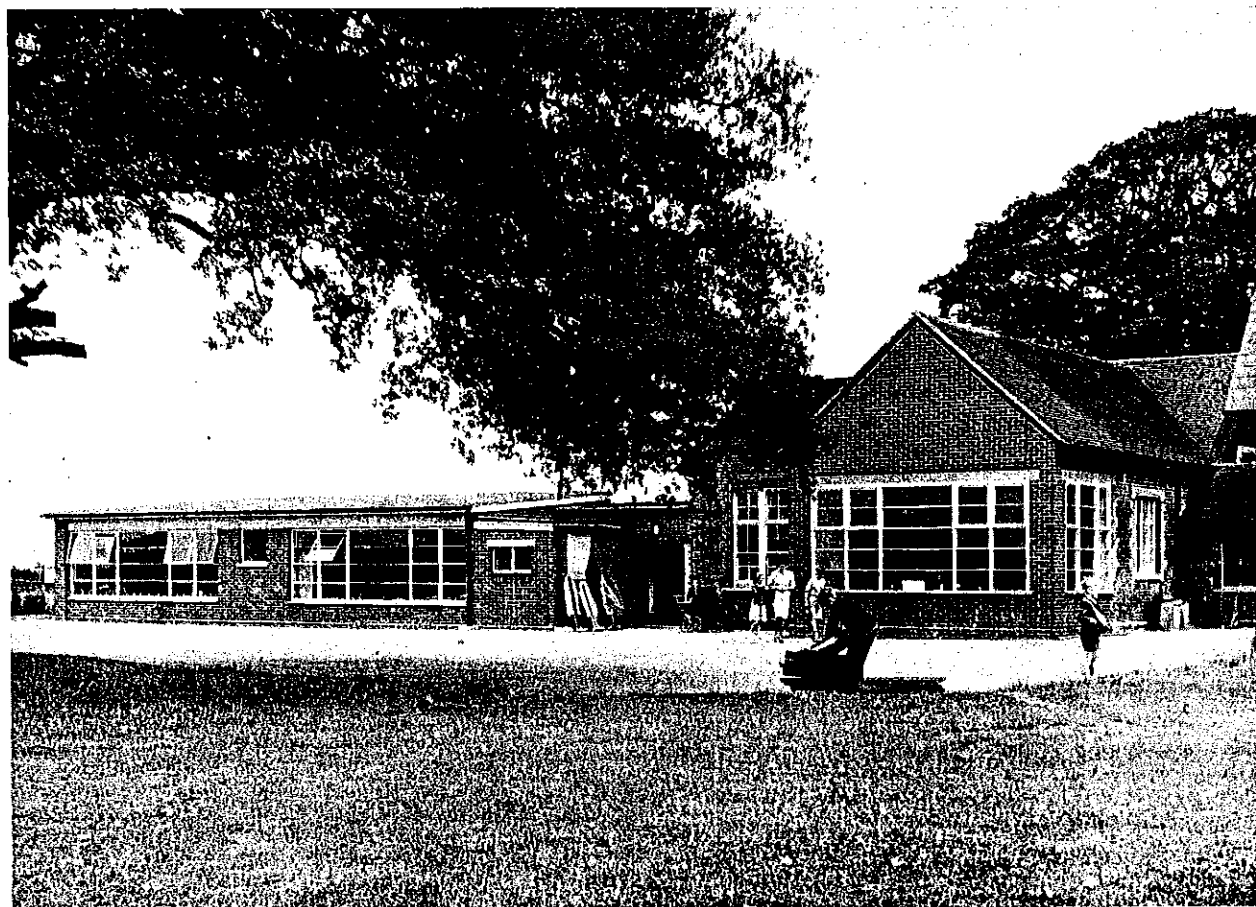


BENTLEY C.E. SCHOOL - BRENTWOOD

1864

1964



A SHORT HISTORY

-of-

BENTLEY C.E. SCHOOL

BRENTWOOD

ESSEX.

Compiled by The Headmaster,

George E. Taylor.

May, 1964.

THE PARISH.

First of all, a word about Bentley. You will not find it marked on any map and I know of one sign post only which points the way to Bentley Common.

On the very old maps you will discover either Bentley Mill or Bentley Common, but Bentley as a parish did not exist until 1953. Before that time it was part of South Weald parish and although our church had its own church council and our school its own Managers, both were actually under the jurisdiction of South Weald.

