

THE SCHOOLS OF ELM

The following gives a chronological account of schools in Elm, including those in Little Elm.

1823: Elm National School (mixed) erected.

National schools were founded by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, providing elementary education in accordance with the teachings of the Church of England to the children of the poor. This was the first near-universal system of elementary education in England and Wales. They were eventually absorbed into the state system.

By 1821 the parish hit a peak population of 449 (up from 1801 when it was 331, and 1811 when it had grown to 368). There were 66 inhabited houses, 70 families, 20 employed in agriculture, 47 in trade, manufacturing or handicraft. "Some extensive iron-works have been lately established here" (*Somersetshire Delineated* by C & J Greenwood.)

1833: *Government grants were given to schools.*

1840: Location of the National school at (Great) Elm: The Tithe Map of 1840 shows the school as number 168, a large oblong building at the north west side of a rounded piece of land (no. 169) the shape of which may indicate a pound for animals before the erection of a 20th century bungalow in which Mr Fred Starr lives. The school was in the grounds of **Manor Farm** (no. 167) set back and to the east of the main house.

The **1887 – 1889** O. S. Map also indicates the school location as Manor Farm.

(The **1841** census shows the farmer at Manor Farm to be William Carter, with Hannah Line and a son of 20, William. See separate file for Manor Farm owners and tenant farmers.)

1841 Census: There are 421 inhabitants. The census for this year does not, in the main, cite that the children in the village are going to school.

However, the Rev. Charles Griffiths at the Rectory is running a Private School with 8 male children as pupils, none of whom were born in the parish:

Lionel Regent (13), Lerone (male) (12), Arthur Stancomb (15), George Ogilvie (14), William Aikman (14), John Hornidge (13), Henry Clark (12) and a second Henry Clerk (11). The transcription undertaken by others may be incorrect in giving these latter children virtually the same name.

Joseph Walton, aged 25, lives in the village, though he was not born here. He is a 'Mattl. (mathematical?) tutor', living in the household of William and Anne Mead.

1844: *Ragged schools were set up for children working in factories. They were to have six half-days of schooling every week.*

1851 Census: There are **408** inhabitants.

The Rev. G. J. Griffiths, Rector of Elm, now aged 61, appears to have ceased running a private educational establishment from his home, as, whilst there are numerous servants living in, there are no longer any boys being taught in residence.

The census enumerator records an unmarried 65 year old school mistress, Jane Wollen, as an "old maid".

The census for this year indicates that a number of children are at school. Children as young as 3 and as old as 15 were being schooled:

Sydenham Williams (15) and Gertrude (10) were born in Elm, and at this date, were living with their mother, Ann, of Glastonbury, together with their two adult brothers.

Frederick Izant (8), and his sister Sarah (6) were born in Mells and were the children of Walter Izant, an edge tool worker and, Martha. The name Izant is of long standing in the parish. John Izant was Overseer of Elm in the 18th century (see *The King's Peace: The Justice's Notebooks of Thomas Horner of Mells 1770 – 1777*, edited by Michael McGarvie).

The Gawens children - Barbara (9), Albert (7) and Eliza (5) - to William Gawens, an edge tool worker, and Hester. The entire family was born in Elm.

Francis Gowen, aged 3, is also recorded as being a scholar. He is the son of Samuel, a widowed edge tool worker of 28 years of age, whose own mother, Sarah Gawen, a widow of 63, is in this small household.

George Jones (8) and his sister, Juliet (6) are at school. They are the children of the widowed Ann Jones, aged 25, who is on parish relief and looking after three young children.

William Dix (6) is the youngest child of James and Hester Dix, who are on parish relief. William's two teenage brothers are working as a labourer or a cloth worker - all born in Elm.

Mary Gawen (10) is the child of Samuel and Elizabeth Gawen. Samuel is an edge tool worker, as are his sons - Charles, John and Henry.

Shadrack Biggs (8) is the Elm-born child of Joseph Biggs, a labourer, and Eliza - the one born in Mells and the other in Beckington. Biggs is, like Izant, a local name of long-standing, being found in Thomas Horner J.P.'s notebooks of 1770 – 1777, cited above, though this time, John Biggs and family are on the other side of the fence to John Izant above, being ill supported and in a penurious state.

Emma Gowen (6) is living with her uncle and aunt - John Charles White, an iron worker from Whatley, and Frances, from Elm.

Frances Haskell (13) is living with her sister, Eliza, a cloth worker, and her husband, James Jones, a labourer. Frances was born in Frome.

The two youngest daughters of the widowed Jane Ball, keeper of the beer house - the Eagle Inn - are Lucy (13) and Emma (10), both born in Elm.

Most of John Izant's children are at school: Ann (12), Emma (10), Ellen (7), and Jane (6), all born in Elm. Their mother is a straw bonnet maker, Jane, from Castle Cary, and their father is an edge tool maker of Elm.

Elizabeth Hobbs, a 48 year old widow on parish relief, has ten children to look after, three of whom are at school: Juliet (10), Silas (8) and Frank (6). The elder children are either cloth or iron workers, employed in the prevailing industries of the parish. They were all born in Elm, whilst their mother, Elizabeth, is from Whatley.

Harroch (12), Harriet (9) and John (6), are the children of Hosea Frapwell, an edge tool worker, and Martha, who is from Cloford. All the children were born in Elm.

In Vallis Vale lived John Brown (8), one of the sons of Henry Brown, labourer of Elm, and Elizabeth, from Whatley.

Elizabeth Davidge (11), Charles (8), and William (7), all born in Buckland, were the children of Ann Davidge of Laverton and William Davidge from Orchardleigh.

1861: There are 377 inhabitants.

The census cites Henrietta Gough, a 50 year-old widow born in Buckland, as School Mistress, along with her unmarried daughter, 33 year-old Harriet, born in Great Elm. As we can see from the *Kelly's Directory*

entry which follows this census item, they were running a Ladies Educational Establishment. They had six pupils residing with them, the first two being Henrietta's children: Sarah Ann Gough (11) and Henrietta (9), both born in Great Elm. The other children are boarders: Louisa Crees (8) is from Marston Bigot, Kate Hodinott (8) is from Witham Friary, Edwin Jelly (9) is from Frome, as is Henry Coward (8).

Miss Elizabeth Ward is school mistress at the "National School" (*Kelly's Directory* 1861).

In the census, we meet for the first time someone who is to be village school mistress, Hannah E. Rossiter. Here, she is only 14 and was born in Great Elm. She is the daughter of James Rossiter, an edge tool maker of Orchardleigh, and Martha of Wanstrow. We will meet her again in the 1871 census, a subsequent *Kelly's Directory* and be able to transcribe her daily reports on happenings at the school from when she was in charge of it.

Robert Harding is a fuller at Bedlam Fulling Mill. Either in his household or in the village is his widowed 36 year old daughter-in-law, Harriet Harding, who has three school-age children: Emily Jane (8), Henry James (6) and Eliza (4), all born in London.

Julia Ruddock (8), born in Nunney, is the child of Shadrack, an edge tool worker, and Elizabeth, a grocer.

Amelia Lansdown (8), who is deaf, is living with edge tool worker, William, and Ester Montague, who are her aunt and uncle. It is not known where she was at school.

William Wollen (5) is the son of Thomas and Louisa, the father being a scythe maker and all having been born in Great Elm.

Henry Jones (6) is living with his elder brothers, who are iron workers, and his widowed mother, Ann. Also living with them is a young gardener William Dickie, who is Ann's brother. All were born in Great Elm.

Frank (9) and Robert (7) Coombs are the children of the coal haulier, William, and his wife Jane, all of Great Elm.

The child of Seth and Elizabeth Padfield, Edward Charles (5) is at school. This is a well-to-do household with a general servant, Elizabeth Martin, who comes from Great Elm. Seth is a farmer of 90 acres employing three men and one boy. (See separate file on the Padfields and the early death of Edward.)

Henry Frapwell (12), Hester Rosa (10) and Jane Ann (7), are the children of William Frapwell, labourer, and Sarah - all born in Great Elm.

Eliza Ann Hansford (6) and Elizabeth (4) are pupils - the former born in Great Elm and the latter in Little Elm. Their parents are James Hansford, a labourer of Charlton Musgrove, and Emily from Doulton.

Kate Luke (8) and her brother, Thomas (5), are the children of labourer, Thomas, of Great Elm, and Elizabeth Ann, of Mells.

David Frank Doddimead (5), is the child of Abel, a labourer, and Mercy Doddimead. They were all born in Mells.

Arthur Rossiter (7) and Frederick L (4) are the children of Lewis, an edge tool worker from Whatley, and Sarah, from Great Elm, where all the children were born.

Their relations, Sydney F Rossiter (6) and Albert C (4) are at school alongside them. They have Francis, an edge tool worker, and Lydia as parents. Whilst the children were born in Great Elm, the parents were from Whatley.

Alfred Gawen (7) and Elisha (4), born in Great Elm, are the children of Samuel Gawen, edge tool maker of Great Elm, and Elizabeth of Buckland.

Richard Hobbs, edge tool maker, and his wife, Emma, have their niece living with them: Frances Jane Hobbs, aged 5. They were all born in Great Elm, apart from Aunt Emma, from Frome.

Walter Izant, edge tool maker and Wesleyan local preacher of Great Elm, has three children at school at this time: Walter (13), Silas (8) and Robert (6), all born in Great Elm. Their mother is Martha, from Mells.

The relationships within the following household are confusing and perhaps wrongly given to the enumerators of the 1861 and 1871 census and corrected in the 1881 census. It is worth pursuing, as the female child is to become a School Mistress, Fanny Gawen (8) and John (6) are here recorded as the children of Samuel Gawen, an iron worker at the works, all born in Great Elm, and their mother as Elizabeth, whose place of origin is unknown. Within the household is a widowed 30 year old son, Charles, an iron worker manufacturer, and it is this son who appears, by the 1881 census, to have been the father of Fanny. To confuse matters further, there are two couples called Samuel and Elizabeth Gowen in the village.

Sarah Brown (8), born in Great Elm, is the daughter of labourer Henry Brown of Great Elm and Elizabeth of Whatley.

The youngest children of James and Ann Davage/Davige (as the census variously spells the name Davidge) are Alfred (11) and Arthur (9). All the household was born in Great Elm and the father is an edge tool maker.

Emma Cray (4), born in Frome, is the daughter of Isaac, who is a widower of Great Elm at the time of this census. The Cray name is found from at least the 17th century in this locality.

Joseph Biggs is an edge tool worker and Wesleyan local preacher from Mells. Four of his children are at school: Louisa (12), Sarah (10), Joseph (6) and William (4), all of Great Elm.

John Taylor (11) and siblings, Walter (9) and Louisa (4), are from Frome, their father being a gardener George Taylor from Tytherington and their mother, Deborah, being from Frome.

Sarah Ann Lansdown (11), Edwin Charles (8) and Charles Henry (3) are all recorded as scholars, though the youngest child is surely too young to be at school at this time. Their father is an edge tool worker, Charles Lansdown, and their mother is Ann. All were born in Great Elm.

1866: Ladies School. Mrs Henrietta Gough (*Kelly's Directory* 1866).

1870: *Forster's Education Act: Whilst it was not mandatory to attend school, provision to do so was made for children of 5 - 12 years. The charge was 1 pence per week. Boards were established to oversee the work of the school.*

1871 Census: There are 347 inhabitants.

The enumerator's handwriting is difficult to decipher and his spelling is often awry in the census for Great Elm of this year. He does not always record the details.

We continue to meet many of the same families cited in previous census returns, with newer members of the family now at school.

We also meet again Fannie Gawen, who is now a 18 year old School Mistress, who first appeared in the 1861 census as an 8 year old. She is still recorded as the daughter of Samuel, now a 74 year old labourer in the Iron Works, and 70 year old Elizabeth, who is working as a dress maker. However, in the 1881 census the supposed parental couple are recorded as the grandparents, thus making the widowed Charles the likely father of Fannie. In the 1881 census Fannie is recorded as Annie Margaret Gowen, a school mistress.

The Lansdown family again shows Charles Henry to be at school, but now aged 13, along with his sister Agnes Louisa (8). Their father, Charles Lansdown, is now called a scythe dealer and agricultural labourer.

William Frapwell, gardener, and his wife, Sarah, have two children at school - Hester (11) and Ellen Mary (6). All the family were born in Great Elm.

Theophillus Gawen, edge tool worker, and his wife Eliza from Waterperry, Oxfordshire, have William Frederick (6) and Charles G. (5) at school.

Of Romeo T. and Eliza Hobbs' large family, four are scholars: Maria (13), Catherine (11), Frederick (9) and Amy (6). Romeo is an edge tool worker of Great Elm, and Eliza is from Frome. All the children were born in the parish.

Emma Jones (8) and her brother (6) with an unreadable name, are the children of an agricultural labourer, James Jones, and his wife Clara. As with quite a number of local families it was the mother who was born outside the parish. Clara is from Frome.

John Davage (a variant spelling of this surname, at least as it is recorded in the census) is a labourer, lime burning, from Laverton, married to Hester from Frome. Four children in their household are school pupils: Mary Ann (9), Edwin J (6) and Eliza (4) are their own children. Also living with them is Clara Cray (5), their niece from Frome.

At the *Eagle Inn* lives Houro Frapwell, licensed victualler of Great Elm, and Mary. Two of their children are at school: Henry H. (8) and William H. (7). There is a 10 month old baby, Houro C.

Ann Williams (10), Joseph (7) and Jane (5) are children of an agricultural labourer, Thomas L. Williams of Great Elm, and Ann from Mells.

Living at Manor Farm are Walter Richmond (9) and Frederick (6), both born in Great Elm to Edwin and Eliza Richmond, both parents having been born at Shepton Mallett. Edwin is a farmer of 200 acres employing 2 men and 1 boy. They and their three children are looked after by a nurse and domestic servant. They also have a young agricultural labourer living in with them from Shepton Mallett.

Job and Sarah Pickford have 6 children at this point, three of whom are at school: William (9), Emmanuel (sic) (7) and Rose (5), all of Great Elm, though their mother, Sarah, is from Buckland Dinham.

Francis Rossiter, edge tool worker, and Lydia, both of Whatley, have two school age children: William (11) and Louisa (9), both born in Great Elm.

George Jones, gardener and general servant born in Great Elm, and Ann from Quarle, Hampshire, have son Herbert (6) at school. By the next census, Herbert is a carpenter's apprentice.

Alice Parker, (4), daughter of a painter, Edwin Parker from Batheaston and Sarah from Swainswick, was, like her siblings, born in Swainswick.

Richard Hobbs, edge tool worker of Great Elm, and Emma from Frome have two children of school age: Louisa (10) and Albert (7). All their children were born in Great Elm. Living with them is a lodger who is also an edge tool worker of Frome.

Charles Foreman is the 13 year old grandson from Frome of John and Ann White. John is a 71 year old edge tool worker and Ann is 72.

James Wheeler (9) lives with his 36 year old widowed mother, Mary, who is a charwoman, both of Great Elm.

Walter and Martha Izant's children at school are now recorded as Robert (16) and Marianne W (12). Walter is still an edge tool worker and Methodist local preacher. At 16 years old, Robert is likely to be too old to be at the local school so calling him a scholar may be an enumeration mistake.

Amelia Hobbs (4) is the daughter of Robert, edge tool worker, and Emma from Leigh on Mendip. Making up their household is Thomas Ashman, a wood turner from Stoke Lane.

Henry and Martha Smith's children are at school: Hester (11), Henry G. (9) and Sarah A. (7). There is also an Albert recorded without indicating that he was at school. He is aged 12 and thus beyond the normal age for schooling at this time.

Caroline Wollen (13), Thomas (10), Anthony (8) and Frank (6) are the children of Thomas, edge tool worker, and Louisa, who is a laundress. There are no details of where the children were born, though both parents were born in Great Elm.

Julia Vines (6) is the daughter of George, a 45 year old labourer in a cloth factory from Frome and married to Juliet, 26 years old who was born in the parish.

Thomas Edwards, domestic gardener of Marston Bigot, and a dressmaker, Eliza, from Bradford (on Avon), have Mary A. (11) and Emma R. (10) at school. The children were born at Frome.

Romeo Coombs, farmer of 25 acres at Harding's Hill Farm and Hannah from Egford, had three children at school: Amelia (10), Georgina (7) and Emily J (4). Their older sibling, William (12) was not at school.

At Hapsford House, Mary Morris, widowed and 62, was an annuitant from Marston Bigot. She has two domestic servants and a parlour maid, and has her niece, Ellen Barter (?), born in Dorset living with her. Ellen is recorded as being a scholar, though it appears that she may only be 3 years old. The text is hard to decipher.

