibus. The diversity of activity undertaken by the staff and children could now be quite substantial.

The next change to the school was implemented on September 5, 1972 when it became a Combined First and Middle School but, unfortunately, promised extra facilities had not been commenced. The annexe was to be converted into a Unit offering the opportunity to teach craft, science and domestic science subjects. The present playing field was prepared and no longer did the classes need to walk down Green Lanes to play their games.

Mr. Stones was appointed as Headteacher of Topcliffe Primary School in July 1974 and his replacement, Mr. Edgar Davies, took charge in January 1975. Mr. Davies felt that an alteration in opening hours would be beneficial and the lunch break for the Middle School classes ended at 1.00 p.m., half an hour earlier than had been customary. This meant that the entire school finished the afternoon session at 3.30 p.m. and parents appreciated the opportunity of collecting their families at the same time.

In March, 200 trees were planted in the garden behind the unit and these were later to be planted in Sutton Park to help replace ones which had been lost in the drought of 1976, as well as improving the school grounds. Spring Flower Shows were also introduced.

The buildings were beginning to show their age and, in 1975, contractors were called in to check ceilings after 1 yd.<sup>2</sup> of plaster fell to the floor in the classrooms. The ceilings were inspected and declared safe, but this was not to be for, just after this, part of the Main Hall ceiling collapsed. Urgent repairs were then carried out as the problem was found to be much worse than they had originally thought.

September saw the introduction of a House system in Wylde Green and the four patron saints were chosen – Andrew, George, David and Patrick. Competitions for trophies included weekly and monthly house point totals, together with all the major sports.

In the same month, a refuse lorry fell through the wooden boards covering the steps leading into the air-raid shelters. Within a year, these had been permanently filled in with the aid of a government grant and the entire playground was resurfaced.

Mrs. Cornish, the Cook Supervisor for the past 16 years retired in 1976 and was presented with gifts from the staff and children. Also 24 children and three teachers revisited a centre in Penybontfawr, Wales, where, during a five day stay, they could study the environment in that area. The “*Great Drought*” brought almost intolerable conditions of over 100° F in the 4 mobile classrooms which were sited adjacent to the playing fields.

Mr. Davies resigned as Headteacher in April 1978 and moved to take over the Headship of a school in Lyme Regis. Mrs. Anne Dudley (who remarried and became Mrs. Baker) came to Wylde Green Combined School later in that month and, within a short while, saw the school through a most enjoyable time – the year of 1980 in which was celebrated the first 140 years of the school’s existence. At the time, there were 360 children on the registers taught by a staff of fourteen teachers, in marked contrast to its beginnings back in 1840 when Mr. Cramp commenced teaching with 20 or more pupils in the Green Lanes Boys School.



## Chapter XI The First 140 Years

The year 1980 became a memorable year for the old school, culminating in a week of activities to celebrate the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding, back in 1840.

It began with a school project based on the most beautiful asset of the town - Sutton Park. The stimulus for this was an entry by the school into a competition being run by the Friends of the Park and entitled - "*I Spy Sutton Park*".

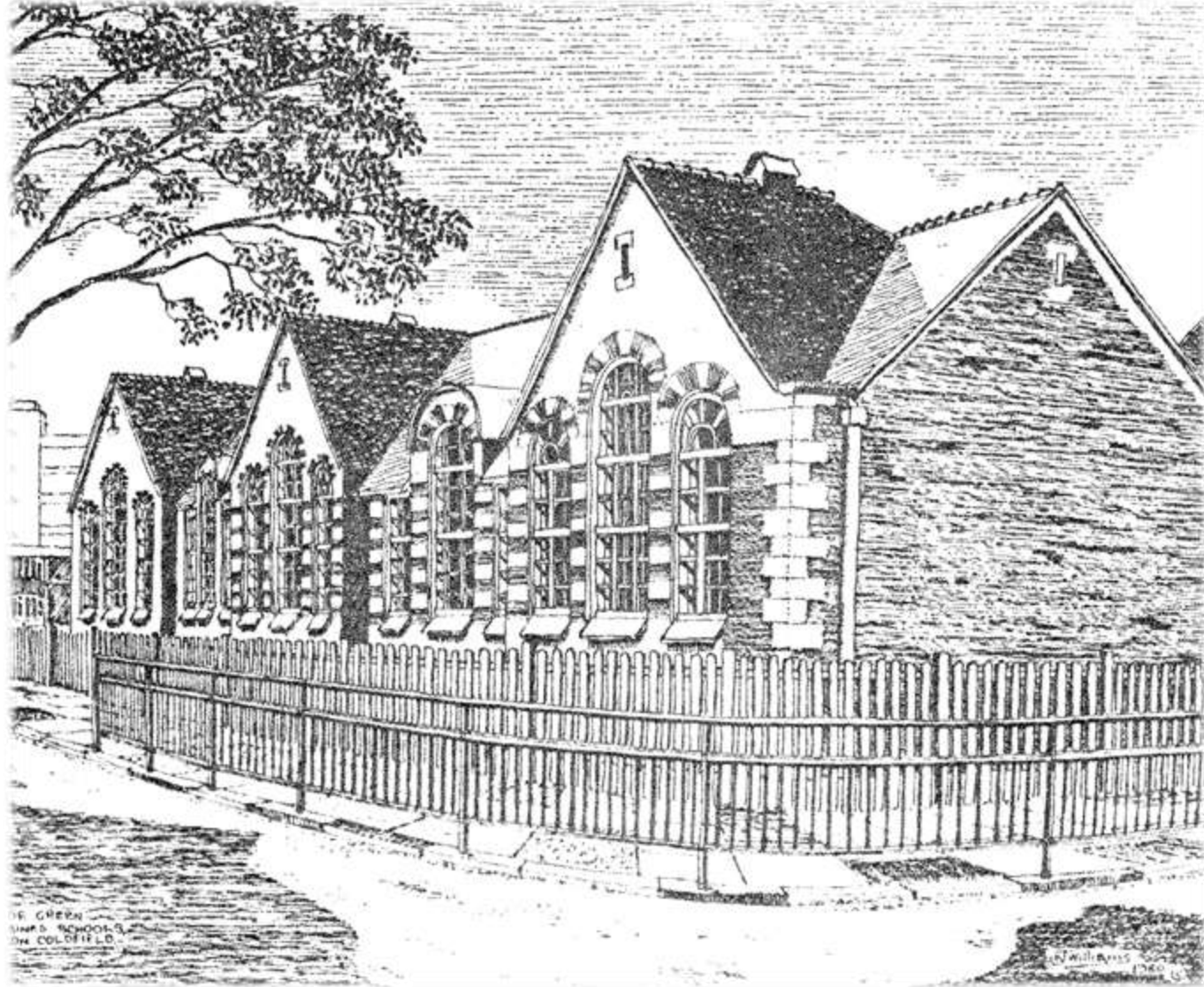
During the Spring Term, classes worked on different perspectives of the Park and, to assist them in gaining further educational experiences, a "Sutton Park Fortnight" was organised. It was centred around an exhibition of animals, photographs, documents, visual aids and many other items placed on display throughout that period in the School Hall. Assistance in putting on the Exhibition came from several sources including Sutton Coldfield's local history library, the Museum and Art Gallery and many individuals who were prepared to loan items of special interest.

