



St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Established 1845

The Story Of Our School

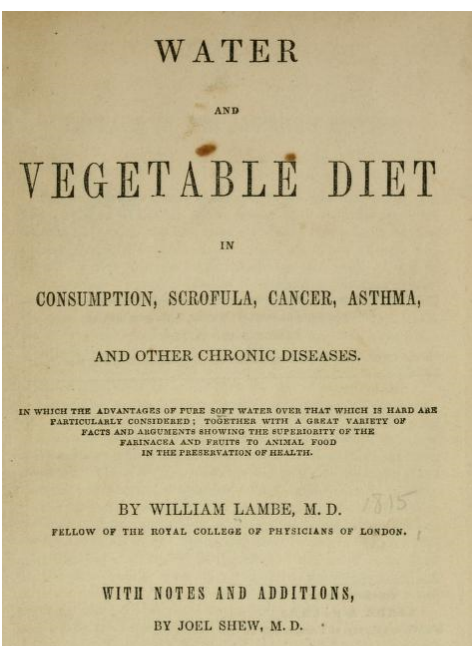
St Mary's CE Primary School, Dilwyn

In 1788, William Lambe of Henwood MD, Dilwyn, donated forever one clear yearly sum of £5 for establishing a Sunday school within the parish, for the purpose of teaching the poor of Dilwyn to read the Old and New Testaments, to learn and repeat the Church Catechism and instructing them in the principles of the Christian religion, hoping that with this small beginning others would make additions. William Lambe was head boy at Hereford Grammar School before training in medicine at Cambridge. He was a pioneer of the belief that pure filtered water and a vegetarian diet would protect people from many ailments. Lambe was seen as an eccentric by his contemporaries, mainly on the ground that he was a strict, though by no means fanatical, vegetarian. His favourite prescription was filtered water. He retired from practice about 1840 and died at the aged 82 in June 1847.



DR. WILLIAM LAMBE (AGED 82).

In 1807 he directed that the school and school house at Dilwyn, with the garden and orchard, should always remain appropriated, kept in repair (except glass windows, hedges and fences) by the person in possession of his estates, to be let to a careful and attentive schoolmaster at a rent per year not exceeding £5 5s. Lacon William Lambe, his son, undertook to keep the school and schoolhouse in good repair in lieu of £5 per annum.



Thomas Phillips also made provision for the school by giving Drake Moor (10 acres), a part of Newton Court. He stipulated that the money derived from this was to be used only for poor children. When the school started there were 25 poor children and 20 paying pupils.

So who was Doctor Lacon William Lambe (1797-1871)?

He was a doctor like his father, both who are buried in the family vault in the churchyard overlooking the school they created. Lacon W Lambe studied medicine and graduated from Caius College, Cambridge. He set up a school trust in the village which exists to this day. The Lambe Trust ensures the poor of the village and now all children will be educated in a Christian ethos.



The school was built in 1845 and opened in October. Mr. John Deane and his wife, Sarah, were master and mistress. Mrs. Deane's brother, Mr. Frederick Lace, also lived with them and was a schoolmaster, though whether at this school or another school is unknown. Mr. Deane was also the village postmaster.



The school was referred to either as Dilwyn Charity School or Lambe's school. By 1867 it was referred to as a National School for boys and girls. It came under government inspection and had a certified Master. There were 143 children on the register but the average attendance was 58.

As a National School it was supported by a government grant as well as the charities mentioned above. The Master was John Mullany and Mrs. Sarah Mullany, the Mistress. The village population was 1,112 and the number of inhabited houses were 238.

In 1872, the school was enlarged with the addition of the hall and so comprised of two rooms. In 1890 there was now accommodation for 200 pupils but (fortunately?) the average attendance was 107. Pupils were expected to help at home and on the farms so attendance was often low.



Life In The Victorian Days

Attendance

Standards in the school were low mainly due to the poor attendance. When the school opened in 1845 the average attendance was 107 out of a possible 200. Education was not seen to be as important as it is today and family commitments and hard winters meant survival was often the order of the day. On the 5th May 1879 a 'Wild Beast Show' saw the morning attendance of 84 drop in the afternoon to 51. On 16th June 1882, four boys gave the excuse that they could not come to school because the dog would not let them.

Poor attendance could also have been caused by the existence of an attendance fee or simply by the boys working in the fields and the girls staying at home minding babies.