Emley (sic), presumably Emily, Brown is the 5 year old daughter of John Brown of Great Elm and Louisa of Road (now Rode). There are no details of their occupations.

1872: C of E School (mixed) Miss Fanny Margaret Gowan, Mistress (*Kelly's Directory 1872*)

1875: Great Elm National School was newly opened on 1 February

Miss Ruth Purnell, Mistress (*Kelly's Directory 1875*)

The School log book of 1875 – 1909 can be viewed at Somerset Heritage Centre, Taunton (C/E/4/118/1).

This log book comprises the teacher's diaries of daily events in the school. It provides a fulsome account of the minutiae of the school day. It also provides social and historical information, containing as it does details of which children are being admitted or are leaving, their behaviour, childhood diseases, child labour, and their entertainments, together with notes concerning when the weather affects their attendance.

We will see that a number of diseases affect the children: croup, whooping cough, scarlet fever and influenza, from which some children die. Medical intervention would not have commonly been available, and resorting to the power of prayer may not have worked. The medical profession held startling opinions concerning the causes of illness. The 1848 edition of *Buchan's Domestic Medicine* listed amongst the general causes of illnesses such as measles and scarlet fever, "diseased parents", night air, sedentary habits, anger, wet feet and abrupt changes of temperature. The causes of fever in general included injury, irregular bowel habits, and so forth.

The details extracted and recorded here from the log book concentrate on the people involved, though there is also a glimpse of the teaching and learning being undertaken. The frequent visiting by committee members and the, almost daily, visits from the Rev Hare or his replacements are a given. The official reports of the school at this stage tend not to be fulsome in praise, though neither is the school regarded as particularly poor in its teaching. The following account shows a little of the lives of the inhabitants, rather than the timetable and punishments.

The log book for 1875 shows that Ruth Purnell was only in post for about nine weeks and indicates that she maintained a strict and rather punitive regime.

The log begins: "I, Ruth Purnell, commenced my duties as Mistress of the above school on February 1st 1875." It continues:

February 1. "The school being newly opened, the morning was occupied in admitting children, and classifying them in readiness to commence routine work in the afternoon. In the early part of the morning, there were present Mrs Walters, Miss Fussel (sic) and Miss Baxter (members of the Committee). Later in the morning Miss Fussel visited again accompanied by her mother (Mrs Fussel). In the afternoon lessons were followed according to the time table."

The number of children admitted was 12 boys and 25 girls.

Feb 2: "Commenced school at 9.30. Began teaching the children the 'morning hymn', 'O, Father look upon us'. The children are very backward indeed most of them not having been to school for some time."

"Taught standard IV Troy weight and Avoirdupois weight. The whole school commenced learning the multiplication tables."

Feb 5: "Recreation time this week has been devoted to drill and marching for the elder children – play for the younger ones. Average for the week 32.9."

Sarah Villers, in her *Village Schooling in Somerset*, (Rylands, 2012) indicates that physical activity did not figure much in the early days of schooling. After all, many children had long walks to school. It was later included for practical reasons: by the time of the Boer War the often shockingly poor state of health of the recruits became a national scandal, so strenuous efforts were made to improve the physical condition of school pupils. A section of Drill Exercises was published weekly in the Schoolmistress journal to help teachers not familiar with this new approach.

Feb 15: "Mrs Rossiter called this morning to say that she cannot spare Louisa to come to school for three months". (This is Lydia Rossiter.)
It is a frequent occurrence that children need to stay at home to help.

Feb 17: "I examined Standard II on Dictation – Julia Viner had 2 mistakes, Edwin Davidge 13."

On Feb 22: Mrs Hobbs, Emma, the laundress sends a note to say that she can't spare Amelia "as her brother is so very ill." It is not known which brother this is.

March 22: "Mrs Davidge sent to say she could not spare Alice to come to school for some time".

April 26: "I, Harriet Grosvenor, took temporary charge of this school. Anna Norris, a pupil teacher from Chantry, who has been in charge of it for the last fortnight came to help me for the day."

April 28: "Emma Jones, the monitor, absent all day." She was absent quite often. "Two boys behaved very badly outside school".

By 4 May "the children are working hard." However, on May 5: "The infants only had recreation today as some of the elder children did not keep in the playground yesterday",

There is plenty of reluctance to go to school and the children were rounded up by a committee member on one occasion to get them to attend. It may be that the cost of going to school was too much for the families to contemplate.

June 21: "Louisa and John Rossiter struck off the books". Louisa would have been around 13 years of age, and John only about 4 at this time. No reason is given for their both leaving, though Louisa is now of an age not to go to school.

Serious illnesses are often recorded and there is a spate of deaths amongst the children.

"Two of the infants, Albin Padfield and Harry Antell, have died of the croup since Friday. Two more are not expected to recover. I resigned my charge of the school today." Currently it is not known to whom these children belonged. They do not appear in the 1871 census. Albin may have been the child of the farmer, Stephen and Jane.

On July 6 the School Mistress, Annie Sackree (?) began her appointment. It was a grim time as children were still dying. She records on her second day in office that: "July 7. One of the infants, Herbert Hobbs died today." In 1871 there are three Hobbs families living in Great Elm and presently it is not known to which one Herbert belonged.

A holiday was had from 21 August to 6 September. The children would be needed for the harvest.

October 11: "The infant, Sarah Ashman, died on Saturday". Sarah was too young to have been recorded in the 1871 census.

By December 9 of that year Georgiana Maria Lake took over the running of the school.

We see children suffering, and dying, from croup, whooping cough, scarlet fever and the flu during the lifespan of the log book that is currently the only one available to view in the archives. There was high national mortality from scarlet fever from 1840 – 1880 and it has been suggested that the sharp decline after 1880 was due to the parallel fall in wheat prices, scarlet fever being associated with poor nutrition.

1876: The school log book continues to record the happenings of the school, giving a snapshot of the life in the village.

Feb 3: "Mrs Walters (Committee) gave orders that E. Davidge was not to be admitted into school again without a written order from one of the directors as he was so very impudent". This is Edwin Davidge, who, with Frank Wollen and Emmanuel Pickford, is often in trouble for bad behaviour.

There are regular reports from the District Diocesan Inspector (at this time there were 20 children present, plus 26 infants):

"School has only been thoroughly organised since Christmas last."

"The infants are largely taught by monitors who on alternate days leave the infants to learn with the first class." It is understood that it is the infants, rather than the monitors, who learn with the first class, as the monitors would be rather too old. The inspector holds the view that it would be better for the infants to have one person to teach them. The situation is not helped by the fact that the monitors – school pupils themselves - don't seem keen on their responsibilities and are often absent with or without permission.

Sept 7: "Very few children at school this afternoon it being Mells Flower Show".

Sept 20: Agnes Lansdown is made a Monitor but by November 20 she had left. She would then have been 13 years old.

Nov 27: "Infant Reginald Hobbs died on Saturday".

1876 Feb 14: Mrs Pope couldn't spare Lucy for a month. No reason is given.

May 3: "Charles Hobbs (half timer) at school all day today being detained at the 'shop' yesterday afternoon." This may mean that Charles is working in the grocer's shop in Great Elm, or perhaps 'the shop' is a term for a workshop at the iron works. It is people called Roddock/Ruddick who keep the grocery during this time. In 1872 Shadrack Ruddock is baker and grocer, in 1875 Stephen Ruddock is shop keeper and in 1883 it is Shadrack again (Details from the *Kelly's Directories* for those years).

1877: June 18. Sarah Higham took charge as the new Mistress. See below for more information about her and her family.

July 8: "The Monitor (Emma Jones) failed in her exams as a candidate for Pupil Teachership. Her services have been discontinued by the Manager." Emma's absences, with or without leave, have been frequent and she may not have been keen to pursue a career in teaching or her family circumstances did not allow for frequent attendance.

Monitors could leave with one month's notice and were only paid a small amount, up to 3 shillings a week. A pupil teacher might only be 13 years old, and could be recruited immediately on completing elementary school. Their apprenticeship of 5 years' duration involved teaching at the school for no more than 20 hours a week and they were to receive up to 1 ½ hours' instruction from the Head Mistress. The Head Mistress would have received £5 for having a pupil teacher under her instruction. It appears that Emma failed an annual exam set when the Inspector called to examine the whole school.

July 31: "Several children were away from school this afternoon. I have enquired into the reasons for this and with the following results.

Thomas Jones - carrying ginger beer to the cricket field.

Emily Brown - weather so hot. (She is 11.)

Caroline Cox - weather so hot.

Harriet Brown - went to the coalpits with her mother.

Frank Wollen and Mary Wollen - went to Frome.

Emily Davidge - carrying tea into the hay making field to her mother. (She is aged 8.)

William Izant - sent to Frome with his mother."

Aug 21: "Jane Williams was carrying food to the harvest field." Many children were absent from school but there were still 57 present the day before. Luckily, three weeks of harvest holidays began on August 23.

However, pupils' absence in order to do other things continues:

Sept 18: "Ellen Pickford and Jane Williams were absent as picking up potatoes." Ellen (9) and Jane (11) are the children of agricultural labourers Job Pickford and Thomas L. Williams.

The children often have to help if there are mishaps at the school:

Sept 25: "A boy named Arthur Davidge made the floor of the boys closet filthy. I sent Thomas Hobbs and George Viner to get water and clean it. This took them nearly an hour as they went to the public fountain twice."

Sept 26: "Several children absent as they went to the Cheese and Butter Show."

The school has occasional professional help:

Oct 3: "Alfred Pope (carpenter) fixed two rows of double pegs under the cupboard".

Oct 24: "Found Frank Wollen, a boy in the second class, guilty of very rude behaviour towards Jessie Page, a girl who was sitting near him."

Sometimes it is the parents who cause problems.

Nov 6: "Alice Matthews living at Hapsford, came to the school this afternoon and made a very great interruption. She was raving with passion because her children are not allowed to remain in the schoolroom to take their dinner. She used extremely violent and abusive language. 52 children were present. Eleanor and George Matthews were taken away by their mother."

Nov 13: "I have been directed by the committee to exclude the children of Alice Matthews from school until a suitable apology be made by her for her violent language. She has sent her children to school every morning this week but I have not allowed them to remain."

Children who are considered dirty may be sent home to wash their hands and faces.

1878: Feb 15: Helena Hobbs is appointed as second Monitor, whereupon she keeps being absent. Ellen Wear/Ware is also a Monitor but she keeps being absent too,

April 3: It is noted that Rosa Pickford has moved to Bath and that George and Kate Brine left the parish. Rosa or Rose is the daughter of Job Pickford mentioned above. It is not known why she left for Bath as her younger sisters, Ellen (10) and Eliza (9), are mentioned in the following month as making their presence known in an unruly way.

May 17: "Edith Walton, William Newton, George Viner and Eustace Higham went to Chantry today to be examined in Religious Knowledge." Eustace is the 9 year old son of the school mistress.

May 24: "Talked to Ellen and Eliza Pickford and Annie Hobbs about fighting and quarrelling with Ada and Ernest Jones on their way home from school. The Pickfords have promised to behave better in future and seemed sorry for their conduct to the Jones family."

June 19: The school was shut for a week for the Whitsun vacation allowing time for the schoolroom to be whitewashed and freshly painted.

July 5: The special subjects for the year are Geography and Grammar. Otherwise the curriculum involves the 3 R's, and some sewing, which the girls might do whilst listening to a scripture lesson.

Illness continues to dog the children.

July 8: "Sarah and Harriet Brown have whooping cough".

Sept 30: "Edith Walton began as Monitor". She has just been examined in Religious Knowledge as we noted above.

Not all the children are religiously inclined:

"Nov 5: I had to severely reprimand Edward Wheeler for a very irreverent speech which he made to the boy sitting next to him during the Scripture lesson this morning.

1879: The year begins with deep snow. In fact, school attendance fluctuates dramatically depending upon the weather.

The inclement weather produces a "curate's egg" of a day:

Jan 8: "Mr George Rossiter came voluntarily early in the morning, and cleared the snow from the school door and made a path through the school yard. Mr James Jones also came early to the school and swore shamefully at Edith Walton for making what he considered too large a fire. The coal on the fire had been brought by my son Louis from my own supply, that a good fire may be made to encourage the children to come to school." We find in the 1881 census that George Rossiter is a farm labourer and that Edith Walton is his niece. James Jones is a farmer of 70 acres.

Something is eventually done about the coal situation.

Jan 29: " Received a supply of coal for the use of the school the scholars having suffered severely from the cold in the school room lately".

The school can still be seen at Manor Farm, used latterly as a farm building, with half of its originally pan tiled roof covered in corrugated iron. The school comprised two rooms, the smaller of which had the fireplace. It is difficult to see how the warmth of the fire located there could have had much impact upon the temperature of the larger room. The larger room had an attendance board fixed to its wall, and the remains of this are still in place.

Feb 7: The school mistress is ill so the school closed for two days. This is the first official sign that Sarah Higham's health is damaged.

Feb 10: "Walter Pickford has left the parish".

May 1: "The school was closed today by permission from the Correspondent, as the Mistress wanted a holiday."

June 9: "None of the children belonging to the Williams Family (Wadbury Cottage) can attend school as Scarletina is in the family. Also Walter Wheeler for the same reason."

There is perhaps a touch of acerbity underlying the following report from the school mistress:

June 11: "The Sanitary Inspector came to test the drinking water on the school premises, but as we have nothing but rain water there was nothing for him to do in that way".

July 28: "Mistress unwell and did not attend. School carried on by her husband assisted by the pupil teacher and monitor." As we will see from the details we have found concerning her family below, Sarah's husband was a school master.

June 30: Mary Jeffery took charge of the school.

It is not only the school mistress who is ill.

Nov 14: "James Thomas at home with a cold and some kind of rash. The other children desired to stay away in case of its being anything infectious. Caroline Cox away with measles."

"No singing this afternoon, Mistress having a cold." This is the last time that Sarah Higham is mentioned in her post at the school.

By Nov 24, several of the children are away with sore throats and rashes, and by the following day, the school was closed by the medical authorities on account of the scarlet fever breaking out amongst the children. The school was reopened on Dec 29.

1880: *School is now mandatory and all children must attend until 10 years of age. It costs families 1 pence per week for each child.*

March 23: Emily Sprague is now the Mistress. She gives details of the lessons given by her pupil teachers.

May 4: "Bessie Phelps became a Monitor. Anne Line gave a lesson on 'Cape Colony'."

June 3: "Jane Newton gave a lesson to infants on a 'Bird's Nest'. Discipline very weak." Both Jane and Bessie/ Elizabeth are pupil teachers.

Aug 26: "Howard Biggs has spent most of the day in reading and learning geography and spelling as he was unable to write because of a gathered finger."

Oct 19: "Taught the children a round of 'Chairs to Mend'."

Nov 23: "Taught the children a new round 'A Boat, A Boat'".

Sarah Villiers, in her *Village Schooling in Somerset*, indicates that singing was a serious business and required exercises first before a melody was sung. The most popular method of teaching singing was the sol-fa, invented as a system by Sarah Glover (1785 – 1867).

1881: There are 353 inhabitants.

The census records Sarah Higham, our one-time School Mistress, as a married 45 year old certificated school mistress (unemployed). Though she had been the school mistress from 18 June 1877 it appears

that she left her post because of illness. Her husband is not registered as present in the 1881 census, though he must still have been part of the family as he is cited at the time of Sarah's illness as helping at the school on July 30, 1879 .

Their son, Louis Header Higham, was born in Goosehill on the Isle of Wight in 1865. He figures in an incident recorded in the log book of the school in 1879, during the time that his mother was the school mistress. He is now an apprentice wood carver. Her other children are at school: Eustace Stephen (12) was born in Blackwell, Somerset, Hilda Lockett (10) in Mickleton, Gloucestershire, and Winifred Sarah (8) in Oxford.

Sarah Higham was born Sarah Withers in Bath. She married Thomas Richard Higham between July and September 1857 in Helston, Cornwall, near Crowan, where her husband had been born. In the 1861 census she is living at 1 School Lane, Trumpington, Cambridgeshire as a school mistress and her husband, Thomas, is a National schoolmaster and organist (?). A nurse is living with them, a widow aged 45 from Grantchester, and a young servant girl from Girton.

By the 1871 census, they are living at Mickleton, Gloucestershire. He is now recorded as a schoolmaster and registrar of births and deaths. In this census there is an Arthur Purnell Higham (8) born in Trumpington, who does not appear with his siblings in Great Elm.