The Exhibition was further enhanced by a series of talks connected with the story of the Park. Guest speakers included Douglas Jones, the local author; Peter Hillcox, the Superintendent of the Park; Leslie Evans, a natural historian and photographer; Arthur Beaumont-Jones, Chairman of the Friends of the Park Association; and Jim Davis, the Warden of the Sutton Coldfield Teachers' Centre. With the aid of slides, speakers told the children the history of the Park, its ecology, its problems and its successes.

As the term ended, the school had produced two entries for a Schools Competition - one from the First School and one from the Middle School. When the judging took place, it was with great pleasure that the school learned that the entry of the First School had won First Prize of £100. This was presented to the School at a special ceremony in May when all the exhibits were placed on display in the local library.

In the summer term, there were many successes. Another first school entry won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in a period model room competition organized by the Moat House Teachers' Centre to celebrate its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.





The School drawn in 1980 by K. J. Williams, a local history artist



One more side of the School was shown in June and would have made Mr. Prothero, the former Headmaster proud. The Athletics Team, looking splendid in their new tracksuits, purchased by the Home and School Association, improved on the previous year when they were runners-up for the Small Schools Trophy in the Sutton Coldfield Area Sports held at Wyndley Leisure Centre.

In 1980, not only did the children win the Small Schools Trophy, competed for by schools with less than 250 pupils, a very good achievement in itself, but they also beat all the 23 competing schools for the Minor Boys Shield. This trophy was awarded to 4<sup>th</sup> year Middle School boys, aged 12 years, who competed in the various events. It was a splendid victory against very much larger schools and revived memories of the successes of the former Green Lanes Boys School in the 1920s when they won trophy after trophy in football and swimming.

The final term of the year was perhaps even more exciting. Throughout the term, as classes studied the Victorian period, preparations were made for a week of activities to celebrate the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the School. A dedicated and enthusiastic band of teachers embarked on a very ambitious programme.

While these matters proceeded, other items of interest occurred. The purchase of a photocopier costing £600 in the Summer Term was followed by the addition of a video-recorder in the Autumn Term, assisted by a grant from the Sutton Coldfield Municipal Charities.

Despite some teething problems, the machine proved to be a great asset allowing more flexible timetabling and lunchtime entertainment when it was raining.

The minibus, too, received attention and the seatbacks were re-covered which considerably improved the appearance of the vehicle.

By October, the school was heavily involved in its Victorian project. The Hall was decorated from floor-to-ceiling with huge life-size paintings by the Middle School classes, while the First School decorated the library and canteen in a beautiful Christmas Theme.

The decorations ready, the School held its Christmas Fair on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Staff and parents who ran the stalls dressed in Victorian costume to advertise the forthcoming celebrations. The fair was a tremendous success and raised a record £895 – a magnificent sum, rivalling the amount raised by the annual Sponsored Walk earlier in the term.

As the time drew nearer, the stage was erected. For the first time in many years the stage curtains were used. These had been purchased by the newly-formed Home and School Association in 1963. The work of a dedicated band of parents and teachers ensured their construction in time for this special occasion.

After many hours of hard work and several meetings by the teachers, Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> arrived – the start of the Victorian Week. It began with every child, teacher, dinner lady and even the kitchen staff dressing up in period costume.

After an assembly in the hall, children moved into six rooms leading off the Hall where they stayed in groups of approximately 60 children for the remainder of the day. Then they experienced 19<sup>th</sup> century lessons given by the staff and received innumerable visits from inspectors, school managers and the press.

