

A SCHOOL WITH A VIEW

A SHORT HISTORY

OF

ST SAMPSON'S SCHOOL GOLANT

There are many schools in Britain which can boast of having a pleasant outlook. Cornwall with its long coastline and many coastal villages has plenty but few can have such a magnificent outlook as the old school on the hill at Golant, two miles up-river from the port of Fowey.

It looks down on one of the most beautiful estuaries in the world, where the river runs between steep tree-lined banks topped by lush farmlands. A place now classed as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Among the side creeks, where herons, ducks and moorhens abound, Kenneth Grahame is said to have got his inspiration for the *Wind in the Willows*. A short distance away is the Iron Age fort of Castledore which has associations with Cornwall's King Mark, Tristan and Isolde, and in 1644 was the scene of the defeat of the Earl of Essex and the surrender to King Charles of a Parliamentary army of 6000 after a campaign in which the district was subjected to siege, plunder and battle.

The 14th century parish church is just up the hill and stands on the Saints' Way, the track between the sandy estuary of Padstow in the north and the Fowey estuary in the south, which once led traders and pilgrims safely across Cornwall on journeys between Ireland, Wales and Brittany.

Formerly, schooners plied the river with coal, limestone and agricultural produce but the river has sanded up so that even at very high spring tides there is little more than 20 feet of water at the quay and slipway, although at Fowey it is deep enough for very large ships.

A remote village even today. Very remote indeed in 1877 when the nearest school was two miles away at Tywardreath and a trip to St Austell would have taken all day and been something of an adventure.

Education for the higher social classes had been available for centuries in Grammar Schools and the ancient universities. Other establishments, privately owned, unregulated and providing basic education at a cost had sprung up following a general rise in literacy after the 14th century, but at the lower end of the social scale, and in the country's remoter areas, many people in the 19th century were totally illiterate or could do little more than sign their names and read the simplest of texts. Those able to read the Bible, write letters and do paper calculations were regarded as '*scholars*' and superior beings and, increasingly, had access to the better jobs.

For many, earning a living was paramount and most poor parents saw little point in educating children beyond the minimum necessary to get by in daily life. Boys started full-time employment at about 12 and girls were also expected to contribute to the family purse, learn domestic skills and by marriage leave the family home and ease the parental burden.

Before the government organised a national education system in 1870 some children received a basic education in simple Dame Schools, all unregistered and unregulated and in which the single teacher was little more than barely literate, scraping a poor living from teaching the alphabet, two and three-letter words and Bible stories. If there was a Dame School in Golant there is no record of it. There was a Boarding School for Girls in 1758 but this was little more than a training place for seamstresses. An advertisement which appeared in the *Sherborne Mercury* is given as an appendix to this book.

The 1870 Education Act, the first of its kind, examined the national provision of education and where it deemed that it was insufficient or unsatisfactory it required that School Boards be set up, to provide new schools or supplement the Voluntary ones already in place.

Golant children before 1877 went to school in Tywardreath, two miles distant. This was unacceptable to the *Board of Education* in Whitehall and there was correspondence from 1874 to 1877 between the *Board* and St Sampson's Vicar about what might be provided in the village. The choice lay between a school set up by a local School Board, unconnected with the Anglican Church and, it must be said, generally non-conformist in its outlook, and a Voluntary one set up by the National Society, or to give it its full grandiose title, *The National Society for the Education of the Children of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church*.

The Church offered to provide a school for Infants only in the village but this did not meet government requirements. It had to be a Public Elementary School for children of all ages with a properly Certificated Mistress. The Church had to accept that it would either be provided from public funds by a local Tywardreath/Golant School Board, or by the Church at its own expense, with government grants for efficiency after annual examination.

The latter option was chosen and plans for a building on Church Hill were successfully submitted to Whitehall in November 1875. The *Board of Education* stipulated that it should be finished and occupied by 1 July 1876. Who gave or sold the land has not been discovered but from a receipted bill for £14, in November 1877, for final small jobs, the builder appears to have been Mr Nicholas Blowey.¹

¹ Author's note:- I have been told that the late Mr Henry Thomas claimed that his grandfather had been the builder. As this person would not have been born until the 1860s, and probably the late 1860s, it is unlikely. He could possibly have worked on it or Henry's great-grandfather might have been involved, but no records show the name of Thomas.