There are plenty of teachers in Great Elm parish. We again meet Fannie Gowen, whom we have met 20 years ago as an 8 year old scholar and 10 years ago as a school mistress. She is now referred to as Annie Margaret Gowen 28 year old, certificated teacher, born in the village and living with her grand parents - Samuel, now 84, who had been an agricultural labourer, and Elizabeth, now 80, from Sheffield. This couple had been recorded as her parents in both the 1861 and 1871 censuses. She is not known to be the school mistress at Great Elm School at this time. However, she may be teaching at another local school.

As we know from the school log book for the period, it is Emily Sprague who is the 22 year old School Mistress at Great Elm. She is living at Newnham Cottage and was born at St Martins, London. Living with her as a boarder is Elizabeth Phelps, who is a Pupil Teacher from Ilton. She is mentioned in the log book above.

Emily Sprague, in her role as School Mistress, is the keeper of the school log book for the next few years. However, first we will cover those children recorded in the 1881 census before returning to the school records she kept.

As will be noted in the following, the village is fairly bursting with children at this time, with many of school age.

At the same address as Emily, Newnham Cottage, is the Pope family with six children at school. Lucy Maude (13), Jessie Isabel (12), Cuthbert (10), Ellen Louisa (8) and Emeline Kate (6), all born in Frome, and George Alfred (4) born in Great Elm. They are the children of carpenter and joiner, Alfred Joseph Pope and Tabitha, both of Mells.

Also a pupil teacher is the 18 year old Agnes, daughter of the widowed Charles Lansdown.

George and Jane Rossiter have their 14 year old niece, Edith Walton, living with them. She is at school and was born in Westminster, London. George is a farm labourer from Whatley and Jane was born in the parish.

At the Green is Albert Eves, a gamekeeper of Bridport, Dorset and Annie, a laundress. Living with them is their niece, Elizabeth M Eves a 6 year old from Cocken Hall, Durham.

Living at the *Eagle Inn* are Forehead Eames, inn keeper from Standerwick and Fanny from Trowbridge. Their younger children are George (16) still a scholar, and James (14), both from Frome.

William and Sarah Frapwell have Alice Mary Frapwell in their household. She is a 16 year old scholar of Branksome, Dorset and thus too old for the local school.

Joseph Hill, Sawyer of Long Sutton, Dorset and Elizabeth of Great Elm have Sarah (13) and William (6) born in Buckland as school age children.

Hapsford Cottage is now the home of James Pickford, who is a retired farmer at the age of 41, born in Berkeley. There is no sign of his wife and 13 year old Amy is acting as housekeeper. Her younger siblings are at school: James (11), Ada (9), and Bella (7). All the children had been born in Frome.

Of the six children of Richard and Alice Farmer, four are at school: George (10), Eleanor (8), Alfred (6) and Beatrice (4). The father and the children were all born at Buckland, and Alice is from St. George's, Manor Square, London.

Henry Coombs has a surname which is old in Great Elm and he and others of his surname are prominent in the village over time. Here, Henry is an edge tool worker of 33 years old and Martha is his wife who came from Beckington. The children at school are Amy Mabel (7), and Ethel Gertrude (4).

We have seen in earlier censuses that James and Louisa Wollen's children attended school. Now it is Mary (12) who is at school, whilst her older siblings are agricultural labourers. James is an edge tool worker. All the family were born in Great Elm.

John Henry Webb, a 28 year old engine driver, is new to the village. The family has come from Cornwall, where Henry was born at Linkenhorne. His wife is Emily from Breage, Cornwall, and the three children were born at Gernoe, Cornwall. Cited as being scholars are Annie (8), Lily (6) and Edward Henry (3).

Albert Jones (12) and Herbert (9) are the children of James Jones, farmer of 50 acres, all of Frome. Their mother is Eliza, born in Frome.

Robert Hobbs, general labourer of Great Elm and Emma from Leigh on Mendip, have two of their own children at school: Wyndham (11) and Alban (?) Frank (5). Their niece is also in the household, Ellen Hobbs and all the children are from Great Elm. Thomas Ashman is still a boarder with them, a wood turner of Stoke Lane. We met him at the last census and will meet him similarly placed in the next.

Edge tool worker, Ernest Montague of Mells, and Elizabeth Ann of Whiteparish, Wiltshire, currently have one child at school: Mary Gertrude (6), born in Great Elm, like their other children.

Francis Rossiter, 50 year old bill hook maker and Lydia, his wife from Whatley, have two children left in the household: John James (10) and Henry Joseph (7).

Francis William Penny (12), Leonard Thomas (10) and Hubert John (7) are living on a farm. Their father is William Penny from North Cadbury, who is the farmer of 180 acres and employing two labourers and one boy. Their mother is Ann, from Lovington, and they have a widowed young general servant in the house from Hornblotton, Somerset, plus a farm servant from South Cadbury. The birthplace of an older, 14 year old child, shows that the family were at South Brewham before North Cadbury, where the three scholars were born.

Edge tool worker, Sidney Francis Rossiter of Great Elm is married to Annie from Westbury, and Ernest Francis James Rossiter (3) their son, is cited as being at school.

Shadrack Biggs is an edge tool worker, born in the parish and married to Caroline from Leigh on Mendip. Of the five children they have by this census date, Howard (9), Gertrude (8) and Nellie (7) at school, all born in Great Elm.

We have met George Jones, scythe smith of Great Elm and his wife Ann from Quarley, Hampshire before. The son Herbert, of the last census is now at work, but there are now another 6 children, four of whom are at school: Ada Jane (11), Minnie Louisa (10), Ernest George (8), and Charlie (6), all born in Great Elm.

Nehemiah Batley's is a new name in the village. He is a coachman of Malcombe, Dorset married to Sarah, and both she and the next three children are from the same village. Annie (12), Sidney (11) and Mary (9) are at school, whilst the youngest child Amelia (4) is not. She had been born in Shaftesbury, the town.

Of general labourer Thomas L. Williams and Ann Williams' children, it is the turn of Charles (11), John (8) and Alice (5) to be at school. All the children were born in Great Elm except for Alice who was born in Mells. Their 15 year old sister, Jane, is an unemployed housemaid, though perhaps not that unemployed, given that there is a 1 year old boarder, Clement Williams born in London whom she probably had to look after.

In Job and Sarah Pickford's household, there are now two children at school: Eliza (12) and Florence (9). The older boys are now making edge tools or working in a farm. The mother, Sarah, fulfils the occasional rule that wives can often come from outside the parish. She is from Laverton, whilst everyone else was born in Great Elm.

Unfortunately the next entry for a "scholar" has an unreadable name. Is it Orascey or Draxy or neither? The 3 year old is the male child of Henry W. Jones, edge tool worker and Elizabeth. All the family were born in the parish. They don't appear in earlier or later censuses to check the name. He is one of the infants that are attending the school, sometimes called "the babies" by the school mistress.

The family of bar iron and wire roller, James Newton, come from Kinver, Staffordshire, where his wife, Charlotte, and four of their children were born. Elizabeth (11), Maude Mary (8) and Mary Ann (4) are at school. Whilst the last child was born in the parish, Maude had been born at Coldicott, Monmouthshire.

William James Brown, edge tool worker of Great Elm had married Sarah Matilda of Bishop's Sutton in Somerset. Their two older children are at school: Harriet (8) and Edwin (5), both born in Great Elm.

George Viner of Frome, 59 year old labourer in the iron works, has married the 36 year old Julia who was born in Great Elm, along with their children: Henry George (13), Elizabeth Mary (8) and Mabel Sophia (4).

Alice Cox is head of her household, a married woman employed in house work from Limington. Her children were born in Mells, Caroline (9) being the one of school age at this point.

Charles Smith, foreman at the edge tool works, has come to the village to work. Phoebe from Dudley, Staffordshire married him and all their children were born in Oldbury, Worcestershire, except the last baby, who was born in the parish. The "scholars" are Arthur (10), Albert (8) and Amelia (5).

This concludes the 1881 census details of school children. The school log book in which the School Mistress, Emily Sprague, keeps her reports for this year include such details as:

Jan 10: "Howard Biggs and Walter Wheeler have gone to Mells School."

Feb 4: "Jane Newton has left today."

Feb 6: "Lucy Pope commenced her duties as Monitor."

March 11: "Miss Walters and Mrs Biggan visited – heard the children sing and the babies read." As we have seen, children as young as 3 years are attending the school. It is a way of maintaining sufficient numbers and the situation will not change until the 20th Century.

In April children are away with the measles, and attendance is down to 16.

1883: Miss Emily Sprague is cited as School Mistress in *Kelly's Directory* of this year.

1884: Feb 15: "The teachers have asked permission to stay from school this afternoon to attend a funeral as they are members of the choir."

1885: July 23: "Holiday this afternoon. Children were invited to Somerleaze by Mrs Walters for their school treat."

July 19: "Removed Ada Gowen's name from the register as she is still ill. The Dr has said she ought not to come to school for at least three months." This may be Emily Ada Gowen, approx. 5 years old, daughter of Alfred and Emily.

This is the year in which Little Elm became part of the civil parish of Whatley. It had been part of the ecclesiastical parish of Chantry from 1846.

1886: An Indenture of 30.9.1886 shows William Strachey, Esq mortgaging land for which Eli Gillman had earlier not honoured his mortgage commitments. Dodge is to have a walled garden with buildings and premises occupied by the School Committee except for fixtures and fittings.

1887: The Sunday School at Elm is shown on the map of 1887 – 1889, with the same footprint as the current the Village Hall, on the Green in front of Glebe Farm. This is one and the same building. Children attending Sunday School in its proper application would be taught bible stories and a little reading. We will see later that the building is pressed into service as the elementary school.

Emily Sprague, in her school log book for the National School, reports that the year starts with snow. She continues:

Oct 19: "Arthur Perrins behaved rudely and was punished in consequence".

Oct 20: "M. Montague has been away a fortnight owing to her mother's illness. C. Jones potato digging."

Nov. 14: "Gawens are attending badly this week".

Dec. 4: Three boys asked to leave at 4 to carry their father's tea.

Dec 15: First class girls had 20 lines to learn for talking".

1888: Snow blights the first few months of the year:

Feb. 13: "Sent several children home early on account of a heavy snow storm".

Feb 14 – 16 "No school as heavy snow".

Feb 17: " 8 children present. Sent them home again".

Feb 18: "Closed."

In March the weather is still bad.

June 5: "Robert Williams came to school but was sent back, because he was wet through."

The summary of the Inspector's Report says that "The children are in capital order", though the rest of his report is slightly less fulsome in praise.

1889: *It is now mandatory for children up to the age of 12 to attend school.*

National School (mixed) Average attendance: 51. Mrs Emily Newton, Mistress (*Kelly's Directory* 1889)

Emily Newton reports in the log book:

Jan 14: "Several children with bad colds lots of coughing caused an unusual amount of noise." A. Gawen keeps being ill.

April 30: "A, Gowen, J. Biggs, Romeo Hobbs, Edward Holloway, Frank Simms, H. Essington all away with bad colds."

May 24: "Some children still away with whooping cough".

July 10: "A. Knight absent hay making."

1891: *The school's pence fee is abolished and schools are now free. Pupil teachers recruited at this time were 13 or 14 years old.*

Census: There are 289 inhabitants.

The census records an Edmund Moon as a married 63 year old retired school master born in Nunney. He does not have anything to do with the school at Great Elm.

Maude M Newton, aged 18, is a Pupil Teacher, born in Coldicott, Monmouthshire. (1891 census)

Mrs Emily Newton, now aged 32, is still the Elementary School Mistress at Elm, born in Picadilly, London. (1891 census).

Amongst her pupils at that date are, speculatively:

Agnes Dutch (5) of Sawmill Cottage, Hapsford. Her mother is head of the household, 35, recorded as being supported by her husband, and born in Shepton Mallett. Agnes had been born in Bristol, a baby boy being born in Frome. A 14 year old lodger who is a farm labourer from Filliegh, Devon is in the household too.

Dorothy Rossiter, (6) and the niece of Wm Hoddinott, living at Hapsford Farm, born in Great Elm.

The Gowen children, Emily (10), George (9), Alfred (6) and Francis (4), were all born in Great Elm to Alfred Gawen, an edge tool worker (scythe setter) born in Great Elm and Emily, born at Hillfarence in Somerset.

The Essington children, Samuel (12) born at Cradley, Staffs, Sarah (7) born at Stourbridge, and Henry (4) also born in Stourbridge, are children of Richard, a steel form drawer and Sarah, both born in Stourbridge, coming to the village for work.

Ernest Baber (8) born at Batcombe and Herbert (6) born at Nunney, are the children of Edmund Baber, a groom and gardener of Batcombe and Mary Louisa, born in Great Elm. The family has clearly moved around locally due to the father's occupations.

Minnie Hobbs (10) and Beatrice (4), were both born in Great Elm to Robert Hobbs, a Labourer in Iron Works born in the village and Emma, a laundress of Leigh on Mendip. The older children are now working as laundress, wood turner and errand boy. Thomas Ashman, the long-term lodge, is still with them, employed as a wood turner.

Ernest Montague, edge tool smith of Mells, and Eliza A, of Whiteparish, Wiltshire are still in the parish with their children. It is the turn of Helen L. (13), Jessie F. (11), Annie M. (8) and Gladys E. (5) to be at school. The full first names of the children are Helen Lucia, Jessie Florence, Anne Maud, and Gladys Edith, who will subsequently become a school teacher who dies in 1968.

Hester G. Williams (6) and Carey T. (4) were born in Great Elm to Hester, and the wheelwright, Thomas Williams.

Jeanette Turner (11) of Green Street, London, is the grand daughter of farmer at Manor Farm, Harry Beacham and his wife, Mary, both of Buckland Dinham. She is recorded as living with them rather than just visiting so is probably on the Elm school roll.

Romeo Hobbs (7), Matilda (6) and Leonard (4), are the children of the married Sarah Hobbs who has no occupation and was born in Marylebone, London. Romeo had been born in Chippenham, Wiltshire, before the family came to Great Elm.

Emily Williams (16) and William (8) are the children of George Hayward, General Manager of the Edge Tool Works and living "near Mells Iron Works". Emily was born in Southwick, Staffordshire and William in Sheffield. Emily is too old for the local school so must have been in education elsewhere at this date. Their mother Hannah was also from Staffordshire and the family had moved from Old Hill to Southwick in Staffordshire, and then Sheffield, before coming to Great Elm for work.

Edward Perrins (13), Amy (12) and Maud (10) are the children of Sarah Ann from Birmingham, and a roll turner, Harry Perrin living "near Mells Iron Works". Edward had been born at Southwick, Staffordshire and Amy and Maud at Warley, Worcestershire. Their father was from Londonderry, Worcestershire. They have been in the parish for four years at this point.

Lily Knight (10), Bessie (7) and Beatrice (5), at the children of Frank Knight, an edge tool grinder, living "near Mells Iron Works". Their mother, Harriet A. is from Wincanton. All the children were born in Great Elm. The school log records that Bessie died of scarlet fever on 20 December.

Also living at "near Mells Iron Works" is Thomas Cook, a fitter from Blackheath, Staffordshire, with his wife Elizabeth from Old Mill, Staffordshire. This is where Martha (9) was born. They have two boarders in the household, both edge tool makers from Birmingham.

William Smith (8), is grand son of Henry Smith senior, a labourer in Mells Iron Works. William had been born at Frome, and his grandfather in Great Elm. Next door are Henry Smith Junior, an engine driver at Mells Works, and Emily of Frome and it is assumed that they are William's parents.

Harold Biggs (9), Ethel (6) and Russel (sic)(4) are the children of wood turner, Frederick Biggs, of Great Elm and Jane of Leigh on Mendip. The children were all born in the village. The oldest son, Howard, is now a printer compositor.

Jennie Biggs (13), Edwin (11), Stanley (8) and Walter (4), all born in the village are the children of Shadrack Biggs, an edge tool maker, born in Great Elm, and Caroline, born in Leigh on Mendip.

Frederick Gowen (sic) (8), lives with his grandfather, Samuel Gawen, a 68 year old scythesmith cutler of Great Elm and his grand mother, Elizabeth, who was born in Buckland Dunham. Within this household are Frederick's single uncles, Elisha, a heater to spade and shovel plater and William who was "an imbecile since birth".

Davy Pope (8) and Winnifred (4), are living with their mother, Tabitha Pope and four older siblings. Both children and Tabitha were born in Great Elm.

Rose Rossiter (8) and Bessie (6) were born in Elm to William Rossiter, a warehouseman at the Edge Tool Works, and his wife Sarah, from Bawdrip.

