

Heritage Sheet 10

EDUCATION CONCLUDED

The post war period started with a new headmaster – William Clark Godson (his predecessor Arthur Y Jordan took up the headship of Wallingpen Council School). Similar problems persisted at this time – health, frequent staff changes, harsh winters causing difficulties in travelling arrangements particularly affecting the Wolds children.

On a more promising note progress in teaching was reflected in favourable inspection reports. A poignant reminder of the terrible losses of the war came with the annual observance of Armistice Day and the singing of the hymn “Oh God our help in ages past”. Empire Day was marked by the singing of patriotic songs, explanation of the Union Flag and the saluting of it by the children. (This was a continuation of the pre war practice – Major Mark Sykes addressed the children in 1909).

Holidays were still granted for the Feast and for the periodic visit of the hounds to Middleton Hall although less children absented themselves for the Kiplingcotes Derby.

Changes were also occurring in other directions in that there was less involvement by the Rector and the occupiers of the Hall in the affairs of the school.

The modern features of school life which were noted on the eve of the war continued with the introduction of medical inspections and visits from the nurse and dentist.

The heating of the building had always been a problem and for the reopening after the summer break in September 1930 the open fireplaces had been removed and an “up to date heating apparatus” (stove) had been installed with radiators. A water tank had also been provided with new taps over the washbasins.

Although the school received favourable reports from the church authorities the local authority, the East Riding County Council's inspectors had different opinions. In the 1920's they seemed to be particularly dissatisfied. An inspection on the 14th April 1921 sets the tone:- "The managers of this school, I am told, are very indifferent - the buildings show signs of the correctness of this information".

"One cannot help noticing the similarity between the children of Middleton and those of Lund and South Dalton - rough, stodgy, untidy and uncouth. It leads one to think that these characteristics belong to the district.

Throughout the decade and into the next the inspectors seem to have had a problem with the headmaster who was considered a weak and unattractive personality, humourless and with an exaggerated sense of his own abilities. However from time to time they acknowledged his efforts to improve the school and bring it up to date and conceded that he meant well.

On a more positive note following and inspection on the 26th January 1924 the report stated that "the teaching of infants is very satisfactory, Miss Dowson being a teacher of outstanding ability and personality. Her manner with the children calls for admiration".

By 1932 the library van was calling at the school and an increasing number of books were borrowed.

In January 1934 Mr Godson died after a short illness. Also in that month a decision was made to divide the school into three houses and choose prefects by ballot.

On 13th December of that same year the school was opened to parents for inspection and it was reported that this created an excellent feeling among the people of the village. The event was hailed as a new departure at the time but it had been done before – on the eve of the Great War.

Another sign of the times was the visit in March 1935 of Mr Gibson, BBC Director of Studies for the North of England, who gave the school interesting facts about “Broadcasting Lessons”.

For the academically gifted there was the opportunity to try for a scholarship and in July 1935 three boys attended Pocklington School for the examination. Watson B Stuart obtained a scholarship.

In 1935 the new village hall opened and this took some of the pressure from the school in providing accommodation for events, so much so that in December of that year the school itself was able to arrange for its exhibition of work and prize distribution to be held there.

On 18th September 1939 the school reconvened after the summer holidays which had been extended by national instruction, war having been declared on 3rd of that month. Soon one hundred evacuees from Sunderland Redby School were using the school in the afternoon and the village hall in the morning and the Middleton children were in the school in the morning and the village hall in the afternoon. In April 1940 the two schools were amalgamated for the period of the hostilities.

The winter of 1939/40 was severe and in February 1940 there was flooding in the village which on one occasion threatened to maroon the children in the village hall.

On 2nd July 1940 an air raid warning sounded during the night – it was followed by another later in the month.

On 23rd May 1941 22 children came from Hull following the devastating air raids on that city (“A North East Coast Town”).

Education continued although some adjustments were made. For example the lawn in front of the school was used for growing potatoes. Examinations were held and scholarships awarded. One particular physical education event of note was the Sports Day held on 5th May 1943 in Mr Walker’s field in connection with the “Wings for Victory Week” which was a nationally sponsored event to raise funds for aircraft to aid the war effort.

