

# **Fairfield School, Havant**

## **1895 to 1987**



Published by the Fairfield First School Parent Teachers Association

Researched and compiled by Ann Buckley  
with a contribution from Roslyn Lawrence, Headteacher



Watercolour painting of Fairfield School by Angela Loader, commissioned by the Parent-Teacher Association in 1986, to commemorate the school's 90th anniversary, which coincided with the completion of the modernisation and extension of the school.

A second original painting was presented to Mr Peter Street on his retirement from the school's Governing Body in September 1985, after 18 years' service.

## Acknowledgements

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We should also like to thank the Hampshire Records Office for their permission to reproduce information from the Log Books; The News, Portsmouth, for their permission to reproduce several photographs and one press report; Hampshire Education and Architects Departments for information and plans and also the staff of Havant Branch Library for their assistance.

We are also very grateful to the following subscribers to the publication fund: Mr K. Makins, Mr P Street, De La Rue Systems Ltd, I B M United Kingdom Ltd.

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The teaching Staff, early 1900s

Mr Harry Beeston, the first Headmaster, was employed at the school for 29 years. Mrs Betsy Beeston, seated at his left, was Headmistress for 26 years. Mrs Emma Tomlins, framed in the doorway, joined the teaching staff the day the school opened and retired 29 years later.

## Introduction

The Fairfield First School Parent-Teacher Association is very pleased to be able to make this contribution to the commemoration of the school's 90th anniversary, which coincides with the completion of the extensive modernisation and extension of the school.

It was in 1985 that the P.T.A. decided to undertake this study. When the building work was completed an Open Day was held at the school in June 1985 and many former pupils returned. Many of these were interviewed by pupils at the school and questioned about their school-days.

As we gathered more information and photographs, we felt that the material directed us towards a study contrasting the early days at Fairfield when Mr Beeston was the Headmaster, from 1896 to 1925, with the period of Mrs Lawrence's Headship, during which time the school has undergone radical structural changes and has emerged as a "new" school.

It is important to point out here that during the period from 1896 to 1948 the school provided the child's total elementary education from starting to leaving school. Today, Fairfield is a First School, with the pupils starting school in the term in which they reach their fifth birthday and leaving when they are eight years old.

Although the school has had various names over the years, the Board School, Havant Council School, Havant Primary School and Havant County Infants School, for many people it has always been called 'Fairfield' because of its location on the historic fair field site.

Surprisingly, apart from the School Log Books compiled by the Headteacher from 1896 to the present day, which were a very good source of information, and the original architect's drawings (1894), there were no other records or photographs in the school for the period prior to the 1960s. The Log Books for the period from 1896 to 1925 are held at the Hampshire Records Office, Winchester.

As well as looking back to the past, we hope that this study will give an insight into school life today, and no doubt the school photographs of today's pupils will be looked at with interest by future generations of Fairfield children.

Ann Buckley, July 1987

# Historical Information

## Chapter 1

### The Fair Field

#### (1) The Fair

Fairfield School derives its name from its location on an historic site in Havant, part of a parcel of land described as the fair field. Since 1451 a trade fair, known as St Faith's Fair, was held annually within this area on green fields next to the town of Havant, now the site of Fairfield School. The fair was held on the 5th and 6th of October, the eve and the feast day of St Faith.

Another fair, for trinkets and toys, is also known to have been held in Havant itself, in the streets around St Faith's church on 11th June, the feast of St Barnabas, and in the early days the fair would have been held in the churchyard.

The annual St Faith's Fair and the weekly markets, held on Saturdays, were the result of a charter granted by Henry VI to William Waynflete, who was Bishop of Winchester and Lord of the Manor of Havant.