Standards

In May 1884, the Headteacher, Mr Mullany, was succeeded by James Trembath, the late Master of Buxted National School, Sussex, and formerly Master of Probus Parochial School, Cornwall. He commented that the children knew 'very little indeed of either Geography or Grammar and are very disorderly'. James set to work on improving standards and also collecting owed school fees. He had to apply to the Pauper Children Board of Guardians as there were many poor families in the village at the time. James retired in 1904. Victorian education was mainly about the 3Rs with a few other subjects tacked on.

- *Typical lessons at school included the three Rs - Reading, WRiting and Arithmetic - and Dictation.*

- *Children were taught Geography, History and singing once a week. Girls were also taught how to sew.*

- *Music or PE was not taught in the way that schools teach now. Children sometimes did a 'drill' in the classroom. A drill was a series of exercises that were done by the side of a desk.*

Punishment

Punishment did not end with caning. Students had to stand on a stool at the back of the class, wearing an armband with DUNCE written on it. The teacher then took a tall, cone-shaped hat decorated with a large "D" and placed it on the boys head. Victorian teachers believed that all children could learn at the same speed and if some fell behind then they should be punished for not trying hard enough. How times have changed.

The First Summary Report of 1865

The general efficiency of the school is fair, about the same as last year. The religious knowledge, reading and writing is fair. The spelling is only moderate, the arithmetic is fair in the upper, but imperfect in the lower classes; the needlework is pretty good. The discipline is satisfactory: a portfolio and a proper Log Book should be provided. The Pupil Teacher's papers are disgracefully bad.

Life in the Village 1865

This summer the school did not reopen until early October (it was an 8 week Harvest Holiday) to allow the crops to be safely gathered in. The winters were long and cold in this part of Herefordshire. Children worked throughout the year on the land, they were expected to thin turnips and weed the crops in the spring, help with the grain harvest in the summer and then pick hops, potatoes, blackberries, apples and even acorns. In April, a number of children would be away from school picking primroses to sell at Leominster Market.

Extracts from the Log Book of a Typical Year (1866)

- 6th February: Arthur and George Nash re-admitted after 2 years absence.
- 14th February: Children all went to Church at 11 o'clock – Ash Wednesday.
- 27th February: Several pupils absent on account of the weather – snow falling all day.
- 2nd March: The average attendance this week is low owing to the severe weather. Many children away with bad feet.

- 6th March: A very small number at school today. Many children have bad colds; those at school are consistently coughing. 25 absent today who have been at school this week.
- 10th April: This being the day of Races at Weobley, the numbers at school are small.
- 24th April: The attendance today is small, many children are absent at fieldwork (farming).
- 8th May: This being Weobley Fair day there were so few present in the afternoon that I dismissed them soon after 2 o'clock. Mrs. Mullany kept the girls for sewing.
- 14th May: There are a large number absent today, 59 in out of 111. I think this is partly owing to its being Pembridge Fair today.

Summary of inspector's report for the year 1866-1867

The children have made creditable progress during the ten months they have been under charge of Mr. Mullany. As yet, they are not sufficiently prompt in answering, speak too much together, and don't put their hands out well. New desks are required.

M. Leather. LLD Vicar

Illness in Victorian Times

In Victorian times there was no vaccination and the mortality (death) rate was between 50-60% of children before the age of five. Victorians were used to illness and death. It was part of life. The school had many outbreaks of measles, whooping cough, typhoid and scarlet fever. In 1869 scarlet fever broke out in the Parish and sadly, Sarah Watkins, who was sent home on the 5th July, died on the 7th July. In 1882 disaster occurred. On 14th July, a few children had whooping cough and measles. This soon spread and on 4th August the Vicar (under the Medical & Sanitary Authority), closed the school, reporting an epidemic of measles, whooping cough and scarlet fever. The school was closed until 20th November (14 weeks) and sadly 11 pupils died of scarlet fever. When the school opened again there were still 20 houses under quarantine. In 1889 measles hit the school and on 25th March the school was closed for three weeks by medical order on account of measles. The rooms had to be 'cleansed' and were all scrubbed and lime-washed. In 1896 vaccinations were introduced into



schools and Dr Hall vaccinated 30 pupils, probably against typhoid and cholera as other vaccines were not available.

The Story of the Traction Engine (1885)

It was on 29th April, during the dinner hour, when a traction engine passed the top playground. At the time, this was where the entrance gate of the school was. Several of the boys followed the engine to Weobley and did not return for



school. The next day the boys were called to the Headteacher who caned Colin Preece & James Creswell for their part in the episode. Charles was not a good school attender and was reported to the School Attendance (truant) Officer for his poor attendance in the last month. Sadly, Charles died of consumption (tuberculosis) three years later.