Altogether it was a very enjoyable, if tiring, day. Even the dinner was an appropriate fare of Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding.

At the end of the day, a party of over 100 parents, children and teachers travelled to the nearby Gracechurch Centre in Sutton Coldfield and sung carols, dressed in their costumes. In the space of 45 minutes, the sum of £48 was raised and the money was presented to the Good Hope Maternity Hospital.

On the following day, Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December, the morning was given over to a dress rehearsal of the Christmas concert "*Away, Away to School!*" before an audience comprising of the school and several senior citizens from the neighbouring home.



Wylde Green School – Victorian Week December 1980 (Author on far right)



Wylde Green School – Victorian Week December 1980 – First School pupils.

Frenzied activity during the afternoon and early evening by members of staff turned the school into a “*theatre-restaurant*” and heralded the highlight of the week. Tuesday evening was a Staff and Old Pupils’ Reunion.

Even before the doors were “open” several old boys were in the building reminiscing. The two central classrooms of 1905 were turned into an exhibition room showing photographs, plans and other documents relating to the history of the school. In addition, there was a display of Victorian artefacts and a stall selling framed prints and cards of the School. The hall was filled with groups of chairs and desks, the canteen laid for a buffet and the library utilised as a “bar”.

By half past seven, there was a crush of enthusiastic former pupils and staff attempting to enter the building and, for a while, chaos ensued. Eventually order was restored, nametags distributed, coats hung up and over 200 adults had a most enjoyable time as they sought out classrooms and classmates. The “*faggots and peas*” supper was greatly appreciated; the female teachers being ably assisted by the kitchen staff who volunteered to come and help. The bar coped well and, by 10.00 p.m., everyone was in a happy mood ready for the “entertainment” - a cabaret performed by parent members of the H.S.A. Stage nerves soon disappeared and the performance was received with tremendous enthusiasm by the audience. A raffle and words of thanks at the end were followed by emotional “Auld Lang Syne”. As people drifted home filled with revived memories and friendships, an evening of nostalgia came to its conclusion.

Performances of “*Away, Away to School!*” dominated the next two days. This was a musical play telling the story of Green Lanes School. The words, songs, music, scenery, costumes and lighting were all the results of teamwork amongst a highly enthusiastic, if exhausted, staff. The result was a marvellous, colourful and enjoyable show, much appreciated by the audiences.

The finale to the Week, held on Friday, was a costume parade by the entire school before a packed audience of parents. Each class in turn was judged for the best dressed boy and girl and presentations were made by Councillor Eames.

The oldest pupil still known to be alive, Josiah Gannaway, aged 91 years, was also present and he received a commemorative spoon signifying the 140 years of the School's history, as did every child and staff member.

It had been a grand week and one which would be remembered by all those who participated. Local newspapers gave very good coverage and photographs were taken of all the classes for the children to purchase as a memento. The Victorian Week even overflowed into the following week's traditional Carol Service at Emmanuel Church when participating children dressed again in their Victorian costumes, adding a seasonal flavour to the evening.

Thus ended a truly remarkable year in the story of Wylde Green School.



## Appendix I

*The Corporation Committee Resolutions, January 1845-May 1854, lists the members of the School Committee that served at various times since September 1825. It reads -*

*The Warden  
B. D. Webster  
John Oughton Esq. //  
Mr. Solomon Smith  
Sir E.C. Hartopp Bart. //  
The Revd. James Packwood  
Dr. Williamson, the Revd.//  
The Revd. S.C. Saxton  
The Revd. G.W. Robinson  
The Revd. W.K.R. Bedford  
The Revd. R.C. Smith  
Thomas Proctor Esq.  
Richard Sadler Esq.  
Josiah Wright Esq.  
George Bodington Esq.  
William Jerrard Esq.  
Mr. Todd*

## Appendix II

### Numbers attending the Boys School

These statistics demonstrate the fluctuations in the numbers on register following the rebuilding of the School in 1911 until it closed in 1938. I have taken July as a base for these although it did not become the end of the School year until 1937.

1911 - 208	1912 - 267	1913 - 313	1914 - 326	1915 - 315
1916 - 317	1917 - 286	1918 - 274	1919 - 254	1920 - 263
1921 - 249	1922 - 225	1923 - 205	1924 - 216	1925 - 218
1926 - 224	1927 - 230	1928 - 244	1929 - 241	1930 - 237
1931 - 237	1932 - 290	1933 - 305	1934 - 318	1935 - 313
1936 - 287	1937 - 246	1938 - 233		

### Numbers attending the Infants School

These figures cover the same period but reflect the January statistics.

1910 - 142	1911 - 206	1912 - 197	1913 - 176	1914 - 192
1915 - 156	1916 - 165	1917 - 138	1918 - 151	1919 - 137
1920 - 125	1921 - 123	1922 - 123	1923 - 113	1924 - 110
1925 - 121	1926 - 118	1927 - 141	1928 - 130	1929 - 133
1930 - 111	1931 - 119	1932 - 112	1933 - 141	1934 - 140
1935 - 143	1936 - 165	1937 - 151	1938 - 162	

### Numbers attending the Junior Mixed and Infants School (January figures)

1939 - 184	1940 - 280	1941 - 311	1942 - 314	1943 - 317
1944 - 336	1945 - 374	1946 - 376	1947 - 378	1948 - 410
1949 - 419	1950 - 468	1951 - 472	1952 - 494	-----
1963 - 417	1964 - 478	1965 - 502	1966 - 501	1967 - 560
1968 - 558	Penns opens	1969 - 355	1970 - 350	1971 - 331

### Numbers attending the First and Middle School (January figures)

-----	1976 - 430	1977 - 394	1978 - ?	1979 - 363
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## Appendix III

### A chronological list of staff teaching at the Green Lanes Schools

This extensive list has been compiled from entries in the School Log Books and Committee Minutes. Some dates are approximate because the information is missing. One or two of the teachers were students.

