

## AMPNEY CRUCIS C of E SCHOOL

The school started in 1722 in a converted barn with a house, yard and orchard by THOMAS JONES AND WILLIAM ASH which was converted into a residence for the master and mistress.

The exact location of the house and barn are unknown but it is possible that this was where the present school stands, However in 1788 the trustees decided to build a new school house because of the dilapidated building - the new school house was complete at Easter 1791. The school unfortunately had to close for 3 years, but the income from the Charity paid for the rebuilding. There is no information on how many days per week or weeks per year the school was open.

The school started from scratch - entries from the school register show that the 30 pupils (9 girls and 21 boys) were all in their first year at school. The school hours for charity schools at that time were from 7am to 11am and 1pm to 5pm in summer and from 7am to 11am and 1pm to 4pm in winter and it is thought that these guidelines were followed in Ampney Crucis. Children attended school for a period of 4 years beginning at 8 or 9 years old.

Records show that George Blackwell recommended that "ANN DAY & WILLIAM SMITH" both 7 years old at that time were recommended by the charity for the next year.

When the school first opened absences averaged 28 days per year for each child and governors decided to expel any pupil with a 25 day absence. This improved attendances and by 1822 the figures were down to an average of 7 days absence per child. The daily record was lost in 1799 and the then headmaster records "The daily register was taken from a shelf in the school and could not be found". One of the pupils came under suspicion of this theft but nothing could be done because of lack of proof.

Because of the Church of England connection most of the reading consisted of the Bible, the Prayer Book and other religious books. Most of these books were published in 1820 but remained in use for about another 40 years. Writing materials consisted of pencils and slate for the younger pupils and quill pens, ink powder, foolscap paper and copybooks for the older children.

The boys clothing consisted of:

- Blue Cap with Black Ribbon
- White Linen Shirts
- Blue Coat and Waistcoat
- Leather Breeches
- Blue Worsted Stockings
- Black Leather Shoes

The girls wore:

Straw Bonnet with Black Ribbon  
White Calico Cotton Frock and Petticoat  
Whalebone Stays  
Blue Cape  
Blue Worsted Stockings  
Black Leather Shoes

Some of these clothes were made by the local tailor and dressmaker - the remainder were cut out and made up by the school mistress for which she was paid extra money. The girls were not left idle as they were required to knit their own and the boys stockings.

In November 1833 some alterations were made to the school, and in 1834 the school was divided in two and separate boys and girls schools were formed for the very first time - this increased the numbers bringing the total to some 56 children attending the school. In 1837 some of the excess money from the closure of the school from 1788-91 was used to buy two cottages at Hilcot End giving additional income for the school from the rents charged. It is thought that the houses mentioned were Nos 50 and 51.

In 1862 the term "Charity School" was dropped and the school became known as "Ampney Free School". New Trustees were appointed to the charity in 1862 and their first action was to build a new girls school which included a dwelling for the mistress of the girls school on the eastern end of the old 1791 building and a new girls schoolroom adjoining the dwelling house measuring 16 ft by 33 ft with an entrance porch attached to the eastern end.

Money for this building came from the sale of the two cottages at Hilcot End - the Lord of the Manor also donated most of the building materials with the villagers carrying all this material to the site free of charge. Work commenced in September 1861 - the cost of the rebuild being £214. 17s. 9d - work was completed in November 1852 with a new administration being drawn up by the commissioners. A charge of up to 4d could be made on each child, payable every Monday. Admission to the school was now open to all children of Ampney Crucis, as far as space would allow, and this was not dependant upon selection by the trustees as was previously allowed. The expenditure of the charity income was altered, so that the £65 previously used to pay the master and clothe the children, was now used to pay staff, and for school repairs. The £15 formerly used for placing out of apprentices was now used to clothe 6 boys and 6 girls selected in respect of their "Proficiency and Meritorious Conduct" - these to be called Foundation Scholars.

**1874** - Reorganisation had taken place and the school was now divided by age not sex.

**1902** - Local Education Authorities were formed with the financing for schools coming from the rates. In 1903, Gloucestershire Education Committee became responsible for the school with two representatives from the Education Committee

joining the Trustees. The 12 children who were entitled to the clothing grant under the 1852 agreement were, from 1928, allowed to buy clothing of their own choosing to the value of £1. 5s. 0d.