The Penny Bank (1891)

School fees were ended and on 1st December 1891, the Vicar announced that from next Monday he intended to open a 'Penny Bank' in connection with the Infant School. This was a way families could save for times of hardship. On the same day, to improve school attendance figures, he also announced an attendance prize (3/- each) - this was to be given to each child who attended 400 times (200 days) during the year. On the 2nd January 1893, the sum of 3/- was added to the deposits of the following children in the School Savings book. They had attended 400 times during the year ended November 1892.

Herbert Patrick 411

Ernest Dement 424

George Symond 427

Heber Tudge 405

William Lewis 406

Harry Palfrey 413

Margaret Bottom 401

Mary Davies 427

Frederick Burton 411

James Bywater 407

Edith Davies 423

George Lee 403

Summary of H.M. Inspector's Report 1893

On the whole, the School has made progress in elementary subjects and the upper standards deal with problems in arithmetic much more successfully than they did at last inspection. Geography and Singing by Note are attempted for the first time, and with some allowance for this circumstance each subject may be passed. The summary mark for needlework rises somewhat above fair, but the examiner reports that the herring-bone exercise of the third standard is not correctly worked. The scholars have still to acquire habits of self-reliance and of strict attention to work.

On 4th August 1893 our first school photograph was taken after lessons.



The Early 1900s: Victoria dies & Edward becomes King

At the end of the Victorian Times, Britain was involved in the second Boer War in South Africa. The Boers were fighting for two Boer states to become the South African Republic. In the war, 1000 British soldiers were trapped in a town called Mafeking by 8000 Boers. They held out for 217 days on starvation rations, many dying, before on 17th May they were rescued by 2000 British troops. In Dilwyn, people were very patriotic and concerned and raised money to show their support. On May 11th a half-day holiday was given so that the classrooms were prepared for a concert in aid of the War Fund. The siege turned the British commander, Colonel Robert Baden-Powell into a national hero. He went on to found the Boy Scout movement which many boys and girls continue to join to this very day.

On 22nd January 1901, Queen Victoria died after 63 years on the throne. She was buried at



Windsor on the 4th February. In the bottom of her coffin was placed the dressing gown of her husband Prince Albert and many photographs. In Dilwyn it was a very cold week with frequent snow; the

village prepared for a service of remembrance in the church as a memorial. Rev. R. Mellor took the service. Britain now had a King, Edward VII, and the Edwardian Days started. This period was known for its elegance and luxury and the development of the motorcar.

At school on October 14th 1902 the School Attendance Officer visited for the second time in a week and took attendances of the Griffiths (Firs) and of the Haynes (Stretford). They were both summoned to explain their absences; both were farming families and worked on the harvest.

There was also a case of diphtheria & scarlet fever – Edith Haysum was absent as a consequence. It was reported that ‘although sickness has interfered with progress a good year’s work has been done, and the condition of the School is very creditable both to the management & the teaching’

Frederick Mellor, Correspondent

It was reported in the early 1900s that the attendance had 'very much improved'. However it fell dramatically in October as this was the harvest and hop-picking time. James Trembath who had been appointed Master on 1st May 1884 now retired and on 1st March 1904 R.Hughes-Rowlands commenced duties as Headmaster of the school.

Edwardian schools were similar in many ways to modern ones. Classes were taken in the 'three R's' (reading, writing and arithmetic) and there were also Physical Education lessons (drill). Girls were generally taught needlework.

The Drum & Fife Band

In April 1904 a "Drum & Fife Band" was organised at the school. It had 24 members that soon increased to 30. Lessons were given to the boys by the new headmaster free of charge, after school hours. By Jul, the Band had become so good that they started to accompany school drill.

On the 24th May 2005, Empire Day, they played as the Union Jack was raised on the boy's playground. Three cheers were given to Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. The children were then dismissed, but the Master took the Band round the village to the cheers of the villagers. On 9th November, The King's_Birthday the children were taken to the girls' playground and formed a "square"; the "Union Jack" was hoisted and the School Band played the National Anthem.

Illness was still an issue for children with children suddenly falling sick and dying from diseases like diphtheria, scarlet fever and pneumonia. On 11th January 1907, one little boy (Fred Lewis, The Haven) died very suddenly, from bronchial pneumonia. Medicine was still in its infancy and again the school was closed on 27th May when an outbreak of scarlet fever occurred.