There were delays in building and some pressure was put on the Vicar by Whitehall to explain why the school was not ready on time. The architect, Mr Edward Geach, replied that problems were due to a lack of tradesmen because of the many new schools and other large buildings being built, and the wave of strikes then sweeping Cornwall. He was pleased to inform the Board on 22 February that the school had been completed, a Certificated Teacher had been engaged in January and that Golant children were being taught *'in a large room in the village'*. As far as it is known the only *'large room'* would have been the original Methodist Chapel and that was the probable venue.

The first records of *St Sampson's National School* are in the school Log Books¹ now kept in the County Record Office at Truro. The first entry reads:-

Monday 12 March 1877. School opened by Elizabeth Berry, Certificated Teacher.

An important occasion, marred by the fact that:-

as insufficient notice had been give, 3 children only put in an appearance.

The school building was not opened for business for another four months as there were fears for the health of the children because of the wet plaster on the walls, but eventually the Mistress was able to record:-

19 June 1877 Removed to New School today.

As we are used to modern schools, with many classrooms, each with a separate teacher and probably helpers also; and well supplied with books and equipment, it will be as well to give a brief description of a school like Golant's, typical of most in the 19th century.

They were run by local Committees of Management, often under the authority of the local Vicar. These were responsible for the hiring and firing of teachers, for providing a large part of the running costs, including staff salaries, and for maintenance of buildings and equipment. Grants from The National Society and Government were given, but depended principally on Attendance and satisfactory Annual Reports by Inspectors.

The 1870 Act made school attendance compulsory, in theory, but ensuring it was a serious problem right up to World War 1. Teachers, largely untrained, had an uphill task in teaching large numbers of illiterate children and securing a good Report. At least Golant had small numbers and a Certificated Teacher but that teacher had full responsibility for all, from the youngest to the oldest, an age range probably of some 8 years.

¹ Under the 1870 Education Act Log Books recording important daily happenings and results of Inspections had to be kept in all schools. They are now an invaluable record of what went on, although naturally, some are more informative than others. Incidentally, Log Books are still kept today.

In June 1877 Golant's new school may have looked impressive but it had only the bare minimum of equipment. The Mistress recorded:-

At the request of Mr Geach, through Mr Phillips, I ordered a supply of books really necessary to carry on the work of the school but on a meeting of the Committee great surprise was expressed that as many as four classes of books were ordered. One gentleman thought that a few ABC books and a few Psalters would be enough.

The reference to Psalters shows where the priorities were thought to lie. Four days later Elizabeth Berry wrote:-

The three children that have attended this week are very backward in their lessons owing to there having been no suitable school nearer than Tywardreath.

They probably were backward, but it should be noted that all teachers taking over new schools at this time noted that the children were *'backward'*. This was an insurance against criticism from feared Inspectors who had enormous powers to praise results or, too often, condemn them.

By 23 March the word had spread, and the number attending had risen to 9 but Mistress felt it necessary to warn them against coming late. Prompt arrival was vitally important as the Register remained open for only a short time after the official start time. Pupils arriving after closure were not marked as present and therefore did not count towards the attendance totals. The Mistress's warning obviously had small effect for not long afterwards 4 boys were given 20 lines each for persistent lateness.

Although there was only one teacher, there were frequent visits and help from outsiders, the Vicar, members of the local gentry and Managers. Thus, on May 11 the Rev. Mr Houchen, Correspondent, or Clerk to the Managers, gave Dictation to the 1st Class. These were the youngest children and the number must have been very small.

Despite the importance of securing good attendance, holidays and occasional closures were frequent. School was closed more than once so that Mistress could attend a funeral. In June 1877 there was a half-holiday because children went to the Chapel Sunday School Treat; in July Mrs Rashleigh invited them to Menabilly for a Friday afternoon visit, and in August there was another half-holiday because of Golant Regatta. The invitation from Mrs Rashleigh was akin to a royal command and the others were compelled by *force majeure* as the children would have gone with or without permission.