From 1936 Stanley G Hogarth was headmaster of the school (a position he retained until his retirement at the age of 61 in 1960. He was in addition Chairman of the Parish Council for 17 years and a member of the Royal Observer Corps during the war.

As was to be expected when the end of the war came change was in the air.

EDUCATION POST 1945

In 1944 the wartime coalition passed a new Education Act (Butler) which was to have far reaching results though not quite as the Government intended. Its' most famous provisions were for secondary education to be of three types – Grammar, Modern and Technical each of these being of equal worth “parity of esteem”. But the full implementation of this system was some way in the future. However from the 12th April 1947 the school leaving age was raised to 15.

In the meantime the immediate post war periods saw educational visits becoming more of a feature of school life. Museums, cinema, theatre and symphony concerts were included and in 1951 eight senior pupils visited the Festival of Britain in London. In 1946 the school had received a radio (it waited until 1961 for a telephone and 1967 for a television). Inter school sports were also becoming a regular occurrence.

Pupils were sitting examinations for such schools as the High School for Commerce and Riley High School in Hull and on the resumption of studies after the summer holidays in 1952 the seniors were transferred to Market Weighton Secondary Modern School. The roll for Middleton School was now 40 and was destined to fall still further until a revival came with the closing of other village schools.

The 1872 building was still in use and an East Riding of Yorkshire County Council report described it as it was in 1945 and 1966. In 1945 the school took pupils of all ages without the provision of school meals and it had earth sanitation and oil lamps. In 1966 it catered for infants and juniors with electric light, w.cs. and school meals which had been provided from 1953 in an ex army hut by Mrs Hardwick some distance from the school, the lunchtime trek being enjoyed by most pupils. The last day in the old school was 3rd April when an official closing function was held attended by parents and former head teachers Hogarth and Boyes because despite these improvements a new school was provided at a cost of £30,000 with occupation taking place in on 29th April 1968.

The official opening took place on 1st November 1968 the ceremony being carried out by the MP for the area the Rt Hon. Richard Wood with the Rector of Middleton with Dalton, the Rev. C Hume who as Chairman of the School Governors also presided. The Bishop of Hull, the Right Rev. H L Higgs conducted a short dedication service.

The staff of the new school on opening day in April 1968 consisted of:

Mr J A W Goodrick	Headmaster	
Mr C B Rose	Mrs D Woodliffe	Miss E M Walker
Canteen Staff		
Mrs E Hardwick – Cook	Mrs C Lewis – Assistant	Mrs D Jenkinson – Supervisor
Mrs R Mizon	Caretaker	
Mrs M Colley	School Crossing Patrol	
Mrs C Walker	School Secretary.	

At the opening there are 99 pupils on roll.

In the early days the school had frequent visitors anxious to see an open plan system at work. In November 1970 there was the first meeting of the Parent Teachers Association.

In July 1972 Mr Goodrick left the school to take up an appointment as headmaster of the much larger Willerby Carr Lane School. Mr Goodrick was also Chairman of the Drifffield Council of Churches and Middleton Youth Club and Playing Fields Committee as well as being a churchwarden, a member of the Parochial Church Council, the Deanery Synod and the Village Hall Committee. He presented a shield to the school as a trophy for future sports days. He died tragically in 1977 leaving a widow who was a teacher at the school and two young daughters.

The new headmaster Mr P G Sykes, a Howden man who had been the Head of Weaverthorpe C.E. School for the past 3 years, took over in January 1973 and continued until his retirement in 1990. He was succeeded by Mrs Ann Adamson and then Mrs Christine Bennison who was succeeded in 2012 by Mr Woodhouse.

From the 1980's the school had to cope with the demands of new technology, constant staff training and management of budgets whilst dealing with the ever changing requirements placed on education by the central government.

In common with other village schools a fall in pupil rolls could have threatened closure. At the present time however the school plays a bigger role in the community and its Federation with Beswick and Watton Schools in 2007 has strengthened its position.

When the school re-opened in September 2011 after the summer holidays the staff and children returned to a much extended building with high tech facilities which would have amazed the staff and pupils of the 1870's.