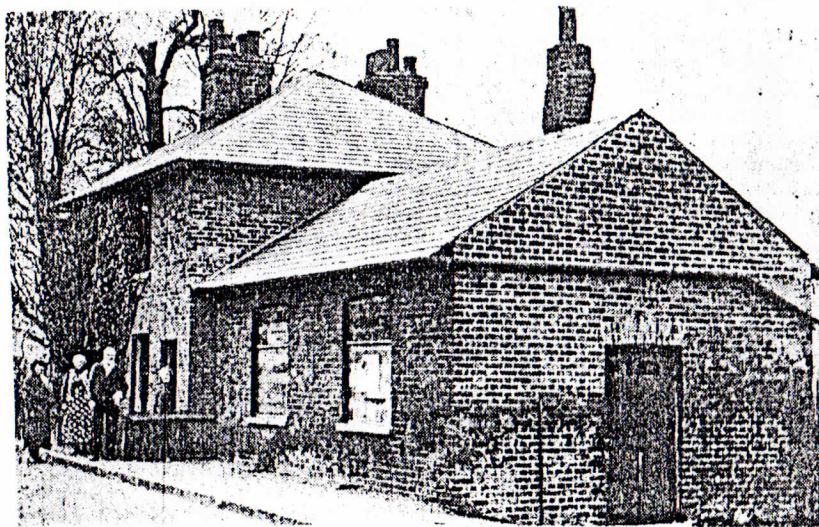


EDUCATION IN EAST BARNET IN THE 19TH CENTURY



THE OLD VILLAGE SCHOOL, CHURCHHILL ROAD

There had been a village school in East Barnet for some time before the 19th Century but little is known about it. An entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts in 1631 authorised payment for the services of a "lawful clerke or clergie man to teach the children of the inhabitants in East Barnet letters and good maners". In 1763 the Lord of the Manor, John Thomlinson, provided in his will for a sum of money to be left to a village school run by a John Howard in a cottage but it is not known where this was.

In 1822 the National Society gave a grant of £20 towards "the fitting up of a daily school for 56 boys and 56 girls". A lease of a property was obtained for one year with the option of increasing the period to seven or fourteen years. The building was described as having lathe and plaster front and end walls, a brick back and a tiled roof and had two classrooms, 22ft 4in wide by 14ft 6in wide and 8 feet 4 inches high. It is not clear where this building was or who owned it but may have connections with the one referred to in 1841 in the estate papers of Edward Beeston Long held at the Herts Record Office, as being "the school house now divided into two tenements with gardens (sold 25.10.1841 for £262.10.0d) and let to Solomon Edie at £10".

Piggotts 1838 Directory shows a National School for both boys and girls being run by a Mrs. McFarlane. Mrs. Elizabeth McFarlane aged 50, is again mentioned in the 1841 Census as a teacher this time also with a Mary Heady. By 1851 Ann Treweek aged 47, seems to have taken over the running of the National School and a separate building was being used as an infants school from at least 1854.

The 1851 Census showed that in East Barnet 45% of boys and 43% girls were scholars; 15% boys and 9% girls were in employment; 40% boys and 48% girls were unclassified. Nationally in 1851 30% of 10-14 year olds were working - of whom there were 37% boys and 22% girls. Many more girls would have been working at home and would therefore have been unrecorded. The 1851 Census also shows that nationally of 2.2 million children under 10 years 3.5% were occupied but this does not seem to have been the case in East Barnet, where not one child up to the age of 10 is recorded as being employed.

The 1861 Census showed that a separate building was still being used to house the Infants School on Cat Hill with Eliza Oliver as the infant school teacher and later a Miss Savage.

The 1867 Post Office Directory mentions that a Susan Grant was mistress of the elementary National School at that time and Miss Caroline Corps, who was to remain headmistress of the school for fifty years, took over from her in 1869.

A written record of the day to day progress of the school began in the school log book which opened in July 1869, and which seems to have coincided with the appointment of the new headmistress. The first recorded HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector) reports it as being "a village school fairly conducted". The average attendance for the previous year was 39 (Juniors only). The report was signed by the rector the Rev. C.E.Hadow. Since the school was a church one the rector and his wife seem to have made regular visits and on Saints' Days the children attended church.

Although, as I have already said most of the children of East Barnet of school age attended school, it seems from the log book, that it was quite acceptable in the early years (1869-1879) that children should miss school whenever the opportunity for work arose.

In 1870 C. Nightingale and J. Burrell were both recorded as being absent for a week in April "at work". At the end of the month the comment was made "several boys still at work". In May Charles Nightingale (presumably the same child as before and at that time aged 10) was readmitted having had 6 weeks absence "at work". In June 1870 Joseph Dixon was recorded as being absent during the week "being needed by mother".