An interesting example of closures forced by local custom is given by the following entries in 1877 and 1878:-

19 October 1877. No children came. Parents kept them home to carry ferns.

27 March 1878. Children home helping with gardening.

21 October 1878. Being the day appointed by parents to carry ferns a day's holiday was given.

The reference to carrying ferns is intriguing. Obviously it was something of great importance to the village, but why? No satisfactory explanation has been found but since Golant was full of orchards, and cider-making was a local industry it is possible that ferns (or bracken) were used in that process, possibly to provide a soft bed for the storage of the apple crop.

Materials for the school came slowly. In September 1877 Mistress received a clock and two locally-made desks, and a harmonium was lent by Mrs Houchen. In November a set of fire-irons, two mats and an ink-can were sent by a Mr Serpell.

By the end of that year the school was functioning and Elizabeth Berry was doing her best to instil not only some basic education but also regard for punctuality and personal cleanliness and tidiness, something not received kindly by some poor parents.

In November 1877 Mary Elizabeth Frethey (sic) was warned for untidiness and was promised punishment. Her grandmother, with whom the child was living, withdrew her and her sister Miriam, and said that she would educate them herself. They returned shortly afterwards but Mary Elizabeth came in for more trouble in February 1878 when she was punished for taking her Copy Book home without permission. This is a sad tale, for in April 1878 the grandmother died. What happened to Mary Elizabeth is not recorded but an entry on 15 April 1878 noted that Miriam Frethey left *'to go into the Workhouse'*. A further entry in February 1878 illustrates just how poor many people were then:-

Mrs Trembeth kept boy home 'to mend his rags'.

There was no Social Security in those days.

March 1878 saw the delivery of 24 Bibles and 24 Testaments, very necessary books in a school dominated by the Church but, one might think, of limited use by children with little reading ability.

The school's first Inspection came on April 9 1878:-

This little school promises well. The children are orderly and attentive and their attainments are creditable for a first Inspection. Writing is rather a weak point. A supply of maps is required. I hope that next year the school will qualify for the Grant for Music.

The maps came in May. In July there was a holiday for Golant Feast, a day no longer observed.

Entries at this time mention arrears of School Pence. Education was not entirely free and children were expected bring small weekly amounts towards school costs. Three pence or sixpence was about average but where there were several children in a family the amounts were progressively reduced. Even so, these payments were a burden on poor parents and contributed towards bad attendance.

The annual Government Inspection was not the only examination during the year. Being a Church School there was also the Diocesan Inspection carried out by a clergyman. Children were expected to know a great deal about the Bible and parts of the Book of Common Prayer, especially the Catechism and the Lord's Prayer. Thus in 1880 the Diocesan Inspector expressed some concern about irregular attendance, was reasonably satisfied about Biblical knowledge, but recorded that:-

....children are orderly and well-behaved but rather unintelligent.

Except for criticism of the Arithmetic of the 1st Standard there was a good Government Report in 1878. The Freemasons' Fete in Fowey and the Fowey Regatta caused poor attendances as did the Listwithiel (sic) Regatta and the Band of Hope Tea.

Log Books show for the first time the well-known local names of Blowey, Dyer and Rundle, the last appearing in December that year when a Mrs Rundle transferred her son to Tywardreath because he tore his trousers at school, the Mistress being held to blame for insufficient supervision. The Mistress's version was that he pulled himself through the hedge during recreation and when he went home told his mother that other boys had done it.

A pupil at this time was Frank Dyer, born in 1875, the 11th child in the family, a child remarkable for his later achievements. On leaving school he became a servant of the Rashleighs of Menabilly and must have impressed them greatly, for in 1893 when he was 17 rising 18, they helped him with his passage money to Chicago.