**1935** - Two temporary classrooms were erected on the site of the present 1966 extension at a cost of £237 necessitating the sale of Saving Certificates owned by the school.

**1945** - It became obvious that a new school was required costing an estimated £11,700 - this school became a grant aided Church of England school.

**1952** - The school lost all pupils over the age of 11 years old to secondary schools, and in the same year the governors decided to apply for Aided Status under the shadow of the County Development Plan. It was clear that a new building was needed and the only question was whether to adapt or rebuild. Aided status was not granted until the end of 1953.

**1956-57** - Plans for rebuild were drawn up but little progress was made,

**1959** - Early in the year the size of the redevelopment was agreed for a 3 classroom 70 pupil school and once again plans had to be redrawn.

**1960** - Redevelopment was agreed at a cost of £14,000 and by Easter 1961 tenders were requested. One of the big problems in accepting this was that nearly 50% of the money had to be raised locally if the school was to retain its AIDED status. Many local people donated gifts and interest free loans, and by Easter it was reported that "we have enough money to pay our share of the cost of the new school". In October 1963 the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Rev. Basil Guy (Mr Thorne was the present headmaster) performed the opening ceremony. Now the school was housed in the 1862 building (modified to modern requirements) and the 1963 building, making it a model school and probably the most modern in the county. In addition to classroom facilities, the school had ample playground space and also its own kitchen. In 1964, Barnsley Village School closed and these children joined Ampney Crucis which now served Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Peter, Ampney St Mary, Harnhill, Driffield and Norcote. Since then with the closure of Poulton School, children from Poulton have joined the school.

*A note found in the book states that:*

Mrs C COPPS  
4 Caldicot Close  
Bedgrove Park  
Aylesbury  
Bucks HP21 9UF

Fathers Name ALBERT JAMES COPPS  
Mothers Name MARGARET ELIZABETH

“He taught at Ampney School and left in approx year 1933”

*This may be of use for persons wishing to trace old teachers of the school or Family Histories.*

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND (AIDED)  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**250th Anniversary**

**1722 — 1972**

**Service of**

**Thanksgiving and Re-Dedication**

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY ROOD, AMPNEY CRUCIS**

**THURSDAY, 22nd JUNE, 1972 at 11 a.m.**

## ORDER OF SERVICE

*All Standing, the Vicar shall say: —*

We are met together, in the presence of Almighty God, to give thanks for two hundred and fifty years of the life of Ampney Crucis Church School. To remember, with thanks giving, its foundation, and the many blessings it has received throughout the years. We come also to pray that the work so ably begun by others may be continued, and that the seeds of virtue and learning, there sown, may bring forth fruit that shall abound unto the glory of God, and the benefit of His people. Amen.

### HYMN

O WORSHIP the King,  
All glorious above;  
O gratefully sing  
His power and his love;  
Our shield and defender.  
The Ancient of Days,  
Pavilioned in splendour.  
And girded with praise.

O tell of his might,  
O sing of his grace.  
Whose robe is the light.  
Whose canopy space  
His chariot of wrath  
The deep thunder clouds form  
And dark is his path  
On the wings of the storm.

This earth with its store  
Of wonders untold.  
Almighty, thy power  
Hath founded of old;  
Hath established it fast  
By a changeless decree.  
And round it hath cast  
Like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care  
What tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air.  
It shines in the light;  
It streams from the hills  
It descends to the plain.  
And sweetly distills.  
In the dew and the rain.

O measureless Might,  
Ineffable Love,  
While angels delight  
To hymn thee above.  
Thy humbler creation  
Though feeble their lays  
With true adoration  
Shall sing to thy praise.

THE FIRST LESSON : St. Luke 2, 41-52

Reader: Miss Angela Beese, a pupil of the School.

### HYMN

FATHER hear the prayer we offer;  
Not for ease that prayer shall be.  
But for strength that we may ever  
Live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures  
Do we ask our way to be;  
But the steep and rugged pathway  
May we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters  
Would we idly rest and stay;  
But would smite the living fountains  
From the rocks along the way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness.  
In our wanderings be our guide ;  
Through endeavour, failure, danger.  
Father, be thou at our side.

THE SECOND LESSON: Philippians 1, 2-11 Reader:

The Headmaster.

