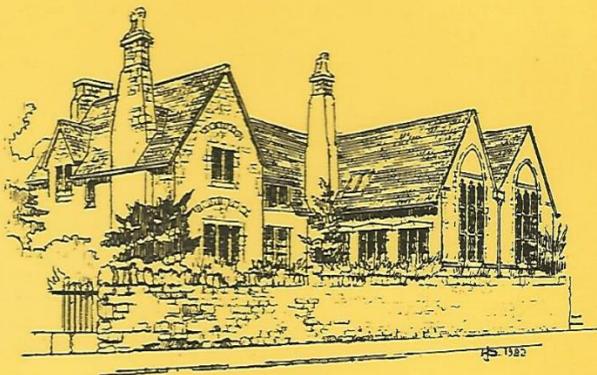


*WHEATLEY
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCHOOL*



THE WHEATLEY SOCIETY

WHEATLEY
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCHOOL

The Society wishes to express its thanks to the County Record Office; the Bodleian Library; Mr. G. Rees Evans and his office staff; senior residents of the village for their long memories; Miss Winifred Leyshon, who preserved many important records; Dr. W. O. Hassall for permission to quote from "Wheatley Records"; Lesley Bevan, who typed the text, and Messrs. Gray & Baynes, who so generously allowed her to do so; Jon Drake for his cover illustration; and members of the Society's History Group, who worked on the School Log Books.

October 1982

THE STAFF IN THE EARLY 1890s



(Back row) Frederick Sheldon, Mr. Leyshon, Miss East, — Brooks
(Seated) Miss Christian, The Revd. A. Sturges, Mrs. Leyshon
(Kneeling) Miss Chapman

Foreword

I feel very honoured that I have been asked to write the foreword to this book.

Miss Rosenthal and Mr. Jackson are to be congratulated on producing a book which should be of real interest to all the past scholars of the School and to the parents of the children who are now attending school. It is most appropriate that the book covers the one hundred and twenty five years of the School's history on the present site, because as from the beginning of the academic year 1983 it will start a new life in another part of Wheatley.

I regard it as a real privilege to have been Headmaster of the School since September 1956, and I should like to offer my sincere good wishes to all who have had any connection with the School.

G. REES EVANS
Headmaster

Introduction

In view of the projected removal of Wheatley Primary School to a different site the Local History Group of the Wheatley Society thought that it would be appropriate to make a study of the school's long history. There proved to be a wealth of material available and many people have worked on the project. By courtesy of Mr. Evans, the present Head of the school, the surviving log books, dating from 1863, have been read and analysed. Other sources consulted were documents in the Bodleian Library and in the County Record Office, and articles in Jackson's Oxford Journal. Much interesting information was gleaned from personal reminiscences, some of which were oral and some written down about thirty years ago at the request of Miss Winifred Leyshon.

We have been struck by the steady development of educational provision in the village and, even at times when facilities were by modern standards woefully inadequate, by the concern, initiative and devotion shown by the head teachers and their assistants. We have also found that the school records throw a great deal of light on many aspects of village life and work during the last 125 years.

Charities

Possibly the earliest record to do with schooling in Wheatley is the bequest of Dame Elizabeth Curzon, widow of Sir Thomas Curzon, Bart., of Waterperry, who c1688 gave £100 "for the use of the poor of Wheatley to be laid forth on lands, or an annuity or rent-charge issuing out of lands, and the yearly rents and profits thereof to be for ever applied and disposed of for apprenticing and putting forth and schooling of poor children of the said town of Wheatley, whose parents should not be able to do the same."

Four years later, an inquisition of October 20th, 1692, by the Charity Commissioners found that "the said sum of £100 was then in the hands of Thomas Phillips, of Ickford, who had not laid out the same." The Commissioners ordered Thomas Phillips, or his heirs, to pay £100 to such person or persons of whom the lands should be purchased, and that the lands or annuity or rent-charge to be issuing out of lands should be conveyed to Sir John Doyley and five others and their heirs, in fee simple, for the poor of Wheatley.

A long legal wrangle ensued, but eventually in 1773, Lady Curzon's money together with a bequest of a Mr. Sims, of Wheatley, and interest, was used to purchase

6 acres of land in Chalgrave field, and

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of arable land with 5 lots or pieces of meadow and certain commons appendant thereto at Ford, in the Parish of Donnington or Dinton, Buckinghamshire

In the Enclosure Award of 1814, the estate at Ford, which is off the Thame-Aylesbury road, near Stone, consisted of 5 acres and 37 poles of meadow land let to Mr. Kingham, of Ford, at £10 per annum. The rent was carried to the general account kept by the chapelwarden.

The Charity Commissioners, in 1837, made the following comment: "No part now applied for education, but £3 appears to have been sometimes paid for a Sunday School before the establishment of the present school."

In 1886 the Trustees, who were the Right Reverend Bishop of Oxford (Samuel Wilberforce); the Rev. James Henry Ashhurst, Rector of Waterstock; William Henry Ashhurst; William Earle Biscoe; the Rev. Edward Elton, Rector of Sherington, Bucks; Joseph John Henley; William Bracher, asked the Charity Commissioners to amalgamate the following Wheatley Charities:

Bishop Moss
Dr. Cyril Jackson
Dame Elizabeth Curzon
Joseph Sims

The Charity Commissioners agreed and the following were appointed Trustees:

The Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Oxford; the Vicar and Churchwardens of Wheatley Church; the Rev. James Henry Ashhurst, Rector of Waterstock; William Henry Ashhurst; Henry Stafford Biscoe, of Holton; Joseph Frampton, farmer, of Wheatley.

It is possible that this amalgamation resulted in money from the Curzon Charity being used for the payment of school fees for some of the poorer children in Wheatley. The following is entered in the log book on January 20th, 1888: "The following notice was posted up the school this week, and copies were sent to the parents of the children: 'All children whose school fees are paid by the Curzon Charity, or by Mrs. Miller must make at least eight attendances each week, or they must for that week, pay their own fees. Also those children who pay 1d. must pay 2d. for each week they do not make the proper number of attendances. These rules do not apply to children who are ill, if notice be given to the Master.

16 Jan. 1888

(sgd) Henry J. Wooldridge, Head Teacher
C. H. Firmstone — Manager. '

The attendance this week has been almost as bad as it can be."

When the school fees were increased in January 1890, a special concession was made, by the desire of the Master, that those children making a full attendance each week would have 1d. of their fees returned to them. This rule did not apply to those children whose fees were paid by the Curzon Charity or by Mrs. Miller. Then on September 19th of this year we read: "W.M., whose school fees are paid by the Curzon Charity, was warned that he would have to pay his own fees if he did not come to school more regularly." (He had not been for more than a week.) He came for 2 days and then left saying he was 13 years old. "On this school register and also on that of the Infant School he is not 12."

Early in 1982, the 5 acres at Ford were sold by auction by the Trustees for a profit amounting to £12,800.

The School That Never Was

Dr. Charles Moss, Bishop of Oxford from 1807 to 1812, by a codicil in his will, dated 7th December, 1811, gave and bequeathed to John King, Esq., the Rev. Samuel Ryder Weston, D.D., Bartholomew Bouverie, Esq., and the Rev. John Sneyd, and to the survivors and survivor of them, his executors and administrators, the sum of £3,000 in trust, to dispose of the same in such charitable donations as they should think proper; whereof he recommended, but not enjoined, their giving £200 to the governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, £200 to the Bath Infirmary, and £100 to the Salisbury Infirmary; and then establishing and setting a going, but not giving any endowment thereto, of a school at Wheatley and at Cuddesdon, Oxon, for the education and bringing up of children of the same parishes,

and also of Denton and Chippenhurst; which schools he recommended should be set up on Dr. Bell's plan, supported by the new National Society.

By the middle of 1813, active steps were being taken, in the words of the new Bishop of Oxford, the Rt. Rev. William Jackson, "to carry the poor bishop's intentions into execution so as to answer the excellent purposes which such Institutions cannot fail to produce ..." So, according to papers in the Bodleian Library, on 12th August, 1813, the Rev. Richard Downes, perpetual Curate at Wheatley, wrote to Bishop Jackson that the measurements he had given to the Bishop about a plot of land may not be accurate, and also suggesting an alteration to the anterooms of a school it was proposed to erect on this plot.

Architects' drawings exist of a school to be erected on a plot of land measuring 95 feet from East to West and 56 feet "or rather more" from North to South, according to a letter written by Mr. Downes to Bishop Jackson on 14th September, 1813, but by 27th December, 1814, Mr. Downes, again writing to Bishop Jackson, said "The Area of our ground is 42 feet by 130 - wherever the wall of the adjoining field recedes from it, it is something more, but it measures as much as that in every direction, an allowance being made for the irregular course of the wall. Your Lordship will perhaps perceive a small trench marked out below on each side of the Road, and on our side of it nearly adjacent to our piece of ground by which some of the water from the hill has lately been made to pass down on the sides of the road towards the brook that runs thro' the village. Whether our little plot could be drained by some means or other your Lordship may judge. With our united respects, I remain Your Lordship's most obt Servt Richd Downes." This plot was situated on the Wheatley Road on the descent from Cuddesdon.

The architects' drawings were for a school to accommodate 100 boys and 100 girls, or 80 boys and 80 girls, or 60 boys and 60 girls. One scheme for a 100-boy and 100-girl school had a room area of 60 ft. by 27 ft. divided on its long side into two; each room had a fireplace and outside were toilets and two coal sheds. Another sketch for a school to accommodate a similar number was for a two-storey building with a room size of 24 ft. by 12 ft. The girls' classroom was to be on the first floor. The ideas for a 60-boy and 60-girl school were shown on a rough plan of two rooms side by side, each 14 ft. 9 in. square, with an anteroom, 9 ft. square, at each end. (For detailed specification see Appendix '1').

An estimate by Mr. Leach, dated August 21st, 1813, "of the Expense to Erect a School Room, Boundary Walls and Offices Agreeable to the Plans and Elevation for 100 Boys and 100 Girls the Inside Walls to be of Free Stone" came to £716 8s. 4d. The cost of a similar building for 60 Boys and 60 Girls was estimated to be £559 5s. 3d.

One of the things which had to be given serious consideration was the number of scholars who were likely to attend the school when it was built, as it would be a waste of resources to provide for 200 children if only 100 places were needed. Mr. Downes, therefore, produced a "Return of Children at Wheatley for National School" in December 1814:

		Girls	Total
		27	
Of Farmers Tradesmen & Journeymen		Boys	50
The greater part of whom could		23	
pay for the Instruction of their children			
		Boys	Total
		43	
of poor people labourers &c		Girls	87
		44	
	Wheatley	Cuddesdon	
	Boys	Girls	
	23	27	
	43	44	
	Total	Total	
	66	71	
	Total boys	Total girls	
	66+44=110	71+39=110	Say 90 boys and 90 Girls

One comment which can be made about these numbers is that 60% of the children were expected to come from Wheatley, but, as we shall see later, this number was to include children from Holton, and possibly Waterperry, Waterstock and Tiddington. It must also be assumed that the Cuddesdon numbers included children from Denton and Chippenhurst. The scheme to build only one school (at Wheatley) was, in fact, a departure from the terms of Dr. Moss's will, which said "a school at Wheatley and at Cuddesdon." On the basis of the estimate of £560 for a school of 120 children, which did not include the cost of the site, to build another school at Cuddesdon at a similar price again plus the price of the site, would not have left much to provide for furnishings and heating, not to mention the salaries of the staff.

In the spring of 1815 two estimates were submitted by a firm called Thos. Wyatt, Saint John's Street, and Geo. Leach, Ship and Meadow Lane, Oxford. It is not certain if Geo. Leach is the same Mr. Leach who submitted the previous estimate for £716 8s. 4d. dated August 21st, 1813, but if he is then there had been a major re-assessment of the costs. (See Appendix '2').

These estimates must have caused great concern to Bishop Jackson and his Curate, for the price has soared by 58% in 20 months, an annual rate of 35%.

Mr. Downes was very "apprehensive" in September 1813, when he wrote to Bishop Jackson: "On the morning of the sale of Sir Jas. Gardiner's property (before which I had no opportunity of seeing the Surveyor for the purpose) the ground for the school was duly staked out ... On Passing by two or three days afterwards, I saw that some person or other had since entirely taken away the stakes, so that I was obliged to have others put in a second time, which cannot easily be removed. I mention the circumstance, being rather apprehensive that the School itself when erected and the ground on which it is to stand, will be always liable to visits of the same kind, in case your Lordship might be induced to reconsider, before the erection of the intended plan, how far it might be advisable for the master to be constantly resident on the spot, on account of its distance from the village and other reasons."

In order to meet the problems of security and increases in costs Mr. Downes suggested, in a letter to the Bishop dated February 21st, 1815, that room for 80 boys and 80 girls be considered. In a postscript, twice as long as the letter, he suggested that the master be accommodated in rooms where the anterooms are. Then he referred to p54 of the National Society Report for 1814 - "the School at Witham, Essex, is the room on ground floor and staircase with Girls school over. Cost something more than £350."

Other problems were beginning to appear in addition to those of numbers of children, security and increased costs. For Mr. Downes continued his postscript with an account of the visit paid by him and Archdeacon John C. Clark to the plot of ground "digging several holes for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of the soil, to procure accurate information for Mr. Perry. The clay goes down below the depth of five feet. How much deeper than five feet the clay goes we have no means of judging."

Archdeacon Clark, in a letter dated February 23rd, 1815, confirmed the results of his visit to the plot and continued: "... the ground about 50 feet from the Road appears to me to be sounder than it is on the other part. In one place indeed the soil was stony but there was reason to suppose that an old road might have passed over this spot ..." The Archdeacon also expressed his concern with the financial position by commenting "It seems to be apprehended that the sum which will remain after the Schools are built and fitted up on the new plan, would hardly be sufficient to pay the expence (sic) of having a Person from the National Central School to set the Schools on foot, and also to provide a remuneration for Mrs. Stroud."

The Rev. Richard Downes wrote to Bishop Jackson the next day, February 24th, that a further examination of clay for 7 or 8 ft. and a probability of 30 ft. at least of rock to go through to dig a well, "Mr. Crook having dug forty feet in the yard on the opposite side of the road without obtaining water. Mr. Perry thinks well might cost £100." Mr. Downes was still pressing the idea of a two-storey building with the master's accommodation in place of the anterooms.