The decade ended with the death of Edward VII, Queen Victoria's oldest son, on the 6th May 2010 at the age of 68.

On 13th January 1911, "Captain Windebank this day on behalf of the late Mr. George Bray of Henwood presented a Union Jack and flagstaff to the school as a memorial for which we thank the donors".

This was a time of adventure and there was a race to get to the South Pole. Captain Robert Scott led the Terra Nova Expedition. At



the same time Roald Amundsen was also racing to the Pole; he arrived on 16th December 1911 and erected the Norwegian flag. Scott arrived 17th January 1911, a month later, and sadly died of hypothermia on the way back to his ship.



The news got back to Britain and on 13th February 1913, a "Memorial Service" was held at St. Paul's for Capt. Scott and his companions. The Headmaster thought it was fitting that some notice should be taken of it, and therefore special lessons were given to the children in the school on Captain Scott's journey to the South Pole. The school Union Jack was then hoisted at 'half-mast' in the playground.

The flag was also raised high on 18th June to celebrate the Duke of Wellington's victory at the Battle of Waterloo (1815). On 25th May, Capt. Windebank of Henwood gave a very interesting and instructional address on our "World War Empire" to the children. All assembled in sight of the flag. Patriotic songs were sung and the flag saluted. The Captain then left 4/- to buy the children sweets.

This was a turbulent time in Europe and Britain had an agreement with France and Belgium. Germany declared war on France. But the Belgians refused to let the Germans through so they invaded Belgium on Aug 4, 1914. By doing this, they violated the Treaty of London and on the 4th August, Britain declared war on Germany. There was a call to arms and many boys from Dilwyn left the village and signed up to fight the Germans.



On 11th January 1915, three Belgian evacuees (all boys) joined the school.

On 17th June, Gladys Wright was poorly in school and had diphtheria. She went to Burghill Isolation Hospital. Her two brothers, Harold & Harry, were also isolated from school. Sadly, Gladys died a week later and the school was closed for a fortnight. On 30th July, it was found that Mrs. Jones (the school cleaner) had the diphtheria germ in her throat and she was forbidden by the doctor to clean the school for at least a month. Attendance suffered considerably on account of the epidemic as parents were worried about infection.

During the war years, the children had to help on the farms as the men had gone to war. Gardening was the order of the day and the bank above the school was planted with vegetables. In October, there were a number of half-day holidays so that the older children could go blackberry-picking. These were then taken to Kingsland Station and sold in city markets.

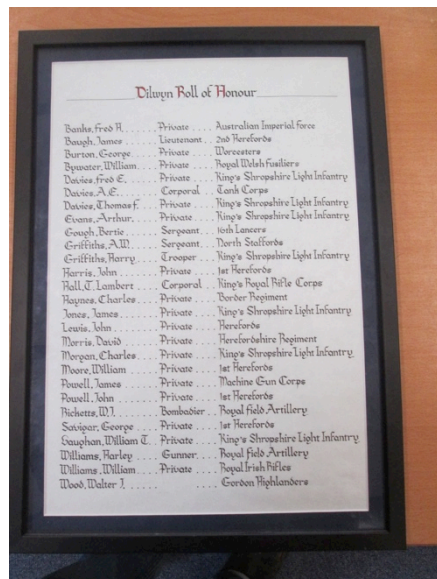
On 21st Feb 1918: "Charles Chandler, Charles Evans and Stanley Symonds were punished across their seats this morning at the request of their parents and under the superintendence of Sargent Matthews for wilfully breaking off the top of the iron railings around the Doctor's residence by throwing heavy stones at them".

The War was very bloody and there were many casualties which were brought to convalesce at Sarnesfield Hospital. The children entertained the soldiers on the 11th & 12th April and on 3rd May, forty wounded soldiers visited the school and the children produced a tea and evening entertainments.

On 11th Nov 1918, the school "heard this afternoon that the Germans had signed the Armistice". It was too late to give a holiday so the Vicar said a few words on war, asked for Rule Britannia to be sung and then told the children in remembrance of 'Peace Day' that they should have a day's holiday tomorrow.



Because so many died, 28 from Dilwyn, the bodies were never repatriated and lie in the fields of France and Belgium. Families had no graves to visit so they provided the money for a



memorial. It was designed by WG Storr Barber of Leominster and erected and unveiled in 1922. St. Mary's School remember this day every year at the memorial, as many of the fallen had once attended our school. On 3rd March 1919, the three Belgian evacuees left Dilwyn and went home.