### **Green Lanes Boys School**

#### Masters and Headmasters

Mr. James Cramp	March 1840	–	March 1878
Mr. William Eden	April 1878	–	July 1885
Mr. Charles Davis	Aug. 1885	-	Feb. 1891
Mr. Alfred Simpson	March 1891	-	March 1924
Mt. William Prothero	April 1924	-	July 1938

#### Assistant Teachers

Mrs. Eleanor Bartley 1874-1880 (Infant Schoolmistress)	Mr. George Oldroyd 1873-1874
Mr. Yeoman Jan.1875-Feb.1875	Mr. Thomas Tennant 1874-1875
Mr. Charles Davis Oct.1876-July 1880	Mr. George Davis Apr.1875-Sept. 1876

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Mrs. J. Simpson	Nov 1896-Sept 1923	Mr. J.W. Sidwell	July 1898-Sept 1899
Mr. W.T. Sidwell	1894-May 1898	Mr. Pollack	Sept 1889-Dec 1899
Mr. Allen Jones	Nov1900-Dec 1932	Mr. Frederick Mayo	Oct 1902-Jan 1906
Mr. Clarence Perry	July 1906	Mr. Ainslie Ensor	Sept 1906-Oct 1907
Miss F. Wilson	Feb 1907-Apr 1907	Miss G. Clegg (Parkes)	May 1907-Apr 1922
Miss Barber	Oct 1907-Aug 1912	Mr. A.E. Hughes	Dec 1907-July 1938
Mr. Thos. Parkes	Sept 1911-Dec 1914	Mr. H. Townshend	Sep 1912-June 1919
Mr. James Breeze	Jul 1914-Oct 1919	Miss Deaman	Jan 1918-Apr 1919
Miss French	Mar 1915-Mar 1917	Mr. Pemberton	Oct 1915-Apr 1933
Mr. F.W. Perrens	Mar 1916- ?	Ms.Molyneau (Seaney)	Apr 1916 - ?
Mr. Eric Bowen	Feb 1917-Dec 1917	Miss Devis	May 1918-Dec 1931
Mr. Henry Clinton	Sept 1920-July 1938	Mr. Richard Morgan	Sep 1923 - ?
Mr. R. Newman	Sept 1924-Dec 1925	Mr. E. Hayward	May 1926-May 1929
Mrs. M.E. Prothero	June 1929-Sept 1929	Mr. R.E. Airdrie	Sep 1929-July1938
Mr. J.S. Coane	Mar 1932-July 1938	Mr. S. Fry	July 1932-Feb 1936
Mr. W.H. Harris	Jan 1933-Mar 1938	Mr. Jones (Crafts)	May 1933-Sept 1935
Mr. A. Maddison	July 1933-Dec 1940	Mr. Waby (Crafts)	Oct 1935-Mar 1938
Mr. Alan Davies	Mar 1936-Mar 1938		

*It is not clear whether all the teachers listed as being at the school when it closed on July 1938 were still there at that time.*

## Green Lanes Infants School

### Headteachers

Miss Florence Hardman	Dec. 1909 - Aug 1929
Miss Ellen Freeman	Sept 1929 – July 1957§

### Assistant Teachers

Daisy Burdett	Dec 1909-Feb 1918	Asenath Derbyshire	Dec 1909-Mar 1919
Florence Borett	Apr 1910-Sep 1911	Janet Sweetingburgh	Aug 1910-Jul 1911
Lillian Burdett	Jan 1911-Mar 1916	Elizabeth Heapes	May 1912-Jul 1921
	and Sep 1925-Nov 1925	(Cartwright )	
G.D. Smart	Sep 1913-Oct 1913	Frances Derbyshire	Sep 1914-Sep 1921
Mrs. Bloomer	Feb 1918-Mar 1921	Margaret Keeling	Apr 1921-Nov 1924
C. M. Baylie	Jul 1921-Oct 1921	Marchil Kemp	Oct 1921 – Oct 1925
Mrs. Sunderland	Jan 1922-Dec 1922	Winifred Walker	Jan 1925-Dec 1946
Maud Moore	Nov 1925	Nora Lewis	Dec 1925-Jul 1931
Anne Tideswell	Sep 1931-Jun 1932	Florence Brown	Jul 1932-Sep 1936
D. Wallbank	Jan 1934-Aug 1943	Dorothy Jones	Jan 1935-May 1948
Beryl Hughes	Dec 1936-Dec 1939		