So captivated by the idea of the two-storey building was Mr. Downes that a week later he sent the Bishop a plan of the school with the master's accommodation on the site. The plot, on its southern

boundary had a wall 130 ft. long and in this wall were two entrances, one for the girls and one for the boys. From these entrances were two curved paths, bounded on each side by 3 ft. high walls, leading to doorways in the anteroom of the main school building. Downstairs this room was divided into two, and on the girls side the room was 5 ft. by 13 ft. from which led a staircase with a closet under for the storage of a $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton of coal. On the boys' side the door was flanked on either side by "cloaks". The remainder of the space, 13 ft. by 8 ft. was to be the master's sitting room. From the sitting room in its wall adjoining the "Boys' School below stairs" was the door leading to that schoolroom. The mind boggles at the idea of up to 90 boys, wet and with mud on their boots traipsing four times a day across the master's sitting room to enter their classroom. Upstairs the floor space was divided into three: a landing where the stairs came up, 5 ft. square, and on the wall adjoining the girls schoolroom an entrance door; the remainder was divided into two bedrooms, the larger about 12 ft. by 7ft., the smaller 8 ft. square. The sketch does not show any provision for a kitchen nor even a privy. On the bottom right-hand corner of the document the following is written: "N.B. Book cases of deal might supply any want of an anteroom on account of the books. And there would be no difficulty in putting away Cloaks (great coats) of which latter there would be very few and Hats by some similar contrivance within the respective schools". Problems with cloakroom and lavatory accommodation were to dog the school for the next 150 years.

Despite all the problems which had arisen it was decided to put the work out to tender, and the following were two, both dated April 7th, 1815:

Bridge Works, Dorchester

Tender from Thos. Johnson of £982 to build School to complete satisfaction of Mr. Perry.
Plans seen at Mr. Morrell's office.

The boundary wall not estimated for.

Wheatley, Apl 7 1815

Tender from Johnson Morgan of £790 for completing the whole of the work as specified in the Plans and Particulars of the National School at Wheatley

N.B. The above includes the boundary wall

Poor Mr. Downes's troubles were never-ending. Less than a fortnight after the above tenders were received the whole scheme must have been back in the melting pot. On April 18th, he wrote to Bishop Jackson at 3 St. James's Place, St. James's Street, Westminster, that Mr. Biscoe now intended building his own school at Holton with the assistance of Dr. Ashurst, Curate, and therefore "will not be sending any children to Wheatley ... Because of other schools in the village, there may not be more than 60 Boys and 60 Girls, so school could be smaller." In addition Mr. Downes found that the Old School Master and Mistress managed the post office so could not make application to be considered for the new school, because the post office would be left unattended during school hours. It is most likely that the schoolmaster and mistress were Mr. and Mrs. Stroud referred to by Archdeacon Clark.

In his will, Dr. Moss specified that the schools should be set up on Dr. Bell's plan, supported by the National Society. In 1808 two Quakers, Joseph Fox and William Allen, took over a one-room school in Borough Road, London, and formed the Institution for Promoting the British System for the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of Every Religious Persuasion. This roused the Established Church, and to combat the Nonconformists, in October 1811, The National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales was formed. These two organisations vied with each other in establishing schools and in this the National Society had the very considerable advantage of a diocesan and parish set-up already in existence.

Dr. Andrew Bell, an Anglican chaplain to the Indian Army, trying to cope with his duties as superintendent of an orphan asylum in Madras as well as chaplain to five regiments, employed an intelligent pupil to teach his fellows to draw and write in the sand. Joseph Lancaster began in 1801 to use this idea of monitors to teach thousands of children in his school in Borough Road. Originally an expedient for coping with large numbers of children, it became a system where, by 1814, the National Society had 230 schools and about 40,000 pupils.

The dual system of National (Church) Schools and British (Nonconformist) Schools lasted until the Balfour Education Act of 1902 when local authorities became responsible for elementary education and the schools became "Council" responsibility.

The necessity for school inspectors grew out of the Factory Act of 1833, which made it illegal for children to be employed in more than one factory on the same day and they had to be at least 9 years old. Those children who were between 9 and 13 had to attend school for two hours daily. Four inspectors were appointed at a salary of £1,000 per annum each.

Dr. James Phillips Kay (later Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth) became the secretary of the newly set up Committee of Council on Education. He instituted a training school in Norwood for the more diligent 14-year-old boys and girls to act as assistant or pupil teachers, and he also, in 1839, appointed school inspectors with comprehensive roles as advisers and friends. In 1846, the Council allowed certain schools, approved by the inspectors, to become training centres for pupil teachers. These 13-year-olds were to receive one-and-a-half hours instruction each day, and were paid £10 per year with increments of £2 10s.

A Royal Commission under the Duke of Newcastle recommended in its report of 1861 "a searching examination by competent authority of every child in every school to which grants are paid with the view of ascertaining whether these indispensable elements of knowledge are thoroughly acquired." Robert Lowe, Vice-President of the Council, conceived a revised Code of Grants in 1862 which resulted in each child in an infant school earning 6s. 6d. and each older child 12s. for "satisfactory" performance in an examination conducted by the H.M.I.s. Penalties could be imposed and money withheld as we shall see. It is most appropriate that the "payment-by-results" scheme was to cease in the year that Mr. Rees Leyshon took charge at Wheatley - 1891.

A vivid picture of what conditions were like in the early years of the 19th century is preserved for us in the correspondence between Bishop William Jackson, of Oxford, and the Rev. W. Wood, of Fulham, who wrote from there to the Bishop in a letter dated November 28th, 1814. Mr. Wood apologised for not being able to visit Cuddesdon and advised that the Secretary of the National Society be asked to send an "account of what are conceived to be the best proportions of the length and breadth and height, and how rooms be lit, and warmed and ventilated." ... With regard to space "the basis is that six square feet is considered enough for each child. My new school now nearly finished is a very handsome room, 40 by 30, and therefore large enough for 200 children."

The Bishop then wrote to the Rev. W. Wood asking a series of questions, and the reply dated December 8th, dealt in detail with the problems and the Rev. Wood's solutions to them in Fulham.

The first question was about the age for admission. The reply was: "as to age — I admit them at any age when they are stout enough to come....At what age they are most likely to profit by the system, I do not feel myself qualified to decide, nor do I know the practice of other schools' — My practice is to get all I can, and to make no scruple about age if the Parents are willing to send them ... If you ask the question with a view to ascertain the numbers which you are to provide I think you would be safe if you reckon all the poor children from six to fourteen. At Wheatley being near the School they may like to go younger than six — But from Cuddesdon especially in the winter they will scarcely be able to go till they are much older."

The second question dealt with getting the children to attend. Again the reply is a cameo of the social conditions in Fulham in 1814. "As to petition or recommendation, I require none whatever. In fact I am obliged to Bribe the parents to send their children, which many of them are by no means disposed to do. I sell them blankets and coats at an underprice, and (undecipherable) them to the utmost in the distribution of the Charities of the Parish. I find the children out myself, Visit their Parents, and endeavour to prevail upon them in every way to let me have their children. At our weekly meetings for the relief of the poor I give my voice against all applicants who have children running about the streets. I should hope your Curates will not have the same trouble as I have. But these hints may be of use to them."

The next question concerned the leaving age. Again the realist faced the situation head-on and dealt with it pragmatically. Mr. Wood replied "Fourteen is the usual age for dismissing them. I suffer them to go at any age when they can find employment, and to return when their employment is at an end,

and I keep them beyond fourteen if they have nothing better to do. They may learn all that is necessary long before fourteen, if they are regular in attendance, but perhaps you could not find constant work for them (Winter and Summer) before that age except for a very few."

Payment was the next question and the reply "All my scholars are educated gratuitously. Here if there were anything to pay that would be an insuperable difficulty" links up with Mr. Wood's answer to the second question. But he did recognise that there could be virtue in a charge being made, as he went on "Nevertheless where they are able and willing to pay I am persuaded that it is best for them to do so - because it would be more likely to ensure regular attendance. In that case sixpence per week might be a proper sum."

In the last paragraph of the letter, Mr. Wood defended the National Society. He wrote that it was "surely their business to furnish information upon all points to those who want it, and this must be done thro' their Secretary."

The letter was not dispatched immediately, because the wrapper, dated December 16th, 1814, was written on. Unfortunately this has been torn, but what can be read illustrates, in the first paragraph, the economic conditions of Fulham at the end of 1814, and in the second paragraph the physical conditions in which scholars received schooling in a "very handsome" up-to-date building.

"With respect to the continuance of the children in the school," Mr. Wood wrote, "it seems to me to be of importance to keep them as long as possible in order to form their habits. But of course, their Parents will wish to gain something by their labour as early as they can—and this may be done in some Parishes, where there is plenty of work, at a very early age. In order, therefore, to accomplish both these objects a manufactory should be introduced, and a proportion of the profits should be given to the children. But in the generality of places....."

extremely difficult to find a suitable manufactory. I tried
.....in-bedding, by which I was soon a considerable loser—and now;
..... thing, because I cannot obtain satisfactory inform.....
.....to make experiments. But I permit any child to....
...gardens, or elsewhere, for a week or a fortnight at a time, and
I receive him again when the work is done."

In his final paragraph the Rev. Weed returned to the building itself and his description is graphic to say the least. He wrote: "With respect to the building and all the chief circumstances of airing, lighting &c I am persuaded that if you go upon the ground with any intelligent workman, you will find no difficulty. The filling up of the interior (so as to do it cheapest) may certainly be best done by a person who has seen the Central School, but the clumsiest carpenter in the world would be able to do it after having seen such a model. The Area of the room is clear of all benches and there the children stand from morning to night, except when they go (to w)rite for which purpose there are desks against the wall nearly all (round the) room. They have no fireplaces, and I have built my last school (torn) one. The Girls are more likely to want fires than the boys." Because of the tear in the wrapper we do not know whether Mr. Wood included a fireplace in his new schoolroom.

It seems most unfortunate that all this planning did not result in a school being built at Wheatley. The reason or reasons are not known. Maybe it was that the cost was likely to be too great; maybe the site was thought to be unsuitable, or in the wrong place; or maybe the need to provide for a resident master proved too much. We do not know.

Bishop Moss's School

For whatever reason plans for a purpose-built school were dropped and a house in the High Street acquired by the Trustees. This house, now known as Mitcheldene, is described in the deed of sale in 1818 as "The message heretofore called by the name or Sign of the Maidenhead but then converted and used as two tenements together with the Wheelwright's Shop and the yard and Garden". The deed states that the Trustees bought the property for the purpose of establishing according to the wish

expressed by Dr. Moss the late Bishop of Oxford and by a codicil dated 7th of December 1811 ... a school at Wheatley for education of children of Wheatley and Cuddesdon and also Denton and Chippinghurst which school he recommended to be set up on Dr. Bell's plan supported by the new National Society". It was sold by Charles Mottley of Piddington, who had inherited it from his mother, and at the time the tenants were Thomas Neighbour, Thomas Becketts and Joseph Holiday. The Trustees were the Bishop of Oxford (Edward Legge); the Revd. Thomas Lee, D.D., President of Trinity College and Rector of Garsington; and the Revd. Thomas Ellis, Vicar of Great Milton: they paid £300. The large schoolroom, which still stands in the garden of Mitcheldene, was used for the boys, while the house provided a classroom for the girls and accommodation for the Master and Mistress.

It appears that Valentine Guy, who is already recorded in 1813 as receiving 13s. 3d. for schooling boys, became the first Master and his wife the first Mistress. Her maiden name was Saunders and her nephew, William Saunders, says that he received "uncontrolled management" of the school from the Bishop in 1828 and was formally appointed Master in 1838 after his uncle's death. This suggests that Valentine Guy became incapable of running the school some time before his death, and we know that Mrs. Guy was having trouble with her hand. At a meeting of the Trustees in 1841 it was noted: "It appearing to the Trustees that Mrs. Guy has had the misfortune to lose the use of the fingers of one of her hands and is thereby incapacitated from instructing the children in Needlework, the Trustees wish it to be understood that Mrs. Guy must procure some competent person to attend the school during the school times appropriated to work, who shall instruct the children in Needlework."

The Master's accounts for three months beginning January 1826 give some information about the life of the school: they record 43 Boys reading and 16 writing; 43 Girls reading and 11 writing; 1s. 6d. for sweeping the chimney and cleaning the drain; 4s. for Brooms and 6d. for grinding penknives. In the first three months of 1829 15 quires of writing paper and 700 quills were bought, 9s. 2d. was spent on "rewards," 2s. 6d. on chalk and a similar sum on string and pencils. The entry which occurs from time to time "for putting the bridge over the brook" reminds us that the brook still ran along the street. The income for the school was partly provided by the children's "school pence", partly by subscriptions from local gentry, often paying for children whose parents were unable to pay, and partly by the income from Bishop Moss's endowment.

We know something about William Saunders because he gave evidence in a law case in the Court of Arches in 1841. Certain parishioners had complained about the behaviour of the Curate, the Revd. William Hawkes Langley, and Saunders was among those questioned about the alleged offences. His answers make it clear that he did not intend to commit himself about the matters in dispute but some interesting facts emerge. He refers to a clothing fund for the children of the school from which £10 had been laid out "as well as what was provided by the parents." He went to Garsington three times a week for a music class and he had done some Land-Measuring for the Bishop. The Income he derived from the National School (since becoming Master) was about forty pounds a year. Asked about the lack of heating in the Church he said he had observed coughing among the children in winter and added "we have a Fire in School in winter". An eighty-two year-old resident (Thomas Juggins) testified to his character: "I should think that William Saunders is esteemed by the Bishop. I never heard anything against his Character and he attends Church regularly and plays the Organ and takes care of his Scholars."

In October 1846 Saunders wrote his letter of resignation to the Archdeacon of Oxford: "Enjoying as I do the approbation of my superiors in the neighbourhood, the friendship of many of the yeomanry and the goodwill and respect of most of the peasantry, it will be to me exceedingly painful to sever myself from so many ties which have been so long growing upon me." He left to become master of an agricultural school in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. His aunt wrote in January 1847 resigning her post, saying "At my nephew leaving me I feel very dul".