October seems to have been the highest period of absenteeism when children were involved in picking up acorns. We had some pig farms locally and they undoubtedly purchased this supplement to their animals diet. Large numbers of children took time off to do this right through the 1870s but by the 1880s the numbers seem to have reduced and the entries tend to read "a few" or "several" children absent. The number of children attending school (infant and junior) in the 1880s was around 100. Even in 1890 there was still mention of boys being absent "picking up acorns", but there does not seem to be any mention of girls being similarly employed.

Not all the local children receiving education attended the village school. The number of governesses employed in private houses had increased from 2 in 1851 to 3 in 1861 and there were also listed one schoolmaid and a teacher living with a farming family.

The 1851 Census shows a private boarding school being run by a Mrs. Fletcher with 6 boarding pupils. It is impossible to discover how many day pupils she had at that time but since she appears to have been running the school alone and her three daughters were also listed as scholars, it cannot have been a great number. However by 1861 the Census shows that her three daughters were also acting as teachers and she had the assistance of a governess. The school had eight boarders at that time but the high proportion of staff suggests that day girls were likely and that the school had grown considerably. Many of the pupils may well have come from the new class of office workers living in the newly formed area of New Barnet. The 1867 Post Office makes no mention of Mrs. Fletcher's school but only the National School and Church Farm Industrial Boys School (see Bulletin no.24). It gives the population as 1851 in 1861 and the acreage covered as 1601 acres (20 acres less than the 1858 Piggotts Directory).

By this time New Barnet had started to be thought of as a separate area and in 1864 a new parish church had been built to serve the Lyonsdown area of the parish (Holy Trinity) and another church (St. James') to serve the more southern part of New Barnet and a National school was built in 1870 to serve the growing population. Unlike the old East Barnet school this school had a conscience clause in its trust deed and local opinion, support and even more important money, seem to have been divided over this issue.

The New Barnet National School's log book starts for the Infant and Junior Schools in June 1870. The schools were linked with the church of St. James and the Vicar is recorded as visiting the school and taking an interest in its management. The New Barnet schools used the pupil teacher system and despite several changes in staff the HMI reported after seventeen months "The National school is in a state of efficiency". In 1871 the New Barnet schools accommodated 315 children.

# REPORT

*For the Year commencing November 1, 1879, and ending October 31, 1880.*

THE Committee of the East Barnet National and Infant Schools have to submit the following Report to the Subscribers as the result of the last year's working.

The Expenses of the Schools have been £211 4s. 8d.

The Report of the Government Inspector, who visited the Schools in November last, is to the following effect:—

“ But for the very poor Grammar in the Third Standard, which I regret to say must cost the School one Class Grant, and the defective Arithmetic, the School would have passed well in all points. The Infants are very fairly looked after; a Monitor should be permanently kept in that room.”

“ E. WATERS should be informed that she is now qualified under Article 79 but not under Article 60.”

Spurred on perhaps by the building of the new New Barnet School the Reverend Hadow resolved to build a new school in East Barnet and wrote in a letter in 1870 to the National Society supporting his claim for a grant, "We could have raised the whole amount, as the Bishop knows, had it not been for the opposition of ultra liberal parishioners who wanted a school deed that should be undenominational with a conscience clause was well!" The Rev. Hadow in the same letter stated that the school had been run for the previous fifty years in a hired house. The HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector) reported in 1871 "The Schoolroom is inadequate and an infants school in the Parish is held in a room far away" however "the Infants school is not under inspection".

Land was obtained for a new school in 1871 and on the 11th April 1872 the new school, called St. Marys', was opened at a cost of £1360.18s. with a grant towards the costs of £40 from the National Society and £191.10. 4d from the Education Committee. The balance of £1053.6.8. was raised locally through donations. The school committee was made up of the rector the Rev. Hadow and local residents Robert Mansel, W. Church, N. Searle Parker, F. Foxall, and G. Gooper. Matthew Arnold inspected the new school on 25th July 1872 and he reported "This district (he included New Barnet) contains 2400 inhabitants of whom 3/11ths are of the class whose children may be expected to attend elementary school. School accommodation ought to be provided for 417 children". "Efficient schools within this district already existing or increased and being supplied, will accommodate 1247 boys 147 girls and 167 infants; I consider there is no deficiency in this district 18.12.1871."

Miss Caroline Corps the headmistress of the East Barnet school made an entry in the Log Book on 30th October 1872 "received Parchment from Government" "gave children half day holiday". This followed an entry in August 1872 from the HMI that "Miss Corps will shortly receive her certificate", presumably prior to this she was unqualified.