The mill is shown on Chapman and Andre's map of Essex, but not the "Mile". On the O/S map of 1881, the "Mile" is shown as a road and not, as before, as a cart track, and the mill is marked as "wind and steam". Millfield, now the offices of the Eastern Electricity Board, was not yet built.

Bentley School is 335 ft. above sea level.

THE SCHOOL.

The original Bentley District School was founded in 1864, although the trust deed is dated 16th April 1865. It was not, as many of us think, the South Weald Parochial Council (of which Parish Bentley was then a part) who decided that a school should be built at Bentley Common. The School, which cost £450 began through the kindness of three men (one Mr. Arrow, lived at Pilgrims Hall) who apparently thought that there were enough children in the district to make the building worth while.

Furniture was also provided. This, of course, was very crude according to present-day standards, probably consisting of long backless forms and a head teacher's desk. The staff probably consisted of the Head Teacher and two or three Unqualified Teachers.

As the school consisted of one room only, the children, for many of the lessons, worked together. At other times, the older children might be repeating aloud lessons from the blackboard, while the younger pupils were writing on their slates.

The room was heated by a single open fire (the chimney can still be seen) and the outside toilets were primitive. The bell, as far as is known, is the same as in use today, but instead of being fixed to a wall as now, it stood on the roof of the school and the rope hung down into the school itself.

In 1893 it appears that the School was becoming overcrowded and at the request of the Board of Education an infants classroom was added on The North Western side of the original building. The accommodation was now for 111 children.

A further extension was probably made as The Return on Elementary Education 1900 stated that there was now room for 163 children.

During the Summer Holidays of 1922, a disastrous fire broke out. Not only was the building badly damaged and the furniture destroyed, but all the School records, probably dating back to the Schools inception.

Here is what the Headmaster at that time wrote about the unfortunate event.

"During the Summer Holidays, viz: August 11th, 1922, a disastrous fire broke out in the Schoolroom.

It was discovered by the Headmaster (E.O.M. McMair) about 3.20 a.m. when he found the roof of one of the classrooms and the Main Room well ablaze.

The Master's family roused the neighbours whilst the master cycled to Brentwood for the Fire Brigade which hastily arrived.

It was found impossible to save anything in the School with the exception of two scholars desks nearest the main door. Therefore, all the registers, records, furniture etc. were completely destroyed.

The Building was fully insured".

It is said that fortunately the value of The School for Insurance had been doubled only a few weeks before.

In 1923, the School was repaired, but not, unfortunately, rebuilt. The north eastern wall was extended a little and central heating was installed.

In 1935, gas was connected to The School and the oil lamps gave way to gas lighting. It was a big improvement, but still very trying to the eyes.

In 1936 saw the building of the Secondary Modern School in Brentwood and the end of Bentley School as an all age school. Previous to this, the older girls had to journey to Brentwood (usually on foot) for Domestic Science lessons.

In 1937 there were 120 pupils at The School. The outside toilets were still in existence and the buckets were emptied each evening by the Caretaker into a cesspool which was in turn emptied at intervals by the Council. The handwashing arrangements were still primitive and consisted of two wash basins (no warm water) for the whole school. The playground was unsurfaced and in wet weather had a covering of sticky mud.

The total staff at this time comprised the Headmaster, three assistants and one part-time cleaner/Stoker.

In 1938, a branch of The County Library was instituted in the School, thus making it one of the first junior schools to enjoy this educational benefit.

At the outset of war in 1939, the number on roll increased with the coming of evacuees to the district. Now followed a period of upheavals and disturbances, gas masks and air raid warnings, evacuees and rationing. The school bell was silenced for the first time since 1864. Mr. Chamen kindly lent us his chauffeurs room at Millfield for an office.

In 1941, owing to food rationing and the difficulty that parents found in filling sandwiches (even in those days very few children went home for their mid-day meal) a one course lunch was served. This was cooked in the School House and carried across to the School.

The School had a fortunate (some people at the time called it unfortunate) escape from incendiary bombs which fell all around the School and Millfield. No damage of any kind was caused.