### HYMNS

*To be sung only by the Infants*

Jesus bids us shine

Jesus loves me

THE THIRD LESSON : Ephesians 4,1-7 and 11-16

Reader: Col. M. C. Watson, School Manager.

HYMN

BREATHE on me. Breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew.  
That I may love what thou dost love.  
And do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me. Breath of God,  
Blend all my soul with thine.  
Until this earthly part of me  
Glow with the fire divine.

Breathe on me. Breath of God  
Until my heart is pure,  
Until with thee I will one will.  
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me. Breath of God,  
So shall I never die.  
But live with thee the perfect life  
Of their eternity.

PRAYERS

led by Canon D. A. R. Keen, Diocesan Director of Religious Education.

LET US PRAY

For all who teach and all who learn that together they may learn dependence of the Holy Spirit

*All: We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord.*

For all teachers and those who are being trained to teach that they may be possessed of reverence and humility in their office and be inspired by the greatness of their vocation.

*All: We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord.*

For all parents that they may wisely guide the children entrusted to them by God

*All: We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord.*

For all schools and colleges and for all governors and managers that they may recxxx their responsibilities and fulfil them with diligence and understanding.

*All: We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord.*

For our country with its responsibilities in education; for the Secretary of State for Education and Science and her Officers, for the Members and Officers of the Education Authorities; for Basil our Bishop and for the Diocesan Council of Edu that they may be guided and blessed in their work.

*All: We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord.*

Let us give thanks to Almighty God for the special blessings He has bestowed c School and for the vision and ideals of the man who founded this School.

*All: We thank Thee, O Lord.*

For the public spirit and service of men and women who have worked through the to administer the affairs of the School with wisdom and foresight

*All: We thank Thee, O Lord.*

For the knowledge, skill and devotion of all who have served the School as teachers *All: We thank Thee, O Lord.*

For scholars, past and present, who by their hard work and play and loyalty/ have standard for the School, and have helped to build up its tradition.

*All: We thank Thee, O Lord.*

Let us bring together all our prayers in the words of the prayer taught to us t Saviour Jesus Christ, The Great Teacher:

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy \ done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive i trespasses. As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us no temptation; But deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom. The power and the for ever and ever. Amen.

## HYMN

SAVIOUR teach me day by day  
Love's sweet lesson to obey  
Sweeter lesson cannot be.  
Loving Him who first loved me.  
Teach me thus thy steps to trace.  
Strong to follow in thy grace.  
Learning how to love from thee.  
Loving him who so loved me.

With a child's glad heart of love,  
At thy bidding may I move.  
Prompt to serve and follow thee,  
Loving him who first loved me.  
Love in loving finds employ,  
In obedience all her joy,  
Ever new that joy will be,  
Loving Him who first loved me.

## ADDRESS

by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester (The Right Revd. Basil Guy).

## HYMN

PRAISE, my soul, the King of Heaven,  
To his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Who like me his praise should sing  
Praise him! Praise him! Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour,  
To our fathers in distress;  
Praise him still the same (or ever,  
Slow to chide and swift to bless,  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame he knows;  
In his hands he gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him  
Ye behold him face to face;  
Sun and moon, bow down before him;  
Dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace.

## PRAYERS

led by the Bishop.

### THE SCHOOL PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, friend of all children, bless our school at Ampney Crucis, and the children and grown-ups who work in it; help us to do our best, to be kind to one another, and to be cheerful all the day, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

### PRAYER OF RE-DEDICATION

Almighty God in whom we live and move and have our being, make our school at Ampney Crucis a field which Thou hast blessed; that whatsoever things are true, pure, lively and of good report, may here abound and flourish. Preserve in it an unblemished name, enlarge its work to a wider usefulness, and exalt in it the love of all its members an instrument of thy glory through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.

## THE BLESSING

*What follows here is the full report from the Wilts & Gloucestershire Standard dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 1980 and refers to the school at Ampney Crucis over a considerable length of time.*

## **250 YEARS OF SCHOOLING AT AMPNEY CRUCIS**

Sex discrimination, personal feuds, and rule with a rod of iron — it's all in the past at Ampney Crucis Church of England Primary School.

Nothing short of strike action would appease the current female teachers if they were faced with the 1834 situation — master of the boys being paid £25 a year compared to the school mistress's £5 a year!