It was at this time that people wanted change and a better Britain. Education was considered important. By the end of 1918, young children were no longer regularly expected to work alongside adults. School attendance was not only compulsory but the school leaving age was raised from 12 to 14 years old. With so many men fighting in the war and

getting killed, the women had taken over the men's jobs at home. This was a big leap forward to equality and on 21st November 1918, women over the age of 21 years were given the right to vote and stand for Parliament. A year later, Lady Astor became the first female Member of Parliament. Unemployment was high and after the promise of a land fit for heroes, there was a general strike in 1926 that lasted nine days. The strike failed and a great economic depression occurred. In 1931 there were three million people unemployed.

In Dilwyn, school life went on much as usual and attendance improved; children were marched to the centre of the village to cheer the hunt. On the 1st November 1922, William Probert commenced his duties as Headmaster and on 4th December, Miss Davies, who had no previous teaching experience, took over the teaching of the Infants. On 26 July 1923, the school closed for the day to enable the children to accept the kind offer by Mrs. W. H. Verdin to experience Garnstone Castle and deer park. The children were treated and thoroughly enjoyed their day out.



Cookery lessons were also introduced for the girls in 1923 and the boys learned woodworking skills. The role of women was usually to cook and clean in the home.



Mr Probert did not stay long at school and left in August 1924 to take up a post in Kent and then Albert Lewis Lloyd commenced the duties of headmaster.

Religious knowledge became an important focus in the school. On 17th June 1926, the vicar handed a Report of Scripture Examination (Dios).

1 st Class	Edna Harris
2 nd Class	Beryl Holland (Henry Hill Prize), Lizzie Wood
3 rd Class	Ethel Davies, Edward Dyer, George Dyer, Thomas Eckley

In 1927, there was a Diocesan Report on Religious Knowledge: *"The religious knowledge of the school shows careful and consistent teaching in all departments. The children had a sound knowledge of their subjects generally. The Prayer Book was very well known. The written work of the girls is again very well ahead of the boys. There is an excellent & reverend tone in Prayer and the singing of the hymns was excellent"*

L. P. Jones (Dio. Ins.)

Knowledge and singing is still excellent to this day.

In March 1928, there was an outbreak of scarlet fever at The Row. Two children were sent to hospital and all the schoolchildren from The Row were excluded from school and put in quarantine by Sanitary Inspector Lewis. In March 1930, measles spread to the village; there

were only 24 children present in school and over fifty cases of measles. The outbreak was reported to the authorities and the school was closed for three weeks.

9th December 1931: Excerpts from Government Inspector's Report

"Since the last report the number in attendance has increased and an additional teacher has been appointed. This increase has necessitated an interchange of rooms, so that Class 1 is now rather cramped in a room which some parts are badly lighted on dull days. The children's frank response to the inspection of their work remains an excellent feature of the school."

This led to school improvements in 1932; the large classroom was divided during the summer holidays and classes moved into the new rooms (now classrooms 2 & 3) at the beginning of term. On 3rd October, there was great excitement as an anthracite stove was placed in the new classrooms before the cold winter. In the Easter holidays 1933, the school lavatories were updated and now consisted of pails (buckets) underneath a toilet seat.

1933 also saw Laura Humphries receive a Silver Medal in April for 6 years unbroken attendance and Ronald Sadler was granted a Rural Scholarship to attend Leominster Grammar School.

In 1934, two new "tortoise" stoves were installed in classrooms 1 and 3. On the 3rd February there was almost catastrophe: in the afternoon the room was full of smoke and a beam was found burning. It was extinguished before the school had time to catch fire.



Cooking was an important skill that all girls were expected to learn; below is a picture of the cooking class. How did Tommy get in the picture with the girls?



1934 cookery class Mrs Dyer 5th top row and little Tommy Chandler at the front

On 28th January 1936, the school closed for the funeral of King George V and his son, Edward VIII, succeeded him. In Britain there was high unemployment and many families were brought up in slum conditions in the cities - how lucky it was to live in rural Herefordshire. On 17th August, the school was closed and the children went on an outing to Borth.



1937 saw a daily milk delivery and on the 19th January, a wireless was installed and the pupils listened to their first broadcast.

In May, Mary Elizabeth Powell and Florence Ada Thomas were granted Rural Scholarships to attend Leominster Grammar School. In October, the school reopened with 88 pupils.