Although William Saunders would not accuse the Curate in court he certainly knew something to his disadvantage for the accounts and correspondence of the Trustees show that Mr. Langley was in debt to Saunders for £20 0s. 10d. from 1825. In 1835 at a meeting of the Trustees it was ordered:

"1. That Mr. Saunders be instructed to apply to Mr. Langley for the amount

2. That until the same be discharged, the whole or such part as shall remain unpaid, shall be placed at the head of every account of the expenses and disbursements of Wheatley School
3. That Mr. Saunders be instructed to apply to Mr. Langley on the part of the Trustees for all accounts and papers in any way connected with the School. It appearing that such accounts and papers have from time to time been borrowed and taken away by Mr. Langley and that they have never been returned. Also that application be made at the same time for all those papers and accounts which were placed in Mr. Langley's hands by Mr. Downes on his quitting the curacy of Wheatley."

This vexatious business was not finally settled for several years.

After Saunders' resignation there was some anxiety among the Trustees about a successor. Mr. Ashhurst, of Little Milton, wrote to the Bishop: "I have just heard that there is no Master to take Mr. Saunders's place ... and that in consequence of the Boys' School being closed the Dissenters have opened one and some of the boys who used to attend the N.S. have already been sent there ... I had understood from Mr. Saunders that a person by the name of Turner was coming from the Training School ... but perhaps he had been misinformed." Soon afterwards he wrote "it is very desirable a man and wife or brother and sister for only one house and only one sitting room downstairs. School sadly in debt." In February the Archdeacon received a letter written on behalf of the Bishop: "from all he has heard he thinks Mrs. Hunt's son of Wheatley will be the next person to appoint for the Boys' School at Wheatley; and that his sister will do very well for the Girls' School. The Mother, Mrs. Hunt, has the Infants' School and she would wish to live with her son and daughter which in all respects will be advantageous ..." In March there was a letter from Mr. Hunt expressing his thanks for help in obtaining the appointment.

The reference to the Infant School in the Bishop's letter is a reminder that this school had been in existence since 1840, on the present Bell Lane site, which was bought for the purpose from Richard Gardner for £120. Responsibility for the Infant School was taken over by the Trustees in September 1841 at the request of Miss Tyndale who had provided the school.

William Hunt and his sister took up their posts at the school but their relationship with the Trustees seems to have been difficult. There was disagreement about the amount of money they were entitled to from the children's pence in addition to the regular salary of £10 a quarter. Sarah Hunt signed a document agreeing to receive only half of the money, leaving the rest with the Trustees for school expenses, but her brother continued to claim the full amount and this was not settled until June 1849 when both Hunts signed a document by which they were to receive half and the Trustees half. The same document shows that their appointment was not permanent but renewable annually.

By October 1849 the beginning of a change which was to have profound effects on the village and the school are evident. The energetic Bishop Samuel Wilberforce had been in office since 1845 and he was concerned about Wheatley, which he must have passed through frequently on his way from Cuddesdon Palace to the city. He decided to raise the status of the parish from a curacy to a vicarage and he invited the Revd. Edward Elton to become the first Vicar. Mr. Elton accepted the Bishop's challenge in a missionary spirit. In a letter to the Archdeacon about the need for help in building a suitable vicarage for himself and his family he wrote: "I feel your pastoral experience will would confirm my statement of its sinful and debased state, besides ... the turbulent and lawless conduct of the masses of the inhabitants holds up its character to the notice of the whole county." He must have felt confirmed in his estimate of the moral state of the village when he found himself fighting against the badger baiting and when about 150 young trees he had planted were cut down just as they were beginning to grow. He found the school in an unsatisfactory condition: it was badly in debt and he thought the building "wretched". Nor was he pleased with the Hunts. A letter from Mr. Garrett, Rector of Garsington and one of the Trustees, to the Archdeacon comments: "I would advise their (the Hunts) receiving notice at the end of their present agreement ... and urging them to look for another situation which if they can obtain sooner than June next the schools would be taken off their hands at any time. This course the Bishop strongly approves and Mr. Elton very much desires."

A few weeks later Mr. Garrett wrote again, complaining that "unless funds are made available to make the necessary repairs it will not be possible to appoint Proper Teachers who know their business ... I shall reduce my little fund so much as to render me unable to proceed, because I cannot afford to

employ Tradesmen unless I have within my reach sufficient funds ..."

By December the Hunts had obtained another situation but their mother stayed on in Wheatley. In October 1870 Mr. Elton noted in his diary: "Our late excellent schoolmistress Mrs. Hunt, about 25 years in charge of the Infant School, died this morning in 77th year. A good Christian...."

The question of the appointment of teachers continued to be difficult. In March 1852 it was reported to the Trustees that the Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress had given notice to leave, having been elected to the schools at Maidenhead. Mr. Elton said that he hoped to secure a successor who had a Government Certificate of qualification. Evidently no satisfactory arrangement was reached at this point for it is not until September 1853 that he notes "Last Sunday before school master comes." At this time, too, he records his indignation that some of the most respectable children of the place - children of the Bishop's butler - were being sent to Cuddesdon School "thereby casting a reflection on ours." The next master, Mr. Wilson, lasted less than two years but Mr. George Wright, who arrived in April 1855, settled down until 1871.

Edward Elton's School

As soon as he was established in his new vicarage (now Morland House), Mr. Elton set about the task of raising money to replace the Church building which stood on the Old Burial Ground and to provide a new building for the school. In January 1857 he was able to record that the Trustees had adopted a plan for rebuilding the schools, with hopes of its speedy fulfilment, and in the same month he was given the site: "it belonged to a very rich person, a brewer, a man not very likely to be moved by a direct appeal from me. I accordingly stated the case to the Bishop as Chairman of Bp Moss's trust and asked if he could apply for permission to buy half for the new school ... He generously gave the whole garden of an acre." The generous donor was Mr. Morrell and the school has stood on the site for 125 years. During this time when the church was being built the upper room of the old school was used temporarily for services. In May the contract for building the school was signed and the work went ahead. Mr. Elton says the cost was £1,000 and he took advantage of an offer from the Government to double whatever was given by residents within five miles. On the 5th May 1858 the school was opened, less than a year after the consecration of the new Church.

The following account of the opening ceremonies appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal for 8th May, 1858:

On Wednesday last the Church's work received another impetus and, let us hope, a great source of blessing and strength, in the opening of the new schools (at Wheatley) — The material used is stone dug in the neighbourhood ... (In his sermon) the Revd. T. B. Morrell, Rector of Henley-on-Thames — proceeded to ground upon his text the duty of Christian education, and to meet certain popular but unreasonable objections against education ... The congregation and children having adjourned to the school suitable collects were read by the Revd. E. King, Curate, and the Incumbent delivered an address. ... he was followed by the Revd. A. Pott, Rural Dean, who alluded to the great work Mr. Elton had done in the parish. The children were then liberally feasted on tea and cake; after tea they sang, with great taste, some excellent rounds, catches and glees ... Heartily do we wish 'God speed' to the work going on in this parish under the able and persevering incumbent, who has struggled successfully with no common difficulties, and who, since his appointment in 1851 has been instrumental in building a new church, a new parsonage and finally new schools in this parish, once a bye-word for all that was ignorant and demoralising. We feel sure that these new schools will be a blessing to the children of Wheatley, Littleworth and Shotover, for whose benefit they have been erected. We understand there is still a deficiency of about £30 in the school building funds, which, we hope, will soon be made up.

This account is interesting for several reasons, particularly for the further evidence it gives of Wheatley's bad reputation in the area and for the reference to the Revd. E. King, at that time Curate, who was later to become widely known and revered as Bishop of Lincoln. The tribute to Mr. Elton's work for the school was well-deserved. Almost every day during his incumbency the log book records a visit by him or by his wife and daughters, to teach the children or to support the teachers with advice

or practical help. His successors have all maintained a close association with the school. The Revd. Arthur Sturges, Vicar from 1889 to 1907, described as "the best friend for boys ...", took a particularly keen interest in its activities but others have also made important contributions not only in religious instruction but in many varied ways.

The accounts of the building fund have survived and they demonstrate Mr. Elton's methods of raising money by canvassing a wide circle of friends as well as people in public positions. Characteristically he persuaded the architect, the lawyer and the auctioneer to contribute.

Monies received and expended on and about
the Building of Schools at
Wheatley

Date	Received	£	s	d
Sept. 1857	Ashhurst John H. Mr.	5	-	-
Do.	Ashhurst The Rev. Jas. H.	5	-	-
June 1858	Do. 2nd Subscription	5	-	-
Jany. 1859	All Souls College - The late Warden of	2	2	-
Sept. 1857	Biscoe Mrs.	5	-	-
Sept. 1857	Cogan Mr.	10	-	-
Sept. 1857	Dallas Mrs.	1	-	-
July 1858	Davenport Mr.	4	4	-
Sept. 1857	Elton Revd. E.	20	-	-
June 1858	Do. 2nd Subscription	20	10	1
Jan. 1858	Earle Mrs.	5	-	-
Sept. 1857	Gammie G. Mr.	10	-	-
Sept. 1857	Henley Rt. Honble. J. W.	10	-	-
Jany. 1858	Hall Mr.	5	-	-
Sept. 1857	King Revd. E.	10	-	-
July 1858	Hallam Mr.	3	3	-
Jany. 1858	Oxford the Rt. Revd. The Lord Bishop	10	-	-
June 1858	Do. 2nd Subscription	5	-	-
Jan. 1858	Oxford University	20	-	-
June 1858	Pott Revd. A.	5	-	-
Sept. 1857	Sandeman G. Mr.	6	-	-
July 1858	Do. 2nd Subscription	4	-	-
July 1858	Street G. E. Mr.	4	4	-
Sept. 1857	Tyndale W. E. Mr.	10	-	-
July 1858	Do. 2nd Subscription	5	-	-
Jany. 1858	Tyndale Revd. H.	2	-	-
June 1858	A friend		5	-
DONATIONS		197	8	1
	Bp. Moss' Charity	40	-	-
	Diocesan Board of Education	30	-	-
	National Society	30	-	-
	Government Grant	357	-	-
	Sale of Old Premises	110	-	-
	Sale of Old Materials		10	-
	Collection after Sermon	23	6	1
	Cuddesden - Offertory		18	-
		789	2	2

Date		Expended		£	s	d
Sept.	14	1857	To Giles Holland	100	-	-
Nov.	30	1857	Do.	100	-	-
Dec.	19	1857	Do.	10	-	-
Jan.	21	1858	Do.	40	-	-
March	10	1858	Do.	35	-	-
June	7	1858	Do.	33	4	6
June	24	1858	Do.	92	14	7
July	12	1858	Do.	270	-	-
		1859	Do.	10	-	-
<hr/>						
		Contract £650 Extras £40-19-1		Total		
				690	19	1
May		1858	Carting Materials	1	19	-
May		1858	Labour	3	9	7
May		1858	Mason for building wall and fixing step	7	3	-
July	12	1858	Architects Bill - Mr. Street	39	8	-
July	5	1858	Auctioneers Bill - Mr. Mallam	20	1	6
July	5	1858	Lawyers Bill - Mr. Davenport	26	2	-
<hr/>						
				789	2	2
<hr/>						

Examined and
approved
March 15 1859

George Gammie

Alfred Pott
W. E. Tyndale
Edward Elton

The above balance sheet has been copied from the Bodleian Library MS DD Par Wheatley b18 bundle 1, and was deposited there by the Vicar and Churchwardens of Wheatley. It shows how the school was paid for. It must be pointed out that none of the money was borrowed.

WHO WAS WHO
(alphabetical order)

The Late Warden of ALL SOULS COLLEGE was the Rev. Lewis Sneyd, M.A., who died on February 21st, 1858

The Rev. James Henry ASHHURST, M.A., was Rector of Waterstock

John Henry ASHHURST lived at Waterstock House. He had been High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1852
Mrs. BISCOE should probably read "Misses Biscoe". The unmarried sisters Elizabeth and Frances Biscoe were Ladies of the Manor of Holton, and lived at Holton Park

Joseph COGAN appears in a directory of 1854 as a "surgeon" of Wheatley

Mrs. DALLAS. Nothing is known as yet of this lady

John Marriott DAVENPORT was Clerk of the Peace of Oxfordshire and an Oxford solicitor. He acted as solicitor to the school Trustees

Mrs. EARLE was a relative of Margaret, second wife of the Rev. E. Elton and a tenant at Shotover

The Rev. Edward ELTON was Vicar of Wheatley and had been instrumental in building the school

George GAMMIE was the owner of Shotover House. He was a magistrate and became High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1859

Alexander William HALL was the brewer who built up what was to become, in 1896, Hall's Oxford Brewery. He lived at Barton Abbey, but was one of the major landowners in Wheatley. He was an M.P. for Oxford from 1874 to 1880 and 1885 to 1892, and High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1867

The Right Honourable Joseph Warner HENLEY was Lord of the Manor at Waterperry and a prominent M.P. for Oxfordshire. Contemporaries described him as "the father of the House of Commons" and "a most estimable and sagacious man". He lived until the ripe old age of 92, having been a Member of Parliament for 37 years until his retirement at 86. He was also Chairman of Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions from 1846 to 1863

Giles HOLLAND was a builder, brick and tile maker of Park Street, Thame. He built the school

The Rev. Edward KING was Elton's Curate, later Principal of Cuddesdon College, Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology and then Bishop of Lincoln

Mr. MALLAM was an Oxford auctioneer

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of OXFORD was Samuel Wilberforce

The Rev. Alfred POTT, M.A., was Curate at Cuddesdon

Lt. Col. George Glas SANDEMAN owned Sandeman's port wine company. His connection with the Wheatley area was that in 1850 his daughter, Eliza Carey Sandeman, had married William Earle Tyndale, of Holton

George Edmund STREET was the Architect of the school. He was the Diocesan Architect and among his many buildings were the Theological College at Cuddesdon and the Law Courts in The Strand

The Rev. Henry Annesley TYNDALE, M.A., was Rector of Holton and nephew of the Misses Biscoe

William Earle TYNDALE was the elder brother of Henry Annesley Tyndale and heir to Holton Park.