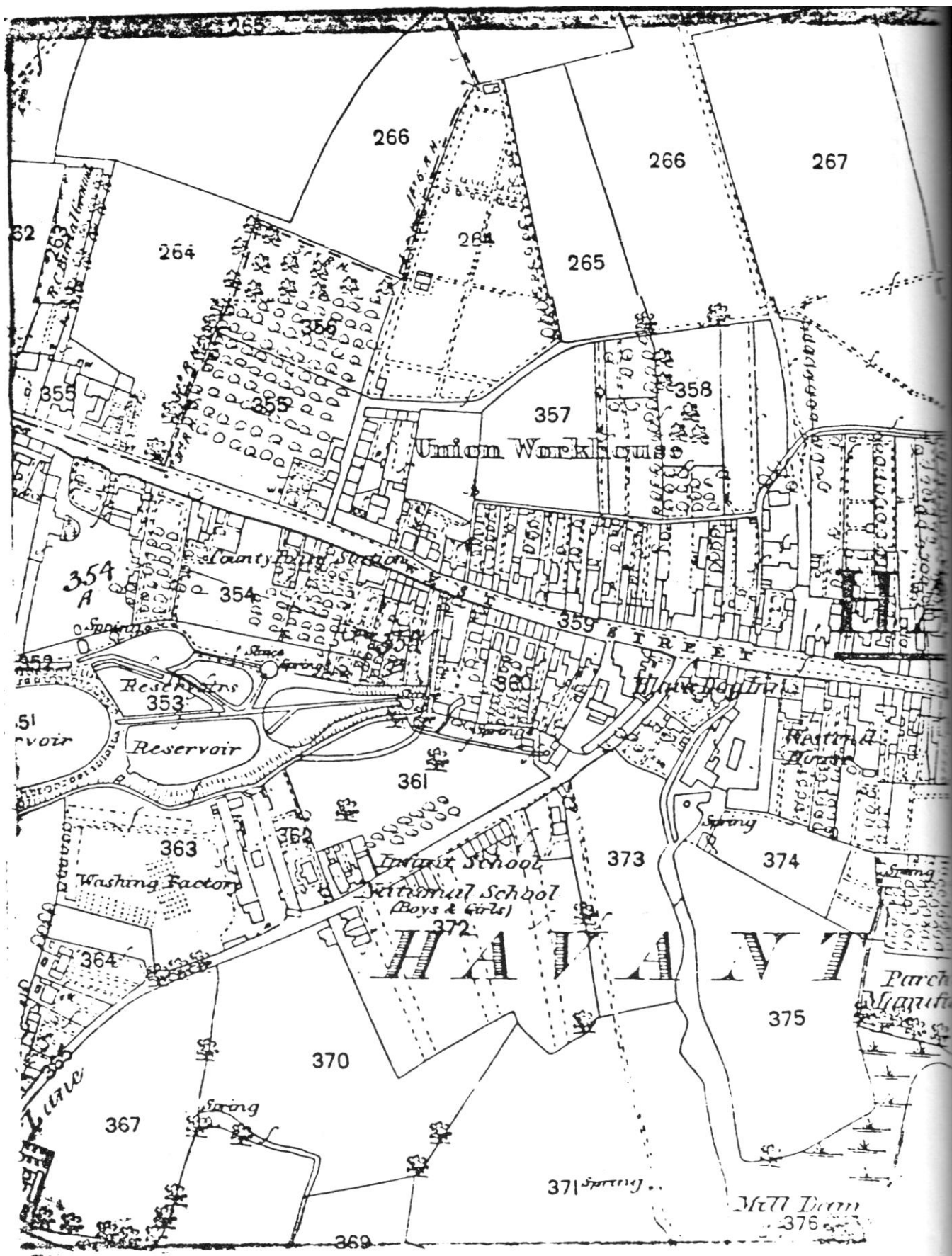
The importance of a fair is perhaps missed by us today, but in the Middle Ages fairs were held on feast days, special days set aside in the church calendar to commemorate the Saints, and the word Fair is derived from 'Fariae' that is, feast day.



Acrobats, from a late 18th century woodcut

On such a day, in October annually, local people in and around Havant would have a rare holiday from their labours and come to the fair field site for some shopping and excitement. The attractions would have been drinking booths, minstrels, acrobats, jugglers and performing bears.