## Green Lanes Junior Mixed & Infants School (Wylde Green County Primary)

Alexander Maddison	Sep 1938-Dec 1940	Mary Townrow	Sep 1938-Dec 1957
E.O. Crosley	Jan 1940-Jul 1940	Mrs. E.H. White	Jun 1940-Jan 1943
Mrs. B. Cuthwaite	Jan 1940-Oct 1945	Margaret Wood	Aug 1940-Jan 1946
Mrs. Douce	Jun 1942-Jul 1944	Mrs. Boole	Feb 1943-Apr 1943
Miss E. Bridgwater	Apr 1943-Sep 1945	Miss K. Duigman	Sep 1943-Dec 1944
Miss M. Williams	Jan 1944-Dec 1945	Miss Olive Warton	Jul 1944-Dec 1944
Miss Hilda Garbutt	Mar 1945-Dec 1950	Miss Hilda Ricketts	Mar 1945-Apr 1945
Miss Joyce Brown	Sep 1945-Jul 1958	Miss Pauline Dodd	Jul 1950-Jul 1953
Mrs. M. Badger	Jan 1946-Jul 1948	Miss Skelton	Mar 1946-Dec 1949
Miss Edna Smart	Jun 1946-Jul 1946	Mr. K.C. Elliott D/H	Sep 1946-Mar 1951
Mrs. F.E. Roe	Mar 1947-Jul 1959	Miss M. Davenport	Sep 1947-Mar 1948
Mrs. F. Treadgold	Oct 1947-Jul 1957	Mrs. K. Peters	Jan 1948-Jul 1955
Mrs. Mary Hughes	May 1948-Feb 1949	Miss Pamela Wood	Jul 1949-Jul 1951
Mrs. Varley	Dec 1948-Jun 1950	Mr. G. Key	Mar 1949-Jun 1954
Mrs. J.B. Killick	Jul 1949-Mar 1951	Mrs. June Weller	Jan 1950-Jul 1950
Mr. Raymond Ward	Jan 1951-Jul 1952	Miss Jean Smith	Jan 1951-Jul 1956
Mr. W.J.Chesher D/H	Apr 1951-Jul 1953	Mrs. P. Philips	Apr 1951-May 1951
Mrs. E.P. Jones	May 1951-Jun 1951	Mr. A.G. Jackson	Jul 1951-Dec 1954
Miss E. Cope	Sep 1951-Jul 1958	Mr. D. Rodgers	Sep 1952-Jul 1956
Miss B. Brown (Hall)	Sep 1952-Jul 1956	Mr. Alan Davies D/H	Sep 1953-Apr 1955
Miss B. Hilder	Sep 1953-May 1957	Mrs. L. Egerton	Nov 1953-Dec 1953
Miss Jean Walker	Sep 1954-Jul 1955	Mr. T. J. Morgan	Jan 1955-Jul 1955

## Green Lanes Junior Mixed & Infants School (Wylde Green County Primary)

### Headteachers

Miss E. H. Slarke	September 1957	-	April 1962
Mr. Thomas Lawson	April 1962	-	July 1967
Mr. John Stones	November 1967	-	July 1974

### Assistant Teachers (Continued)

Mr. R.E. Barlow D/H	May 1955-Jul 1960	Miss J. Deeley	Sep 1955-Dec 1958
Ms. Margaret Bethel	Sep 1955-Jul 1957	Miss J. Johnstone	Sep 1956-Apr 1957
Miss M.P. Stephen	Sep 1956-Apr 1957	Miss M.P. Stephen	Sep 1956-Jul 1957
Mrs. Ann Lawson	Sep 1956-Jul 1957	Mr. N. F. Eccles	Sep 1957-Jul 1959
Mrs. K. Fellows	Sep 1957-Jul 1959	Mrs. Hobonqwana	Sep 1957-Dec 1957
Miss M.M. Gribble	Sep 1957-Apr 1960	Mrs. Torri	Jan 1958-Jul 1961
Mr. Henshall	Apr 1958-Jul 1960	Miss A.A. Scott	Apr 1958-Jul 1958
Mrs. F. Siddall	Sep 1958-Jul 1961	Miss J.M. Milton	Sep 1958-Apr 1960
Mrs. E. B. Harper	Sep 1958 - ?	Mrs. Lane	Jan 1959-Jul 1960
Mr. Hawkins	Apr 1959-Jul 1959	Mrs. Holmes D/H	Sep 1959-Jul 1965
Mrs. Barlow	Sep 1959-Dec 1959	Miss S. Stammers	Sep 1959-Jul 1960
Miss Leila Ashton	Sep 1959-Dec 1959	Mrs. Coulter	Sep 1959-Dec 1959
Mrs. Dugdale	Jan 1960-Mar 1961	Mrs. Howell	Jan 1960 - ?
Mrs. M. Beech	Apr 1960-Mar 1961	Mrs. I.M. Horsfield	Apr 1960-Dec 1961
Miss Coomberwood	May 1960 - ?	Mr. J.F. Wilmott	Sep 1960-Jul 1961
Mrs. B. Taylor	Sep 1960-Dec 1960	Miss Welton (Morris)	Sep 1960-Jul 1965
Mr. D.A. George	Sep 1960-Jul 1961	Miss J. Brislin	Sep 1960 - ?
Mrs. M. Peters	Sep 1960-Dec 1960	Mr. B. Parker D/H	Jan 1961-Dec 1963
Mrs. A.M. Philips	Apr 1961-Jul 1961	Mrs. Harris (Helper)	May 1960-Dec 1963
Mrs. Dudley Evans	Apr 1961-Jul 1961	Mrs. J. Carter	Sep 1961 - ?
Mrs. I. Giles	Sep 1961-Jul 1964	Mr. A. Jones	Sep 1961-Oct 1961
Miss L. Bartleet	Sep 1961 - ?	Mrs. Fellows	Sep 1961 - ?
Mrs. Laithwaite	Oct 1961-Jul 1962	Miss K. Pickard	Apr 1962-Jul 1965
Mrs. L. Jones	Apr 1962-Dec 1965	Mrs. M. Hipwell	? - Jul 1962
Mrs. B. Nicholls	Sep 1962 - ?	Mrs. L. Davies	Sep 1962-Jul 1968
Mr. Jones-Griffiths	Sep 1962 - ?	Miss M. Temple	Oct 1962-Sep 1963
Mrs. Crook	Jan 1963-Jul 1967	Mrs. J. Shuttleworth	Apr 1963-Jul 1969
Ms. Fryer (Assistant)	Jan 1964-Mar 1964	Mrs. Mace	Jan 1964-Jul 1965
Mrs. Oakley	Jan 1964 - ?	Mr. Agnew	Apr 1964-Apr 1966
Mrs. Hadley (Helper)	Jul 1964-Dec 1965	Mrs. M. Cocks	Sep 1964-Oct 1965
Miss E. Gratwick	Sep 1964-Jul 1965	Mr. Pearce	May 1965-Jul 1965
Mr. W. Jones D/H	Sep 1965-Jul 1969	Miss V. Marjoram	Sep 1965-Jul 1968
Mrs. J. Joynson	Sep 1965-Jul 1966	Mrs. M. Tyrell	Sep 1965-Jul 1966
Mrs. A. Gray-Davies	Nov 1965-Apr 1966	Mrs. Jennens	Jan 1966-Oct 1966
Mrs. R. Showell D/H	Apr 1966-Jul 1971	Mrs. P. Wilshin	Apr 1966-Dec 1966
Mrs. S. Lewis	Apr 1966-Jun 1966	Mrs. N. Roberts	May 1966-Jul 1966
Mrs. J. Daniels	Sep 1966-Jul 1968	Miss B. Jones	Sep 1966-Jul 1968