Classes 1 – 25 A.L. Lloyd CH

Classes 2 – 29 Mrs. A.M Patrick CA

Classes 3 – 21 Miss L.M. Jones VA

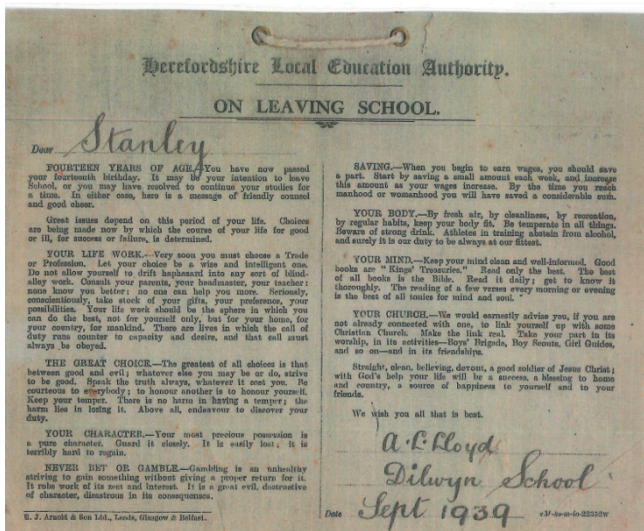
Classes 4 – 13 Miss H.L. Phillips Sup



Mr Lloyd's Class

In 1939, four pupils were granted scholarships and the standards at the school were on the up. In Germany, however, Adolf Hitler's Nazi party stormed the Polish frontier shortly before

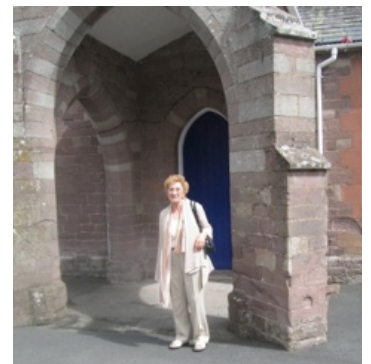
5am on Friday 1st September; tanks and 1.25 million troops raced into the country. Two days later, British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, declared war on Germany and France followed suit. On 8th January 1940, bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. By 1942 many other foodstuffs, including meat, milk, cheese, eggs and cooking fat, were also 'on the ration'.



In school, notices arrived and the school was informed that there would be an evacuation of children from vulnerable areas. On 4th June 1940, gas masks and instructions arrived; pupils practised putting them on and also walking to the air raid shelter in the cellar of the Parsonage. Sandbags arrived from the ARP warden on 7th March. Many dads joined up to fight and the school had to close for a week on the 2nd May, so the children could help plant potatoes on the local farms. On 21st May, people in the village heard a passing Spitfire plane, whose engine was spluttering and with black smoke pouring out. The pilot was trying to land but could not see clearly. He tried to land in a field at Chadnor, but at the last minute had to swerve to miss a farm worker (Leonard Deakin) and hit an oak tree. Sadly, Pilot Officer John Pugh died and the body was taken to the church until it was taken away by the RAF. Today his memorial can be seen on the Village Green.



On 17th May 1941, 31 evacuees, with their teacher Miss R. Breen of St. James's School, arrived from Bootle. These joined the school which was divided into 4 classes; during the week 6 more Evacuees arrived from St Monica's Catholic School. This picture is of Theresa Oldfield, who remembers her years



fondly at Dilwyn School. She lived at Haven Farm and revisited the school in 2015.

The war effort was in full swing and as things progressed food shortages occurred. On 11th May 1942, the Food Office started using the school to distribute Ration Cards. Dilwyn children formed part of the land army producing the food on every available piece of land. In 1943, the iron gates at the front of the porch were requisitioned by the then Ministry of Works for the war effort. The hinges still remain.

Germany's desire to invade Britain had been stopped in 1940 (Battle of Britain). In 1942, the Soviet Union defeated Germany at Stalingrad, marking the turning point of the war in Eastern Europe. D-Day on 6th June 1944, the Allied Forces of Britain, America, Canada, and France attacked German forces on the coast of Normandy, France. With a huge force of over 150,000 soldiers, the Allies attacked and gained a victory. Sadly, four Dilwynners lost their lives in WWII.