The children don't have to witness personal feuds between their headmaster Mr. Fletcher and the vicar — Mr. Fletcher wouldn't hoist the Union Jack up the flag pole if the current vicar left the parish.

And the days when the children got caned for laughing at the antics of their elders; or for

talking; or just for looking the wrong way, are long gone.

The little school with the long history, some of it hilarious, began in 1791 as a charity school, endowed by Lord of the Manor Robert Pleydell in 1722.

Endowed with a rent charge of £80 per annum for ever, two boys or girls were to be apprenticed every year; clothing was bought for them; and instruction in writing, reading and in the Christian knowledge was provided.

According to "The Story of a Charity School" written by Clive R. Paine and current headmaster Mr Fletcher, the school was established on the profits of 13 acres, two rods, and one perch of land in Ranbury Farm in the Parish of Ampney St Peter or Eastington.

The five trustees appointed paid £65 yearly towards the maintenance of the master and mistress and clothing and instruction of the poor boys and girls; and they also chose the master and mistress.

And who would guess that the now modern school sprang from very modest beginnings — a house converted into a

residence for the master and mistress; and barn being used to accommodate the children.

It is not known where exactly this first school was sited but it is believed that it stood where the present school stands.

It wasn't until 1862 that the Trustees decided to build a new school house because of the dilapidated state of the old one. That was completed in 1791.

## **TRUANCY PROBLEM**

And despite decent conditions; the possibility of being apprenticed to a good trade or calling; or being well-clothed — truancy was a great problem in those early days.

Many stayed away for little or no reason; many were kept at home by their parents; and as a result many were found unworthy of the education provided and were "excluded on account of negligence". Not many children completed their four years of education.

It was one truant, one such scholar though unworthy of the education provided who was wrongly suspected

of stealing the 1799 record of attendance. The case was never proved against the youngster and the register which had been kept on a shelf in the school, was never found.

Why did they play truant? one asks. Whether it was because of the strict discipline or the curriculum we'll never know.

From their first minutes in the school they were taught the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The Bible and Prayer Book were used as fundamental reading material; and the children were taught spelling, writing, reading, arithmetic and Anglicanism - all reading material being religious in nature.

The infants wrote with chalk pencils on slates and the more advanced scholars had quill pens, ink powder, foolscap paper and copy books.

They wore, thanks to one of the bequests of the 1722 endowment giving clothing to the poor children, clothes made by the local tailor and dressmaker or the headmistress.

The boys wore blue caps with black ribbon, white linen shirts, blue coats and waistcoat,

leather breeches, blue worsted stockings (which the girls knitted), and black leather shoes.

The girls wore straw bonnets with black ribbon, white calico-cotton frocks, petticoats and whalebone stays, blue capes, blue worsted stockings, and black leather shoes.

And they all sat round desks which were placed around the edge of the classroom, the area in the middle being reserved for the master.

That was the 1830s. But it wasn't only those early scholars who disliked school - a later scholar who still lives in the village of Ampney Crucis remembered his days at the school.

Assembly in the morning, reading, writing and arithmetic - "properly, none of this computer effort", says Mr. Fred Kent. And afternoons taken up with drawings and paintings.

### STRICT

It was terribly strict, he says, laughing. "I got the cane every day, once or twice, and no-one dared do any pranks. You got the cane if you didn't know your multiplication tables — you got the cane for looking the wrong

way".

"It was work all the time - there was no leisure time. No nature walks or anything like that and no PE. Only when it was cold would they take you out in the playground to stamp your feet and clap your hands to keep warm".

The children were paraded to and from church on days like All Saints Day and Good Fridays; and the conditions were not awfully good.

### NO HEATING

Tortoiseshell stoves and fires in the middle of the room which didn't work; and there were times when the children sat with their coats and gloves on in the winter - there was no heating whatsoever.

The girls had to curtsy to the Lord of the Manor if he came through the village and the boys had to salute him. "If you didn't you know what you'd get - a little bit of cane across your fingers," says Mr. Kent.

And when the inspector visited the school, two of the boys would be instructed to carry his suitcase for him to his next port of call - Barnsley. "We quar-

reled for that," says Mr. Kent, "it's a long way to Barnsley you know and it took practically all day to walk there and back again." But despite the conditions and the fact that Mr. Kent attended school under sufferance - he didn't like it - his memories still make him laugh.