Our first air raid shelter was provided by Mr. Chamen. It consisted of a deep ditch in Ashwells Road with a roof of wood and sods. Later three brick and concrete shelters were built in the Playing Field and the children spent many hours in these gloomy buildings lit only by candles and miners' lamps. On one occasion when the Diocesan Inspector, The Rev. G.M. Behr arrived to examine the School, the air raid warning sounded and the examination took place in the shelters. Even so, we had a good report!

At the end of the war, the future of Bentley School was in the lap, if not of the gods, at least of the Administrators.

In the County Development Plan, Bentley School was scheduled to become an Infants School. Many thought that the provision of new schools at Pilgrims Hatch would bring about the closure of our School. But, although the numbers fell in 1950, enough parents had faith in Bentley School to enable it to carry on with 79 pupils and the numbers quickly increased.

Faith in the future of the old school was restored to such an extent that improvements, renovations and even extensions were being planned.

In 1952, electric light was connected to both the School and the School House. This was a great improvement as it meant that such equipment as projectors, record players, tape recorders.etc. could be used as aids to teaching.

The whole of the School House was taken over as ancillary of the School in 1955 and has proved invaluable in providing us with a Staff Room, small Classroom, Stock Room and Storage Rooms.

Plans were now going ahead for the School to be modernised and in December 1957 the Vicar conducted a simple ceremony to mark the turning of the first sod.

The new buildings were completed at a cost of some £14,000 in September 1958 and consisted of two modern classrooms, kitchen, toilets and cloakroom. At a Ceremony in September the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rev. Faulkner Allison, dedicated the buildings in the presence of a large gathering of Managers, Parents and children. This occasion also marked the completion of 21 years service by the Headmaster who was presented with a cheque and electric tools.

The playground was extended in 1959 and a hedge removed so that a very pleasing vista across the Playing Field to Navestock and Doddinghurst is provided. On a clear day the buildings on Galleywood Common can be seen.

In 1962 what was in the old days a small infants room, was extended. Half a dozen enthusiastic and industrious parents removed a wall and dug out the footings ready for the builder to start work.

THE FUTURE

If the number on roll does not decrease to a great extent, another classroom is really necessary to enable us to use the old building as a hall, which is needed for Physical Education, Drama etc. as well as for use as a Dining Room.

And what of the future of Bentley School?

Visitors to the School are amazed to find a flourishing school in a rural locality where there are not more than a dozen houses within a radius of a mile. Every child lives at a distance from the School. Most of them come by bus or by car, by cycle and on foot from Brentwood, Pilgrims Hatch, Crow Green, Coxtie Green, Navestock, Doddinghurst, Stondon Massey and Blackmore.

Why do they come such a distance? Firstly, it is the only Church School for many miles. Secondly, the School stands in a spot which is both safe and lovely. How fortunate we are to have such a beautiful playing field surrounded as it is by trees and hedges. There is only one busy road to cross and this crossing is efficiently patrolled by Mrs. Perry. Thirdly, we like to think that parents want their children to attend Bentley School because it is a "family" school endowed with a tradition for friendliness and individual care.

1. We are fortunate in our Managers who showed foresight and faith in the future of Bentley School.

2. We are fortunate in our Parents who are always ready to give to work and to co-operate and who by their own efforts have raised nearly £300 in the last six years to help pay for the new wing.

3. We have been fortunate and are fortunate in our Staff who serve the School diligently and wholeheartedly.

4. We are fortunate in our Pupils, some of whom are the children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren of former pupils.

While there are such parents, managers, staff and pupils Bentley School will remain. While the Green Belt exists our beautiful surroundings will remain. But if house building on a large scale is allowed, no one can foretell what might happen to both School and countryside.

THE SCHOOL TODAY.

A few years ago, the School was divided into three houses for competitive purposes. The Houses were named after three brave Essex men who laid down their lives for a cause. William Hunter - who died rather than give up his desire to read the Bible and Lawrence Oates who gave his life in a vain attempt to save his friends. William Fryatt - who was put to death by the Germans for attacking a German submarine in defence of his ferry steamer.

The school uniform, easily recognised, was adopted after the war, and was "borrowed" from St. John's College, York, where the Headmaster was trained.

The badge is a representation of Bentley Mill which stood on the island at Bentley Corner until about 1885.

Our lovely Playing Field does not belong to the School. It was purchased by Essex Council from the Weald Estate in 1947 and we should be very grateful to that body for this kindly and thoughtful act. It is a pity that progress has brought about the removal of one lovely hedge and the death of all but two of our ancient oaks and all our northbeams.