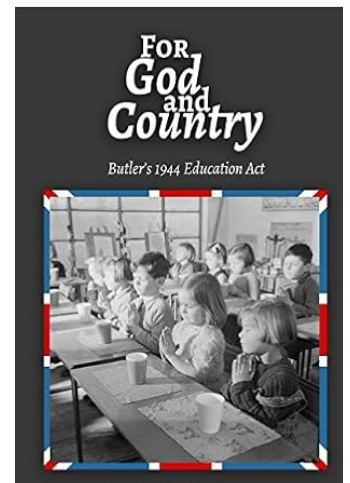
In school, life went on; 17th May 1941, Trixie Eileen Ricketts and Sheila Winifred Fletcher gained scholarships. Trixie later returned to Dilwyn as an Infants Teacher (Mrs Burton). On 18th June 1942, dried powdered milk was replaced with fresh milk by Mr H. Williams of Townsend Farm. In 1945, cocoa from the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) was supplied for a penny a week. Things started to get back to normal; on 20th April, the Circus arrived in



Weobley. About 80 children left school at 3pm, with the Vicar's permission, and walked to Weobley. On 8th May, the school was closed as the country celebrated Victory in Europe (V.E Day).

In Education, the Butler Act tried to improve equality for all.

Pupils had to stay on in compulsory education until the age of 15. Fee paying in state schools was forbidden and all church schools, including Dilwyn, were brought into a national system. The 1944 Act provided a real chance for social mobility and at 11 children took an exam called the 11plus. This was intended to provide equal opportunities, regardless of their backgrounds. It also entitled every child to a free school meal. The date is significant, of course. During the late war years and for years afterwards, many children in Britain certainly needed some wholesome nourishment; in 1946 the School Milk Act provided free milk (a third of a pint a day) to all.



In October 1950, Mr D Proctor became Headmaster and in 1951 the removal of buckets in the toilets was discussed; however flushing toilets did not arrive until April 23rd 1958.

At midnight on 4th July 1954, after 14 years, rationing in Britain ended on the sale of meat

and bacon. On 6th February 1952, King George VI died from lung cancer (he was a heavy smoker) and on the 15th February, a service in his memory was held by the Vicar in the Church. On May 29th 195, the school was closed for Coronation festivities. All children were presented with a coronation spoon by the Vicar. Queen Elizabeth II became our queen. The children enjoyed fun and games. The Fifties saw a gradual improvement in the lives of people and this decade is often referred to as 'the golden years'. People had more money in their pockets, low cost housing was available and there was a baby boom.

On 28th April 1960, Colin Fox, became Headmaster, followed by Mr. H. H. Mason in 1963. The school garden was still an important part of the school life at this time and in July, a County Horticultural Organiser came to judge the school gardens. The result can be seen below. Graham who lives at Common Farm still grows vegetables.

1st Graham Dyer & William Brown

2nd Michael Prosser

3rd David Williams & Brian Jacobs

In August 1961, there was the first school residential trip to, on 19th June, Daintree Games (now Griffiths) was awarded a merit certificate in the national handwriting competition for Great Britain. What an achievement! In 1963, in icy winter conditions, two lorries skidded into the front playground wall, demolishing it. Police took the drivers' full particulars; no one was hurt and the wall was soon repaired. In the Sixties, families became smaller and young people moved away to the towns for work; the number of children in school fell. In 1966 there were only 44 pupils on roll and the baby boom had slowed down. In 1965 the comprehensive system of education was introduced and all our children at 11 started to go to Weobley.



1967

The sixties was a time of vibrant colour and psychedelic prints on clothes. The Beatles music was to the fore and people became more liberated. Feminism became influential and more jobs became available for young women. Many universities were built by the Wilson Government and the young became more independent and moved away from their families.

The Seventies was a time of economic unrest: an energy crisis; financial hardship; unemployment; strikes and cuts in education. In fashion, bell-bottom trousers and platform shoes were worn and there was a rise in the popularity of discos. The decade ended with the election of Britain's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, in 1979.

At school, Mr Evans became Headmaster. 1970 also saw the 125th anniversary of the school and on October 15th a display of historic photographs and artefacts was put up in the village hall. The next day a team of BBC cameramen made a short film and sound recording of the children playing in the top playground. This seemed to boost the numbers and by the end of the year the number on roll had risen to 49. On the 21st February 1972, the fuel crisis in the country saw the compulsory closure of school for the week. On Christmas Eve, the top Juniors performed a nativity play in Dilwyn Church for the village.