He was a magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire. In 1866 he changed his name to Biscoe by royal licence

When Bishop Moss's School was put up for auction it was described in the announcement of the sale as 'situate in the best part of the village, and having a considerable frontage to the main street, comprising a stone-built and tiled house, with large room on the ground floor, and 3 bedrooms, 3 attics and lumber room over; also a two-roomed cottage adjoining, with back kitchen, pump of excellent water, yard and offices, together with the Upper School House, Yard, Garden, and entrance to the upper street.' It fetched £110.

Mr. Wright must have been busy, but he continued to improve his own standards: in March 1859 it was reported to the Trustees that he had distinguished himself at the recent Government examination by obtaining a First Class.

Night School

Among other educational work for the community the Elton family set up a Night School. Mrs. Elton

wrote an account of this which was reprinted in the 'Church Times' in 1954. The classes began in 1863 and were held on Monday and Friday evenings, lasting for two hours. The following extracts from Mrs. Elton's account give a vivid picture of what she called "a very successful campaign."

"The system we adopted seemed to give equal satisfaction to pupils and teachers. The main part of the boys was divided into four classes - the number in each class varying from six to ten. Four lady teachers were appointed, each of whom undertook a distinct branch of education; our eldest daughter taking arithmetic; the second taking the reading; another inmate of our house taking the writing; I taking dictation and spelling; my husband overlooking all.

"We always opened the school ourselves at 6.30; and carried it on till 8.30. We engaged a steady lad to see that the room was thoroughly warmed and that all was in good order; slates, books, copybooks, pens, etc., all in their proper places and the candles lighted at the appointed hour. On our arrival, we immediately admitted the boys ...

"My husband always admitted them as their respective names were called; and on the Monday night each boy paid his penny to me, as he passed by me to his place; and he saw the penny duly registered at the moment of presentation ...

"Our time was divided into four half-hours, and at the end of each half hour a bell was rung, which was a signal to all, to give up their present employment, and each class passed on to the next teacher, the arithmeticians to reading, the readers to dictation, and so on all round ...

"Another chief feature in our school was the system of taking of places which we found most useful in keeping up the interest of the boys. Whoever was at the head when classes changed was entitled to a mark; and we found that a wholesome emulation was thus caused which had not at all subsided in the month of March; indeed; the excitement rose high about that time as a rumour was afloat that 'prizes were to be given for the marks'; and I believe that many an involuntary gasp was checked, by the hope that a mauvais pas might be made by John or Tom, and so a triumphant move lie made to 'the top'.

Prizes were (as was rumoured) afterwards given according to this register ...

"Our average number was thirty, and as we carried on the school for twenty weeks, we received about £2 10s. in pence; and this is all that the receipt page of my night school account has to record; (subscriptions were neither asked for or received). The expenditure page tells a different story; it says reading books 2s. 9d., copybooks 6s., slate pencils 3s. 6d., candles (dip) £1 1s. 8d., firing £2; and, at the last, £1 10s. laid out in prizes, which were highly appreciated by the boys."

Mrs. Elton's account does not make clear how long this pioneer effort lasted but there are records some thirty years later of an Evening Continuation School from 1896 to 1914 and this was given a grant after the annual Inspector's Report - in the first year this was £8 17s. 6d. Girls as well as boys were admitted and in 1896 the subjects taught were Mensuration, Elementary Physics and Chemistry, Woodwork and Needlework. The Inspector's Report read: "Great pains have been taken to make the class useful; but it is not quite clear that the subjects chosen were those in which the scholars most needed instruction."

In 1897 reading and writing are mentioned, as well as Music lessons, some of which were given by the Vicar, Mr. Sturges. In 1900 the Inspector was more enthusiastic: "This class has a very cheerful tone and the students in attendance have undoubtedly gained much benefit by the excellent instruction provided for them." In 1901-2 Elementary Physiography and Horticultural Botany were being taught and these subjects, with Woodwork, were continued until 1911 when Physiography was replaced by Rural Arithmetic. In 1912 there was an Evening School Garden and lessons were given on Chickens, no doubt enlivened by the presence of a hen and her ten chicks: for the thirteen eggs she was given to hatch a shilling was paid. In 1913 Cookery was added to the curriculum and fifteen girls took advantage of these classes.

There are no further records after 1914 but in the eighteen previous years between twenty and thirty pupils attended annually, of ages ranging from thirteen to thirty-seven.

Reports

The main source of information from 1863 is the school log books, and Wheatley is fortunate in that for the boys, girls and mixed schools these are extant. The headteacher was required by the Code of 1862 to keep a log book and it is in these that the reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors are recorded. In 1863 the H.M.I. was H. W. Bellairs, and from his report we get the following: "The discipline of the Lower Class may be improved. The reading of the 1st class is good - of the others very moderate. The arithmetic of the 1st class is good - of the others imperfect. The dictation of the 1st and 2nd class is good - the writing from slates imperfect - Copy Books, pretty good." The Head Teacher was George Wright, assisted by Pupil Teacher Edward Knapp.

Two years later Mr. Bellairs reported: "The Ventilation practically is confined to the chimneys as the holes in the floor are closed. It must be close or full of draughts. Some scientific plan should be adopted. The Copy Book writing is confined to the upper classes - none practise straight strokes, pot hooks and hangers. The children purchase their books, and there are intervals between the close of one book and the beginning of another. A monthly payment of a halfpenny each child would remedy this and enable the Managers to take Paper writing lower in the school. The general condition of this school is good."

Reading was a problem during the next four years so that in 1869 the Inspector's report stated: "The defects mentioned last year still prevail. In view of the warning given last year - my Lords have no alternative but to reduce the present Grant to that Department by one tenth under Article 52(a)." In 1871 the school became co-educational, but unfortunately the "good results" expected "eventually from these changes" did not materialise, and again in 1873 "my Lords" regretted to receive so unfavourable a report. This cost the school £6 14s. 10d. in grant.

There had been a change of Head Teacher in 1874, and this was reflected in the report of 1876 which stated: "The school has come on wonderfully since Mr. Thompson took charge of it: great credit is due to him for its improved condition." This improvement was substantiated by James Ridgway, the Diocesan Inspector, who wrote that "the school is decidedly improved in all respects since last year. The children in the lower classes now read equal to their age; last year they were at a loss, unless they had learnt the lesson by rote."

The improvement continued and attendances increased during the next four years, but Mr. Thompson left in 1880, and the Inspector reported in 1881 "There is a want of discipline and the general order of the school has deteriorated. The children must learn to hold out their hands before they answer and only to answer one at a time." The following year did not show an improvement. The report stated that the head "has great disadvantages and many difficulties to contend against in this school. But I do not think he has the power of preserving good discipline nor of imparting instruction in such a school as this."

There was another change of headship in 1883; George Wright, who had been at the school from 1855 to 1871 returned from the Isle of Wight and was in charge for the next three years. It may have been that the boys took advantage of this change for the Inspector reported that the "Boys are especially unruly and troublesome." It is possible that this deterioration was a factor in the school being divided again into girls and boys, because this change was effected in 1884 and in the following year the Inspector stated "The Girls have for the last nine months been formed into a separate department, which is in my opinion a good arrangement ..." His comments on the Boys School were the "rooms were bitterly cold. The funds being very low fires could not be afforded, and if fires were lighted the stoves would smoke." There was some slight improvement in discipline and the standard of education. By 1886 there had been a new stove installed which warmed "the room well," and "some good new desks have been provided. ... When the children leave the Infants School they are well prepared, but both Boys and Girls deteriorate as soon as they come into these departments." Because "the rules laid down in Article 4 and Article 90 had not been observed by the Managers in regard to the Boys Department Their Lordships are therefore unable to pay a Grant for the last three months of the School year." Some improvement was noted over the next five years during which time George Wright had left and his place had been taken by Henry James Woodriddle.

During the period from 1819 to 1891 Wheatley School had had no less than twelve head teachers, but

in September of 1891 there was appointed a head who was to stay for the next thirty four years, and it is interesting to note that from the commencement of Mr. Rees Leyshon's headship to the present time, a period of more than ninety years, there have only been four headmasters.

Although there was no immediate dramatic improvement, improvement there was, so that the 1897 report stated "the teaching has wisely aimed at maintaining the accuracy fostered by an annual examination ... The children continue to be exceptionally regular and punctual in attendance."

A cry of anguish went up from the Correspondent in his report in 1893. He wrote: "Voluntary Schools all over the country are threatened. We are threatened with an order to enlarge our Classrooms, as well as to change their method of ventilation; as well as to build a Porch and Cloakroom for the boys." This cry from the heart was occasioned by Circular 321 issued by A. H. D. Acland, Vice-President of the Committee of Council, which laid down sanitary and building conditions to which grant-aided schools had to conform. In November, 1897, W. H. Crouch, H.M. Sub-Inspector, reported: "the school-room is almost too full to allow work to be carried on in comfort. I am sure the Managers, anxious as they always are to promote the welfare of the school, will take into earnest consideration the question of enlarging this room." The Managers were quick to take action. In February 1898 an architect visited the school, on July 1, work on the enlargement started, and on September 9, the log book records "New portion of building used this week." In addition, by the end of October ten new desks had arrived. There was a further improvement in that the enlarged schoolroom was partitioned into three in January 1900. But the H.M.I.'s report of May 1899 had this comment: "This is an interesting school on account of novel and intelligent methods of instruction ... There are 137 children on the books and at my unexpected visit 137 were present, and this is not a rare occurrence." There is no doubt that the structural alterations were of great benefit to both scholars and staff.

"Very creditable work continues to be done," said the report of 1904, and then added: "the Art 68 teacher taking the lowest class has habitually been in charge of sixty children. The staff should be strengthened so as to avoid this irregularity." Extra staff were employed, but in 1907 H.M. I. E. F. Davidson submitted a very long report, which was very constructive in its approach, admitting that the strengthening of the staff in the lower part of the school had been beneficial, but commented: "Mrs. Leyshon cannot effectively teach 55 children in two different standards, where nearly all the subjects require to be taught separately." The staff re-organisation was effected on October 21st. After generally favourable observations on reading, recitation, spelling, composition, handwriting, arithmetic including the metric system, geography, history, drawing, physical exercises, singing, needlework and object lessons, he went on to say that the "premises are generally in good condition, but the Girls' cloakroom is inadequate, the offices need better ventilation and the walls require re-colouring. ... Care should be taken to prevent the misuse of the Boys' urinal. Dictionaries are needed for the use of the elder children, and books for silent reading are desirable in all classes." The re-painting was carried out in the summer holiday of 1908.

H.M.I. Butler visited the school on January 18, 20, 24 and 25, 1911, and as can be imagined such a lengthy inspection produced as lengthy a report. There were ten points listed in the document, which were constructive in their approach. The numbers in attendance were in excess of those laid down in Article 12(a). Then Mr. Butler suggested that drawing should be taught to girls as well as boys, that elder boys should have practical woodwork and elder girls practical cookery. It would appear from this comment that the cookery classes which had been held in the Merry Bells, starting in 1899, had lapsed. The H.M.I. also noted that "constant care should be taken to prevent ... unhealthy postures in desks ... lessons in physical exercises should invariably end with a deep breathing movement." Point was again made of the inadequate girls' cloakroom "and lavatories should be provided." A comment of this nature suggests no improvement had been made in the last hundred years!

A new room was added in September 1913, when hot water heating apparatus was installed, the walls cleaned and distempered, also new offices for Boys and Girls with a new girls' cloakroom.

In November 1920, H.M.I.s Hunt, Forbes and Bartlett submitted a long and detailed report on the curriculum, teaching methods and achievement. They said the children were well behaved though many needed rousing, but the large size of classes and crowded seating impeded individual effort. There was not any great intelligence shown in comprehending what was read and recitation suggested their imaginations were not reached. It did not appear that the children were used to being made to

think out questions for themselves. Nature Study, gardening and physical exercises were creditably done, but the best subject taught was geography. The final comment of these three inspectors was that it seemed "regrettable that few, if any, children from this school as a rule enter for scholarships to a Secondary School." Little did they know that in the next seven years fourteen children from the school would be awarded County Minor Scholarships, mainly at Thame Grammar School.

In the next thirty odd years scarcely a year went by without a scholarship success and in some years the number reached double figures. This was helped when the Girls' Grammar School at Holton was opened.

Mr. T. W. Balmer, the H.M.I. who inspected the school in 1929, reported "The Head Master of this school has worked hard ... the allround improvement noted is necessarily slow, but ... definite progress is evident ... His difficulties are being overcome and those remaining will best be met by a continuance of the determination to succeed with which he set out."

Ventilation of the premises continued to cause comment and by 1932 there were 183 children on the books. During the Christmas holidays 1934-35 an additional classroom (temporary) had been provided and together with a reduction of the number on the school roll an easement of both organisation and conditions of teaching was achieved.

In September 1950 the school was re-organised and the senior pupils were transferred to the new Wheatley Secondary School and by 1952 the numbers on the roll had been reduced to 125.

The problem of the girls' cloakroom, which had existed for nearly 150 years was resolved in 1951. A description of the school at that time stated that the main school building contained four classrooms, two of them divided by a far from sound-proof glass partition. The smallest of the four was furnished with chairs and used as a spare for the teaching of music. A wooden hut in the playground with a cloakroom attached provided quite spacious quarters for the largest class and there was a rather dilapidated hut, formerly a woodwork centre, which was little used. The girls' cloakroom contained four fixed basins; main water had been brought to the school a year ago but not yet extended to the offices. These were very old-fashioned in need of decoration; they were flushed once a day from a storage tank to which water was first pumped by hand. There are constant references to the caretaker being paid so much per week for performing his pumping duties. Mr. Key started his 1951 log book entry in red ink with this: "1951 6 Jan. Work almost completed in connecting the school with mains water supply for washing, etc."

Mr. John G. Key signed off on April 13th, 1954, with this: "School closed, after p.m. session for Easter Holidays. The final entry made on the retirement of John G. Key." He was succeeded by Mr. Ronald A. Murray Ransom, who in turn was followed two years later by Mr. Glenville Rees Evans. Mr. Ransom left to take up a post at Marlborough School, Woodstock. Mr. Evans was still at the school in 1982, although he said that when he came it was only for two years.