To go back to before Mr. Kent's time, however, one has to turn to the old log books and thanks are due to Gloucestershire's Records Department, Shire Hall). In 1833 the school was enlarged, new benches were erected, a new fire grate was installed in the little room, and one room was divided into two units. And it would appear that there were two schools - one for girls run by a Mrs. Hall, and one for boys run by Henry Kemble.

The system of charity bequests and teaching appears to have continued until 1862 when the term "charity" was dropped from common usage in the village and the school became known as Ampney Free School.

In 1861 when new trustees were appointed, a new girls' school was erected (for £215. 17s. 9d) adjoining the east of the 1791 schoolroom.

There was a new dwelling for the mistress, new schoolroom for the girls adjoining, and an entrance porch.

By 1874 reorganisation had taken place and the schools were divided by age not sex. The infants were in the former girls school and ground floor of the mistress's house (no longer needed because all future masters and mistresses were married), and the seven to 12 years olds were taught in the 1791 school.

By 1897 the school held 130 children. It had an average attendance of 104.

From 1860 onwards children at the school had been charged 4d per week for education, payable every Monday. But by 1891 the government grant of 10s 1d per head was accepted and with state aid to support the original endowment, education was once more provided free of charge.

In 1903 the Gloucestershire Education Committee became responsible for the school which was run by six managers, four of them were trustees of the endowment and two being representatives of the committee.

Religious instruction

was Anglican and directed by Gloucester Diocesan Syllabus with the exception that Communion Service was substituted for Morning and Evening Prayer in the Prayer Book Section of the Syllabus.

## STRIFE

And it was the religious instruction which appears to have caused some of the strife

Between the feuding vicar and headmaster of the school. (The two were always arguing and the headmaster was eventually dismissed as being unbalanced).

There was rivalry between the syllabus of the Diocese and that prepared by the vicar who was placed in charge of religious education in the school.

The master wished to return to the Diocesan Syllabus (as much out of spite to the vicar as for any other reason probably) and the vicar placed the matter before the Board of Education. They resolved that the responsibility for religious education should rest on all the managers and not solely on the vicar - the Diocesan Syllabus therefore was once more adopted.

The vicar left for another living and the headmaster, who was dismissed as being unbalanced, was certified three months later.

## FROM THE LOG BOOKS

The following are just some of the extracts from the school's log books.

**1897**

**April 6:** "A very cold and snowy morning, the roads being covered with slush, but 93 children were present. Slightly improved attendance in the afternoon although the weather was not much better." (There were 110 on the roll).

**June 25:** "Mrs. Cripps very kindly presented the school with a Diamond Jubilee Portrait of HM Majesty the Queen. Average for week 106.8. Average percentage 92 nearly. Number of registers 116."

**June 29:** "No school. The master and teachers took the choir boys to see the Jubilee Fleet at Portsmouth. It is a great pity that all the upper children were not able to have gone, as it formed an object lesson never to be forgotten."

**July 6:** "No school. Great fête in Cirencester Park in connection with the Odd-Fellows Friendly Society."

**1898**

**February 14:** "Not a good attendance. Several children are absent, suffering with chicken pox. One was supposed to be dying of consumption, was re-admitted."

**October 4:** "Not a good attendance. There was a rummage sale at the Vicarage which kept some of the children from school."

**October 5:** "Not a good attendance. Some of the children were absent to go to Cirencester to take out the Clothing Club, and some stayed at home while their mothers went to town."

**1899**

**January 12:** "A particularly rough wet day. Some children came to school after dinner and got wet through. They had to be sent home to change their clothes."

Object lessons included: a farm yard; steam engine; pearls and poisonous plants to name only a few. Poetry was 'Signs of the Seasons', 'We are Seven', 'Homes of England' and 'Graves of a Household' and 'Building of the Ship'. Grammar for the year was as per code for all

standards; geography was as per code; and songs were 'Playtime', 'Snow', and 'Curly Head'.

**February 20:** "Inspector visited the school in the afternoon...; Large Nellie Violet admitted."

**1900**

**April 11:** "Not a fine day but there was a good attendance. The vicar's wife visited the school in the morning. In the afternoon the children on the Foundation had their clothes given to them..."