Laura Jones (12) and Percy (10) were born in Elm to George Jones, an edge tool worker scythe man of Great Elm and Annie, from Quarley, Andover. We have met this family before. Ernest is now an apprentice to a shoeing smith, and Charlie is a compositor, letterpress.

Clement Williams (11) from London, is the grand son of Luke Williams, a widowed general labourer born in Great Elm. Within this household are Clement's uncles, variously a farm servant, carter, carpenter's improver, and saddler's apprentice and Alice, his aunt, whose occupation is unrecorded. She was presumably too busy in the household to have another formal one.

Francis Smith (11) and Florence (8), at the children of a spade and shovel plater, John Smith of Coaley, Glos and his dress maker wife, Eliza, born in Yate, Glos.

This concludes details from the 1891 census for school age children in Great Elm.

Emily Newton, as School Mistress, reports the following in her school log book for 1891:

The school is closed in March because of the snow.

May 20: "The Boys' Office thoroughly repaired – new pans, seats, etc.

In June, the Monitor has scarlet fever so children are told not to come to school. Some children have measles.

Dec 3: There are only 6 children attending school. Many are ill with measles and scarlet fever so the school is closed until after Christmas.

1892: The school log book reports that "Bessie Knight died of scarlet fever on December 20, 1891". She was 8, the daughter of Frank and Harriet.

Jan 11: "Influenza. Jessie Montague sent home with a rash – scarlet fever. Carey Williams away with influenza."

Jan 18: "Carey Williams died yesterday".

Feb 9: "May, Alice and Joseph Stanford away with measles.

Feb 18 and 19: No school because of the snow.

March 1: Rev. H. B. Hare examined the standard children. The arithmetic was very bad "not so much from ignorance as from lack of practice on paper". The children will have had to use slates and chalk instead.

May 13: R. W. Baker, the Assistant Diocesan Inspector (Bath and Wells) reports on the religious instruction: "The highest division and infants answered and showed much intelligence".

July 22: The summary of the Inspector's Report says that: "some suitable desks should be provided for the classroom and backs should be added to the seats of the gallery". The Head Mistress is to bring this matter to the attention of the Managers concerning Article 85(a). The gallery is where the infants are taught.

The Mistress has obtained second class in the Queen's Scholarship exam. Unfortunately for her, no payment can be made under Article 102 for her as "she is not required to make up the minimum staff of the school (Article 83)".

1893: *Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act 1893. It became compulsory for children under the age of 11 to attend school.*

The *School Mistress' log book* continues:

May 22: "No recreation this afternoon – boys lazy and girls rather noisy".

May 26: "A new drainpipe has been placed in the girl's yard". Despite this attention to the fabric of the building, the H. M. Inspector's Report of

July 25 avers that "the premises do not afford sufficient facilities in any respect for conducting the education of children efficiently – the space is limited and inconvenient – the ventilation defective and in summary the atmosphere is oppressive. While in winter it would seem that part of the room nearest the door, owing to the draughts is not habitable when the weather is cold. The managers should take immediate steps to provide efficient accommodation as the further recognition of the room can only be continued pending the provision of a more suitable one."

He records the Head as Mrs M. Newton, the Assistant Teacher as Edith Walton, and the Monitor as Minnie Hobbs. The Head is to "enquire whether the Managers are prepared without delay to provide new and convenient premises. The seats in the offices should be separated (Article 95(a) of the Code Form 46. The special attention of the Managers is required of the Enclosed Forms 46 and 69. No grant is payable under Article 105 of the Code as H. M. Inspector is unable to report that the staff is efficient within the meaning of the article".

The school is not fit for purpose later in the year:

Dec. 13: The water has come in both at the classroom door and windows during the night. It is altogether unfit for the children to sit there in the morning."

Dec. 14: The Assistant H. M. Inspector visits without notice.

The Assistant Teacher, Edith Walton, is away sick both before and after Christmas. By March 5 following, she has sent in her resignation to the Managers by the Dr's advice on account of ill health.

1894: *Kelly's Directory* for 1896 gives the date of the opening of the Public Elementary School (mixed) as 1894. However, this is not the case. *Kelly's Directory* of 1910 gives it as 1896. This latter date is the one in which the school moves to the premises which are now the Village Hall, then known as the Sunday School.

Mrs Emily Newton is still the School Mistress. (*Kelly's Directory* 1894)

Her log book continues:

Jan. 31: "David Fellows expelled for indecent behaviour". This is the first and only time that the official records show this form of punishment.

March 5: Emily Walton has sent in her resignation to the Manager by the advice of the Dr on account of her ill health.

Aug. 27: "Emily Chandler is appointed to teach the infants.

Sept. 19: E. Dutch and A. Dutch had their marks cancelled as they wanted to leave at 3.30 to go blackberrying. Cancellation from the register for attending school late or leaving early is the norm. Attendance matters for all. The children need to show that they are being schooled sufficiently often and the school attendance figures need to be kept up.

Sept. 20: Twelve children are away blackberrying. To allow this to happen suggests that foraging for food is an important supplement to a family's diet.

Dec 3: "Lucy Gawen died of diphtheria this afternoon."

1895: In November Fussells Iron Works finally closed and the population of the parish decreased. The population in 1891 was 289 and by 1901 it was 180. This is from a peak of 449 in 1821 at the time of the establishment of the iron works.

Feb 6: The delightful and always enthusiastic Treasurer, Alfred Hayman reports: "I have this day paid a visit to the school and was much pleased, altho' a very cold day the children were happy and comfortable and well behaved. Mrs Newton doing all she could to add to their comforts." Alfred Hayman is a stalwart of the community. He lives at Hapsford House and was a church warden for many years.

Feb 7: However, the facilities are still an issue: "Weather is still so severe we cannot sit in the lower part of the room at all".

Feb 11: Only three infants present. The room was so cold this morning we could not keep on with lesson long at a time. Had to stop and drill."

Feb. 28: "Children played out of doors this morning, the first time for a month, because of the late bad weather".

May 10: "Attendance not so good on account of a circus in Frome".

1896: The year in which the school moves to the Sunday School premises on the Green. It will be a temporary arrangement.

Jan. 10: "A Montague, T. Moon the Monitor and Assistant, left at 3pm to attend Mrs Hayman's funeral". Alfred Hayman was to dedicate a stained glass window in the church to his wife. Later, during WW1, he was to erect the commemorative cross outside the doorway of the church in honour of his son and four other village men who died in this war.

Feb. 21: The school was closed owing to confirmation by the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

June 22: The summary of H. M. Inspector's report indicates that: "the children are in good order. They have been taught with great care and have made good progress with the elementary subjects. The class subject is well known. Singing and needlework are good. The infants are making good progress. E. Chandler is continued under Article 68 of the Code.

July 23: "Had copy books today for the first lesson as I intend to introduce Civil Service Writing in all the standards".

Sept. 22: "Standard II and III wrote out the National Anthem this afternoon instead of having an object lesson".

Object lessons were introduced in the late 1860s and became compulsory in 1890, and lasted four decades. *Village Schooling in Somerset*, by Sarah Villiers, tells us that "the object lesson focused on something familiar to the children and which would be of interest to them as well as in their interest". The Head Mistress could select from a list of possible topics. To begin with they were on familiar subjects and later became more exotic.

The school gears up for the transfer from its first premises at Manor Farm to its new location on the Green: the Sunday School.

Sept. 25: "Packed up books and maps ready for the removal tomorrow this being the last day on which Elm School will be carried out in this building."

Sept. 26 Saturday: "All school furniture, apparatus and moveable desks removed to school on the green."

Sept. 28: "No school today in consequence of arrangements having been made and furniture placed in other school room – commonly known as the Sunday School."

Sept. 29: "Keys of former Building delivered to W. Strachey, Esq. today at 12pm." As they commenced school for the first time in the Sunday School building not much work was done. "The classes are not yet comfortably in".

Oct. 5: "Rev. H. B. Hare visited this morning promising to arrange for more hat pegs and to attend to ventilation".

During October, children are away with bad colds.

Oct. 12: E. Biggs still absent with a "breaking out".

Oct. 16: Standard Grade VI wrote letters to their friends away from home and intend to post them out.

Nov. 10: "Frank Stott absent with chicken pox".

Nov. 11: "D. Collins, M. Collins, H. Sugar absent. Also 3 Padfields".

Nov. 13: "7 children away with chicken pox. Others with bad colds."

Nov. 23: "Sewing for girls and drawing for boys from 11 – 12 in morning. Too dark to see by 3 o'clock".

1897: *Kelly's Directory* for this year cites Mrs Emily Newton as School Mistress. Average attendance: 44. In fact there is a change of Head half-way through the year.

Jan. 28: "No school today. Mistress ill".

Feb. 17: "Mistress absent with influenza. Assistant carrying on school".

March 4: Alfred Hayman pays another visit: "I had such pleasure in paying a visit to the school this afternoon, and was pleased with the perfect order that existed. The children were well behaved and attentive to their teacher. I was also struck with their clean and tidy appearance – examined their writing which I considered excellent and was much pleased with their singing. Altogether it was to me a pleasant visit".

March 5: "Mistress resumed duties".

March 21: A complaint has been made: "I gave notice, in the school room to the school mistress and the children (altogether being 37) that the lord of the manor, Mr Spake (?) objects to their using the village green as a playground. Signed H. B. Hare, Manager and Correspondent. Witnesses Emily Newton, Emily Chandler".

June 21: It is Jubilee Day so there is no school.

June 24: "I resigned charge of the school today. Emily Newton".

June 25: "I (Maude Mary Newton) commenced duties as Head Mistress in this school today".

Sept 22: "Children had a holiday this afternoon to attend a treat kindly given by Mrs Beaver at the Rectory".

Oct. 22: "Received hammer hook and a small shovel for school today. Coke and wood received".

We learn from an Indenture of 16.12.1897, that Thomas Norris of Whatley, edge tool maker, sold a house (Cookson's Green) and its garden to Alfred George Hayman of Hapsford House. This was property and land that Mr Norris had bought from Sir Edward Strachey in 1858.

However, about 40 perches of the garden were to be excluded from the sale to Alfred Hayman as it had been conveyed to Elm School Board as "a site for a school and playground". The Indenture is in the hands of Jean Hurst and Nick Marriage who are the current owners of Cookson's Green.

1898: The Board School will open in October. The design for the school and its specification were approved in October 1897. The details of these and of the Architect follow.

Jan 26: "Gave a lesson on the potato to lower standards".

March sees the School Mistress being ill and then the Assistant Teacher who had been in charge in her absence. Children are also away ill.

Feb 8: "Gave a lesson 'coal'".

May 13: Grace Prideaux had earlier been in Wales but is now "absent having gone to visit her mother in Winchester".

The school closed for Harvest holidays on July 28 and reopened a month later.

Sept 12: "Gave a lesson on 'rats and mice'".

THE NEW SCHOOL:

Oct 24. The change of ink colour shows this to be a **red letter day**. "Commenced school in the new Board School today. No. on register: 31. Three children absent this morning."

The new school was designed in 1897. The architectural drawings had been signed off by the Education Committee on 1.10.1897. (C/CA 113 3 Somerset Heritage Centre. Copy enclosed.) The archived drawings are incomplete. They include the elevations and the ground plan for the "offices" i.e. the toilets, but not the ground plans of the main building.

Elm school is now located directly on Elm Lane. Richard Swann and Katy Duke now have their home there. Richard reports that the building originally had two doors into two classrooms. Apart from the plans and elevations and specification for the buildings works, there are details in the responses given in 1903 by the school managers to Somerset County Council. This is the *Elementary School Return* concerning Elm Board School made in compliance of the Education Act of 1902.

Richard says that a wave of schools were built at this time due to the 1893 Act mentioned above, and that the design and materials are such that the school was likely to have been by the same architect as the one who designed Nunney school which has a date carving for 1896. The exterior appearance of the walls, "level bedded random rubble rockfaced in jumped courses" are the same in both schools, though one can also note the same in a number of buildings around Frome of the same vintage.

Whilst there is no record yet found concerning the architect of Nunney school, it is assumed to be by the same hand. This hand was owned by the Hereford-born architect, Edwin Henry Lingen Barker, born in 1838, and who died in 1917. He had an architectural partnership: Barker & Cross, at 9 West Street, Weston super Mare (*Kelly's Directory* 1889).

E. H. Lingen Barker, as he styled himself, was the architect of many small scale restorations of existing small churches and designs for new small churches. These churches included those of:

St Stephen, Cinderford; St Matthew's, Monkswood; Steynton, Pembrokeshire; St Thomas a Becket, Haverfordwest; St James the Great, Walwyn's Castle, Pembrokeshire; St Peter, Little Newcastle, Pembrokeshire; St Carannog, Llangrannog, Ceredigion; St Michael, Pembroke; St John the Baptist, Nelson, Caerphilly

He also designed the Stanhope Memorial in high Victorian Gothic style in Lincolnshire.

He is known to have designed the Board school for Grosmont and Skenfrith, Monmouthshire in 1877. His practice will have benefited in small part from the wave of school building at this time.

Edwin is found in the 1911 census for Chorlton, South Manchester, where he is a 71 year old widower living in a boarding house which let out three rooms at 4 York Place, one of which was inhabited by our architect.

To be able to teach and learn in a purpose-built school building must have been welcomed by everyone involved, though, as we shall see, the same issues emerge as for the previous two locations over the lifetime of this, the last school.

A transcript of the **Specification**, date stamped by the Education authority as approved on 1.10.1897, is to be found in the archives of Somerset Heritage Centre. (C/CA 1/113) and is transcribed below:

"Specification of sundry works to be done in erecting and finishing complete School Buildings and Offices at Elm near Frome in the County of Somerset for the School Board according to the accompanying drawings prepared by Mr E. H. Lingen Barker.

Digging Remove up to a depth of 12 inches where directed upon the Site for easy carting away the soil covering the space to be occupied by the building – Excavate for trenches of walls to a bottom approved by the Architect & fill in, if required, with lime concrete compounded to directions to within 24 inches of proposed floor level and 18 inches wider than the walls above.

Concrete Layer Put a layer of Portland cement concrete compounded to directions over the whole surface within main walls to prevent damp rising, raising same on a well rammed bed of dry rubbish 17" deep –

Walls To consist of approved local stone 18" thick outside (except to Porches where they will be 15") an... (obscured word) 9" thick (or 4 ½" as shown) inside, the character of the external walling to be what is technically known as level bedded random rubble rockfaced in jumped courses with a 1" double margin angle draft –

Mortar To be compounded of fresh stone lime & pit sand free from loam & in the proportions of one of the former to two of the latter –

Damp Course To be laid throughout all internal and external walls below floor level, composed of two coats of gas tar & pitch boiled with grease & sand as directed –

Chimneys Flues to be parged with cow-dung mortar all the way to tops of caps, the stacks above roofs being in approved white bricks & six top courses set in cement with a dwarf flue pot fixed in each –

Fixing Frames All frames of doors or windows are to be set, bedded & pointed in Portland cement and all sash sills in oil putty with iron tongues let into the stone sills –

Corbels, set offs, heads & sills (where shown) to be of Bath stone from the Monks Park or other approved quarry with rubbed surfaces, sunk, rebated, splayed, moulded or chamfered as shown on detail drawings –

Floors The Porches, Cloak Rooms & Lavatories to be laid with approved franolithic paving & the W.Cs and Fuel House with bricks on edge grouted in cement –

Chimney Pieces etc. Provide the P. C. sum of £10 for two chimney pieces, grates & hearths including carriage & fixing and provide & fix a wrought iron caulked chimney bar to each opening –

Steps The steps to external doorways to be 12" x 6" and 9" x 6" tooled Pennard stone and thresholds to W.Cs 6" x 4" –

Ventilators Fix in walls where directed two of Boyle's 16" x 8" x 3" painted air inlet brackets & gratings of the P.C. value of 14/- each –

Roof Covering is to be of sun-coloured angular Bridgwater tiles on 2" x 1" red deal strips with ridges & finials of approved pattern & color fixed in cement –

Lead The gutter is to be covered with 6" lead 24" wide on 1" boarding & bearers, and the flashings are to be of 4" lead 9" wide stepped where necessary & tucked nailed & cemented into joints –

Bolts etc Provide one cwt of wrought iron for use in rods, ties, straps, bolts etc –

Spouting The eaves spouting is to be case iron half round, 4" to main building & 3" to Offices, and the downright pipes 3" circular with swannecks & heads where directed protected with galvanised iron caps –
Timber All to be from approved Baltic ports, free from sap, large, loose or dead knots, the scantlings to be as follows – lintols from 15" x 11" to 9" x 3" – plates 4" x 4" – purlins 6" x 4" – ridges 9" x 2" – rafters & collars 4 ½" x 2 1/2" with wrought & cut ends – hops & valleys 9" x 2 ½" –

Floors The floors of School & Class Room are to be formed out of 16" x 3" x 1 ½" red deal woodblocks laid on the concrete in Lowe's composition –

Doors Thwe frames to be solid 5" x 4" red deal chamfered, projecting 1" beyond face of walls with iron dowels to the outer ones, the doors to be 2" pitch pine, the lower panels filled in with v. joint 1" boards and upper ones with British plate glass – Hang with 4" wrought butts (3 to main & 2 to others) & provide strong approved 5/- mortice locks with large brass handles – The main doors to be ½" thicker, double diagonal braced with 9" drawback lock –

Windows The frames to be 4" x 3" red deal with oak sills & the window boards 6" x 1 ½ " pitch pine rounded fixed on oak blocks – The sashes to be 2" made to open as directed – The glass to be best 21 oz. sheet in panes of approved sizes, the lower 2 feet to each window being in plain enamelled glass, £2 P.C. being allowed for gearing etc

Dado The interior of School and Class Room walls to have a dado 4ft high, the boards being 4" x ¾ " v. jointed rebated on proper grounds with 2" moulded capping –

Cap Partitions are to be 1" v. jointed red deal grooved into 4" x 4"! top & bottom rails & posts in two thicknesses and provide with approved double wire hooks, numbered & fixed 12" apart in two rows –

Spirette Provide the P. C. sum of £15 for Spirette complete –

Lavatory & W. C. Provide the P. C. sum of £25 for Lavatory, W.C. and Urinal fittings –

Plastering The walls & ceilings are to be plastered with 3 coats, walls twice tinted, the W. C. walls & roofs being twice limewhitened, also the lathwork generally, using double fir laths only –

Painting Cover all the outside iron & woodwork with 4 coats of approved paint – and inside woodwork size, Cyanite stain & twice varnish, each finished to approved tints –

Fittings Provide the P. C. sum of £30 for desks, gallery & cupboard including carriage & fixing –

Boundary and Walls etc provide the P. C. sum of £250 for boundary and division walls, gates & pies, playground formation & covering and drainage-

The School Mistress' log shows that the first few days in this new location sees lessons on 'books' and 'the bat'.