As far as can be traced the school had its first prize-giving in 1957, when the Bishop of Dorchester, the Rt. Rev. D. G. Loveday, presented the prizes for achievement. In 1902 the scholars were awarded books for attendance.

On Monday, May 5th, 1958, the centenary of the school was celebrated by having a special thanksgiving service in the church when all the school attended along with more than a hundred old scholars and friends. The service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. C. R. de Lyons Pike. The first lesson was read by Margaret Fogell, a scholar, and the second lesson was read by Miss E. Gunn, who was a scholar at the school in 1883.

Curriculum

Prior to the Newcastle Report of 1861, the curriculum at National Schools consisted of the three Rs — Reading, (w)Riting and (a)Rithmetic — and learning the Catechism and passages from the Old and New Testaments. The Vicar visited the school nearly every day and was usually the Correspondent (secretary) of the local Board of Trustees and Diocesan Inspectors conducted an examination of the

scholars at least annually.

Subsequent to the publication of the Newcastle Report with its emphasis on examination in depth by Her Majesty's Inspectors and the Richard Lowe scheme of payment by results a noticeable change came over the curriculum. The teaching of the three Rs was retained but the teaching of the Catechism and the Bible became the responsibility of the Diocesan Inspectorate, not the H.M.I.s. The state added two further subjects: drawing for boys and sewing for girls.

A detailed list and the time-table had to be submitted to the H.M.I. in April at the beginning of each school year for the following twelve months, and returned to the headteacher signed by the H.M.I. The log books record the submission of the time-table and its signed return annually up to the discontinuance of the payment-by-results scheme in 1891.

It was also necessary in order that the grant for each pupil to be paid for the pupil to have attended school a minimum number of times. Pupils with less than the minimum number of attendances were not allowed to be submitted for examination.

The religious instruction was supervised by the Vicar and the Diocesan Inspectors examined the children annually, submitted a written report and recommended the award of the Bishop's Prize and certificates. As the Bishop's Prize was a Bible it was not awarded to the same child twice.

The Rev. H. W. Bellairs, the first H.M.I. for the area covering Wheatley, in 1867 examined 36 day school boys, 26 of whom passed in reading, 25 in writing, and 32 in arithmetic — payment £11 1s. 4d. He also examined 8 evening school boys, 6 of whom passed in reading, 7 in writing, and 5 in arithmetic — payment £1 10s. 0d. There was an average attendance of 45 boys at the day school and 13 at the evening school. The total grant paid was £23 3s. 10d. The grant had increased to £28 18s. 10d. in 1870, but in the next year it had dropped to £23 0s. 6d. In the National School report of 1872 there were 94 (48 boys and 46 girls) on the roll but only 56 children had put in sufficient attendances to be presented for examination. The total grant was £40 8s. 0d.

The Infants School was also subjected to examination in the three Rs and H.M.I. Pickard reduced the grant by £8 3s. 2d. from £27 4s. 0d. to £19 0s. 10d. because "the school is dirty and badly ventilated. I am glad the Managers intend to substitute another school for the present premises. The mistress is thoroughly incompetent as schoolkeeper, has made three gross blunders in her register and examination schedule and other mistakes in filling up her part of the Managers' Return. The children examined in accordance with my instruction were totally unable to pass in anything like a satisfactory manner. The headmistress should be warned that another such unfavourable report may result in the withdrawal of her Provisional Certificate." The school had only been on the list of schools to be examined by the Government Inspectorate for a year and one does wonder what sort of standard the H.M.I. expected to be reached by a teacher with only a provisional certificate, with more than 50 infants on the books, ages ranging from nearly three years old to nearly seven years old, with the help of a girl monitor. All this in a building which was most unsatisfactory. The room was overcrowded, the chimneys smoked so much in the winter when the fires were lit that they had to be allowed to go out. This resulted in all the children being crowded into one room, causing real problems for the teaching of the elder ones.

In addition to the basics, by 1875 singing was added to the subjects, and the following songs are listed for that year: "Men of Harlech," "All Among the Barley," "See our Oars with Feathered Spray," "The Bluebells of Scotland," "Come Follow" and "Three Blind Mice."

In the infants the boys as well as the girls had to learn to sew and to learn songs. These youngsters also had what were described as Object Lessons and this was the list for the year ending March 1888:

Sheep	Form	A lead pencil	Looking glass
A street	Rhinoceros	Rain	Cotton plant
Haymaking	Sealing wax	Bricks	Ice
Form	Horse	A teacup	Iron
Whale	Colour	Books	Stars
Plum	Rabbit	A candle	Boots and shoes

Colour	Cocoanut (sic)	Snow	Light
Potato	Wolf	Silver	Frost
Paper	Tea	Air	The sea
Elephant	Gold	A bed	Wind

It would be interesting to discover what teaching aids were used when some of these objects were described to a class of five to seven-year-olds.

While the infants were having to cope with "Men of Harlech" and the "Rhinoceros" the scholars at the National School were being taught subtraction, simple division, compound addition, multiplying by whole numbers and fractions, simple interest, compound long division, compound multiplication, cubic measure, short division money, vulgar fractions. It was, of course, understandable that the children should be conversant with the weights and measures, but it is astonishing to find that standard 5, in 1866, should be taught wine measure! It is difficult to imagine that any child in the National School at Wheatley would ever need to know that. Or that etymology would be of much use to them.

In the 1870s, geography became a very regular subject. The scope of the lessons varied from the motions of the earth, the hemispheres and by way of Scotland, France, Italy, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Russia, Asia, Africa, The Colonies, America, Canada, to the Geography of Oxford. It also included the mountain system and the railway system of England, as well as the rivers: on the whole a very comprehensive list.

With the discontinuance of the payment-by-results scheme in 1891 the curriculum was further extended, but the contents were still submitted to the H.M.I.s for approval.

Cookery classes were started in January 1892, under the heading of Technical Education. The girls of St. IV and upwards attended the Merry Bells from 3 to 5 p.m. daily to be instructed by a teacher sent by the County Council. Miss Cook, an assistant teacher at Wheatley School, also attended in charge of the girls. By 1899 the time of the lesson had been changed to 3 to 4-30. It is interesting to note that normal school hours ended at 3.45 p.m. It would appear that this course lapsed, for H.M.I. Butler commented in his report of 1911: "5 - It is very desirable that the elder boys and girls should have some training in Practical Woodwork and Cookery before leaving school. The teaching of Infant Care and Management should form part of the general course and Personal and Domestic Hygiene as outlined in the Board's memorandum on the subject. Some handwork might also be done in the lower classes in connection with the Geography, History and Arithmetic lessons."

This report was acted upon in May 1912, when cookery classes started with Miss Miller as teacher, and lasted until the end of July, with 22 girls. From now on cookery became a regular subject. Until hut premises were built in the school complex it was sometimes held in the Merry Bells, and after the closure of Holton School in 1914 the classes were held there. From time to time problems arose with the classes, chiefly because the teacher's duties were of a peripatetic nature. This meant that there were times when the classes were not held because she did not turn up due to illness, inclement weather or accidents such as scalded legs. There were also a number of occasions when the room was too cold to be used and the teacher refused to work in these conditions.

It would appear that in the 1930s the cookery class pupils cooked a meal, for Mr. Key records on March 18, 1932: "Received message at 9.30 a.m. Cookery Mistress ill. No Cookery today. Dinner had to be provided for 23 children who had come to school with no other provision for dinner than that usually supplied on Friday. Headmaster and 4 Senior girls spent the morning cooking the dinner." There was a repeat performance on April 15, and on March 24 the following year again the Head, this time with the help of 5 senior girls prepared a mid-day meal for 32 children.

There is an interesting report from the Rev. Mr. Sturges, in 1893, on the Penny Bank. The Post Office Savings Bank was started in 1861. It is not recorded when the Penny Bank was started at the school, but it was well launched by 1893. Mr. Sturges reports: "Our Penny Bank has been a most complete success. Mr. Rees Leyshon and Miss Christian take a keen interest in working it in their respective schools. Our system is to procure a separate bank-book for every child, and one penny in every shilling is added by way of bonus, but only on condition that the money is not touched until the child leaves school, when he can take his bank-book into service with him. It would be well if every boy - and

perhaps every girl as well — leaving school should not only be provided with a Bible and Prayer Book and with a Post Office Bank Book but should also be an admitted Juvenile Member of some sound Benefit Society. We have made a good beginning towards these important objects already, and hope to do more in the future. At the present date we have 99 children in the Large School with bank books and 36 in the Infant School. The former have put by a sum of £68 and the latter £12. Total, 135 children with £80 invested. This, at least, is a promising result of 'free education.'" It would seem that the Post Office Savings Bank scheme has been in existence at Wheatley School for something like ninety years.

Needlework was always a subject taught to the girls and was the responsibility of the mistress, usually the headmaster's wife, as we know from the minutes of 1841. It was the general practice for the girls to be taught to repair and patch garments, and the log books record that the wealthier ladies of the village visited the school from time to time bringing clothes which could be mended or turned into other garments. There are frequent references during Mrs. Elton's time of sheets, chemises and full-size pillowcases being made and sent to her. Mrs. Leyshon put a new dimension on this subject. The Oxford Local School Board, in 1870, started the Oxford Needlework Scheme, which among other things, was to encourage plain needlework, and was limited to the schools under the board's jurisdiction. So successful was the scheme that the following year the catchment area was extended to a 25-mile radius of Oxford. The scheme was a voluntary one and received considerable assistance from the Oxford Self-Help Association. The best entries in various classes were awarded money prizes. After a prize-giving, usually in Oxford Town Hall, the children were given a tea. Mrs. Leyshon's first successes were in April 1898 when 9 girls obtained first prizes, 2 girls second prizes, 49 girls third prizes and 5 girls were commended.

There is no doubt that great efforts were made by the girls, and one of the older inhabitants of the village remembers his sister gaining a first prize. He recalls that none of the male members of the family was allowed anywhere near the garment while it was being made. His mother kept guard over it and his sister carefully put it away wrapped in tissue paper and a white sheet. One of the entrants remembers that the girls went to Oxford by train to attend the prize-giving. Mrs. Leyshon and her pupils were very successful as for the next sixteen years more than 30 girls received awards annually.

The work must have become more intricate because in 1911 H.M.I. Butler commented in his report "Needlework is taught under a scheme which involves very fine work that is liable to cause eyestrain. The results are very creditable, but the subject should in future be taken on the lines suggested in Circular 730." On the face of it this comment seems to take a dog-in-the-manger attitude because the Ministry of Education line was not being followed, nevertheless there was a fair point here. During the winter months the school was lit by oil lamps hung from the ceiling and there would certainly only be oil lamps at best in the home, and there are a number of references in the log books to pupils being off school with weak eyes. Still the scheme was entered up to 1914, possibly to allow those who had begun the scheme to continue until the garment was finished, or it is possible the scheme itself ceased because of the 1914-18 war.

The list of work for the year April 1903 to March 1904 is an example of the additions that had been made to the three Rs, Sewing and Drawing:

Geography	St. I & II, Definitions &c using Map of England; III, England; IV, British Isles & Canada. Maps in each Divn.; V, VI, VII, British Empire with reference to the World
History	St I & II, Simple lessons; III & IV, Fuller lessons; V, VI, VII, Whole
Grammar	St. I & II, Nouns & Verbs; III & IV, Parts of Speech: IV, Do. with parsing; V, VI, VII, Analysis & parsing simple sentences, (ex. in Compd. & Complex)
Composition	St. I to VII

Poetry	St. I & II, Fidelity (Wordsworth) St. III & IV, Pied Piper (Browning) St. V, VI, VII, Horatius (Macaulay)
Drill	Military. Scheme of Model course; also Musical drill
Drawing	I & II, Rt. lines & curves; III & IV, Copy from the flat; IV also enlargements & squares
Music	I & II, Key C; III & IV, C. F. G.; V, VI, VII, All keys. Ear tests
Object lessons	See list for each of three divisions
Needlework	Oxford Scheme
Arithmetic	Scheme A with mental exercises. Upper group also Metric System
Writing	I & II, Transcription, Comp of short sentences, easy dictation, C. Books; III, IV, Transn., composition or letter, dictation, Copy Books; V, VI, VII, Abstracts of obj. lessons, Stories, Copy Book
Reading	As varied as Books in each group will allow

It must not be thought that the boys were not able to participate in a special subject. The County Council, in January 1909, sanctioned "Gardening." On the 28th of that month the head received "Register for Gardening"; two days previously an Instructor in Horticulture had called at the school. This was another County appointment. In July the Inspector visited the school garden and awarded 138 marks. In September the school was closed because there was a Gardens Exhibition in County Hall, Oxford and Wheatley was placed 15th. From now on gardening is a regular feature of the log books, and in July next year a toolhouse for the gardening boys was built. At the Wallingford Agricultural Show in May 1914 the school won second and third prizes and gained second place at Chinnor with 336 marks. The capabilities of the boys in the gardening class were put to very good use in 1917 when six boys were deputed to dig and plant an absent soldier's garden.

The school also did its bit towards the war effort in September and October 1917 and 1918. On the fine afternoons of these two months in each year the children went blackberrying for the soldiers. In 1917 1,251 lb. of blackberries were picked. In the following autumn the astonishing weight of 3,304 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of blackberries were picked. This fruit would need to be despatched each night by train to Oxford, and, it is assumed, delivered to Cooper's jam factory, otherwise it would be mouldy. There were some 150 children on the books during these years and the hedges around Wheatley must have been stripped of blackberries as the result of these excursions.