## Wylde Green County Primary School

### Assistant Teachers (Continued)

Mrs. B. Smith	Sep 1966-Jul 1968	Mrs. A. James	Feb 1966-Apr 1968
Mrs. D. Talboys	Jan 1967- ?	Mrs. J. Overton	Jan 1967-Jul 1968
Miss Wilson	Jan 1967-Mar 1967	Mrs. F. Smith	Apr 1967-Jul 1968
Mrs. Parker	May 1967-Jul 1967	Mrs. Berren (Helper)	Sep 1967-Dec 1967
Mrs. S. Williams	Sep 1967-Jul 1974	Mrs. Rushton	Sep 1967-Apr 1968
Mrs. Pitcher	Sep 1967 - ?	Miss J. Summerton	Sep 1967 - ?
Mrs. A. Spreadborough	Sep 1967- ?	Mrs. S. Watson (Tonks)	Jan 1968 -
Mr. A.P. Tween	Sep 1968- ?	Mrs. C. Phillips	Sep 1968-Feb 1973
Miss D.E. Clarke	Sep 1968- ?	Mrs. A. Reed	Sep 1970-Jul 1971
Miss A. Vines	Sep 1970- ?	Mrs. D. Francis	Sep 1970-Jan 1977
Mrs. Evanson	Oct 1970-Jul 1971	Mrs. W.J. Morris	Sep 1971- ?
Miss B.P. Meadows	Sep 1971-Jul 1976	Mrs. V.E. Poynton	Sep 1971-Mar 1980

## Wylde Green First and Middle School

Headteacher                      Mr. Edgar A. Davies      January 1975-April 1978

Mrs. A. Grierson	Sep 1972-Jul 1974	Mr. G. Durrant	Sep 1972-Dec 1978
Mrs. C. Jones	Sep 1972-May 1980	Mrs. Pike	Sep 1972-Jul 1974
Miss P. Fielding	Jan 1973-Jul 1973	Mrs. V. Brown	Feb 1973- ?
Mr. C. Wilson	Sep 1973-Jul 1975	Miss J. McCormack	Sep 1973-Jul 1974
Miss P. Cobbold	Sep 1973-Jul 1975	Miss V. Ball	Sep 1974-Jul 1975
Mrs. M. Allen	Jan 1973-Oct 1980	Mrs. J. Gough	Sep 1973-Jul 1975
Miss M. Lewis	? -July 1975	Mrs. P. Jenkins	? -Jul 1978
Mrs. A. Rockett	Sep 1974-Apr 1975	Miss. C. Abbott	Sep 1975-Jul 1977
Mrs. M. McDonald	Sep 1975-Jul 1979	Mr. J. Gray	Sep 1975-Jul 1979
Mrs. M. Duff	Apr 1978-Jul 1978	Mrs. P. Loizou	Apr 1980-Jul 1980
Mrs. J. Herbert	June 1980-Jul 1980		

The names of these teachers have been extracted from the School Log Books.

Generally speaking, those teachers who were at the School for only a short time were supply or relief teachers, covering absent staff or classes without a permanent teacher for some reason. Several were only part-time. The dates are those given by the Headteacher.

Difficulty occurs when it is not stated whether they were in fact only students and so, in the absence of other evidence, they may have been included in error.

Missing from this list are the names of the staff who were teaching at the School during its 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – they are included in the next list.