In this Summer Term 1964 the School has 130 children on roll. Below are given numbers attending the School at various times -

1886 - 113	1903 - 135	1937 - 119
1895 - 125	1914 - 130	1940 - 169
1899 - 150	1924 - 149	1951 - 79

The first Head Teacher, it is said, was a lady who resigned after six years because she could not control the big boys. Since 1870, there have been four Headmasters only. Only one resigned before reaching retirement age.

Here are their names:-

1870 - 1914	-	Mr. B. Cooper
1914 - 1931	-	Mr. McMain.
1931 - 1937	-	Mr. Lay
1937 -		Mr. G.E. Taylor

At the time of our Centenary Celebrations, the Managers and Staff of Bentley School are:-

Managers.

Lt. Col. R.P. Tong (Chairman)
Rev. D.O.R. Parry (Vicar)
Mrs. E. Womersley
Mr. P.W. Hammond
Mr. W.D.S. Jackson
Mr. G. Rolls
Mrs. J.M. Hammond (Correspondent)

Teaching Staff.

Mr. G.E. Taylor (Headmaster)
Mrs. C.L. Copperthwaite (Deputy Head)
Mrs. M.J. Ford
Mr. W.L. Gaulton
Mrs. D.F. Richings
Mrs. P.I. Cook
Mrs. V. Malden

Mrs. G.E. Taylor (Clerical Assistant)

School Meals Staff

Mrs. G. Swift (Cook)
Mrs. I. Flegg
Mrs. N. Harvey
Mrs. O. Hales
Mrs. E. Perry)
Mrs. E. Bull) Mid-day Supervisors.

School Maintenance Staff.

Mr. W. Gurr
Mrs. P. Gant
Mrs. M. Balcombe

Managers' Prize Winners .

1953	-	Geoffrey Hitchin	1961	-	Stephen Lacey
1954	-	Roger Medwell	1962	-	Paul Frith
1955	-	Wendy Ambrose	1963	-	Paul Fox
1956	-	Christine March	1964	-	David Lee.
1957	-	Nita Cox			
1958	-	Richard March			
1959	-	Patricia Chilver			
1960	-	Sandra French			

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 1964

Monday 7th July in the School Field at 2.30 pm.

Exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian articles

Plays, Songs, Dances, Pageantry.

Programme:

Coronation of Miss 1864 and Miss 1964 by Class IV

Procession and Crowning of the two queens.

For details of Actors, Dancers etc. see below.

Miss 1864 - Pauline Gibbs
Miss 1964 - Carol Mead.
Courtier - Richard Masters
Pages - Paul Holdsworth, Russell, Monroe.
Dancers - "Lavender Blue"

Celia Ager, and Rodney Mullender
Heather MacHale and Tony Howlett
Sharon Latham and Alan Sullivan
Elizabeth Glibbery and Kevin Dunstan
Alison Brown and David Jacomb
Linda Parris and Nigel Clements
Amanda Taylor and Lee Warren
Vivienne Tarbox and Leslie Dawson

Buttercups and Daisies

Sharon Latham	- Linda Parris
Margaret Chilver	- Gwynette Lacey
Janet Lees	- Evelyn Harvey

Villagers of Bentley.

Sandra Wall	- Michele Crook
John Brooks	- Lorraine Berwick
Aidan Bradford	- John Betteridge
Jeannette Capon	

Homage to the Queens.

Windmill and millers, with three tables and the making of bread, with millers singing "Bobby Bingo" (this will be taped to enable millers to move around).

Queen Victoria to enter and sit on throne. To be presented with a loaf of bread.

- Entertainment begins with
- (1) All children singing "Were you ever in Quebec".
 - (2) "Two little girls in blue" - to be sung twice - second time with audience of dancers joining in.
 - (3) "Little Dolly Daydream".
 - (4) Soldiers marching to "Soldiers of the Queen".
 - (5) Village children - Clap Dance, and then free music and movement - children expressing happy playtime on village green. The Queen is invited to join in, both the clap dance and music and movement. Drummers sound a tattoo on drums - soldiers line up, inspected by Queen. Queen leads off followed by soldiers marching to "Soldiers of the Queen" lined either side by dancers cheering.