H.M.I. Butler's ten-point report in February 1911 may have been the catalyst which enabled H.M.I. A. Bartlett to make "special note" of the new relief maps. Mr. Butler suggested that "Some handwork might also with advantage be done in the lower classes in connection with the Geography...lessons." The method of heating schools at this time was by a tubular stove, fed from the top, and with a small grate at the bottom to control the draught and to allow the ash and clinker to be removed. These stoves can be seen in the photographs taken by the County Council Education Department after it had become responsible for the schools in 1902. There are frequent references to these stoves in the H.M.I. reports with recommendations about guards and the standing of buckets of water on the top to provide humidity in the atmosphere. Mr. Leyshon used these pails of water to good purpose. The children were given used paper to tear into small pieces and these were put into the water on the stoves to make pulp for papier mache. One scholar recalls the hours he grudgingly spent tearing up paper during his time at school. Mr. Leyshon got a local carpenter, possibly someone employed by Mr. Chapman, to make a globe-like wooden frame. The papier mache was then stuck on the wooden frame to produce a relief

map. Considerable interest, both educationally and commercially, was shown in this project. Messrs. Meedon and Gater from the County Council Education Office came to inspect. Mr. Brown, Headington Council School, came to see how the boys made relief maps. Mr. Prince, a representative of Messrs. Arnold, the school stationers, called so that he could report to his firm. Later on the Bishop of Oxford and his sister "visited the school to examine the raised maps."

Then, in June 1913, the school was introduced to beekeeping. Mr. Leyshon put up an observation hive and "all the school (a.m.) were taken to see the bees in their various stages and at work in the observation hive."

Handwork seems to have been a hit-and-miss affair, possibly because there were no suitable premises. A County Council Teachers' Class, "Handwork for the Standards," was started in December 1911 by Mr. Leyshon. It was held on Saturday mornings between 10 and 12. Handwork is not mentioned again until 1920, when on January 20, handwork materials arrived. Then in May the following year the County Organiser, Mr. Halliday, came to inspect the hut as to suitability for woodwork. This class was started in November and lasted all one afternoon from 1.30 to 3.45. The handwork was of a sufficiently high standard by 1926 for a book trough, a knife box, a raffia bag, a model of the school garden and drawings from nature to be sent to the Education Office in Oxford for exhibition.

One of the items in the syllabus of a century ago was "drill." This consisted of marching in lines, marking time, swinging arms, bending knees, and such like exercises. The drill was sometimes done to music. One H.M.I. report contained the recommendation that the lessons in physical exercise should invariably end with a deep breathing movement. Spasmodic attempts seem to have been made to organise some form of sport, not entirely from altruistic motives on some occasions it must be added. In 1879 the headmaster recorded "Have started a football club for the boys which I find helps the attendance very much. Mr. Elton allowed them to play in his field." There are other instances when, providing the attendance reached a certain percentage over the week, "games" would take place for the last lesson on a Friday, and the children were promised this. On the whole references to football and cricket are very few. There was a football match against Garsington in February 1907. Possibly a more serious attempt at sport was tried in 1920, when boys and girls clubs were formed for "games." Netball was being played in 1925 and September 1926 saw the introduction of hockey. Early in the 1930s there are references to annual sports on the last day of the summer term and in the 1950s Miss Winifred Leyshon presented a cup in memory of her father. Also at this time area school sports were held and Wheatley won the Benson Cup in 1955. Swimming was organised in 1927 and Mr. Fane, in addition to allowing the use of his field for the annual sports, permitted his pool to be used. The Fanes lived in the vicarage built for the Rev. Elton, and renamed it Morland House. The house is now an Oxfordshire County Council children's home. There were also swimming instruction classes at Long Bridges, in Oxford, and certificates were awarded to those achieving the required standard.

An art and craft teacher visited the school on Fridays from 1951. When Mr. Ransome took charge of the school on the retirement of Mr. Key, visits were regularly paid to concerts, and more recently under the headship of Mr. Evans trips abroad have become a regular feature.

Honours

An old resident looking back to her early years said: "The chosen few for Thame Grammar School were very posh and no longer looked the way of the village school student." Head teachers, however, have been proud to record the successes of their pupils. From the first, in accordance with Dr. Bell's scheme, senior pupils were selected to become monitors with a fee of one shilling. They were expected to attend extra lessons after school and they had to prepare for an examination. If they passed this they became pupil teachers and eventually were considered qualified teachers. The Girls' School log books chart the progress of Caroline Froud, who followed this course and in 1865 was appointed mistress of the school at Ledbury. A presentation of a rosewood work box was made to her and she came back several times to visit the girls. From 1892 there are records of more ambitious forms of education. In that year Fred Sheldon and Alf Wilmshurst won County Council Scholarships to Burford Grammar School and in 1896 Henry Sheldon followed them, having obtained one of the five scholarships awarded that year. In 1897 Fred G. Sheldon, who had been pupil teacher and assistant, left to go to Culham Teacher Training College and two years afterwards he is recorded as having gained his First

and Second Year Certificates in the First Division.

In August 1901 the master's daughter, Winifred Agnes Leyshon, was awarded a County Council Junior Scholarship; in that year one other girl and four boys in the County were successful. Among the examiners' comments we find "History; Some of the work is very good ... Few candidates are clear about the respective uses of the Star Chamber and High Commission Courts. Spelling: The girls spell better than the boys, nine of the latter failing altogether in Spelling." We shall return to Winifred Leyshon's remarkable career later.

In 1903 the school had another success: Leonard Sheldon was placed second in the examination for entrance to the Oxford Technical School. In 1905 two girls, Ethel Thornton and Clara Marjorie Cruickshank both gained Junior Scholarships. In July 1910 Miss Cruickshank, presumably one of Clara's elder sisters, was sent to the school as a supply teacher "just out of College." In 1913 another member of this family, Kathleen, passed in seven subjects (including Domestic Economy) in the Oxford Locals Preliminary Examination, as did Hilda Sturges, while Freda Heath passed in five. It seems likely that other pupils took these examinations but there are no records in the log books.

In 1921 Raymond Brandum gained a scholarship at Thame Grammar School. In the next year Ronald Cox and James Sheldon won two of the thirteen scholarships awarded by the County Council, Ian Cruickshank passed for Oxford Technical School and Percy Hawes for Thame Grammar School, Leslie East gained a free place by examination at Thame. During the next five years the following gained County Scholarships or free places at Thame: Geoffrey Sheldon, Robert Jackson, Charles Lowe, Thomas Joseph Matthews, Evelyn M. Chapman, Joseph Lowe, Grace Down and John Chapman (son of Mrs. M. L. Chapman, assistant mistress at the school).

The Cruickshank family whose name occurs often in the list were children of the agent at Shotover and one of them, Andrew David, won fame as a pioneer airman. Born in 1898 he went from Wheatley School to the Oxford Technical School and began to train in engineering at the Oxford Steam Ploughing Co., Cowley. This was interrupted by the First World War and at the age of 17 he trained as a pilot and served in France, Belgium and Germany in the single and two seater planes of the period. After the war he went to Canada, where he joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in which he served, for five years, but the call of flying was strong and for the rest of his life he was employed as a pilot, at first by the Alaska-Yukon Airways. His obituary in the Vancouver Daily Province records: "He crossed and recrossed the treacherous mountain peaks jutting above the Alaskan coast and studding the island ranges". He later joined the Canadian Airways and on the occasion when the explorer Col. MacAlpine and his party were lost in the Arctic he did more than 7,000 miles of flying in the Arctic in a few weeks before finding the members of the expedition. "Mile after mile of country known only to the Eskimo, and some of it not even to them, reeled off beneath him as his plane criss-crossed the barren lands in its search. To quote the obituary again "Canada has lost one of her greatest flyers in the death of Andrew David Cruickshank".

Winifred Leyshon's early success in gaining a County Council scholarship was the first step in a career achieved by few women in her generation. Her father had hoped that she would go to Oxford High School but she was given a place at the Oxford Technical School where her scientific bent was encouraged. In 1907 she was awarded a scholarship in Science at Bedford College, University of London. She took a full part in college activities and the Bedford College Magazine records her contributing to debates, coxing a boat for the Science department and taking part in a variety concert. For two years she was Secretary of the Bedford College branch of the Women's University Settlement. She took her degree in 1910. After a brief experience of school-teaching she was employed during the First World War in the development of wireless for military purposes but before the Armistice she had found the post in which she was to spend the rest of her working life - teaching Physics to medical students at the London School of Medicine for Women in Hunter St. "Her war-time activity was put to very good use for the children at her father's school. February 23, 1923 has this remarkable entry: "Wireless. The children listened to 'Cinderella' broadcasted by Marconi 2LO (2½ - 3½ p.m.) at the School Wireless." The story is an example of the co-operation between father and daughter. Miss Leyshon spent her vacations building a receiving set. Broadcasting was only started in 1922. The low and high tension current was supplied from batteries round the room and there were two pairs of headphones. These were handed on from child to child, each child being allowed to listen for a minute.

As far as is known Wheatley School was the first school in Oxfordshire to have a radio set. On 3rd May, 1923 Mr. Leyshon closed the school so that he and Mrs. Leyshon could attend the ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall when their daughter was presented with her PhD. After her retirement she settled in Wheatley where she was greatly respected. Much of what is known about the life of the village during the early years of this century is the result of her work in collecting and preserving records and information. At the time of writing she is living in sheltered accommodation in Malvern, a living link with the last century.

It would be a pity to overlook those many old pupils who, without winning scholarship or fame, gave unstinting service to the community. Typical of these was Wilfrid Sheldon (1885-1972). He came of a long line of blacksmiths and his father remembered shoeing Bishop Wilberforce's horses. Wilfrid kept the forge going until 1955: an old resident remembers: "on the way to school we always looked in at Mr. Sheldon the blacksmith." He also served the village in many other ways, as chorister, bell-ringer, churchwarden (from 1921 to 1971) and as a founder member of the Village Produce Association of which he was a committee member for nearly thirty years. Fittingly his memorial plaque in the Church concludes 'Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.'

Since the passing of the Butler Education Act opportunities for academic achievement have been greatly extended and the Honours Boards at Wheatley Park School give ample evidence of the way boys and girls who received their early education at Wheatley Primary School have taken advantage of these possibilities.

Attendance

From its inception, education, under either the National or British organisations, necessitated a payment by or on behalf of the scholars. The salaries of the teachers were largely determined by the numbers of the children on the roll and the attendances they made. Reference has already been made to the difficulties which arose between the Trustees of Bishop Moss's School and one master over the children's pence. So with the introduction of the payment-by-results scheme which demanded a required number of attendances each year prior to the submission of the child for examination, attendance became even more important. It is very evident from the log books that prior to 1900 there are more references to the numbers in attendance than to any other subject.

The reasons given for absence were many and varied, but chiefly it was the weather, be it wet, cold, snowing; illness, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, scarlet fever, chicken pox, scarlatina, tuberculosis, typhoid, rheumatic fever, or the common cold; or work, particularly harvesting or potato picking. Even the appointment of Attendance Officers did little to improve matters. In fact one Attendance Officer told the master: "The Act is quite useless to me and I must do my best without it." Nevertheless the Attendance Officers had some effect, because on July 21, 1882, the headmaster recorded: "A rather broken week on account of two school treats viz: on Monday afternoon at the chapel and on Thursday afternoon in the school ... Average 110. On the whole the attendance has considerably improved since parents (5) were fined on July 15th."

It is therefore all the more remarkable that with the arrival of Mr. Rees Leyshon in 1891 the log book shows a dramatic change in the number of scholars in attendance. There is not only an increase in the number on the roll but a considerable jump in the percentage of attendances. Entries in red ink now occur with great regularity denoting a maximum attendance for either morning or afternoon and for a very near if not maximum attendance for the week. "Every child present - 121," records Mr. Leyshon. "The above tested by the counting of heads - Present 121. Arthur Sturges, Manager." This presumably to make certain that no-one had answered twice, once for himself and a second time for someone who was playing truant.

These exceptional attendances were regularly commented on in the H.M.I. reports. "The attendance is marvellously regular," "The children are never absent unless too ill to attend." There were also disappointments, as in January 1899; "a.m. & p.m. full attendance - 138. 10 a.m. Cancelled by Nellie Mason. M.C. being unwell, her mother writes to say that she will send her away for a change. Name removed pro tem. January 16 a.m. & p.m., 17 a.m. & p.m., 18 a.m. & p.m., 20 a.m. & p.m. — Full attendance - 136. Not to be counted as M.C. was not sent away. January 26 M.C. sent back to school today. Her mother changed her mind, and did not send her away."

At the end of the school year in April 1899 the following remarkable table was recorded in the log book:

Attendance

1 child (K. Life)	made	8	years'	full	attendance
1 child (R. Shirley)	made	7	"	"	"
1 " (N. Gunn)	"	6	"	"	"
2 children	"	5	"	"	"
4 "	"	4	"	"	"
18 "	"	3	"	"	"
10 "	"	2	"	"	"
10 "	"	1	year's	"	"

Kitty Life's record is all the more exceptional when it must be remembered that during those eight years she avoided all the ailments the children in the village were subject to, or she had them during school holidays; and also she braved the cold, snow, rain and floods to attend school.

The H.M.I.s report of May this year had this comment: "This is an interesting school ... and the exceptionally high attendance. There are 137 children on the books and at my unexpected visit 137 were present, and this is not a rare occurrence."

The final entry drawing attention to full attendance is on June 21, 1904: "Every child here - 140." Between November 30, 1903 and June 21, 1904 there were 43 occasions when every child on the register was in attendance both morning and afternoon.

There was a considerable disadvantage to this increase in attendance as the H.M.I.s were regularly pointing out in their reports. The number of teachers was insufficient to cope with the size of the classes and the premises were inadequate for the numbers attending.

When the Local Authority assumed responsibility for the school it recognised the importance of regular attendance. Prior to this it had been the custom to award a book to each child whose attendance had been 95% or more during the year. The County Council decided that something other than a book was needed to mark full attendance and so a watch was presented to those who made every possible attendance for five years.

Ada Shorter and Annie Davis are the first two pupils to receive a watch each according to the log book. That was in 1908. There are one or two of these watches in the village in the possession of the families of those to whom they were presented. Later a bronze medal was presented for five years' good conduct and attendance. It would appear that the last two children to receive a watch were Georgina Barrett and Ada Cherry. They were claimed in March 1914.

There is a poignancy about the entry of October 1915: "Owing to the War the school children have foregone their prizes due 1 Sept. 1915. In lieu thereof the County Council have issued Certificates, which I have received today." The following day's entry reads: "Distributed prize 'Certificates' for attendance, and I & II prizes in each standard."