There he enrolled at the Moody Bible Institute and became a Congregational Minister. He had a broad Christian outlook, for in his native Golant there had been no great distinction between attendance at parish church or Methodist Chapel, and in the latter lay preachers played a large part. His ministry took him to many places and at its end, after 50 years service, he founded the Congregational Church on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles.

He held many important posts including that of Ecumenical Bishop in 1939. In 1926 he was invited to preach in London and he returned briefly to Golant where he was thrilled to preach in the pulpit of St Sampson's a short way from his original and very humble home.

By 1880 the novelty of having a school seems to have worn off and there are reports of criticism by parents. Rumours abounded in the village in April that *'the itch'* was prevalent in the school and was being passed from child to child. Examination by a doctor proved that all was well. In the same year one parent complained that his child *'was being taught by a hinfant'* – presumably his quoted spelling and not that of the Mistress. It is likely that Elizabeth Berry was using an older child to help a younger, a common practice. Children of 12 and upwards were often appointed Monitors or Monitresses.

In August William Hocking was ordered to write a letter 20 times. (It is unclear whether this was a single letter or a piece of prose – probably the former). He deliberately did it badly and when scolded answered impudently. On being punished he slapped the Mistress's face, whereupon she *'turned him out of school'*.

There is no record of repercussions. Certainly, unlike today, the Mistress would have been totally supported by Authority for having punished him in the first place and for throwing him out. Punishment generally was severe. In January 1881 a girl was assaulted on her way to school. The boy responsible, age unknown, received a month's imprisonment and 2 years in a Reformatory.

The Mistress now began to suffer ill-health and as she was away for three weeks in March 1882 the school had to be closed. Possibly because of it her good standards appear to have slipped, for in May 1882 the Annual Report was critical of Arithmetic, Reading and Spelling. She was advised to drop Grammar in favour of Geography, as it was unwise to attempt both, and a Reduced Grant was threatened for the following year. In May 1883 the Report criticised her for trying to teach two Class Subjects in addition to the basics and recommended that the children should be taught in two groups. As she was the only teacher it did not explain how this might easily be done.

The sacrosanct nature of the Attendance Register was highlighted in March 1883 when the Log Book contains a copy of letter by HMI Mr A W Newton, following an unscheduled visit:-

....called at 2.35pm. Found registers incorrect. No entries against names of 5 absentees. Number present not entered. The Registers should be marked and closed before 2.15pm. Two inside walls streaming with wet notwithstanding comparatively fine weather.

The Mistress could hardly be blamed for the condensation but she could be severely censured for the errors in the Registers. As previously mentioned, part of the Annual Grant depended on the attendance, and deliberate falsification of the Registers was sometimes a temptation. It was usual for Managers and Inspectors to call without notice and check that entries were correct. The omission of any mark against the names of 5 absent children was therefore a serious offence. It is probable that the poor harassed lady had not got round to putting in the correct marks but officialdom always calls at the wrong time.

The Inspector's comment about the condensation was repeated in his Annual Report in May:-

On the day of Inspection the room felt like the bottom of a well.

In August Ellen Puckey's eye was '*hurled*', an interesting Cornish dialect version of an English past tense, and songs learned at this time were *Row the Boat; The Rabbit; The Owl; The Little Busy Bee; Home Sweet Home; This is May and the National Anthem*. Some forenames now rarely, if ever, seen, are seen in the Log Book at this time. There are *Fanny, Hetty, Mabel, Blanche, Leopold, Maud and Albertus*, the last three having been given in patriotic honour of the Royal Family.

In 1884 the Inspector noted the need for a teaching assistant and Ada Roskelly was appointed Monitress. No details of her age or salary are given but she must have been extremely young as she continued for seven years until the end of 1891. In other schools Monitresses were usually older girls of about 14 and were paid ninepence weekly. The local gentry kept up their interest in the school and in July 1885 the children were invited to Tea at Penquite by Sir Henry and Lady Lefroy who, perhaps, also cast their eyes over the older children with a view to obtaining future servants, for there are several references to girls, and boys, having '*gone into service*' .