Nov. 17: "4 children absent this week with whooping cough. Several of the others have bad coughs".

Dec. 2: "Could not open school this morning on account of heavy rain".

1898: Jan. 19: The H. M. Inspector, Richard T. Curry reports "Visited the school. Some pictures for the object lessons are needed and should be hung on the walls. Good and suitable pictures can be obtained very cheaply from the Educational Supply Association, Holborn, W.C." It falls to the generosity of Alfred Hayman to supply them in the following year.

1899: Jan. 9: "I (Emily Chandler, Additional Teacher) took temporary charge of the school today until the appointment of the Head Mistress. 25 children present".

Maude Mary Newton, aged 26 at this time, daughter of Alfred, the blacksmith, has ceased being the Head Mistress as she is to marry Alfred Hugh Bird, 32, a school master of Kilmington on January 2nd, 1899 (*Elm Parish Records – marriages 1837 – 1910.*)

The lists of supplies provided over the next few days indicates the nature of the work being undertaken by the children.

Jan 30: "Received 15 Royal Star copybooks, 2 packets kindergarten cards, 1 bottle red ink, 2 dozen drawings books, 4 dozen exercise books, 2 copy books, 1 jar of ink."

Mar.20: "Received 1 picture, 2 dozen drawings books, 4 dozen exercise books, 2 copybooks, 1 jar of ink".

Mar. 27: "I (Lizzie Henry Welsh) commenced duties as Head Mistress in this school today. 28 children present".

Apr. 11: "Received the following articles: 2 packets embroidery cards and wool for same, 1 dozen Royal Star copybooks, 6 dozen examination papers, box slate pencils, ½ dozen yards calico, 100 sets knitting needles, ½ dozen packets needles, ½ dozen ounces red knitting worsted. Music drill book".

Apr. 13: "Mr Hayman presented us with some pictures for the walls".

Apr. 17: Olive Ackland absent for the past fortnight – gone to Bristol for a change".

Apr. 24: "Received piano today."

May 26: "Emily Chandler resigned duties as Additional Teacher this afternoon."

May 31: "Gladys Montague began duties as Monitor today". Gladys is the daughter of Ernest Montague and Elizabeth Ann (nee Light).

Oct. 5: "Had fires in the school today for the first time". The date in Autumn when the first fires of the year are lit is often given.

Nov. 2: "Gave lesson on 'needles and pins' to the Infants I and II".

Nov. 7: "Gave lesson on 'chalk'".

Nov. 8: " Taught Standard III 'profit and loss'".

Nov. 9: "Gave lesson on 'meaning and use of map'".

Nov. 23: "Gave lesson on 'elephant'".

Dec. 1: "Taught new song 'Norse National Song'".

Dec. 4: "Dismissed school at 3.40. Will continue to do so long as the dark weather continues".

Dec. 5: "Several children absent with influenza".

1900: *Pupil Teachers now needed to be 15 years of age at the time of recruitment.*

The first few lessons mentioned concern one for the infants on "dog".

February is dogged by snow. The children on February 15 are dismissed as they had wet feet.

May 25: "Taught patriotic song 'My own native land'".

Sept. 28: "Taught new song 'Who is a brave man?'".

Nov. 26: "Adele Foale is absent for two weeks with measles".

Dec. 14: "Taught new song 'The minstrel boy'".

1901 Census: There are now only 180 inhabitants in the parish.

In the census for this year we again find Gladys Montague, now aged 15 and recorded as a schoolteacher. (1901 census) Was she teaching her younger sibling? Charles J Montague is 13 at this point. These are the children of Ernest, the domestic gardener and his wife Elizabeth, she of Whiteparish, Wiltshire.

At Bedlam we find William Coombs, a 14 year old pupil teacher, born in Elm to Henry Coombs, stone quarryman and Martha, born in Beckington.

Mrs Jane Elizabeth Dodswell, aged 20, living at Rock Cottage is a School Mistress, born in Frome. (1901 census). She is married to the commercial clerk, Herbert Dodswell, also born in Frome. We will note her log book entries later.

Charles Robinson, single, aged 49 and living at Sidney Valley in Elm is a Private Teacher working on his own account. He was born at Marston Ferry. (1901 census)

The 1901 census is sparse in citing children at school, and, though they seem depleted in number considering earlier censuses for the parish, there are still plenty of children of school age. It is assumed that those between 4 and 11 are at school and may include those up to 14 years of age, as earlier censuses attest.

At Elliotts, Dudlas (sic) (9) is the son of railway plate later, John Cox and his wife, Mary, both born in Pensford. Their child had been born in Chelton, Somerset.

At Hapsford House the widow Sarah Dutch is working at home in the occupation of plain sewing. She is from Shepton Mallett. Her two children are at school: Agnes Ethel (25) born at Clifton, and Arthur James (11) born in Elm.

At Hapsford, Anne Ackland, a married woman from Wenhaston, Suffolk has six children at home. The school age ones are Archibald (13) born at Rodden, Olive (11), Elsie (8) and Reginald (5), all born at Eastville.

At Moons Leaze, Luther Ashman, a domestic coachman from Frome, and Elizabeth, his wife from Box, Wiltshire have three children, the last two being born in Road (Rode): Albert (11) and Elsie (9).

At Bedlam, Grace Prideaux is a 12 year old from Winchester visiting George and Emily Heath of Berkley, he being a plate ganger on the railway. Grace is mentioned in the school log book.

Also at Bedlam is Nellie Williams (6) born in Elm, child of Joseph Williams, stone quarryman of Elm and Julia Florence (nee Burge) from Mells.

A neighbouring child is Rose Matthews (20), daughter of William, stone quarryman of Buckland and Elizabeth Matthews of Brewham.

Sarah Wollen, 73 year old laundress of Elm has her grand daughter Annie (11) living with her. She had been born at Temple Combe. We will hear of Annie in the school log book.

Eva Rose Toop, (9), daughter of Henry John Toop, carter on a farm from Wincanton, and Harriet Rose of Keynton, Somerset, is of school age.

Similarly, Francis (10) born to the widow, Harriet Knight, a laundress of Wincanton. His older siblings work as a general domestic and a stone quarryman.

The village blacksmith and wheelwright, Thomas Williams and his wife, Helah, have three of their four children at school age: Annie (11), Sidney (8) and Gertrude (5). All the family was born in Elm. Members of the Williams family are mentioned frequently in the school log book. Their lives are under duress.

We find Thomas Ashman still in lodgings with the Hobbs family, now depleted, with Emma Hobbs, married charwoman from Leigh on Mendip, as head of the household. Beatrice is 14 at this point and may be still at school, though Maud Martin (6) is only a visitor from Frome.

The farmer, Edwin Cary from Buckland and Ella Cary from Hinton Str Mary have a very young family and it is only Ethel (4) born in Vobster, who is likely to have been at school.

At the *Eagle Inn*, Jane Veal of Batcombe and her husband, the publican and farmer, Thomas Veal of Radstock, have Gertrude (14) born in Radstock at home.

In the village is the domestic gardener, Thomas Arthur Jones and his wife Annie Elizabeth who hailed from Netherton, Staffordshire. Living with them is Minnie Holloway (10) sister in law, from Elm.

Frederick Higgs, wood turner of Elm, and Jane of Leigh on Mendip have children in the printing trade. Russel is already, at 14, a print machine minder. Hebert (12) is cited as having "no occupation" but Henry (10) and Winifred (8) are at school.

At Providence House, the widowed Elizabeth Ruddock, born in Nunney and aged 74, is living on her own means. Living with her is her grand son Wilberforce Willcox (12), born in Great Elm.

Hilda C. Moon (8) and Edith B. (5) are the children of Ellen and Thomas Moon, farmer and contractor. They are from Norton, Somerset, where Hilda was born, whilst Edith and a later sister were born in Elm. They lived at Newlands.

Also at Newlands is Addie Foale, (6), the grand daughter of the widow Jane Foale, who was living on her own means. Jane had been born in Worthing and Addie born at Greenwich, London. It is Adele/ Addie who has had the measles in the winter of the previous year.

The School Mistress' log book tells us that:

Jan. 25: The children learn a new song, "The Village Bells".

Mar 12: The census we have noted above receives a helping hand from the educational authorities: "Gave lesson on the 'Census' this afternoon as required by the Board of Education. Instructed children as to how the form ought to be filled up".

Mar. 15: Mr and Miss Hayman visited and Lizzie H Welsh resigned her charge.

Mar. 18: sees Jane Elizabeth Dodswell in post and 18 children are present. She is also recorded in Kelly's Directory for the following year.

Mar. 22: The new song to be learnt is "Summer Days".

Apr. 2: "Annie Wollen absent for rest of the week having gone to Exeter for a holiday".

Apr. 22: Eddie Williams does not go quite so far for his holidays when he holidays in Frome. This is Albert Edward Joseph Williams, son of Joseph and Julia, who first lived at Newlands before moving to Bedlam in 1901. By 1911 they have moved to 2 Rock Cottage.

Apr. 22: Minnie Holloway is away for three weeks in Birmingham.

Apr. 22: More prosaically, "John Carey absent with ringworm".

June 11: "Punished Winnie Biggs for talking incessantly after being told to stop this morning".

June 25 sees the resignation of Gladys Montague as Monitor and Ethel Dutch is appointed in her place on August 19.

1902: *The Education Act of this year abolished the School Boards, and transferred elementary schools to the control of the Borough of County Councils. The Councils now had the power to build and run secondary and technical schools, whilst developing the system of elementary schools.*

In this same year the Education Act Returns were instituted. These were questionnaires sent to every school which, after the passing of the 1902 Act, became the responsibility of the County Council. The first asked questions on the school included the date of the building, its ownership, the size of the classroom(s), the type of lavatory provision, and how far they were from the school building, the number of children enrolled, whether there was an Evening Continuation school and whether there was a teacher's house. Details of the curriculum were also given and there is a financial statement and estimate of the cost of maintenance. The second asked questions on the teachers, their qualifications and their salaries.

Average attendance: 24 Mrs Dodswell, Schoolmistress (*Kelly's Directory* 1902). Later in the year the teacher is Lily Amelia Brown.

Before relating the details of the fabric of the school and its business operation, a completed form gives the qualifications and conditions of service relating to the post of the School Mistress, Lily Amelia Brown, born 23.12.1880, and thus 23 years of age.

The Management Committee fill in this form for the County Education Committee dated 24.2.1903. (C/E/4 "E", Somerset Heritage Centre)

Formerly a pupil at Buckland Dinham from 1895 to 1899.

Position in the scholarship list: 2nd Class.

Date of passing certificate exams: July 1900.

Position in class list: Year 1st Class, Div I first class. Division II failed.

Certificates obtained:

Freehand Second class 1898

Model Second class 1899

Geometrical Drawing Passed 1899

She is not entitled to superintend Pupil Teachers

She was appointed as Head Mistress 24.6.1902.

There was a written agreement to this appointment.

Notice of termination of appointment: 3 months

Annual salary (1902): £50

This form was read and signed at the meeting of the Managers of Elm School on 24.2.1903.

Henry B Hare (chair) William R. Kent (clerk)

The *Elementary School Returns* made to the new Local Education Authority, Somerset County Council confirms that the school was erected on 24 October 1898 for boys, girls and infants. That date is actually the first day of teaching rather than the date of the building.

It indicates:

2 rooms: Mixed room 22 ft 6 ins x 18 ft, with a height of 14 ft 6 ins.
Infants: 18 ft x 15 ft x 15 ft.

Cloakrooms: 1 for girls and infants 15 ft x 9 ft
1 for boys 9ft x 9ft.

Playground: Boys 350 square yards.
Girls and infants 430 square yards.

No gymnastic apparatus.

Closets/urinals are 45 ft from the school buildings with separate approaches for each sex. These are earth closets.

Accommodation recognised by the board for 36 boys and girls and 32 infants.

Average attendance: 20.

2 departments in school.

School year ends: 31 May.

No Evening Continuation School is held on the premises.

School buildings used for assemblies of the parish meeting.

Insured by Liverpool, London and Globe: £700.

Annual premium 11s 3d paid January 1903 to Mr G. W. Bradley, agent, Frome.

Furniture and appliances insured as with the building for £50.

Annual premium included in the above 1s 6d paid January 1903 .

There is no dwelling house for teachers.

Teaching staff mixed school: Lily Amelia Brown. Monitor: Ethel Dutch.

Particulars of the curriculum:

Boys only: drawing. Girls only: needlework.

English, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Singing, Physical Drill.

Total cost of maintenance in the last school year:	£77. 3s. 10d.
Total grants received from Board of Education:	£52. 2s.

Difference	£24. 5s. 10d.
	=====

No endowment. No school fees charged. No arrangement for deduction of Teacher's Superannuation.

Board of Education Report: 18 June 1902: "The children behave well. They are taught with industry and care and have made very good general progress".

There are no outstanding requirements of the board.

Signed after meeting of Managers by Henry B. Hare, William R. Kent.

Statement of Accounts, Elm School Board. 31 May 1902.

Annual Income from Board of Education	£45. 18s.
Elementary school teacher's superannuation	£6. 10s.
Fee grant from Board of Education	
Rates	£24. 11s. 11d.
Income from other sources:	3s. 11d.

Total:	£77. 3s. 10d.
	=====

Salaries of Principal Teacher	£50.
Monitors	£5. 4s.
Books and Stationery	£2. 8s. 9d.
Apparatus and Furniture	£3. 18s. 6d.
Fuel and Light and Cleaning	£14. 17s. 7d.
Repairs to Buildings	3s. 9d.
Rates, Taxes, Insurance	11s. 3d.

Total	£77. 3s. 10d.
	=====

Signed William R. Kent, 24 July 1903.

Byelaws Elm School Board dated Jan. 11, 1901: (abstract of parts of this document are given here).

Attendance means attendance in the morning or afternoon meeting of the school.

LA means the local authority for the first acting under the Elementary School Act of 1876.

The parent of every child of not less than 5, nor more than 13 years of age must have their children attend school unless the child is under efficient instruction in some other manner, that the child has been away from school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, or because there is no Public Elementary School open which the children can attend within 2 miles measured according to the nearest road from their place of residence.

A Proviso as to Religion and Labour Acts indicates that children should not be withdrawn from any religious observations or instruction in religious subjects, etc.

Total exemption: Children between 12 and 13 need not attend school if they have received a certificate from one of H.M. Inspectors of schools that they have reached the 5th Standard.