Weather

As one might expect the weather figures prominently in the log books. Rain, snow, frost and cold all

had a marked effect on school life. In the days when most of the children walked to school very wet or snowy days meant that quite a large percentage of the scholars stayed away. Should the numbers fall below a certain level in a morning then the school would be closed, the registers not being marked and the scholars in attendance sent home. On at least one occasion there was a terrific rainstorm in the afternoon, and the Correspondent instructed the headmaster to procure horsedrawn transport to take a number of children home, particularly those in the Waterperry area.

Between 1864 and 1920, we learn that the winter months of January, February or March had heavy snow on 34 occasions, and in February 1888 and again in 1900 a foot of snow is mentioned.

November and December, 1875, were very snowy months and the annual Diocesan Inspection had to be postponed because Canon Ridgeway "could not come, the lines being dangerous."

Wheatley seems to be particularly liable to rainstorms, very often causing flooding, in the months of June and July. There are no less than 38 days, or in some cases weeks when heavy rain and storms are recorded. On July 16, 1880, the girls' room was flooded. There were serious floods between November 12 and 15 in 1894. A particularly bad year was 1903. June 15 of that year saw the High Street knee-deep in water. The log book entry reads: "A flood! Street flooded, children cannot swim to School. Morning school not held. Arthur Sturges." A sequel to this flooding was a drowning tragedy at Wheatley Bridge. The Rev. A. Pinson, curate at Cuddesdon, and the younger son of Mr. Martin were drowned in a swimming fatality on the Saturday following the storm. Then from October 9 to 28 it was wet, stormy and there were floods.

Wheatley's famous flood of June 9, 1910, was entered in red ink as follows: "p.m. No session owing to violent thunderstorm and torrential rain. The High Street was flooded. Between 12.45 and 1.50 over 4 inches of rain fell. Total rain for 24 hours amounted to 5.491 inches."

Cold weather at unseasonal times meant that fires had to be lit, which presented difficulties over coal supplies and smoky chimneys. There were many occasions when the temperature in the classrooms failed to reach the minimum laid down in the Education Act. There were also numerous times when the cookery class or the woodwork class was not held because the staff refused to work in the inadequately heated premises.

Central heating for part of the school was installed in September 1913, and the apparatus was inspected at least once a year, but for one reason or another at times the system failed. Sometimes the failure was due to human frailty, but in 1916, when the premises were heated on October 18 for the first time that season, the log book entry for a week later was that the apparatus flooded classroom 1 with hot water and spoiled many books.

Then in April, 1926, following a cold snowy January with outside temperatures of 9 deg. F (23 deg. of frost), and the fires had been out since the end of term the temperature in the school was 40 deg. F. The headteacher decided he would become stoker only to find the coal supply was sufficient for two days. It was five days later when the next load of anthracite arrived.

March, 1928, saw very heavy snow and November was very wet. The end of February the next year there was severe cold followed by heavy snow, and again June produced heavy rain, followed by severe gales in December.

In June 1933 there was again heavy rain and the children's clothing was dried in the cookery centre, which at this time was in Bell Lane. A defective boiler meant that oil stoves had to be provided, but the severe cold weather showed them to be inadequate in October and when a new boiler arrived in November, the school was closed for a week to allow it to be fitted.

For a change there was a prolonged drought in April and May, 1934, which was broken by three days of continuous rain in June, while the same month of the following year there were severe frosts and the central heating was out of order.

In September, 1937, a portion of the playground was resurfaced, but this was damaged by December frosts.

The temperature in the domestic science hut was not above freezing in January 1945 and the weather was still cold in April, the pipes were not repaired and the boilerman had been ill for the last month. The country-wide severe winter of 1947 was such locally that on February 21 the children were sent home because of the snow and on the 25th the outside temperature was 3 deg. F. added to that there was only four days' fuel supply left.

Heavy snow fell towards the end of April 1950, and then in July heavy rain caused flooding in the girls' cloakroom and part of the ceiling fell down on the headmaster while he was trying to stem the flood. The following year in May snow and cold necessitated the central heating being turned on again.

There was again trouble with the surface of the playground in February 1952. Due to overnight frosts followed by a day-time thaw the playground was a mass of mud and the buildings were unapproachable. It was the turn of the boys' cloakroom ceiling to collapse in May, 1953, and in September work was done on resurfacing the playground. Unfortunately the finish to the paths leading to the huts was unsatisfactory and a leak from a drain cover necessitated a local plumber being called in, who found that the drain had been blocked when the playground had been levelled. In February the following year the infant department was closed because of frozen pipes.

Whatever else may have changed during the last 125 years it is very evident from the log books that there has been no change in the weather experienced by the residents of Wheatley.

Sickness

The health of the village is mirrored in the log books. Whilst it is to be expected that the usual children's ailments such as measles, mumps, whooping cough, scarlatina, German measles and chicken pox occurred with regularity, there were also more serious illnesses, such as typhoid fever, small pox, diphtheria and tuberculosis.

In August 1863 a scholar died but the cause of death was not recorded. April 1865 saw an outbreak of small pox and in July measles was a further complication. In June and July 1871 many children were away with scarlatina and two deaths were reported, and measles and whooping cough epidemics were noted in the autumn of the following year.

Attendances were very poor in the first three months of 1882, but the precise nature of the sickness is not given. Nevertheless it was responsible for the master closing the school for nearly a week because he was ill and in March a child died. Later that year there was an outbreak of scarlet fever.

A measles epidemic closed the school for two weeks in October 1884. Mumps and whooping cough were very prevalent during June and July 1887, and there were two cases of rheumatic fever in 1888. June and July 1891 were again the months for measles. A boy died from an ulcerated stomach in May 1892, and there was also a death from diphtheria. Two years later diphtheria closed the school for four weeks and in November of that year cases of typhoid fever were noted and this disease continued in the village into 1895. The school was closed for two weeks at the end of 1896 because of a measles outbreak.

The nine years from November 1898 to the middle of 1907 were particularly distressing. A death from meningitis and tuberculosis occurred in November 1898. In June and July 1899 there was a measles epidemic. At the end of February 1902 the school was closed for three weeks because of whooping cough and pneumonia, and this was followed in October by a scarlatina epidemic which lasted until the end of February the next year, and in April and May 1903 there were cases of small pox. Outbreaks of scarlet fever, diphtheria and scarlatina occurred in September, October, November and December 1904, and the last-mentioned illness returned in January 1905. March saw a recurrence and chicken pox and bronchitis were added in April. The year 1906 started badly. The school was opened on January 8, but four days later a serious epidemic of measles broke out and the school was closed for a month. In 1907 it was an epidemic of mumps which started in early April and was still affecting the children at the end of May and in October of the same year there was an outbreak of scarlatina. In addition there was a case of typhoid and another boy had an abscess in his throat.

The isolation of those with the ailment and the exclusion of contacts in cases of infectious disease were

increasingly practised and these were noted as being absent because a member of the family had diphtheria, scarlet fever or measles. Also the schools medical staff became much more involved and worked in harmony with the local medical practitioners. On notification of a suspected case of infection the school M.o.H. or the Health Visitor quickly came to the school and carried out an examination of the children. In May 1909 this was the log book entry: "MEASLES.

Several children absent today owing to their younger brothers and sisters having measles." There was an interesting comment in November of the same year: "Received a letter from A. A. Bathe, M.A., M.B., re C.J. There is a case of diphtheria in the house, but there is no risk of carrying infection (sister ill. C. comes to school - lives with Mrs. M.)" The next day the School M.o.H. came and examined fifteen children.

Whooping cough returned in April 1910, and a note of panic can be detected in the entry for October 10, "Scarlatina. Miss L. G. Ellison (Assistant Mistress) absent with 'Scarlatina'. (9-30 a.m.) R.G.'s hands looked suspicious of peeling. Rev. W. D. B. Curry sent him, with a note, to be examined by the doctor, who said that 'he was to go home, and return to the surgery, with his mother, at 2 p.m. to be further examined.' (Report: Dry Eczema)" The sigh of relief is still audible.

Measles and scarlatina closed the school for the whole of February 1911, and in the same month of 1913 there was a case of consumption. In March of the same year a card was received from the education office for testing eyesight. This led to the provision of free spectacles for those whose eyesight was defective. Then in July 1914 all the children between the ages of six and eight, inclusive, were examined by a dental surgeon. By 1917 the dental surgeon was extracting teeth using gas as an anaesthetic and premises at The Firs. Also in 1914 there was an outbreak of ringworm. This was most likely because some children were in the habit of visiting a local farmer to watch his cows being milked and contracted the complaint from the cattle.

Again the school was closed for three weeks in 1917 because of a measles outbreak and in October of the following year there was another three-week closure, this time due to influenza, and although the school was opened on January 6, 1919, by January 17 the influenza epidemic had reappeared with a quarter of the children absent.

Mrs. Pearse, the Health Visitor, was regularly inspecting the children, particularly the heads of girls. Scarlet fever broke out in October 1923 and continued through to January 1924, and in February of this year there was a death from diphtheria and another death from tuberculosis in July. The Medical Officer, Dr. Coles, closed the school for two weeks of February and March this year because of the diphtheria outbreak. Later that year there was a reaction against the dental treatment as the parents of only 45 children out of a total of 112 agreed to have their children's teeth attended to by the school dentist.

Measles closed the school for a week in April 1926, and there was a possibility of a further closure in the first week of May, but although the attendance was down to 65% it was decided "to carry on." In July of this year free school milk was supplied to F. and L.C. These two children were sent to a local milk dealer during their play period. There were cases of scarlet fever in November and an urgent request was sent to Dr. Coles to come and examine the children. The children were given a lengthened Christmas holiday because of the scarlet fever outbreak and during their absence the school premises were disinfected.

Again there was a bad start to a new year. By the middle of January 1927 colds were becoming prevalent and on the 27th the school was closed until February 7th. Although the attendance was only 81% when the school reopened it was decided to continue. On July 29 a case of mumps was notified. On August 3rd the infant school was closed because of the illness, and after a telephone communication with the school M.o.H. it was decided that the primary school should close. Unfortunately this attempt at controlling the spread of infection was not successful, and October was a very bad month with a great many more cases. On October 31st the attendance was down to 53%, but the school was not closed as it was pointed out that the closing of the school before the summer holidays had had no effect in reducing the number of cases.

Possibly the one other serious illness which was affecting children during the period covered by these

log books, i.e. rickets, is not mentioned because the children were living in a rural area. With most families having fresh vegetables readily available and also the keeping of a pig, this scourge does not seem to have blighted the children of the village. Nevertheless the catalogue is an appalling one, and it must not be thought that Wheatley was unique in this respect. It is very clear, therefore, that the mass immunisation programme instituted after the Second World War was essential in order to eradicate these epidemics. The effectiveness of this programme of immunisation is shown by the dramatic reduction of the number of children who nowadays become infected.

Holidays and Treats

Apart from holidays at the church festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide and the annual holiday in the summer, the schools were closed for either whole or half-days for a great variety of reasons. The annual summer holiday in the latter half of the nineteenth century was somewhat of a movable feast and also of variable length because it was found that very often more than half the children were absent harvesting or potato picking. The ripeness of the harvest or the length of time it took to gather it in determined when and for how long the holiday was taken. There are references in the log books to poor attendances because harvesting had begun and in consequence the school was closed or that it had been impossible to get the corn in so the holiday was prolonged for a further week. There was also a happy relationship between the infant school staff and mothers for the log books show that at harvest time the infants school was kept open and some of the elder children were also admitted to allow their mothers to go to work in the fields.

In addition there were regular holidays such as a week for Wheatley Feast which was held in October. May Day was a special occasion. The children gathered greenery and flowers and made garlands. They formed themselves into small groups and went round the village calling at houses, singing the Wheatley May Song and hopefully collecting money. This money was then pooled and a few days later was spent on providing a tea. There was a move in 1890 to put the "Garlanding" as it was called on a more formal basis. The entry in the log book for May 2 reads: "Yesterday, May Day, the children were granted a holiday. Acting on the advice of the Vicar (the Rev. A. Sturges) and the Master (Henry J. Wooldridge) the children instead of going around with their garlands in groups of two or three, have this year combined, and nearly 70 went round in charge of a monitor and sang their songs at the houses of the gentry and trades people, the monitor taking care of the money and handing the amount 28/- to the Master who will with it provide a Tea." Mr. Wooldridge did for May 9 has this entry "nearly 70 of the children provided with a Tea. ... the expenses being met with the 28/- collected by them on May Day."

Wilfrid Sheldon remembered "The highlight of the school year was the May Day Garlanding. With the garland carried by two boys we toured the village, stopping frequently at a house to sing the May Day songs. But that wasn't all; there had to be a King and Queen of the May both wearing cardboard crowns. Queens were easy to come by but Kings were more difficult. One of his duties was to kiss the Queen when requested and this happened at most of the stopping places and so at times he got tired of it all and refused to kiss. On one occasion I remember he refused to take any more part in the march and handed over his crown."

There was a spirit of co-operation in the village between church and chapel. It was to be expected that the school would close for Church Sunday School outings and choir trips and festivals, but the log books regularly record the closing of the school for chapel and mission hall trips.

Half-day holidays were given for Ascension Day, Ash Wednesday, Confirmation services, following the inspection by H.M.I.s and the Diocesan Inspectors. There was one occasion when the bi-partisan approach to differing religious creeds seemed about to be broken. The school was closed on May 28, Ascension Day, 1908, and on July 9, "Mr. Meedon visited the school at 11.30 a.m. re: a letter received by them at the Education Office asking information about the children going to church on Ascension Day. I informed him that during the time I had been here (nearly 18 years) the children had always attended Divine Service on Ascension Day at Church at 11.30 a.m., and a holiday was given in the afternoon. Since Oct. 25th, 1907, the Scripture Lesson had been given from 9 to 9-30 a.m. So that on last Ascension Day the children went to Church at 9.15 a.m. and were given a whole holiday. E. Nevell, Esq., (Correspondent) had wired, 25 May, E. F. Davidson, Esq., H.M.I., of the closing of the

school on Ascension Day. School was not opened on that day. Re: a question as to whether a child with its parents' consent had asked to go home but was refused leave - I have no recollection of such an occurrence. I further asked every teacher in the school if they had been asked: but each one positively asserted that they had neither been asked nor had they refused anybody. Further when the children were assembled, I asked them publicly whether any child had made such an application, but not one of them had done so. (Only two children were absent from school, viz.: F.M. and D.M., neither of whom had made any application for leave). From Ascension Day to now, I have not received any complaint from parent or child about their attendance at Church on that day."