**1908**

**April 9:** "Caned pupil (one hander for a beastly dirty act). He returned to his place muttering and then swearing "I seized him, pushed his head under the desk, and gave him a good thrashing."

**1916**

**March 1:** "Miss XXX commenced teaching this morning. The vicar visited and spoke to her. (I ruled out in red ink: 'I noticed she was very upset and afterwards I learned he was very rude to her')."

**March 2:** "Miss XXX - not present, being unwell. The doctor says she is suffering from 'shock'."

**March 3:** "The vicar visited and gave a Scrip-

ture lesson.”

**April 10:** “Received a supply of faggots.”

**April 19:** “Primrose Day. Most of the children came with a button-hole of primroses.”

**May 3:** “The vicar visited and gave a Scripture lesson. Shakespeare Centenary, The following ceremony was gone through:- (1) Hymns; (2) Prayers; (3) Reading “Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.” (4) Short recitation from Shakespeare, (5) Address by teacher on Shakespeare’s life, writings, patriotism and glory. (6) Singing of “God Save the King”

**May 29:** “Monday. Half holiday. Tea and Empire Celebration at Waterton. A glorious time. Patriotic songs, National Anthems, saluting the flag. Recitations and a very splendid address by the vicar of Cirencester, made a lengthy and enjoyable programme.

“Plenty of amusements were provided, and a host of ladies were present and nothing was wanting to make the affair go”.

“Many mothers were present and most of them very proud of their children. Both old and young had a most happy

time.”

**June 9:** “Friday. Punished XXX for being late (one hander), showing temper (one hander), wilful disobedience (two strips across the shoulders.)”

**June 12:** “The vicar visited in the morning, and again in the afternoon”. (And scored out in red ink: “During the morning he shouted ‘You enter the punishment you gave XXX in the book. And I will come in and see it’.”

**July 11:** “Sent off 5/6d to the Committee for the Relief of Belgians. The children brought the money.”

**August 1:** “I yesterday again examined the registers — what I had learned make it necessary to test some particular case — knowing XXX had been ill I went to his house and learned he was ill in bed on Thursday last. I then came to the school and examined the registers and found that on that day he was marked as present both in the morning and afternoon. He had no mark against his name on Friday. When I examined the registers — afterwards a ‘0’ was put against him”, wrote the vicar.

(This entry is followed

in red ink with the following statement by the headmaster: “The inspection (June 23) was added by Mr. XXX on August 1, 1916 during the morning meeting. The statement ‘I found a few days ago the absent ones had no naughts and co.’ is not true.”). (But everything was found to be correct.”).

The headmaster’s entry continues: “I hope XXX (the vicar) does not think that this was intentional on my part. It was a ‘slip’ pure and simple and I feel very vexed with myself for letting it happen

**September 19:** “The vicar visited this afternoon and looked at the registers for 40 minutes.” I now place on record what XXX (the vicar) has done to the school registers. “on June 23 the registers were checked and signed, and an entry made in Log”.

“On Monday July 31<sup>st</sup> - (vicar) visited the school during the morning playtime, got possession of the registers during my temporary absence and altered June 23 into July 23.

“Next day, Tuesday August 1, I had an opportunity to mention this ‘falsification’

(scored out and 'mistake' written in instead) to him and at the same time pointed out that July 23 was on a Sunday.

"He made another alteration and wrote at the side (June is the right entry)."

At the side of this longish entry in red ink is "This alteration - (falsification being substituted for mistake) - was made at the request of the Local Education Authority November 4, 1916."

**September 22:** "A fine day and some children away helping to get the potatoes up. The vicar visited scored out in red ink: "And said 'I want the registers.' After the upset he made in the school on Tuesday and this being the fifth day out of the last ten school days that he had asked for them I refused him on the grounds of his interference with both the discipline and instruction of the school, but said for 'testing' he should have them. After school I took the registers down to the Vicarage and asked him if he would look at them. His reply was 'I refuse to do so now. I am writing to Mr. Household'." (Secretary of Education,

Gloucester County Council).

**September 27:** "The vicar visited and gave a Scripture lesson. The vicar visited a second time during the morning (then scored out in red ink): And said 'I want the registers please'. When I was taking them from the drawer of my desk he said quite loudly 'Don't want to refuse them today, do you?' I made no reply. He was looking at them for more than 20 minutes and again hindered the work of the school."