2. A Dream - Queen Victoria visits Bentley. - by Class III

Players:

Queen Victoria - Melanie Taylor

Two little girls in blue - Sandra Hewlett
Linda Hales.

Little Dolly Daydream - Melanie Pagram

Soldiers (also Millers) - Stephen Wright, Nicolas Wignall, Ian Mills,
David Burn, Stephen Green, John Wood,
High Waterhouse, Adrian Watts, Robert Brooks,
Keith Nickells, Michael Phillips, Adrian Smith,
Gregory Mills, Robins Chilver
David Mallows, David Redman

DANCERS: - Susan Clements, Carole Harvey, Carole Orr,
Angela Bush, Alison Hardy, Gillian Dyer,
Stella Balcombe, Rosalind Ager, Sandra Tarbox,
Jennifer Knight, Melanie Taylor, Linda Hales,
Sandra Hewlett, Kim Dunstan, Melanie Pagram,
Susan Baker, Janet Haynes, Gaynor Wilkins.

3. SONGS THROUGH THE CENTURY - Class II

Songs include:-

"It was a Lover and his Lass"
"Blow Away the Morning Dew"
"O Soldier, Soldier (Linda Francis) and (Michael Green)"
"The Keeper" - (Janet Cook, Jacqueline Hewlett, Rosemary Tarbox,
Peggie Dark, Robert Redman, Stephen Glibbery,
Dennis Oliver).

Parents to join in { "Keep the Home Fires Burning"
 { "Pack up your Troubles"
 { "Bless 'em All"

RECORDERS
SELECTION BY:

Janet Cook, Jacqueline Hewlett, Mary Haynes, Colin Jones,
Michael Green.

SINGERS:

Angela Reed, Matthew Dunstan, Travers Orr, Graham Mullender,
Barry Howe, Alayne Auty, Glenn Warren, Sally Tarbox, Tony Cook,
Mary Haynes, Marian Seager, Marguerite Mickels, Sydney Stapleton,
Stewart Elstone, Christine French, Keith Line, Jennifer Lee,
Roger Perry, Colin Jones.

4. THE MILLER OF BENTLEY - By CLASS IX

Scene - Near Bentley Mill

Time - The year 1885

Players:

Father - Martin Hunt
Son - Robert Redman
Donkey - (Henry Buckeldee
(Stephen Glibbery

Men and Women.

Graham Bell, Rosemary Tarbox, Angela Buckeldee, Angela Reed,
Nigel Perry, Susan Sandford, Peter Seager, Stephen Elstone

5. THE MADHATTER'S TEA PARTY. (from Alice in Wonderland) - by CLASS I

Players - Alice - Jackie Grover
Dormouse - David Lee
Madhatter - Peter Sullivan
March Hare - Diane Watts
Reader - Stephen Haynes.

Nonsense Rhymes.

Spoken by Stephen Roberts, Denise Barrett, Susan Butt,
Stephen Hardy, Cathie Hardy, Julie Button, Janet Wood,
Dudley Reynard, Stephen Elstone, Alan Barrett, Susan Knight,
Richard Younger, Moira Grealis.

Maypole Dancing. - Dancing through the Century.

Dancers - all the above names and John Martin, Peter Smeeton,
Peter Bennett, Christine Wright, Penny Fox,
Shirley Bush, Graham Bell and Glynis Hales.

Thursday 9th June. - Prize giving in Bentley Church at 2.30 pm.

Songs, Address, Presentation of Prizes.
Hymn and prayer.

Saturday 11th June - Sports in the School Field at 2.30 p.m.

Programme includes flat races, novelty races (sack,
potato, obstacle, slow cycle etc.) parents races,
toddlers races, tug of war etc.

Tea: at 5.30 p.m. Will all attending please try to obtain and wear
Victorian costume.

Thanks are due

- To: Mrs. Sullivan of Halletts Lane, Pilgrims Hatch for the gift of the photograph of the new school and to Mr. H. Pigney (now of New Zealand) who took the photograph of the original building.
- To: Mr. W.D.S. Jackson who kindly made both photographs into blocks and for providing and printing the covers.
- To: Mrs. I.D. Cronin, The Brentwood Typewriting Agency for typing and assembling the booklet.

The photograph on the front cover is of the extension completed in 1958, and the photograph on the back cover of the original school of 1864.