The school was very patriotic and celebrated the marriage of Princess Anne with a day off in 1973. On 6th & 7th June 1977, the children and whole village took part in Jubilee celebrations. A carnival procession through the village took place: there were sports on the school field; fancy dress; a football match and refreshments for all. All the children were presented with a commemorative crown to remember the day.

The 1980s saw a further decline in the school's fortunes and more education cuts: it was a time of austerity in the country. In 1980, the school was fitted with an automatic heating system and the coke heaters were removed. In 1981 Mr F Matthews became the Headmaster. A scientist, who loved putting on elaborate, especially written school productions that were enjoyed by all. Numbers continued to decline and in 1986 on 21st Oct, sadly, the chair of the governors, Rev. D. Rees, was killed in a tragic car accident. He was a person of great warmth and enthusiasm who was missed by many. A few months after his death on 13th January 1987, a joint meeting of Dilwyn, Canon Pyon & Almeley governors was held at Canon Pyon School to discuss ways in which the schools could co-operate. The cluster also meant the LEA could save money. Mr Matthews taught science at Almeley while the head of Almeley taught History at Dilwyn; the three schools co-operated with PE. By September 1988, there were only 23 children on roll.



The school's recorder group taught by headmaster Glyn Jones.

1980

The decade ended on a high with the children performing 'David & Goliath' in the Cathedral on 5th May. The performance was outstanding and deemed a great success.



In the 1990s, the government of the day was concerned about standards in state schools. There was the introduction of tests for Year 6 pupils that later became known as the SATs. The children trialled the tests on 16th May 1994 before taking them in 1995. The same year the kitchens were refurbished so children could have cookery lessons. The extension was

opened by Mr. George Bray who was Chair of Governors. The numbers in the school began to rise slowly but in 2010 an announcement of a review into small schools was seen by many as the writing on the wall.

2010

As numbers at the school had fallen below 36, Herefordshire County Council implemented a review to look at the viability of sustaining a school in Dilwyn. (Small School Review Policy). There was a consultation period, with the final outcome being that the school should be closed, with provision being made for the children at Weobley and other local primary schools.

Many parents and local residents were determined to maintain high quality Christian-based education in Dilwyn, but in the period of uncertainty the numbers of families applying for spaces at the school continued to fall. An action group comprising parents, governors and local residents was formed to fight the closure and find ways to continue primary education in Dilwyn. This group was led by Brigadier John Spackman and a group of Educationalists who lived in the village. During the autumn, there were discussions with St Marys R.C. High School about the possibility of federation to produce a multi faith Christian School, but this plan eventually floundered. Herefordshire Council closed the school in August 2011.

August 2011 School Closed by the Local Authority

An action group was formed that applied for Academy Status. This was initially granted; however the Council Legal team thwarted this government initiative and the offer of academy status was withdrawn, two weeks before the planned opening. Lord Hill, the Schools Minister was furious and said he would support an application for FREE SCHOOL STATUS. For a while, it looked as if education in Dilwyn had ended and the battle was lost. The action group and

parents were so annoyed at what had happened that it was decided to go ahead and run a private non-fee paying community school led by volunteer teachers.

Mr John Gerrish came out of retirement to act as Head; Peter Kyles was the Chair of Governors. Friends in government steered us towards a Free School Application. In the interim, staff received no salary and the village raised over £30,000 to pay for the school's running costs. At this crucial time actions were co-ordinated by Brigadier John Spackman.

January 2013

After 15 months and many visits to Westminster, the school opened in January 2013 as a Free School with 16 pupils. The first Principal was Mr Peter Kyles, whose own children had previously attended the school.



Mrs Kyles, Mrs Clarke, Mr Rudland and Miss Thomas were the teachers while Madeleine Spinks became the Chair of Governors. The fight back began. At the opening ceremony, Bishop Anthony cut the ribbon of hope. By September 2014 numbers had risen to 44 and now the projected number for September 2020 is 70 pupils.



July 2012 (23)



December 2012



March 2020

In our 175 years of challenges and hope, the school was closed on the 20th March when a coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) hit the country. A respiratory disease, that has caused the death of over 100,000 people. The school was closed, after 10 weeks the school was partially re-opened on the 1st June. There were two further partial lockdowns in 2021. In 2022 the school started to get back to normal and our number continued to rise to 75 pupils.

March 2023

Sadly, on the 9th March John Spackman who did so much to continue education in Dilwyn passed away at the grand age of 90. Below is a picture of the photograph that hangs with a commemorative clock in recognition of all his endeavours.



Mr K. **What an Eventful 178 Years!**