Partial Exemption for purposes of employment is allowable when a child has reached the age of 12 – 13 years and is being beneficially employed to the satisfaction of the Local Authority, so long as it has a certificate to indicate that it has reached 4th Standard, or a certificate that it has made 300 attendances in not more than two schools in each year of 5 preceding years, whether consecutive or not. They would have to have attended regularly, making 5 attendances in each week in which the school is open, or may after 250 attendances between October 1 – June 1 be exempt from further attendances until 1 October ensuing.

There is a special byelaw for children to be employed in agriculture: A child of 11 or over who has passed the 4th Standard can give notice to the Local authority that they are going to be employed in agriculture.

The minimum age for exemption from school attendance is 13, and children between 11 and 13 need to attend school 250 times a year between October 1 and June 1. Thus you would need a certificate from the Head Mistress and production of a labour certificate as evidence to justify the employment in agriculture of a child of 11.

The penalty is up to 20s. for each offence if a parent is convicted of not observing this byelaw.

The School Mistress' log book provides the following details of activities within the school:

Jan. 21: The teacher in the infant department took the children for a "country ramble" as that lesson occurs in the series of object lessons.

Feb. 3: Mrs Dodswell returned from being absent through sickness from November 22.

There is the usual spate of illness and snowstorms.

Feb. 25: "Albert and Elsie Ashman absent owing to the death of their brother".

May 14: "Punished Charles Brown for bad language towards his teacher".

June 2: There is a half holiday owing to the Proclamation of Peace in South Africa. This refers to the Boer War.

June 3: The school was opened at 1.30 and closed at 3.40 "on account of tea given to the children by Mrs Hosea Willcox at the shop".

June 6: "Reginald Ackland punished for laziness".

June 9: "Punished James Brown (infant) for throwing stones in playground and knocked Ethel Carey with same".

June 24: Jane Elizabeth Dodswell resigns.

June 25: Lily A Brown begins her role as Head Mistress.

July 10: "Owing to heavy thunderstorm at 3pm the children did not have the usual recreation time. School dismissed a few minutes earlier in consequence".

July 21: "James Brown has been absent since Monday last having no boots in which to attend school".

July 28: "Elsie Ashman absent having gone to Weston Super Mare with her mother".

Sept. 5: "Have removed John Cary's name from the register as he will not be strong enough to attend school for several months. The attendance has been very poor this week. The Browns have not yet returned to school. Average attendance for week: 15.4."

Sept. 8: Edith, Charles and James Brown returned to school this morning. They told me that they are shortly leaving the village. Mrs Brown sent to say that Rose and George were not coming again as they are helping move the furniture... Charles and James Brown came to school at 2.25 this afternoon and lost their attendance marks."

Sept. 15: "The Browns have not yet left the village but Mrs Brown sent to say that they are waiting to get a house and shall probably be leaving this neighbourhood in a few days. Rose and Gorge Brown will not attend school in consequence".

By September 25 the Browns have left.

Oct. 10: "Received 4 towels and 2 dusters from Mr Kent".

Nov. 19: "Eva Topp unable to attend school as she has a bad foot".

Nov. 28: "Charlotte Middle has been absent all week as her mother is ill".
Heavy rain means that attendance for the day is bad.

Dec. 4: Charlotte Middle is still absent. By December 9 Mrs Middle says that Charlotte is ill in bed.

Dec. 11: "Elsie Ackland has toothache".

Dec, 17: "Eva Topp has a badly swollen face".

Dec. 17: "Margaret Ackland has a sore throat".

1903: Jan. 5: Attendance is poor. Elsie and Margaret Ackland have not yet returned from Reading and Adele Foale is still in London.

There is a run of illnesses:

Jan. 7: Dorothy Smith is away as her mother is ill and Charlotte Middle returns after a long illness.

Jan. 12: Herbert Cray has the croup.

Jan. 21: Charlotte Middle is absent again with a bad cold.

Jan. 23: Winnie Biggs has a violent cold and Elsie Ackland is away as her mother is ill.

Jan. 30: Winnie Biggs still has a bad cold.

Feb. 5: "Winnie Biggs and Muriel Jones have been absent this week with very bad colds".

Feb. 6: "Herbert Carey has been staying at Buckland this week as his mother is ill". Charlotte Middle is still absent.

Mar. 5: Mrs Middle says she is ill so Charlotte is not at School. Charlotte attends in the afternoon but too late for an attendance mark to be given.

Mar. 13: "Charlotte Middle away all week with no reason given".

Mar. 20: "Charlotte Middle still absent".

Mar. 30: "Marked Charlotte Middle 'left'". The school roll and attendance figures must surely have played a part in this action.

Apr. 20: "Marked Elsie Ackland and John Cary 'left'".

Apr. 22: "Several children absent this afternoon to attend John Cary's funeral".

In June, chicken pox is at large.

Oct. 1: Ethel A. Dutch is a paid Monitor.

Dec. 14: "Ethel Dutch (Monitor) absent this week as she is attending the King's Scholarship Examination in Bristol. (Annie Williams is taking her place).

Ethel Dutch resigned on December 23.

1904: Feb. 16: "Elsie Ackland absent this morning having a gathered finger".

Mar. 11: "Marked Percy Jones 'left' as owing to weak eyesight it is thought advisable for him to stay at home a little longer".

Mar. 15: "Mr Starr sent to say that his son Cecil was kept at home yesterday as Mr Starr was so busy".

June 6: Cecil Starr has the toothache.

June 13: Cecil Starr has the mumps but returns to school on June 27.

Aug. 29: Sidney Williams left for Mells Boys School. Arthur Williams has ringworm. It is not known that these boys are from the same household. Arthur had been born in 1899 to Joseph and Julia Florence Williams and is the brother of Eddie. Arthur dies in 1969.

Sept. 13: Amongst children with a number of illnesses is Daisy Carey who is "sent home as ringworm on her arm". She is back by September 20th.

Oct. 4: Mr Starr says that Cecil has a bad throat.

Oct. 17: Eddie Williams now has ringworm. Eddie later endures WWI and dies in 1976 after working as a machine minder.

Oct 28: It is the turn of Nellie Williams to have ringworm. The Williams children noted above return on November 21. Nellie Eileen Williams had been born in 1895 and died in 1987.

Nov. 1: Annie Toop has a "bad cold in her eyes".

The Diocesan Report by the Rev. J. G. Marston says that "the school is very small indeed".

The *Questionnaire Returns* to Somerset County Council Education Committee on behalf of Elm Board School give an:

Estimate of expenditure on maintenance from July 1 – March 31, 1904

Income:

Amount received from sale of needlework	£5.
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Expenditure:

Teachers' salaries

Lily Amelia Brown

£37. 10s.

Ethel Dutch	£5. 17s.
Cleaner:	
Harriet Knight	
13 weeks at 2/-	
26 weeks at 2/6	£4. 11s.

Total:	£47. 18s
	=====

Clerk's salary	£7. 10s.
Books and stationery	£4.
Apparatus	£1
Furniture	£1. 15s.
Fuel and light	£5. 6s
Cleaning including closets + yards shown before	(£2. 16s)
Rates, taxes, insurance	(11s. 3d).
Repair of buildings	(5s).
No expenses for prizes	
Clerk's postages	(15s)
Audit stamp	?

	£71. 16s. 3d.
	=====

Signed June 9, 1903 William R Kent.

1905: The school log shows the following:

Jan. 26: "Obliged to send Harry Williams and his brother Arthur Williams home this morning owing to their filthy condition". Arthur Percival Charlie Williams had been born in 1899 and died in 1969, the son of Julia Florence Williams and Joseph, who died in 1903 aged 40 years.

Jan. 30: Christopher Williams and Nellie Williams are off with colds along with some other children. Christopher Henry had been born in 1901 but dies at the age of 7 in 1908.

Feb. 10: A half holiday is given "on account of the Children's Entertainments".

March 21: A summary of the Inspector's Report indicates that the infants are taught in "a gallery". This item will figure later.

Apr. 10: "Nellie Williams, Christopher Williams and Cecil Starr returned to school this morning".

May 8: "Nellie, Eddie, Arthur and Christopher Williams are absent today as they have to attend a meeting at Nunney connected with the Frome Union". This is the workhouse. Their father had died aged 40 in 1903 and the family is struggling.

June 1: "Nellie Williams absent owing to bad eyes". Nellie returns on June 23 but Gertie Williams is then absent through illness.

June 30: Gertie Williams is absent all week with measles by returns on July 10.

July 27: "Eddie, Arthur, Nellie and Christopher Williams absent as Nellie and Christopher have the measles".

July 31: "Annie Williams (Monitress) concluded her duties in this school today as she has been appointed to Christ Church Girls School, Frome".

Sept. 4: Elsie Ackland now becomes Monitor. "The Topps are leaving the village".

Nov. 21: "Daisy Carey has had a bad fall".

Dec. 21: Lily Brown, Head Mistress, resigns. Before then she transcribes a copy of the H. M. Inspector's Report which says: "The singing deserves praise. A glee is executed by the small number of children with taste and precision".

1906: Whilst Miss Lily Brown is named School Mistress in *Kelly's Directory* of this year, it is Nellie Jordan who takes over the role on January 16. She is to become Nellie Meehan and continue in her role.

Jan. 22: "Permission from Rev. Haines to use the school after the usual hours for the children to practise for a concert".

Feb. 13: "It was snowing very hard in the morning. I supplied a child with his dinner, on account of the distance home".

Feb. 26: "School started at 1 o'clock so children could leave at 3 to attend a rehearsal for Mrs Ramsay's concert tonight". This may be Mrs Hamilton-Ramsay of Rock House, who is married to John, a J.P. Before the children leave school for the day however, they have a lesson on 'soap'".

Apr. 23: "Admitted Florence Williams, aged 3 years.

Apr. 24: "The blackboards were renovated this afternoon and I paid the cost 4/7 and shall forward account to correspondent".

June 18: Kathleen Bird aged 4 makes a fleeting entrance to the school, but returns home on July 2.

July 6: "I wrote to Mrs Starr with regard to Cecil's irregular attendance".

Nov. 1: "I (Clara Dorothy Smith) appointed as Monitress to replace Elsie Ackland". However, her term of office was short. See below.

Nov. 15: "School closed this afternoon for the children's concert tonight".

Dec. 3: "Removed Dorothy Smith's name from the register". However, Dorothy is still in place as Monitress on June 3 the following year.

1907: Jan. 9: The H. M. Inspector visits and recommends that: (1) the lower panes of the windows should be cleaned by removing the frost. (2) drawing must be taught to the girls.

In February there is an outbreak of flu.

Apr. 24: "The Rector called to see the fallen plaster in the boy's lobby and thought it necessary for repairs".

Richard Swann says that there were originally two entrances to the school and the wording here would suggest that one was for boys and one for girls.

Apr. 25: "Punished Christopher Williams for wilful disobedience and kicking me".

May 14: "A third letter to Mr Kent has had to be sent asking to call the attention of the County Council to my stationery requisition which I have not received and was sent away on April 3, as the children have to use slates, all their exercise books being filled out".

June 3: "Dorothy Smith unable to keep order in the infant school".

June 10: "Removed C. Starr's name from the register as he has left". Cecil works in agriculture. In 1919 and 1923 he is recorded as one of the Starr brothers who farm Manor Farm. He is still farming somewhere unidentified in the parish in 1927 and by 1931 he has taken over Garnett Starr's farm at Newlands. By 1935

he is back at Manor Farm (all *Kelly's Directories* for those years. It should be noted that these directories are not completely reliable).

May 31: A copy of the Diocesan Inspector's Report is made: "This is an admirably taught little school. The tone is reverent and the discipline excellent. The elder children are very intelligent and the answering was even and bright". (J. G. Marshall.)

Sept. 4: "I took Arthur, Christopher and Phyllis Williams home as they have several boils on them". Phyllis Florence Williams had been born in 1903 in the same year that her father, Joseph, died. She lives until

1987. Oct. 7: "There are 7 children absent this morning owing to being covered with boils. The Williams have been excluded by Dr Phelps and he has ordered them to remain at home". They returned on October 11.

Nov. 29 sees a measles epidemic.

1908: Jan. 6: "Esme Moon has died". Lilian Robertson starts as Monitress.

Jan. 14: "I came to school at $\frac{1}{4}$ to 9 and the room was not dusted, the caretaker was doing so and I am quite sure the fires were only just lit".

Jan. 24: "Christopher Williams has died". The children and the School Mistress attended his funeral on January 29. As we noted above, Christopher was around 7 years old.

Mar. 6: "Adele Foale has gone to Christ Church Girl's School, Frome".

April sees an epidemic of mumps. "The Medical Officer ordered the closing of the school to May 8 inclusive".

May 11: Edward and Arthur Williams have gone to Mells Boys School. Edward is Arthur Edward Joseph Williams called Eddie. He is 11 and his brother, Arthur Percival Charlie, is 9 years old.

May 19: Mr Wood visited the school "and kindly tried to put together the medical weighing machine". This little vignette is in preparation for the following:

June 3: A medical inspection is made by Dr Dalby. "Two parents were present viz. Mrs Leather and Robertson". Mrs Robertson may be Kate Maria, whose child Lilian Robertson is to become Monitress at the school. Lilian dies in 1919 aged 25.

There is still no response concerning the teaching materials needed. The Head Mistress now writes directly to the education authorities.

June 18: "The supply of books is inadequate. Another set of geography readers is needed and there are no atlases or dictionaries".

July 9: "Norman Chappell was lost during the dinner hour and I had to send the boys to find him. He was found on the railway line on Buckland. I sent for his father, and he is going to have to have him medically examined as he is afraid that his brain is affected from the result of a fall".

Sept. 11: V. Chappell's name removed from register as he is not able to attend school owing to bad eyes".

Between September 28 and October 23 Miss E. Moore took charge of the school as Nellie Jordan, Head Mistress, was on sick leave.

Oct. 30: Norman Chappell and Ella Cary removed from the register as too ill to attend". The spelling of Cary/Carey as a surname is inconsistently applied throughout.

Nov. 27: G. Smith had to go home on account of a "very dirty head".

Dec. 10. Mr Millard, Sub Inspector, says that the managers should do something about the grass in the spouts, the windows especially the one in the infants' room and the pool of water in the playground.

The school log book records that the School Mistress, on December 13, "received a letter from the clerk sanctioning my proposed marriage." Nellie Jordan became Nellie Meehan on 31.7.1909 when she married Ross Meehan of Mells. She has twins in 1912. However, *Kelly's Directory* for 1910 still gives Nellie's maiden name.

1909: *The Minute Book of the Managers* of Elm School for 1909 – 1943 is open to view at Somerset Heritage Centre archives.

8.4.1909: Present: Rev. L.D. Campbell Douglas, Mr. E. R. K. Wood, Mr. A. Jones and Mr. J. Morgan.

The Rev. Leopold Colin Henry Campbell Douglas, M.A. is incumbent at the Rectory. Edward J. P. Wood (not as above) is resident at Elmhurst. Albert Jones and James Morgan are dairy farmers.

"Resolved: Clerk to write to Mrs Knight to request her to light the fires by 8 o'clock a.m. when the proper time comes for resuming fires".

14.7.1909: Present: Rev. L. D. Campbell Douglas (chairman), Mr. E R. K Wood, Mr H. Willcox. The clerk continues to ascribe the wrong initials to Mr Wood. Hosea Willcox is the shopkeeper.

"Clerk reported formal notice of closing the school from Frome Rural District Council "owing to prevalence of whooping cough and measles, from 7 to 18 June 1909 inclusive".

28.9.1909: Present: Rev. L.S. Campbell Douglas (chairman), Messrs Wood, Jones and Willcox.

"Clerk informs County Education Committee that school playgrounds are not tar paved and that the school closes for summer holidays on 29 July and re-opens on 30 August."

A number of resolutions were made: that coal and wood be purchased for school; that attention be given to drainage of school yard; that fires now be lit at school, given the wet weather; that school be closed on November 1 on the occasion of the visit of the Bishop of the Dioceses."

1910: Average attendance 24. Miss Nellie Jordan (*Kelly's Directory* 1910). This is Mrs Nellie Jordan, who married in the previous year.

The *Minute Book of the Managers* continues:

11.7.1910: Present: Rev. L. D. Campbell Douglas (chairman), Messrs Wood, Jones and Willcox.

Tenders are to be obtained for painting of external iron and woodwork from Messrs Long Bros, Mells and Mr Brownjohn, Buckland. The painting is to be two coats "the first a lead colour and the second dark Brunswick green".