Despite the law many parents sent children to school only when it was convenient. Attendance Officers were appointed, but had little success, for few parents were prosecuted. In Golant, however, two were taken to court in October 1885 and fined five shillings each.

Mistress was away ill for two months at the end of 1887 and Lucy Thomas took temporary charge until she returned at the end of February 1888. The Log Book becomes very sketchy at this point and her entries come to an abrupt end in October 1889.

One assumes that illness overtook her and she resigned, after 12 years in sole charge. Of her marital status we know nothing. She is referred to in several places as **Mrs Berry**. It was unusual for female teachers to be married, except where a married couple ran the same school as Master and Mistress, so she may have been a widow. She seems to have been a good, conscientious and efficient person who was generally esteemed.

Miss Jessie Rundle was appointed Mistress on 24 October and in the Annual Report for that year are the words:-

.....Mrs Berry, who has become greatly afflicted, leaves her school in a very fair state of efficiency.

The next three years are not well documented. Log Book entries continue as they had to be but contain little information. Alice Tabb became Monitress in January 1891 and lasted until about the end of 1893 but there is little of note until July 1893 when Daisy Wheeler, Provisionally Certificated Teacher took

charge, noting that the attendance was poor and listing recent holidays as the Sunday School Treat and the Royal Wedding of the Duke of York and Countess May of Teck. Annual Reports were good.

In October 1895 Ada Searle took temporary charge until January 1896, when Mr J W Burt, Certificated Teacher 1st Class, was appointed Master. To have a man in charge must have been sensational.

He was not impressed by the school, the village nor most of its inhabitants and his first Log entry reads:-

After a week's work I can only say the children are extremely restless.

A week later he issued Attendance Cards, certificates given to children coming not fewer than 9 times – that is 9 attendances out of a possible 10, mornings and afternoons counting separately.

Further entries in February confirm his initial impressions-

*10 February 1896. Children are very noisy both in and out of school.
They do not know what it is to sit still.*

21 February 1896. Children are totally ignorant of Geography.

His problems were not confined to the school, for in March that year he recorded that he had arrived 10 minutes later than usual. Having come by boat, he got stuck on the mud by Penquite at dead low water.

1 August 1896 was an important day, the opening of the railway Halt. The children had a holiday in celebration and again on the following day to attend the opening of the new Chapel.

In October there is a reference to Miss Searle having marked some attendances in the wrong places. We don't know what became of her as she is not mentioned again.

Mr Burt began Object Lessons in July 1897. These were prepared lessons on a variety of topics and came complete with blackboard diagrams and texts to copy. A late 19th century book of Object Lessons on Animal Life has lessons on The Cat; The Mole; Hair, Fur and Wool; Tails and Their Uses etc.

The Annual Report for 1897 was critical and looked forward to better results next year but noted that the Master had been there only a short time.

In December Miss Ethel Burt was appointed Assistant Teacher in place of the Monitress, the first time the school had had two teachers. It was noted that the Master had had no say in her appointment.

There was also a Night School at this time, open to people from the village and parish who wished to improve their education. Home Lessons, what we should now call Homework, were a feature of 19th century schools and, like

attendance, often caused trouble, as they did at Golant in February 1897 when the Master recorded a letter he had received from a mother:-

You need not give my child any more Home Lessons to do because I am not willing for her to do them. You seem to be dreadfully against the child in every shape and form and keep on with her while others can stay home as much as they like and escape your notice. However I have started to keep the Register of my child's schooling myself and also of a few more children in the village not because of any animosity against the children but in the interests of fair play and as soon as I can see my way clear I shall withdraw her from the school altogether.

1897 was the Diamond Jubilee Year of Queen Victoria, and each child at the school received a Jubilee Medal and two shillings. Considering that another parent at this time wrote to Mr Burt asking for permission for his son to leave school a little before the statutory time because *'as soon as he starts work there is pound a month more and that make a brave difference in our family'* the gift of two shillings was a generous one.

The school site is high above the road to the church, known either as Church Hill or School Hill and the playground edge was dangerous. In November 1897 some boys fell through rotten railings into the lane ten feet below. They were fortunate to escape injury by clinging to grass and roots until hauled to safety.