When the Log Book started for the East Barnet School in 1869 the Monitor System of teaching was being used. In January 1870 it records "M. Phillips left (monitor)" and "A. Phillips began her work as a monitor". Hannah Heady left in 1870 and was listed as a monitor and was then aged 20. Emily Hankey aged 17 began as a monitor in November 1870. The appointment of and leaving of monitors continues for some time but the Pupil Teacher system seems to have been used at the same time.

The pupil teacher system was a more formally organised basis of both providing assistance to qualified staff and teaching new ones, almost an apprenticeship system.

One such pupil teacher was Elizabeth Waters who was born in 1861 and was attending St. Mary's School as a pupil when the Log Book begins. Her father was a servant and she seems to have been the eldest daughter of a family of three in 1871. Her father was born in Barnet and her mother came from Norfolk. She lived in Church Hill Road. In 1876 the HMI examined her for composition and map drawing and she "passed fairly" but was told to attend to geography. In 1878 she was examined and passed in penmanship, grammar, composition and history. In 1879 arithmetic, geography, history, penmanship and teaching and was said to have much improved. In 1880 aged 19 she was "informed that she is now qualified under article 79 but not under Article 60". She subsequently left having completed her apprenticeship.

When she became a pupil teacher it had been necessary to obtain a Medical Certificate. This stated "I have examined E. Waters and consider her to be in a state of sound health. signed G.W.F. Bury F.R.C.S " She also needed a certificate as to her character and this was supplied by the rector and stated "I certify that Lizzie Waters candidate for the office of Pupil Teacher in the East Barnet School has been well brought up and that her moral character is correct her home respectable and that she is likely to profit by the instruction given by the mistress".

The Assistant Teachers changed fairly frequently and entries giving their comings and goings mention which acts they were or were not qualified under. "Miss Roberts left last autumn, replaced by Assistant under Article 79" "replaced by Miss Carpenter, doesn't satisfy Act 32 (c)" "Late assistant teacher not qualified under Act 79" - this entry adds the information "not having completed her engagement as a pupil teacher, a deduction is therefore incurred under Article 32 (c). It can be seen that the qualifications of the staff meant a difference to the finance available for the school.

In 1880 a grant of £5 was given by the National Society which was part of a scheme to raise the standard of poorer schools, which otherwise might not meet the requirements of the Education Department. Altogether £24.13.3d was spent on

refurbishing the school and the work was done by a local builder William Bradley. The work included taking down a platform; which may indicate that one classroom was tiered. The front entrance doors were repaired and work was done on the blinds, and fences and the school and teachers house were decorated.

A School Board was set up for the whole district (including New Barnet) in November 1893. It had not been necessary to set up a board before that as when Matthew Arnold had inspected the district in 1871 he had found there was no lack of spaces for children. It cost £100 to form the Board and the Overseers of the Poor of East Barnet had to supply this sum. The New Barnet School was transferred to the Board having spent £495 to meet the Government's requirements. Even so in 1895 the School Board had to take up the Salvation Army Hall in New Barnet for three years to accommodate the ever-growing number of children in the area. From the 1st January 1893 places at New Barnet were free. The Rev. Hadow was clerk to the Board but resigned in January 1894 when the possibility of the transfer of the East Barnet school was being discussed. The East Barnet School had been asked if they were prepared to transfer to the new Board but replied they intended to retain control and did not intend to enlarge their school.

The 1880 Education Act had made education compulsory for children up to the age of 10 years. However this does not seem to have been totally effective. As late as 1894 an entry in the School Log Book read "admitted four children, two over 9 years, not having been at school before, 1 turned 6 not being able to speak plainly". By this time there were over 100 children on the books. Miss Corps does not seem to have been admitting children between the ages of 3 and 5 in 1895 since an entry by the HMI comments that "the idea that children of 3-5 are not eligible is quite erroneous and if persisted in will cost the annual grant". In 1891 the minimum school leaving age was raised from 10 to 11 years.

In February 1894 the Education Department wrote to the Board enclosing instructions and model forms for the proposed byelaws for the attendance of children at School. A School Attendance Committee was set up on 1st March 1894 to receive reports of the school attendance officer and to give instructions for enforcing attendance. By this time it is apparent that the education of children was being taken more seriously and school attendance was considered important. The changing role of children from wage earners to scholars had been a slow one and for a long period the two roles worked in tandem.

#### SOURCES

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This bulletin is a summary of the East Barnet material included in a Project produced for Middx. Poly by the author entitled "The Changing Pattern of Education and Influence of the change in the 19th Century - The East Barnet Example" and is available at Barnet Museum in full.  
Additional information obtained from the National Society has been added and the bulletin was revised in 1990.