## Appendix IV

### Wylde Green First and Middle School

*The Staff teaching in December 1980 - 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the School*

#### HEADTEACHER

*Mrs. Anne (Dudley) Baker - appointed April 1978*

#### ASSISTANT TEACHERS (*Listed in chronologically by appointment*)

<i>Mrs. H. Willetts</i>	<i>Appointed in</i>	<i>April 1964</i>
<i>Mrs. P. McMinim (Helper)</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1965</i>
<i>Mr. T. Ellison</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1966</i>
<i>Mrs. S. Tonks (Watson)</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1968</i>
<i>Mr. R.D. Hurley (Deputy)</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1971</i>
<i>Mrs. S. Edge</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>April 1972</i>
<i>Mr. P. Waters</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1974</i>
<i>Mr. D. J. Redwood</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1975</i>
<i>Miss M. Oakes (Griffin)</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1975</i>
<i>Mrs. I. Zetie</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1978</i>
<i>Mrs. C. Watts</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>January 1979</i>
<i>Mrs. J. Appleton</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>January 1979</i>
<i>Mrs. C. Davies</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1979</i>
<i>Mrs. Baxter (Thomas)</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>September 1980</i>
<i>Miss J. Wilcox</i>	<i>“ “</i>	<i>November 1980</i>
<i>Mr. C. Shute</i>		

## Appendix V

### Salaries paid to Masters and Teachers

The Accounts of the Wardens provide a detailed breakdown of the salaries which were paid to the teachers in their employ. The following extracts show how these increased over the years, and are not a complete list.

<i>November</i>	1843	<i>Mr. Cramp one years Salary and Fuel</i>	£45	10s	0d
"	1845	<i>Mr. Cramp one years Salary and Fuel</i>	£55	10s	0d
"	1856	<i>Mr. Cramp one years Salary and Fuel</i>	£60	10s	0d
"	1870	<i>Mr. Cramp one years Salary and Fuel</i>	£75	10s	0d
"	1871	<i>Green Lanes Infant School year allowance</i>	£10	0s	0d
"	1873	<i>Mr. Cramp, Year's Salary and Fuel</i>	£79	15s	0d
		<i>George Oldroyd, 8m 3 weeks Salary &amp; Fuel</i>	£35	11s	0d
		<i>Mrs. Bartley, one year salary and fuel</i>	£11	10s	0d
"	1876	<i>G.W. Davies, Years Salary</i>	\$63	0s	0d
"	1878	<i>Mr. James Cramp Half Years Salary</i>	£37	10s	0d
		<i>Mr. William Eden Half Years Salary and Fuel</i>	£46	0s	0d
		<i>C. T. Davis, Assistant, Years Salary</i>	£63	0s	0d
		<i>Monitors</i>	£ 1	1s	0d
"	1881	<i>Mr. Wm. Eden, Salary</i>	£80	0s	0d
		<i>Mr. Wm. Eden, additional for instructing</i>			
		<i>Pupil Teacher</i>	£12	0s	0d
		<i>Mr. Wm. Eden, Bonus on Government Grant</i>	£10	1s	0d
		<i>Fuel</i>	£6	0s	0d
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£108</b>	<b>1s</b>	<b>0d</b>
		<i>Geo.Alldritt, Pupil Teachers Salary &amp; Grant</i>	£13	3s	7d

## Borough of Sutton Coldfield Ledger 1897-1904

This records the final payment made to Mr. Cramp, as well as giving the salaries of the teachers, 1898.

### James Cramp

January 7 To Cash Quarter's Pension £12 10s 0d

April 12th To Cash 11 weeks pension to 19<sup>th</sup> March £10 11s 9d

date of death.

### Simpson A.J. Paid £3-0-0 p.a. superannuation)

April 1898 Salary £92 0s 0d

Bonus on Government Grant £22 1s 9d

Bonus on Drawing Grant £ 2 4s 4d

Fuel £ 8 0s 0d

### Simpson Jane.

April 1898 Salary £55 0s 0d

Bonus on Grant £ 1 15s 5d

Bonus Drawing Grant 3s 8d

### Sidwell Walter J.

April 1898 Salary £25 0s 0d

Bonus on Grant £ 2 1s 0d

Bonus Drawing Grant 3s 8d

## Teachers' Salaries

These extracts are taken from a "Register of Teachers" dated 1916. The information has been condensed to show the more interesting details.

### Green Lanes Council School No. 2 (Boys)

	<i>Simpson, Alfred John</i>	<i>Date of Birth 6<sup>th</sup> March 1864 – HEAD TEACHER</i>			
		<i>Left 31<sup>st</sup> March 1924 . . . . .</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£328</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>C.N.C.T.</i>	<i>Simpson, Jane E (Mrs.)</i>	<i>Date of Birth 29<sup>th</sup>. March 1863</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£176</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>C.A.</i>	<i>Hughes A.E. . . . .</i>	<i>Date of Birth 26<sup>th</sup>. August 1881</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£179</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>C.A.</i>	<i>Breeze, J.J. . . . .</i>	<i>Date of Birth 9<sup>th</sup>. November 1892</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£150</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>U.C.</i>	<i>Jones, Allen . . . . .</i>	<i>Date of Birth 14<sup>th</sup> January 1873</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£90</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
		<i>plus bonus</i>		<i>12s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>U.C.</i>	<i>Parkes (nee Clegg Mrs. Gertrude)</i>	<i>Date of Birth 6<sup>th</sup> February 1885</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£98</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
		<i>plus bonus</i>		<i>12s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>U.C.</i>	<i>Pemberton N. . . . .</i>	<i>Date of Birth 3<sup>d</sup> September 1883</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£125</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
		<i>plus bonus</i>	<i>£15</i>	<i>12s</i>	<i>0d</i>