Following the 1897 Report, which was generally favourable except for Arithmetic, the Master wrote comments which expressed his concern that the Grant was always threatened because of the low attainment of his scholars, about which he felt he could do little because:-

This village does not even stand on a road, main or bye – it is a cul-de-sac and has no chance of sharpening by rubbing against others.

February 1898. These children are simply lazy. No amount of inducement is successful. From today I must resort to the stick as the only inducement to work.

The Log Book ends at this point, 29 September 1898, and we know nothing about Mr Burt's subsequent career. It seems that if he disliked Golant, the feeling was mutual. He mentioned more than once that a lady in the village accosted him in the street with complaints and that he refused to speak to her.

One final piece of information from the first Log Book concerns the number and length of holidays and they are worth recording:-

Christmas	2 weeks
Easter	1 week

Whitsun ¹	Monday and Tuesday
Harvest ²	3 weeks
Harvest Festival	1 day
Sunday School Treat	1 day
April 5	Fowey Regatta

There are no Log Books from September 1898 to January 1920, 22 missing years, about which little is known. However, some information can be gleaned from other documents in the Record Office. The condensation problem persisted, for in 1900 a new ventilation system was installed and over-crowding showed a pressing need for enlargement and improvement.

The Inspector's Report for 1903 said:-

This school continues to be over-crowded and additional accommodation is needed at once. The offices (i.e. lavatories) are also inadequate, there being only one for boys and one for girls, whereas there should be two for boys and three for girls, and they are not properly ventilated.

Enlargement was put in hand and a letter to the Board of Education on April 1903 from the Menabilly Estates Office says that Mr Rashleigh had agreed to the use of stone from *'the large rock in the field below Torfrey, occupied by Charles Blowey'* and that no charge would be made for stone or carriage because of his continuing interest in the school.

The Vicar noted in a letter to the Truro Diocesan Schools' Association, December 1903, that the Building Fund had £100 in the bank, that gifts of stone and free carriage had been offered and that there had been other offers from individuals. He also said that application for Grant had been made to The National Society and that the Great Western Railway Company had been approached for a donation, since one-third of the children belonged to their employees working at the Fowey jetties. Commenting that *'an exceptionally large proportion of children for our population'* was due to railway employees he thought that any contribution from the GWR was unlikely.

Between 1903 and 1908 enlargements, additions and repairs were made, funded by grants, local donations and, in 1905, from Betton's Charity.

We return to the Log Books on 5 January 1920, and there is a continuous history until December 1947. By this time the school had changed its name

¹ Whitsun, commemorating the religious Feast of Pentecost, no longer has its former significance and the traditional national holiday on Whit Monday has been dropped.

² This was a very important time and everybody, including schoolchildren, took part in bringing in the harvest. There would have been small attendance had not an official holiday been given.

from Golant National School to St Sampson's C of E School, no longer wholly run by the Church as it was transferred to the jurisdiction of St Austell District Council in February that year. The funding had also been changed by this time and did not depend on attendance figures or on the results of annual tests, although there were still strict Inspections and Reports to keep teachers up to the mark.

The teachers were Mr W Francis Bew, aged 37, Ada Hewitt, 42, and Miss Kingdon or Kingdom who stayed until November 1920, was well regarded and on leaving was presented with a biscuit barrel by the Infants. Ada Hewitt also had a good reputation.

For some time there were problems with school cleaning, Mr Bew writing in February 1920 that:

Dusting is evidently a lost art with our school cleaner.

Occasional holidays for local events were still given. Thus, there was a half-holiday on 25 June for the Wesleyan Sunday School Tea Treat and on 23 September 1920 for the Castledore Races. What these were is unclear, but they did not meet with Mr Bew's approval, for he wrote:-

Castledore Races are being revived this afternoon after a lapse of 50 years. Such an event in the mind of the modern parent is of far more importance than attendance at school, consequently the number of children present is only 22 out of a possible 54.