The Miller family at Shotover House gave generously to the schools in addition to paying the fees of a number of the children of the poorer families. The infants benefited regularly from gifts of baskets of fruit. There was an annual tea party at Shotover, and it is noted that attendance improved because of this impending event. Mr. and Mrs. Elton gave Sunday School treats. April 13, 1888 was a very special day: "The attendance for this week has been much better, due chiefly to a treat given to the scholars by J. Casemore, Esq., of this village, who paid for the admission of them on Friday afternoon to Wombwell's Menagerie, then staying in the place. Regularity of attendance was laid down as a condition of sharing in the treat."

A cameo of life in a rural community in the 1890s, when bad weather prevented work on the land or in the building industry and there was no unemployment benefit to help with the loss of wages, is given in the log book entries for November, December 1890, January and February 1891. At the end of November the fires were lit for the first time that winter, "the weather to that time having been unusually mild." On December 19 there was a very heavy fall of snow so that the children's concert in the school had to be cancelled. The school then closed for two weeks' Christmas holiday. On January 9 because of the severe weather several children had not returned to school. They had been away for three weeks. January 23 has this entry: "Owing to the severe weather there is great distress among the labouring poor of this place, and at the request of the Master, the Vicar has agreed to find means to give every poor child of both this and the Infant School a Free Dinner while this distress lasts. Every day this week an average of more than 100 children have been taken by the Teachers down to the 'Merry Bells' Coffee Tavern, and there partaken of a good dinner consisting of soup, plum and rice pudding, and cocoa." The free dinners were continued the next week, but the weather had improved so the free meals ceased. The total number of dinners issued was 1,066, and the cost amounted to £6 13s. 3d. The comment in the log book says it all: "The good done is very evident, the pinched look having entirely disappeared from the faces of our poor children." The good work did not end there, for it was decided to provide a dinner for those who wished to bring a penny for a ticket. This was also a success and was continued for some time. Mr. Sturges, the Vicar, remarked that the "Merry Bells has never been put to a better use."

There were holidays on royal occasions such as the visit of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) to Oxford in 1863- Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887 was marked by nearly a week's holiday, and for the coronation of Edward VII in 1902 the school was closed for a whole week, and the school was also closed for the coronation of George V in 1911. A day's holiday marked the wedding of Princess Mary in 1922, but a year later the headmaster had to telephone the Education Office and "found that the school must be closed on Thursday next: 'The wedding day of the Duke of York.'" (later George VI).

The log books show the extension of the franchise. With the passing of the Reform Acts and the creation of urban and rural district councils the school was closed so that the premises could be used as a polling station. In December 1885, "This week the school was wanted for the General Election for the first three days so it was closed for the week." There follow regular references to the closing of the school for the day for election purposes.

Choir trips to places as far afield as Weston-Super-Mare and Yarmouth are noted. The outings, of course, were by train from Wheatley station. Such events as a missionary meeting organised by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Diocesan Temperance meeting, the Boys Union Festival, the flower show, or Thame Fair merited a day's holiday. Wheatley Feast, in October, usually meant a week's holiday. There were educational visits to places such as the G.W.R. Works at Swindon or a day at the Wembley Exhibition in 1924. As the curriculum began to include music and dancing so there were visits to orchestral concerts, the theatre to see ballet and in recent years trips to the Continent and exchange visits with schools in Europe.

Three long-serving Headmasters

Rees Leyshon came to Wheatley in 1891 when he was twenty-nine, and settled in the school house with his wife and baby daughter. Many years later that daughter wrote of him: "He was, in addition to being schoolmaster, the organist (self-taught) and choirmaster; he had evening classes for young men who had left school. He used to do some land measuring for farmers, he kept and looked after bees, he was an expert carpenter; he had much artistic ability. He took a great interest in his pupils as individuals and he inspired much affection." He was also a Magistrate and for eight years Chairman of the Urban District Council.

Miss Life (born Emilie Cruickshank) who herself became a teacher, wrote: "I remember Mr. Leyshon managing to teach Arithmetic to a whole class of very medium scholars - I tried for forty years to follow his example - never did I achieve it. I know that when I went to the Grammar School I was placed in Form III but could assist Form VI girls with their homework." She also remembered "Mrs. Leyshon turning out the most wonderful needlework with her pupils."

Another old pupil, Wilfrid Sheldon, wrote "He was a wonderful teacher. A complete master of every subject he taught and able to put it over simply and clearly. It is interesting to me to recall that in the mid 1890's he was teaching and advocating the metric system. He also forecast that it would one day be adopted in this country." This progressive attitude is also illustrated by the work he did on producing relief maps in papier mache, and his introduction of the wireless into school. He kept meticulous records of the weather which he sent to the Meteorological Office. It is sad that a man of such wide interests died at the age of 64, soon after retiring as a result of ill-health. His grave is in the churchyard.

Mr. Key was already on the staff when Mr. Leyshon's health began to fail and he was given temporary charge of the school, becoming Head Teacher in September 1925. During his twenty-nine years as head many developments took place. There was a gradual increase in visiting speakers and in expeditions for the children. On the sporting side there were regular visits from the Physical Training Adviser and the log books occasionally refer to hockey and netball. The annual sports continued to take place at the end of the summer term. In 1936 Mr. Fane, owner of Morland House, gave permission for the children to use his swimming pool and by 1949 there were swimming classes at Long Bridges.

In 1939 one of the greatest tests of the whole educational system took place: evacuation. Pupils of a London school arrived in Wheatley and were billeted in local homes. At first the school day was divided into two shifts but later the Merry Bells and the disused Holton School were opened so that the evacuees could have fulltime education without having to share the Wheatley buildings. Mr. Key often had difficulties over staff shortage as men teachers were called up. For several years following 1942 older boys were having leave to help with the potato harvest and large quantities of rosehips were collected at 3d. a pound. In 1947 came another challenge to the system: the leaving age was raised to fifteen and the teachers, with no more accommodation and little more equipment, found themselves trying to cope with these often unwilling older pupils. In September 1948 numbers reached 224 (compared with the 1928 total of 125) but in 1950 the Secondary Modern School was opened and the seniors were transferred, causing the number on roll to drop to 128.

During these years concern for the children's health is more prominent; medical inspections, diphtheria injections, psychological testing, speech therapy and dental inspections are frequently recorded. When Mr. Key retired in 1954 he must have looked back on many changes and developments and on a very strenuous term of office.

Mr. Evans took over in 1956 and with 179 children on roll. In 1959 the Infants and Juniors were combined to form Wheatley Church of England Primary School and the numbers began to climb until they reached a peak in 1971 and the two subsequent years when they were over 500. Like schools all over the country they have now fallen and stood at 350 in 1982.

The records show a great development in opportunities for Primary School children during these years. One marked feature of the period has been the provision of greatly enlarged premises. In 1957 the new staff room, head's room and classrooms were opened and two years later the new hall and Infants'

classrooms. In 1970 the new Infants' block with the canteen facilities was provided.

Regular open evenings for parents began in 1957 and the Parent Teacher Association was formed. In the same year the first Prize Giving was held, attended by the Bishop of Dorchester and this became an annual event. In 1958 the centenary of the school was celebrated by a service at which over 100 old scholars and friends were present and one of the lessons was read by Miss E. Gunn who had been a pupil of the school in 1883-

Out of school activities have increased greatly in number and variety. The Annual Sports has developed into a competition between a number of local schools and the football team has become a serious and important part of school life. Of recent years seven-a-side Rugby has been introduced. There are a number of after-school clubs, ranging from country dancing to chess and many young children are playing musical instruments. The school productions have become more ambitious with the years and musical plays with a large cast and reaching a high standard are now annual events.

There are frequent expeditions to Oxford, London and further afield and in 1959 first school journey abroad to Bruges for one week and many similar trips have taken place since. In 1971 the staff felt that the children needed help in using the long weeks of the summer holiday and provided a fortnight of varied constructive activities during August and this has become traditional.

The 26 years of Mr. Evans' headship have seen a steady development and broadening of the curriculum as well as the increased opportunities in school visits, music and sport.

Lists of Heads

BOYS

1813-1819	Valentine Guy was paid by the overseers to teach boys
1819-1839	Valentine Guy appointed head of Bishop Moss's School, but in 1828 William Saunders was given "uncontrolled management" because of the illness of Mr Guy.
1839-1846	William Saunders, nephew of Mrs Guy
1847-1849	William Hunt
1849-1852	Head not known
1853-1855	Mr. Wilson
1855-1871	George Wright
1871	William Bailey
1872	William Prewett
1872-1874	Owen Stone
1874	James Castle Parker (Culham student)
1874-1880	William Thompson
1880-1883	John R. Knight
1883-1886	George Wright (re-appointment)
1886-1891	Henry James Wooldridge
1891-1925	Rees Leyshon
1925-1954	John George Key
1954-1956	Ronald A Murry Ransome
1956 - 1983	Glenville Rees Evans

INFANTS SCHOOL

1840-1863	Mrs. Hunt, mother of Wm. & Sarah Hunt, heads of Bishop Moss's School
1863-1866	Jane Marshall
1866-1871	Ms. Corfield
1873	Miss S. A. Brown
1874	Miss Cousins
1875	G. Hanley
1875-1881	Emily Beasley
1881-1916	Miss Emma Ellen Christian
1959	Miss Wren

GIRLS

1819-1846	Mrs. Guy
1847-1849	Sarah A Hunt, sister of William Hunt
1853-1859	Elizabeth Colston
1859	Miss G. Marshall
1863	Miss Baker
1863-1864	Miss Clara Johnson
1864	Caroline Froud, a pupil teacher who was appointed a mistress at Ledbury School in January 1865
1865-1866	Miss Emma Smith
1866-1871	Miss Daniels
1871-1884	Girls' school combined with Boys
1884-1886	Miss Charlotte A. Price – Girls in separate school
1886	Girls' school again combined with Boys

Appendices

APPENDIX 'I'

The following extracts from the "Detailed Specification of the Several artificers Works intended to be done in Erecting a Public School at Wheatley near Oxford" show very clearly what it was hoped the school would look like when built:

Mason ... the walls above ground externally and above the floors internally to be built with the best Wheatley free stone ... A step in each doorway of Headington or Wheatley hard stone 24 in. by 8 in. the corners to be rounded. Lay hearths in the schools 4 feet by 3 feet with 3 inch Yorkshire paving or with square Headington hard stone at least 4 inch thick. Yorkshire paving floors to all the privies $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. Yorkshire paving risers 18 inches high notched for the bearers of the seats — The mortar to be composed of the best lime and clean drift sand to be taken from the brook in Wheatley or the river near Wheatley Bridge. The lime and sand to be in equal proportions. No road dirt will be permitted to be used or mixed with the mortar on any pretence whatever under the penalty of fifty pounds ... Provide three able men six days each for the purpose of levelling and forming such other parts of the ground as may be required

The Boundary wall (4 ft. 6 in. high, ditch outside 4 ft. wide, 3 ft. deep, 250 ft. in length) with the ditch and men's time for levelling and forming the ground to be estimated separately from the building and other works

Carpenter

... All the deals to be sound Yellow Christiana or Sweede timber free from sap shakes or large knots. The oak timber to be sawn die square perfectly sound and free from any sap or wane and to be of such lengths as required. The fir timber to be the best Yellow Memiel or Riga.

The Specifications for the work of the Slater, Plumber, Glazier and painter are just as detailed. The document goes on: "The Contractor is to execute and complete the whole of the works under the direction and to the satisfaction of the Surveyor, he is to use the best materials of their several kinds and to provide all the materials and labour of every description and also all carriage and scaffolding. He will be paid 75 per cent on the works as they proceed, under the Certificate of the Surveyor the first payment to be made when the walls are up to the height of the window sills, the second when the roof is slated and the remainder within two months after the Surveyor shall have Certified that the whole works are completed.

"The work must be entered upon as soon as the contract is made and the whole must be completed on or before the 31st day of July next under penalty of fifty pounds.

"An agreement must be entered into but free from expense to the contractor.

"If any Person should prefer sending in his prices per rod perch, square or foot for all the different Articles and works contained in this specification he is at liberty to do so, or he may both send his prices and the sum total.

"Every further explanation will be given that may be required"

It is most likely that the Surveyor was a Mr. Perry as there are plans of the Section and West and North Elevations by E. Perry, and there are also drawings for the Front Elevation of a School Room for 60 Girls and 60 Boys along with a Ground Plan by a Mr. Leach in the Bodleian Library.

APPENDIX '2'

The two estimates, dated April 7th, 1815 are:

"Estimate of Work intended to be done in building a National School at Wheatley. The Mason's work to be executed in Headington Freestone

£1101.17.06

Wyatt and Leach, Builders, Oxford

"If the Mason's Work on Freestone should be thought to answer by its being neatly Axed and Sett and bonded in the same manner and mortar as above described then they (sic) Amount of the Estimate will amount to One Thousand and Fifteen Pounds, Ten Shillings and Twopence

£1015.10.02

Thos. Wyatt and Geo Leach

"N.B. The Digging of Wheatley Free Stone would amount to much more money than the Headington Free Stone Block and carriage (sic), as also additional price on the labor (sic) for sawing and working the same, nor could half the quantity be procured in time, sett down for completing the aforesaid work, not knowing if any part of the work above stated was intended to have been of common Walling Stone, well hammered or not, I have made it all of one description except the foundation but if any of the sort be wished we will attend and estimate for same".

It must be noted that the estimate of £716 by Mr. Leach included charges for the boundary wall and the ditch. Neither of these items was in the estimates of Wyatt and Leach. An additional "Estimate for Building a Common Dry Boundary Wall and Ditch finding 3 able Men 6 Days each as in Specification and Toped with Mortar, finding labor carriage (sic) Stones &c &c

"Or if a dry Wall Stones well hammered and laid in a close joint

Twenty and Four Pounds Fifteen Shillings" was submitted by Messrs, Wyatt and Leach on April 27th, 1815.