### Green Lanes Council School No. 2a. (Infants)

<i>C.N.C.T</i>	<i>Hardman (Mrs) Florence H.</i>	<i>Date of Birth 25<sup>th</sup> July 1866 - HEADTEACHER</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£202</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>C.A.</i>	<i>Derbyshire (now Heaton) Mrs. A.M.</i>	<i>Date of Birth 29<sup>th</sup>. March 1888</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£132</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
<i>U.C.</i>	<i>Burdett Daisy F. . . . .</i>	<i>Date of Birth 29<sup>th</sup>. December 1884</i>			
		<i>Began Dec. 1909 Left 28<sup>th</sup> February 1918</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£ 75</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
		<i>Transferred to Boldmere Girls School</i>			
<i>C.A.</i>	<i>Derbyshire, Francis A. . . . .</i>	<i>Date of Birth 30<sup>th</sup>. November 1890</i>			
		<i>Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919</i>	<i>£125</i>	<i>0s</i>	<i>0d</i>
		<i>plus bonus</i>	<i>£ 15</i>	<i>12s</i>	<i>0d</i>

### KEY

<i>C.N.C.T.</i>	-	<i>Certificated Non-College Trained.</i>
<i>C.A.</i>	-	<i>Certificated Assistant.</i>
<i>U.C.</i>	-	<i>Uncertificated.</i>



## **Bibliography and References**

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1	Green Lanes Boys School	1874-1921	<i>Warwick</i>
2	Green Lanes Boys School	1921-1938	<i>Record Office</i>
3	Green Lanes Infants School	1909-1936	<i>Were in School's</i>
4	Green Lanes Junior & Infant School	1936-1977	<i>Possession</i>

### **CORPORATION MINUTES**

5	Warden and Society	1828-1844
6	Warden and Society	1844-1861
7	Warden and Society	1861-1878
8	Warden and Society	1878-1886
9	Index of Warden and Society Minutes No. 1	

### **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

10	School Committee	1834-1843
11	School Committee	1843-1851
12	School Committee	1851-1868
13	Corporation Committee Resolutions	1845-1854
14	Corporation Committee Resolutions	1854-1872
15	Municipal Charities Committee	1894-1898
16	Municipal Charities School Committee No. 1	1898-1904
17	Municipal Charities Committee	1905-1929
18	Education Committee	1903-1915
19	Education Committee	1915-1927
20	Education Committee	1927-1937
21	Education Committee	1937-1942
22	Elementary Schools Sub-Committee	1903-1912
23	Elementary Schools Sub-Committee	1912-1924
24	Elementary Schools Sub-Committee	1924-1932
25	School Attendance Committee	1886-1902

### **MISCELLANEOUS – LOCAL MATERIAL**

26	Warden's Accounts	1845-1885	
27	Ledger	1897-1901	1901-1904
28	Council Minutes	1901-1904	
29	Education Committee: Register of Teachers	1916	
30	Sutton Coldfield Directories	1872, 1880	1900, 1908
31	Inquiry at Sutton Coldfield	1855	
32	Government Censuses	1861-1911	
33	Sutton Coldfield News		

## Miscellaneous – Histories and Other Sources

- |    |   |                            |
|----|---|----------------------------|
| 34 | Blond's Encyclopedia of Education   |                            |
| 35 | Town County Primary School  | Miss M. Henry              |
| 36 | A History of Sutton Coldfield   | W.K. Riland-Bedford (1891) |
| 37 | A Commemorative History of Sutton Coldfield                                     | Douglas V. Jones           |
| 38 | A History of Sutton Coldfield   | Z. Twamley (1855)          |
| 39 | A History of the Forest and Chase of Sutton Coldfield                           | A. Bracken (1860)          |
| 40 | The Sutton Coldfield Schools: Their Origin and History from Authentic Documents | W.K.R. Riland-Bedford      |
| 41 | Victorian Schools & Scholars  | J.W. Docking               |

## Maps and Plans

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 42 | Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile                                | 1889, 1904, 1914 Sheet D7   |
| 43 | Register of Plans deposited – Borough of Sutton Coldfield    | Vol 1 63P (1889)<br>Vol 4 1690 (1906) <i>Plans still</i><br>Vol 4 2027 (1909) <i>surviving</i><br>Vol 4 2622 (1915) |
| 44 | Green Lanes Junior & Infant Mixed School Conversion          | (1938) kept by Birmingham Education Committee   |
| 45 | Municipal Charities Plan                                     | 1903  |
| 46 | Public Record Office: Preliminary Statement                  | 1879  |
| 47 | Proposed Green Lanes Infants School Plan                     | 1906 (not implemented)  |
| 48 | Corn Rent Map of Sutton Coldfield                            | 1825  |
| 49 | Birmingham, Erdington and Sutton Coldfield Western Line Plan | 1858  |
| 50 | London and North Western Railway Plan                        | 1860  |
| 51 | Information given by former pupils and teachers              |   |
| 52 | Aris's Birmingham Gazette                                    | 1839  |