**October 3:** "Tuesday - The vicar visited during the morning (then in red: "And his loud remarks to the head teacher (including the sentence 'You pay your debts') again upset the work of the schools.

(In ordinary writing) "He placed the pay sheet and cheque on my desk and told me to sign. I took pen to do so, but having no stamp I told him so. He said 'Very well then I will keep the cheque till you do. He at once took up the cheque and pay sheet and left saying 'Good afternoon child'.

1917

**February 10:** The Board of Education have directed entries on pages 2, 12, 18, 19 (as

above) shall be expunged as they are such as should not properly have been made in a log book (signed by the Secretary of Education Gloucestershire County Council).

There follows a copy of a letter signed by G. S. Richardson (F.G. Mills?) the Minister of Education to the headmaster dated: August 9, 1917: "With reference to your letter of 17th ult, I am directed to state that your case has been carefully considered by the Board who have been forced to the conclusion that your falsification of the registers was deliberate. In view however of your age and your past good record the Board has decided, although with the greatest hesitation, not to take any action against your Certificate on the present occasion, but I am to state that they take a very grave view of the irregularities of which you have been guilty and I am to warn you in the most formal and serious manner that if any charges of a similar nature are made and sustained against you in future they will have no alternative but to suspend your Certificate or to cancel it

altogether.

1918

**March 1:** Fires in large room had to be put out owing to the volume of smoke being emitted. The vicar attended and gave a Scripture lesson to Stds. One, Two and Three. One pupil has been absent since April 27 with influenza. Owing to the extreme cold I had all the school in the infant room in the afternoon. All windows were open wide and the stove in working order. A temperature of 58° was maintained. The large room was full of sulphurous fumes and the temperature 38°! The timetable was varied somewhat after playtime in the afternoon. Percentage for week 93.1.”

About the time of the last extract, the curriculum embodied the four R's; history, geograph, singing and drawing. The girls did needlework and knitting as they had done since the founding of the school; the boys did gardening and carpentry. By 1935 the children were also taught bee and poultry keeping.

In 1935 two temporary classrooms were erected and by 1945 it was obvious that a new

school was much needed. A new school was estimated to cost around £11,700 and Ampney Crucis became a grant-aided Church of England School.

### AIDED STATUS

The managers agreed to apply for “aided” status; new buildings were essential and the only question was whether to adapt the existing building or rebuild altogether. Adaptation was estimated at £13,000.

By 1953 the estimate for adaptation had risen to £18,000 and by the end of the year an application for “aided” status was granted.

During 1956 and 1957 plans for building were being drawn up; in 1959 the size of redevelopment was agreed and plans were redrawn. The redevelopment was to cost £14,000 and there was the problem of raising the money if the school was to retain its ‘aided’ status.

The local people, however, made gifts and interest-free loans and in 1963 there was enough money to pay the share of the cost of the new school.

The little school as we

now know it, having stood on the same site for over 250 years and having occupied the same building for over 150 years, was officially opened in October 1963 by the Bishop of Gloucester the Right Reverend Basil Gray.

No sex discrimination now; no personal feuds: and no rule with a rod of iron. Just modern buildings; plenty of playing space; and a swimming pool.

One wonders if the 65 scholars appreciate just how lucky they are....

*End of Standard Article.*



Picture of Ampney Crucis School pupils taken in 1937. Miss Weston and Headmaster Mr Skinner's Classes.

# AMPNEY CRUCIS SCHOOL



An exterior view of Ampney Crucis School,  
one of the oldest Primary Schools in the county, dating back to 1722



Mr Ernest W FLETCHER with the old Ampney Crucis School admission register,  
which dates back to the turn of the century.



**1907 MR. AND MRS. C. R. WOODMAN**, of Ampney Crucis, near Cirencester, who have just retired from the position of headmaster and infant mistress of Ampney National School, after a period of twenty-four and twenty years respectively.

Mr. Woodman, who will be 65 years of age on November 25 1907, is retiring on superannuation. Mr. and Mrs. Woodman are leaving the Cotswolds today for Tyneham, Dorsetshire, where they will live in retirement with their daughter, who is taking charge of a School in that district.