3.10.1910: Present: Messrs Wood, Morgan, Willcox and Jones.

Report of a letter from County Education Committee is made stating the latter "accepts all legal liability with regard to accidents to children at county schools".

Report that Messrs Long Bros of Mells have done the painting of the school for the sum of £6.

1911: The Census records 195 inhabitants. The Census itself has not yet been transcribed as it is now necessary to search for named individuals rather than be able to gain access to complete pages of the census returns. The search is therefore more costly and complex.

The *Minute Book* continues:

1911 -13.1.1911: Present: Messrs Wood, Jones, Willcox and Morgan.

The relationship between the local authority officials and the school managers is disputatious. This is not an uncommon situation within school environments of this period.

The Inspector's report after his visit on 29.11.1910 made the following points:

- "(1) The lavatory basins should be cleaner.
- (2) The latrines should be provided with separate doors.
- (3) The heating of the school is not satisfactory. The temperature of the main room was only 43 degrees Fahrenheit at 11 o'clock this morning.
- (4) The infants' gallery serves no useful purpose. It appears to be used as a depository for litter of all kinds. Its removal is recommended."

The managers respond as follows:

(1) "Resolved: The school attendant be requested to keep the lavatory basins cleaner and that Messrs Long Bros be asked to paint with basins with white enamel".

(2) Resolved: The views of the managers regarding the latrines be explained to County Education Committee and that "the managers consider the doors would be inconvenient to the little children".

(3) "County Committee be informed that the one fire place in the infants' schoolroom is considered by them to be sufficient, and that the temperature of the other room near the fire at the time of the inspector's visit was 60 degrees and that it must have been 43 degrees at the other end of the room". Also that "on cold days the teacher might easily arrange the children to sit nearer the fire".

(4) "Resolved that the managers do not agree with removing the infants' gallery and that it will be seen that no litter of any kind is allowed to accumulate under the gallery".

3.2.1911: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Wood, Willcox, Cary and Jones. (Edward Carey is a farmer at Court Farm. The spelling of his surname is given as Cary throughout the minutes and that may well be as he prefers. It is Kelly's Directory that gives the variant used here.)

The letter from the County Education Committee in response to the managers' reply to the inspector's report, was read. It stated that:

- (1) Two of the closets used by the girls should be provided with doors;
- (2) Gallery in infants' room should be removed.
- (3) Heat of large room. Suggested that a new tortoise radiating stove should be installed to the present fireplace and connected with existing flue.
- (4) That the plans of the school be sent to the County Office.

The clerk presented 2 tenders for items 1 and 2 as follows:

Messrs Long Bros:	Item (1)	£2 .18s 6d
	Item (2)	£2 .14s 6d
	Gallery	14s 6d
Hodder & Sons:	Items (1)and (2)	£2 .15s
	Gallery	£5

Managers resolved that:

Re (2) "the removal of the gallery would be harmful to the school; at the present time the head teacher can see from her room the children in the gallery in the infants' room under the charge of the Monitress and thus she would not be able to do if the gallery were removed".

Re (3) "...such a stove would be most unhealthy in a room of that size, 22ft x 18 ft and considered that if the heat at the further end of the room needs increasing, some system of pipes would be necessary".

They also resolved that the clerk should enquire as to the cost of preventing damp from coming through the wall in the infants' room.

15.3.1911: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Jones, Willcox, Morgan.

Letter of 28.1.1911 from Miss Lilian Robertson resigning her post as Monitress accepted. Clerk reported that he had advertised in the local press for a replacement and had two responses:

Gertrude Williams aged 15 Muriel Jones aged 13

Applications were referred to County Education Committee, the managers saying that they were happy with either.

Report of visit from Mr Bothomley to chairman of managers (presumably from the County Education Committee). Mr Bothomley explained that the gallery must be removed because "the teacher could not get behind the children" and that the stove was necessary. Also that "the doors must be put on the latrines six inches from the ground with a 6 inch space at the top and a special stool for infants".

11.4.1911: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Wood, Jones, Willcox.

Confirmed appointment of Gertrude Williams as Monitress with payment at rate of £5. 4s per annum as from 29.3.1911.

7.7.1911: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Wood and Willcox.

Letter from County Education Committee read out, insisting on removal of the gallery, installation of tortoise radiator stove, doors for latrines. Tenders considered, and recommended to County Education Committee that Messrs Long's tender of £7.1s. 9d. be accepted (even though Messrs Hodder had quoted the lesser sum of £7).

1912: The minutes continue.

10.7.1912: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Wood and Willcox.

Clerk reported closing school owing to chicken pox from 7 – 30 June.

16.9.1912: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Willcox, Jones, Cary, Morgan.

Letter from Mrs Meehan, head teacher, applying for leave of absence, as specified by County Education Committee for married schoolmistresses, from 25.10.1912. Noted: application from Mrs E. L. Broad to be appointed temporary mistress whilst Mrs Meehan is absent. Latter accepted, subject to County Education Committee acceptance.

Nellie Meehan is going absent as she is about to have twins, Harold and Mary. She subsequently returned to her post. She is known to have died in 1962 in Mells.

1913: The minutes continue:

3.1.1913: Present: Rev. Campbell Douglas, Messrs Wood and Willcox.

Noted that Mrs Broad has been appointed as acting head teacher at annual salary of £60, and that she has held the post from 25.10.1912 to 6.12.1912.

"Chairman said he would be leaving Elm on the following Monday. Resolved that E. K. P. Wood be appointed chairman until April 1914".

1913 - 11.4.1913: Present: Messrs Wood, Willcox, Jones.

"Resolved that Mr Wood should take the chair in the absence of Rev. C. H. Richards who regretted his inability to attend.

Resolved that the following be nominated as managers for the next 3 years: Mr E. K. P. Wood, Mrs Grace Mary Wood, H. Willcox, E. Cary. (Mrs Wood is the spouse of the chairman and lives at Elmhurst.)

Chairman reported upon cases of children in the school who were found at the time of the nurse's visit to have "dirty heads". The nurse would be visiting again in 10 days time to see what improvement there was in the children. Resolved clerk would write to parents of children in whom no improvement was found".

11.7.1913: Present: Rev. Richards, Mrs Wood. (There appears to be a very small quorum.)

"Resolved that the clerk tell the County Education Committee that the managers recommend it would be preferable that summer holidays should be earlier in the summer so as to include as much as possible of the hay harvest which interferes with the average attendance at school".

3.10.1913: Present: Rev. Richards, Mr and Mrs Wood, Messrs Willcox and Jones.

Two girls, Daisy Cary and May Topp, had been admitted to the Frome Class for Cookery.

County E.C. had written to say fixing of dates for school holidays is at the discretion of the school managers.

"Resolved the clerk to write to parents of children with dirty heads to improve their condition within 14 days. Mrs Meehan to be told to exclude children from school until she is happy that their heads are clean".

1914: Average attendance 26. Miss Nellie Meehan (*Kelly's Directory*).

The managers' minutes continue:

Present: Rev. Richards, Messrs Willcox, Wood, Jones, Cary.

Children excluded from the school for "dirty heads": Lily Starr, Louisa Starr, William Seviour.

The Monitress, Gertrude Williams, applied for a pay rise and the managers recommend an increase from £5. 4s to £7. 4s. p.a.

The local authority was increasing the salary of Mrs Meehan by annual increments of £2. 10s to a maximum of £70 p.a. from 1.1.1914, subject to the favourable opinion of the managers concerning her performance in the previous twelve months. The managers report themselves satisfied with her.

However, Mrs Meehan resigned from 31.1.1914, so the managers are to advertise for a certificated Head Mistress at a commencing salary of £70 p.a. The managers accepted Mrs Meehan's resignation "with much regret and ... record their appreciation for her services in the school". They are to provide a testimonial. Two applicants applied for the post:

Miss Clara Evans of Hatherleigh. Mrs F. E. Williams of Hammersmith.

The managers are to ask Mrs Williams for further particulars and to check the level of salary. They want to ask Mrs Meehan to stay on until a successful replacement has been found and the clerk is to readvertise the position.

4.2.1914: Present: Rev. Richards, Mr and Mrs Wood, Messrs Willcox and Cary.

Gertrude Williams' pay rise is granted. Mrs Meehan cannot stay after 13 February. Mrs Croad is to be asked to act as a temporary head. Two further applications have been received, one deemed unsuitable. The other, Miss Mary Green from Manchester is to be invited for interview.

An advert for the post is pasted into the minute book and the average attendance of the school is noted as 28.

11.2.1914: Rev. Richards, Mr and Mrs Wood, Messrs Willcox, Cary, Jones.

Mrs Croad is unable to be temporary head. The clerk has secured Mrs Bartlett, a certified teacher, former of Council School, Frome, as a temporary head. She is to be paid at the rate of £60 p.a. plus 2/6 a day travelling expenses.

Miss Green attended for interview but her application was referred back to the local authority as she did not appear to have sufficient qualifications. The managers do not think that a "qualified uncertified teacher" is suitable.

27.2.1914: Present: Rev. Richards, Mr and Mrs Woods, Messrs Jones, Willcox.

The matter of securing a new head teacher rumbles on. Two applications are considered: Mrs Bartlett, who is in temporary charge and Miss Huntley of Whatley School.

Mrs Bartlett had been interviewed and is recommended to the local authority with a salary of £70 p.a.

16.4.1914: Present: Rev. Richards, Mr and Mrs Woods, Messrs Jones and Willcox.

The County E.C. approves the appointment of Mrs Bartlett.

Tenders are to be invited to install a flag pole.

Miss Gertrude Williams' request to be recognised as a "supplementary teacher" is turned down on the grounds that only a Monitress is needed by the school.

10.7.1914: Present: Rev. Richards, the Woods.

Daisy Cary and May Topp have received their certificates for the cookery course in Frome.

The school has had an outing to Weymouth on 29 June.

Messrs Chislett and sons are to erect the flagpole for £2. 6s. 6d. A union jack is to be supplied by the County Education Committee together with instructions on its use.

Mrs Bartlett supplied a list of repairs.

7.10.1914: Present: Rev. Richards, the Woods, Messrs Willcox and Jones.

The First World War casts its shadow over the workings of the school: A County Education Committee circular gives notice of a separation allowance to wives and children of soldiers who are officers and servants of the County Council. Another circular concerns the use of schoolrooms for Red Cross purposes.

1915: 7.7.15: Present: Rev. Richards, Messrs Cary and Willcox.

Miss Gertrude Williams' salary as Monitress increases from £7. 4s to £10. 8s p.a.

1916: 10.1.1916: Present Rev. Richards. Messrs Wood, Jones, Cary and Willcox.

Noted that the school had closed from 6 – 20 December (1915) owing to whooping cough.

Great Elm School **1915** Photograph:

The school children and teacher(s) are captured in an official photograph during the spring/summer months of 1915.

The slate held at the front of the group reads "GREAT ELM 1915" There is also "Cl" written on the slate, which may mean that a class identification would normally have been written there. However the whole school is photographed.

There are 29 children attending that day.



The head mistress is surmised to be the older one at extreme left. This will be Mrs Clara Bartlett, the certified teacher formerly of the Council School, Frome, who had become temporary head in February of 1914. At far right is a young woman dressed in exactly the same way as Mrs Bartlett, in a white blouse and long dark skirt, her long hair parted in the middle and sweeping back into a bun at the neck, as was customary for woman in that period. This must be Gertie Williams, who was Monitress at the time, but who knows her own worth and is subsequently promoted after numerous raises in salary.

The photograph has been turned into an the post card and there is an identifying ink mark above one boy's head. It is this boy who sent the photo to his aunt on 19th December 1919. The boy in question appears to be called Austin. His signature runs vertically at the bottom of the card, and runs off the page to be lost. We only see "Aust". His aunt is Miss N. Hicks, Draycott, Cheddar. His message reads:

"Dear an (crossed out) Auntie Nelly just a few lines to say I recived your parcel quite safely and very please with it. this all our photo at school. love to all / Aust"

He must be thanking his aunt for a Christmas present. Nothing is yet known about a pupil of this name from current researches.

The management committee minutes continue:

11.4.1916: Present: Rev. Richards, the Woods, Mr Jones.

Another letter from Miss G. Williams asking for a raise in salary has been received. This is to be forward to the County Education Committee with the managers' support for a raise.

By the next meeting following this it was noted that she had received one. Her salary was raised from £10. 8s to £13 p.a.

1917: Present: Rev. Richards, the Woods, Messrs Jones and Willcox.

Matters now shift to the salary of the cleaner:

Resolved: "that the managers regret that the County Education Committee is unable to grant any increase in Mrs Knight's salary having regard to the fact that she has so great a distance to carry the contents of the latrine pails and that she washed the lavatory towels weekly; they ask the County Education Committee to allow her the sum of 5/- on each of the three occasions during the year in which she thoroughly cleans the school rooms".

This was later approved by the local authority.

12.10.1917: Rev. Richards, the Woods, Mr Jones.

The Rev. Richards informs the committee that he is leaving the district in two weeks' time.

1918: Present: Rev. Canon G. F. Wilgress, Mrs Wood, Mr Jones.

The Rev. Wilgress is the new chairman. Mr Cary resigns as a manager.

(During this winter, Spanish influenza epidemic which kills millions directly after the cessation of WW1 hits the parish. See minutes below.)

1919: Mrs Clara Bartlett is School Mistress (*Kelly's Directory* 1919)

10.1.1919: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Mr. A. Newnham.

(The new manager must be Frederick Newnham, farmer at Hapsford Farm or a relative of his.)

A report is given that the school has been closed from 11.11.1918 till 30.11.1918 by the Medical Office of Health "owing to the prevalence of influenza and for another week owing to Mrs Bartlett's illness".

11.7.1919: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Mr Jones.

Miss Williams receives another pay rise. As Monitress her salary doubles from £15. 12s to £30 p.a.

On July 8 there had been a school outing to Weston super Mare.

The committee is resolved to ask the local authority to recognise Miss Williams as a supplementary teacher, "the number of children now attending the school being 36".

There was also a request to pay the cleaner Mrs Knight 5/- per week in addition to the 15/- p.a. for "special cleaning during the year". Miss Williams' application was successful but Mrs Knight's was not.

1920: 9.4.1920: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Mr Jones.

The County Education Committee supplied notice of salaries for teachers:

Head Teacher	1920	£207. 10s
	1921	£239. 10s
	1922	£352. 10s
Supplementary Teacher	1920	£67
Increments of £3 p.a. to a max. of		£90

Miss Williams, upon the recommendation of the Inspector of Schools, attended Christchurch Infants School, Frome for a week.

Mrs Knight, cleaner, is granted an increase in salary from £8. 4s to £12 p.a.

2.7.1920: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Messrs Jones, Johnson, Newnham.

(Mr Richard Johnson is a farmer and cab proprietor.)

Resolved that Mrs Bartlett try to arrange for the children to have tooth brushes, supplied by the local authority.

15.10.1920: Present: The Woods, Messrs Jones, Johnson, Newnham.

A letter from Miss Williams tendering her resignation from 30 November is accepted. It was recommended to the County Education Committee that Miss C. M. Jones be appointed to replace her. (The Education Committee agrees to this and Miss Jones began in her post on 1.12.1920.)

1921: There are now 215 inhabitants in the parish.

The *Managers' Minute Book* continues:

14.1.1921: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods.

Note was taken of the *Women, Young Persons and Children Act 1920*, which prohibits the employment of a child under the age of 14 years in an industrial undertaking".

17.8.1921: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Messrs Newnham, Johnson, and Jones.

A letter of 8th August from Frome Education Committee was read, saying that they had been seriously considering Elm Council School becoming a Junior School, the scholars over the age of 11 years going on to the Senior School in Frome, which "would secure a much better education for the older pupils" and allow an uncertified teacher to be in charge of Elm School, "effecting a considerable economy".

The managers write to the County Education Committee to consider the very beneficial effect of Mrs Bartlett upon the children, and to point out that a "conveyance" would be required to get the children to Frome schools.

The result of this was that the County Education Committee did decide to have an uncertified head teacher for Elm School.

1922: 12.1.1922: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Messrs Jones, Johnson.

Notice was received of the Unemployment Stamp Duty to be paid by the managers in case coming under the new Unemployment Insurance Act 1920 – 21:

Women of 13 years upwards:	From employer	8d.
	From employee	7d

		1s. 3d
		=====

13.7.1922: Present: the Woods, Messrs Jones and Newnham.

The school to be closed from 3 – 23 July owing to the prevalence of measles.

14.10.1922: Present: Rev. Wilgress, the Woods, Messrs Johnson and Jones.