The same problem arose in 1921 but was solved by making afternoon absence official:-

The Vicar not knowing what to do, I phoned to the District Clerk and to the County Office but did not obtain an answer from either one. Such being the case and past the legal time for marking the Registers I have decided on the advice of the Vicar not to mark and I have dismissed those present after taking their names.

Although overall running of the school had passed into the hands of St Austell Council, the Church still had control over religious matters, and on 24 September 1920 the school was closed after Registration to allow children to attend the first Confirmation Service at St Sampson's and the subsequent Consecration of the new churchyard.

The Diocesan Inspector's Report for that year was excellent, but to underline the fact that it was still a Church School commented:-

Excellent, but there ought to be permanently on the walls of the Schoolroom something to indicate at once and plainly the Christian Character of the school

Edward Taylor MA, Diocesan Inspector of Schools

In February 1921 there were 46 children on roll, and in October the staff was reduced to two teachers, the numbers having declined. Mr Bew left on 31 March 1922 to be Headmaster at the new Council School at St Erth. He was succeeded by Headmistress D I Crowther who did not stay long, leaving in October 1923. Mr C L Martin followed, with Miss Hewitt as his Assistant Teacher.

He commented that he could not find any Schemes of Work or any record of work done, and found, on enquiry from his predecessor, that on leaving she had destroyed both. Echoes of the 19th century followed in his next entry:-

Work of the lower group seems to be in a bad state.

In 1925 there were 37 on roll and there is the first mention of a Parents' Day and a Prize-giving at 3pm, and a note about the success of several children in the Minor Scholarship examination for St Austell County School.

Mr Martin left in April 1931 to become Headmaster at Davidstow. He left with regret and much appreciation of Miss Hewitt. Various other Head Teachers came and went- S Clyma (Miss?), Miss Christophers, E May Waldick, E V Allen, and Mrs Truscott, who stayed for 8 ½ years. Her final comment in the Log was:-

Unable to flush the lavatories today

War came in September 1939 and all schools were closed for a week. Golant opened again on 11 September with only 23 on roll, a number soon to be swelled by some 22 evacuees from London. These caused a sensation for they were quite different from the local children, and were wild and undisciplined in many cases. Several Golant residents who were at the school at this time have commented on their shock and disbelief at the attitudes towards teachers of some evacuees. In 1942 there was a survey of the premises with a view to requisition for military use but this was not proceeded with.

In September 1941 it was decided to use the open space under the school as an air raid shelter. This caused a brief parental boycott as it was not considered bomb proof. A Petition was organised, but Authority with a capital A decreed that the German High Command was not pouring over maps of Golant in preparation for an air raid. It said that '*the cellar*' was splinter proof, which was all that could reasonably be expected. It was agreed that two hurricane lamps as emergency lighting, a stirrup pump for fire fighting and wire mesh on all the windows would be provided.

Mrs M Francis came as Headmistress on 28 September 1942 and saw the school through to its end in 1947.

By that time numbers had fallen below a viable level, the water supply had been condemned as contaminated and it was no longer economic to keep the school open with so few pupils.

Mrs Francis wrote her last entry on 18 December 1947:-

School closes today and I relinquish my appointment here to take up a fresh one at Fowey. Children are being temporarily transferred to Fowey until final closure is signed.

So ended 70 years of locally based education in Golant, provided first by the Church of England and latterly by local government. Like most small village schools, it seems to have been a generally well-run and happy place. Certainly, present-day Golant residents who went there remember it and their teachers with affection

The abandoned school stood neglected and falling into increasing disrepair for a number of years, but was eventually acquired and run by a local committee as a Village Hall. It was not an outstanding success, as many people were reluctant to climb the very steep hill to take part in its activities, and the maintenance costs were excessive. The Reading Room, lower down in Water Lane, and open only to men for some reason, was made available to both sexes and it was decided to sell the school building, make improvements to the Reading Room and concentrate village social life there.

Once again the old school became empty and remained so until it was extensively converted into a very comfortable house, the former classrooms providing large rooms. One wonders if the ghostly voices of children still echo around it and in what was once their playground.



