

A  
HISTORY  
OF  
UFFORD SCHOOL

1873 - 1987



COMPILED  
BY  
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Sadly our school is to be closed in July 1987. It will have been in existence for 114 years 3 months. What were those first years like? I quote from the records:-

"I, Sarah Freeth commenced my duty as School Mistress of this school, under the Ufford School Board. It was opened at 9 a.m., The Reverend Rowley, Captain Brooke, Mrs Waspe and Mrs Rowley being present. April 21st 1873."

Miss Freeth was helped by monitoresses and probably a Pupil Teacher. Captain Brooke came in frequently to teach reading and Miss Rowley taught knitting. School desks were installed, new easels, a clock, a map of the world, alphabet box, fireguards and blowers, and a harmonium.

Registers were regularly checked by the Clerk of the Board. The school was visited by an Inspector and children examined in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Two boys were punished for setting light to two meadows and a tree!!

June 24th 1876 - June 1878: Deborah E Williams, Headmistress

Annie Spall and A R Owen were Pupil Teachers and in turn were given lessons by the Headmistress out of school hours. The highest number of pupils was 113. Drop in attendances were due to:-

- 1 A visit to the Circus in Woodbridge
- 2 Haymaking
- 3 Bad Weather
- 4 Whooping Cough
- 5 Pigeon shooting at the Crown

When attendances were low the registers were not marked!

Lessons in the gallery are first mentioned. Boys will be boys and were punished for lighting gunpowder on the school premises, playing truant, and one chap burnt a hole in a pupil's shawl and hat with a red hot potato!

A half-day holiday was given in order to attend the Woodbridge Flower Show.

1878 - 1883: Matilda Cullington, Headmistress

Alice Cullington, sister of the Headmistress, became a Pupil Teacher. Mary Ann Smith and Edith Spall were young monitoresses. Pupil Teachers gave criticism lessons and were assessed by the Headmistress. There were 116 on the roll.

Subjects taught were: The Holy Scriptures, Natural History, Singing, Reading, Writing, Grammar, Dictation, Mental Arithmetic, Tables, Arithmetic (including short and long division and compound multiplication) and Needlework. The boys were also taught to sew and knit. Prizes were given by the Board to pupils having passed their exams.

July 1879: The streets of Ufford were flooded so attendance was poor and in October the children were absent for gleaning. The school was closed for a time due to an outbreak of Scarlet Fever and again when Measles broke out.

March 1st, 1883: C Dawkins, Headmistress, L Dawkins, Assistant

These ladies were sisters. Edith Mary Spall also became an Assistant. C Dawkins must have had some good fruit in her garden, because some boys were punished for stealing gooseberries and later apples disappeared. The culprits were kept in school until 6 p.m. Could it be one of the apple trees that is still standing on my lawn? Some of the boys also decided to wet the doormats under the pump.

Children were sent home if their fees were not paid. Parents could be summoned if they failed to send their children to school (5 shillings). They would first receive an attendance order.

An infant, Emily Adams, died after a few days' illness and Fred Skinner, a pupil in Standard I, also died. The children went to "see" his funeral.

In 1886 there is a first mention of a concert given in school in the evening.

June 1887: a holiday was given for Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

June 1893 - 1894: Edith Kate Elmer, Headmistress

Edith Kate Elmer was Headmistress for one year only. (She was trained at Whitelands). Miss Rouse was Assistant. During this period there were 101 pupils on roll. The pupils were given bags to keep their books and slates in.

In 1893 a holiday was given for the Wedding of the Duke of York and Princess May.

In 1894 the pupils enjoyed a Magic Lantern Show given by The Reverend Ashley, the programme being "Alice in Wonderland" and "The Old Curiosity Shop".

In November 1902 the school was again closed due to an epidemic of Measles. The Headmaster, Mr. Bentley, commented that "1902 has been an unfortunate year".

1894 - 1904: Mr William Bentley, Headmaster  
Mrs Bentley, Infants

Pupils with very familiar Ufford surnames now appear. They included George Chilvers, May Fisher, Lily Boon, Stanley Boon, Hannah Clements, Percy Raven, Abraham and Sidney Smy, Annie Nicholls, George Smith, Fred Cunnell, Harry Cunnell, Arthur Davis, Felix Patrick, Florence and Percy Booth, Thomas Cunnell, Constance and Harold Bezant and Annie Johnson (Inez Benham's Aunt).

In June 1894 there was a Whooping Cough epidemic so the school was closed for a month. Three children in the Infants dies. It seems that only a bowl and towel were provided for the washing of hands!

In 1895 a very severe winter lasting 7 weeks was recorded. On June 22nd 1897 a holiday was given for the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

In 1898 the School Board introduced an Attendance Prize Scheme. Pupils would receive a ticket for a full week's attendance, a card for four weeks, and a prize if eight cards were gained in twelve months. The Rector would give a silver medal to any boy or girl who put in a year's attendance. William Roy and Eva Goldsmith received such medals.

During these years the roll reached 125 pupils! Pupils left at the age of 13, but only if they obtained a Labour Certificate.

In 1901 there was a very hot summer. The main classroom became "obnoxious" so the children worked outside "when suitable lessons occurred".

In February 1902 the school was closed due to an epidemic of Whooping Cough. Four children died. Only four families in which young children existed, escaped infection. A pupil, Ethel Eagle, died of a "brain fever".

In June 1902 a week's holiday was given to celebrate the Coronation of Edward VII.

In November 1902 the school was again closed due to an epidemic of Measles. The Headmaster, Mr. Bentley, commented that "1902 has been an unfortunate year".