A County Education Committee circular has been received requiring schools with only one or two adult teachers not to admit children under the age of 5 years. This is to allow teachers to spend more time with the older children.

(It should be noted that the authority did allow children under 5 years to continue to be admitted to Elm School in 1924.)

1923: Mrs Sarah A. Vile is Head Mistress (*Kelly's Directory 1923*).

1925: The minutes of the managers of Elm School become very brief and scappily written after July of this year.

1926: In February, Miss E. M. Jones is ordered to be dismissed by the County Education Committee. No reason is given. Miss Amy Pickford is selected to replace her.

In July, Mr Wood becomes chairman.

1927: Mrs Sarah A. Vile is still Head Mistress (*Kelly's Directory 1927*).

Mrs Vile was the object of some unpleasant matters which rumbled on for months:

On October 7, 1927 the managers considered a letter concerning Mrs Tuffs. The correspondent was to write to Mrs Vile and Mrs Tuffs.

1928:

On April 9, 1928, the school managers report their meeting attended by:

Mr and Mrs Wood, Mrs Wall, Mr Johnson, Mr Free, Rector in the chair. (Mr Johnson lives at Idon Bungalow and was to take on the role of cleaner when he is in his 80s as we see below in a letter of 1942. Mr Free is a farmer and land owner.)

The business includes a report of an interview with Mrs Vile concerning a Mrs Tuffs who has made a formal complaint. Mrs Vile declares that she does not know of what she is accused and enters a denial of whatever it is. Mr Johnson asks Mrs Vile to drop the matter on Mrs Tuff's promise to leave her alone but Mrs Vile refuses.

Nothing further on the matter is recorded. It is not clear who Mrs Tuffs was. She was not the cleaner, who seems to have been Mrs Hobbs, who resigned in November 1928.

1931: The minutes of the managers become more orderly and legible again.

1932: The County Education Committee resolves again that children of under 5 years should not be admitted to the school.

Mid-1930s: The managers meetings are brief and routine, lasting only 15 to 20 minutes.

1934: October: Note is taken of the milk order. Children now receive 1/3 pint of milk each school day.

1935: Managers' minutes for April: Note was taken of the Medical Inspector's report that the pails of the closets be emptied more frequently than once a week. By October 1935 the managers were writing to the County Education Committee to ask that it "take steps to abolish the offensive bucket closets and provide something more sanitary for the school." Nothing was done until September 1942.

1939: World War II makes its mark on the running of the school. In the minutes of 13.9.1939, the managers discuss Circular 1474 concerning evacuation details. They decide to ask Somerset Education Committee to *reopen* the school at once rather than require evacuee children to walk to Mells School. This would suggest that the school had closed to village pupils by that time.

Managers' meetings were transferred to Elmhurst, the Gothic villa lived in by managers, Mr and Mrs Wood. This was to get around the lighting restrictions applying to the school (blackout). The school was reopened again as evacuee children from London County Council schools were received. Mr G. W. Cray carried out work on the school such as creating black out.

Richard Swann, who, with Katy Duke now lives in the old school, says: "We know that some evacuees were brought to Great Elm and lined up in the school for locals to come and select whom they would take home. A Canadian man knocked on our door once to tell us his experience as an evacuee during a visit to his homeland."

Mells School also received evacuees. Bryan Axford reports an incident. "The school provided garden plots and a cricket pitch for boys at the bottom of the hill. There was a big school air raid shelter during the war across the field next to the Park wall. One day the evacuees from London disappeared. We completely lost them! It turned out that they ran to the shelter when they heard the quarry siren and stayed there during the blasting." (Recorded in *Mells: A Portrait, celebrating ten years of community-run Mells Village Shop*, ed. Costelloe, Macdonald and Waller, 2019.)

1942: In September the buckets used in the latrines are finally kicked out in favour of a more sanitary system.

Ninety year old Fed Starr, resident of Great Elm for all his life, went to the Board school from the age of 5 until 11 years of age, from 1934 - 1940. He then went on to school in Mells until the age of 14. He remembers the primitive latrines at Elm school, and the fact that the boys would not necessarily walk that far to alleviate their bladders.

The Starr family lived at Manor Farm, where the first school of 1832 was situated. Fred's father was Cecil, the boy who figures in the School Mistress' log books above. Fred's family had four evacuees from London staying with them and they went to school alongside him. They were Elizabeth Mead and her brother, Leonard, Jean Penn and her brother, Eric. Fred recalls that his relative, Blanche Starr of Glebe Farm House didn't have evacuees as her home was too small.

When Fred was at school in Elm the Head Mistress was a Mrs Mere, who lived next to the lock up in Mells, Tommy Adams being the Head at Mells School at that time.

We know about the sorry state of the latrines from a letter archived by Somerset Heritage Centre.

Mr Johnson, manager and cleaner, sends a typed letter via the managers of the school to "the proper authority" on 3.7.1942 from Idon Bungalow, Great Elm:

"Sir,

I beg to draw your attention to a matter of some importance in connection with Gt. Elm Council School.

I, being a Manager also the cleaner of this school at the present time and knowing the difficulties experienced in the past with cleaners, now find from actual experience in the cleaning of the school where the trouble really lies, and this is entirely due to the unpleasant task of emptying latrines and W.C. pans.

As you know there are no facilities for disposal on the premises which means not only carrying the buckets across the main street on front of several cottages but in addition across one of more fields for the purpose of emptying them on the dung heap of some friendly disposed farmer. This in my humble opinion does not seem to be an up-to-date procedure in this year of 1942.

I am now about to propose the installation of a more modern arrangement in the form of a Septic Tank for sewage disposal with the addition of running water for flushing, and anticipating that this matter will receive your consideration I have already looked into the question of a very simple lay out for same.

First of all there is the all important question of cost and I have ascertained from Mr. Long whom you know usually attends to repairs etc at the school, that the approximate cost for the whole job would be in the region of £65, in my estimation not a very high figure.

The water main is situated only a short distance of 25 yards away and I am in a position to obtain permission for this to be brought across adjoining property, likewise this permission would also be given for piping away any overflow if required.

Whilst on the subject of water it is [perhaps as well to mention that the school could enjoy an inside water supply for drinking etc taken from the same supply at a very small extra cost.

This matter of school cleaning is one which has to be very seriously considered as you will appreciate that a man of 80 years cannot carry on indefinitely particularly as I already feel it is becoming a little too much for me and sooner or later a new cleaner will have to be found, a position which might be greatly improved if some such arrangement as I propose could be provided.

This surely is a job which should be done without delay and earnestly ask you to give it your fullest consideration.

Yours faithfully,
 Manager & Cleaner

We, the undersigned, fully endorse Mr Johnson's opinion in this matter.
 (No signatures are given but a unanimous endorsement from fellow managers can surely be assumed.)

The Chief Education Officer, W. J. Deacon, M.A., at County Hall, Taunton, replies on 10.9.1942.

Dear Sir

Elm Council School – Offices

I have to inform you that the Managers' letter dated 3 July 1942, with regard to the offices of the above-mentioned school has been very carefully considered by the County Education Committee. In view of the difficulties which are being experienced in connection with the present bucket system the Committee have authorised the conversion of the offices into a water carriage system.

The County Architect has been requested to prepare a specification to include the laying on of water from the private supply, which is stated to be available, and to obtain tenders with a view to the new system being installed at an early date.

I will inform you in due course of the name of the contractor to whom the work is entrusted.

Yours faithfully,

Interestingly, the person addressed in this letter is not Mr Johnson, the manager and cleaner, but G. Charlton, Esq of Park Farm, Buckland Dinham. Mr Charlton is the person who has the private water supply, now owned by the Starrs, who are of the same family, still in use today (2019) to the benefit of a number of households in Great Elm. It is the job of Ernie Charlton, Blanche Starr's nephew at Glebe Farm House, to ensure that the supply in Buckland Dinham is switched on there for the water to flow to Great Elm.

Of the use of the school building in the war years, Richard Swann says: "We know it was used in WW2 by the Territorial Army or Army Cadet Force. The outside walls still had the signs 'officers' on the doors which had plastered walls and ceilings."

It seems that the upgraded sanitation system was to the benefit of these organisations rather than the many school children who passed through the doors.

The date of the school finally ceasing to operate in Elm is not yet definitively known. Those who went there, such as Fred Starr, say that it was "before the war". It seems clear that it must have been at some point during the war.

Population in 1951: 170.

1970s and following years:

The population is 163 in 1961, 171 in 1971 and 151 in 1981.

Richard Swann says: "The school fell into disrepair and was used by a removal company as a store for household furniture in the 70s – 80s. The school had fallen into dereliction when we bought it in 1989. The windows had been blocked with concrete blockwork, the roof had several leaks causing significant water damage to the roof and floors, but thankfully many of the original features were still intact."

LITTLE ELM:

It should be noted that a small part of Little Elm (now Chantry) was part of the civil parish of Elm until 1885. However, the censuses for Elm do not include this part. Enumeration for the small part of Little Elm which was, up till then, part of Elm was made under the Whatley censuses. Information about the schools at Little Elm/Chantry is given below.

THE SCHOOLS AT LITTLE ELM/CHANTRY:

1840s: During this decade a school was set up at Little Elm, (now Chantry), a small part of this hamlet being part of the civil parish of Elm until 1885 when all of Little Elm became part of the *civil* parish of Whatley. It is as yet unclear which small part of Little Elm was part of Elm/Great Elm before that date, but details of the schools there are indicated below.

The *ecclesiastical* parish of Chantry had been formed in 1846 from parts of Whatley, Elm and Mells.

Marked effects upon educational provision were achieved in Little Elm/Chantry as a result of the interests of the Rev. James Fussell, who inspired the formation of three schools over the next few years, beyond the elementary school noted above. He became an inspector of schools.

1857: The National School at Little Elm was much enlarged to provide accommodation for three other schools (*History of Chantry*, David Rawlins):

A Lady's College, a boarding school attracting girls from all over the world as well as all over England, to be taught fine arts with native French and German speakers. It was at its peak about 1881 with 67 scholars aged from 10 to 17 listed in the 1881 census

An Industrial School to teach girl to become domestic servants with fewer than a dozen scholars.

The Infant School which took children from three years of age or younger.

1881: David Rawlins in his *History of Chantry* reports that the Lady's College has now reached its peak, with 67 scholars aged from 10 to 17, lodged in "Chantry House and Ladies College".

The census returns for that year give the following names of teacher boarders and pupil boarders, including one teacher who works for the Elementary School. They are all unmarried:

Caroline Amelia Senior, 43 year old principal of the school, who had been born in Norwich.

Boarding at the Ladies College, part of the residential facilities, are:

Caroline Whitby, (21) English teacher born in Yeovil.

Edith Treaby, (23) Nurse teacher of Amptshill, Bedfordshire.

Ellen Apsey, (21) teacher at Elementary School from Misterton, Somerset.

Gertrude Henley, (19) English Teacher, from Swanson, Glamorgan.

Mlle. A. H. Parot, (23) French teacher, born in France.

All the following are scholars and their places of birth are given:

Edith Mary Henley (16), Raleigh, Essex.

Consuela M. Terry (16, Pontefract, Yorkshire.

Beatrice Mary Tucker (14), Chard, Somerset.

Mary Elizabeth Footner (?) (16), Andover, Hampshire.

Adeline A. Parsons (15), Mells.

Florence M. Low (14), Bristol.

Constance E. White (14), Bristol.

Margaret M. Hartley, (16), Doulting.

Mary Ellen Colson (16), Southampton.

Alexandra A. King (16), Woodborough, Somerset.

Emily Mary Tothill (16), Newport, Monmouthshire.

Minnie Duncan (15), China (public school).
 Jessie Grace Ludlow (14), Dundry, Somerset.
 Ethel E. Stratton (13), Winchester.
 Annie C. Manning (11), Yeovil.
 Gertrude M. Hanson (11), Cambridge.
 Mary Mackin Hanson (13), Cambridge.
 Amy Jane Sherry (14), Yeovil.
 Eleanor B. Maggs (14), Yeovil.
 Lilian Rogers Long (14), India.
 Helen Louise Bickle (12), India.
 Mary Cecil Anniger (12), Westbury
 Florence Witherington (12) Rushall, Wiltshire.
 Alice Witherington (11), Rushall, Wiltshire.
 Florence E. Jones (14), Pembroke.
 Edith Caroline Hare (11), Bridgewater, Somerset.
 Mary G. E. Cashmore (10), Clifton.
 Henrietta M. Smith (12), Brixton, Middlesex.
 Fredericka F. Smith (10), Market Drayton, Shropshire.
 Beatrice R. Hine (123), Ilmington, Somerset
 Sarah Cat. Scrivener (12), Chelsea, Middlesex.
 Julia Maria P. Howard (12), Spain, British subject.

Also living in to work are:

Julia Holton, (25), Cook, Warminster.
 Emily Fortune (16), Housemaid, Calne.
 Martha E. Dalimore (15), Needlewoman, Nunney.

There is also a visitor: Jane E. Witherington (17) Rushall, Wiltshire, who mist be visiting her two sisters.

At the Chantry House, the following are in residence:

Mary Eliza Slader (21), English Teacher school, Infracombe, Devonshire.

The following are scholars:

Gertrude E Woodcock (17), Campshall, Yorkshire.
 Ada Belfield (17), Canada.
 Clara. I. A Howard (14), Spain. British subject.
 Lilian Parmeter (17), Winchester.
 Lilian Armstrong (16), Birkenhead, Cheshire.
 Alice R. Cashmole (18), Cotham, Gloucestershire.
 Kate Groves, (16), Mageston, Dorsetshire.
 Rosa B. Cleverly (14), Bratton, Wiltshire.
 Lucy M.Deansly (14), Wincanton.
 Edith A. Strutt (17) Poynton, Cheshire.
 Annie I. Weedon (14), Reading, Berkshire.
 Harriette L. Wemyss (16), London.
 Emily Bagshaw (16), Chester, Cheshire.
 Susan M. Mpwbray (17), Oxford.
 Caroline R Penney (16), Parkston, Dorsetshire.
 Edith C. M. Ellis (17) New Zealand.
 Ellen E. Temple (15) Basingstoke, Hampshire.
 Maud M. Hine (16), Southampton, Hampshire.
 Agnes M. Temple (13), Basingstoke, Hampshire.
 Bessie M. Mead (17), Bruton.
 Annie H. Holland (15), Canada.
 Kathleen Hollick (15), Clapton, Middlesex.
 Grace G. Campbell (17), India.
 Ada F. Campbell (16), India.
 Alice M. Nutt (13), Sherbourne, Dorset.

Beatrice Nutt (15), Sherbourne, Dorset.
 Edith M Stratton (14), Saltropp, Wiltshire.
 Rhoda S. Witherington (14), B(...), Berkshire
 Amy M. Woolridge (15), Hungerford, Berkshire.
 Sarah E. G. Wright (13), London.
 Emily Susan Jacobs (14) Africa. Cape of Good Hope.

Also in residence are:

Hannah Palmer (23), Parlourmaid, Bath.
 Lucy A Witcomb (20), Housemaid, Mells

The following people are in residence at " Ladies College and Chantry House" because they are at the Industrial School:

Esther Green (15), London.
 Alice Rushton (15), Paddington, London.
 Miriam Beacham (13), Buckland (Dinham), Somerset.
 Emily Knight (17), Bethnal Green, Middlesex.
 Mary Ann Lawrance (sic) 16), Houghton, Hampshire.
 Annie L. H. Hosier (13), Bow, Middlesex.
 Martha J. Cole (15), Calne, Wiltshire.
 Annie Putman (12), London.
 Mary E. A. Williamson, (15) Pimlico, Middlesex.
 Therza A. Wilkins (13), Winchester, Hampshire.
 Clara F. Lamborne (10), Winchester. Hampshire.

Also in residence are:

Annie J. Whitton (16), Parlourmaid, Usk, Monmouthshire.
 Bertha Kvisth (21), German teacher, Thuringia.

These census returns abstracted for 1881 for the above details, also capture children who are probably at the

Elementary School:

John Latham, (8) born in Whatley.
 Thomas Millard Hellier, (7) and Willie Hellier (4) both born in Whatley to Henry Hillier, 25 year old edge tool worker born in Witham Friary and Jane, aged 30, born in Frome.

Robert Dore (4) and Mary Ann Dore (3), recorded as scholars, children of James Dore, 55 year old edge tool worker, all born in Whatley, with Dinah Lapham as 12 year old nurse maid from the same parish.

1891: At the Lady's College, only 18 are now being taught.

1949: The Elementary School at Little Elm/Chantry closed.

Lynn Baxter, Great Elm, July 2019
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