Reproduced from the 1866 Ordnance Survey Map, revised 1872

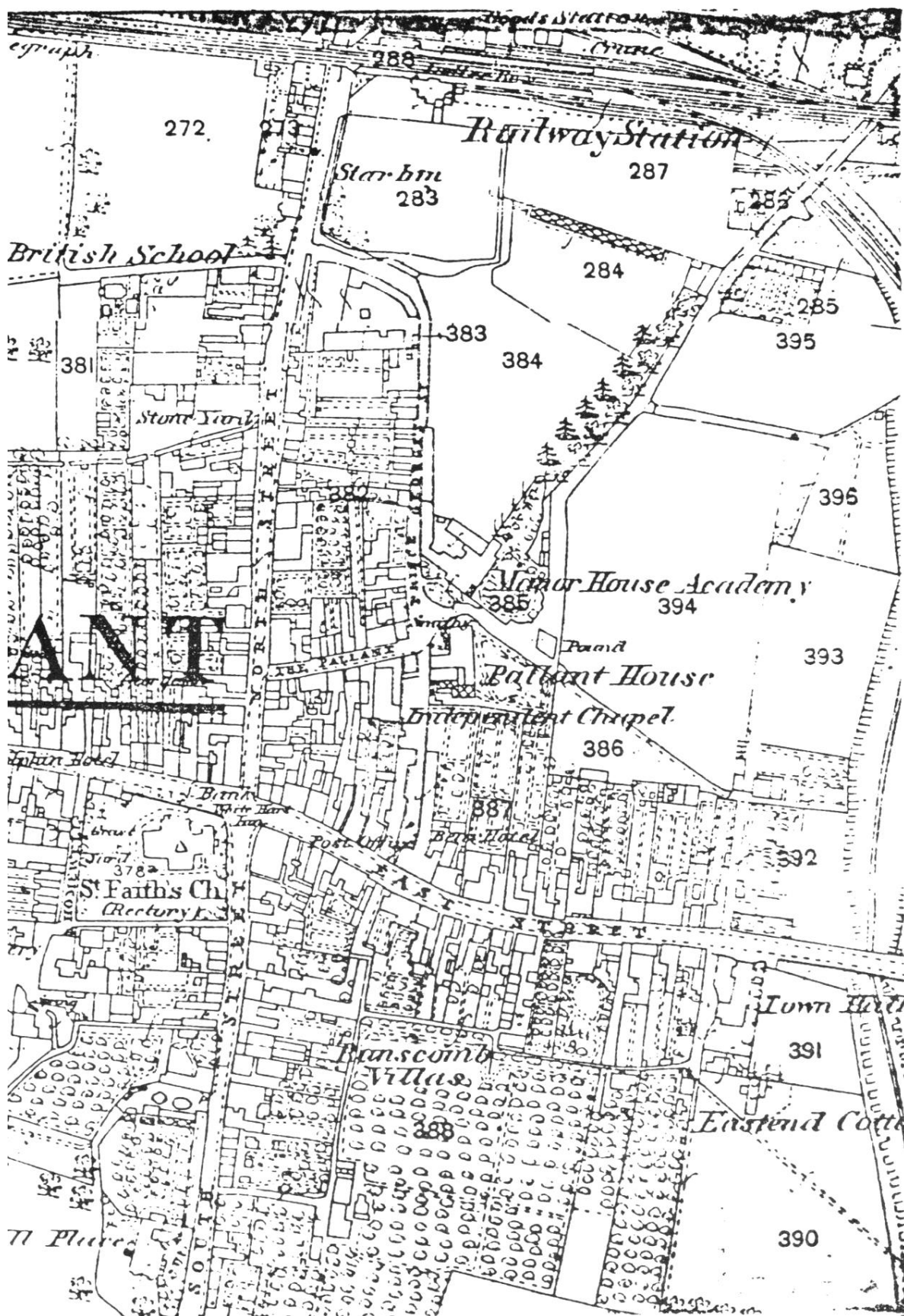


Fig. 6

The St Faith's Fair was a focus for itinerant salesmen dealing in sheep, cattle, pigs, hops and cheese. The fairs were of great importance as they were a substitute for permanent shops.

In the 18th century, the national calendar was changed. As a result of this the dates of the fairs were put forward by eleven days; the Barnabas Fair was then held on 22nd June and the St Faith's Fair on 16th and 17th October.

By 1857, when John Longcroft's local history, *The Bosmere Hundreds* was published, the St Faith's Fair only lasted for one day and was held on 17th October.

It is apparent that by the middle of the 19th century Havant's two fairs were suffering the same fate as most fairs nationally, that of dwindling attendances. Improved transport with the coming of the railway (locally in May 1841) ensured that local shops were able to provide the range of goods and services once provided by the local fairs.

The other factor which contributed to the closing of many fairs at this time was drunkenness. It was the Home Secretary, as guardian of public morals, who closed down many ancient fairs, using his powers under The Fairs Act of 1871.

There is no evidence to suggest that drunkenness was a significant factor in the decline of Havant's traditional fairs, although Havant was known for its beer. Local trade directories tell us that by 1850 the two local fairs were small and indifferently attended and no longer played an important part in local life.

On 7th October 1873 the following notice was printed in the *London Gazette*:

### The Fairs Act, 1871. Havant

#### Fairs

*"WHEREAS a representation has been duly made to me, as the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by the Justices sitting in Petty Sessions for the Havant Division of the county of Hants, that Fairs have been annually held on the 22nd day of June and on the 17th day of October in the parish of Havant, in the said division of the said county, and that it would be for the convenience and advantage of the public that the said Fairs should be abolished:*

*And whereas notice of the said representation, and of the time when I should take the same into consideration, has been duly published in pursuance of "The Fairs Act, 1871:"*

*And whereas on such representation and consideration it appears to me that it would be for the convenience and advantage of the public that the said Fairs should be abolished:*



*And whereas W. H. Stone, Esq., Lord of the Manor of Havant, and Herbert Brabant, Esq., as lords or owners of the said Fairs and the tolls thereof, have consented, in writing, that the said Fairs should be abolished:*

*Now, therefore, I, as the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in exercise of the powers vested in me by "The Fairs Act, 1871," do hereby order that the Fairs which have been annually held on the 22nd day of June and on the 17th day of October in the parish and Petty Sessional Division of Havant, in the county of Hants, shall be abolished as from the date of this order.*

*Given under my hand at Whitehall, this 4th day of October, 1873.*

*(Signed) R. Lowe.*

It is believed that the last fair was held in 1871.

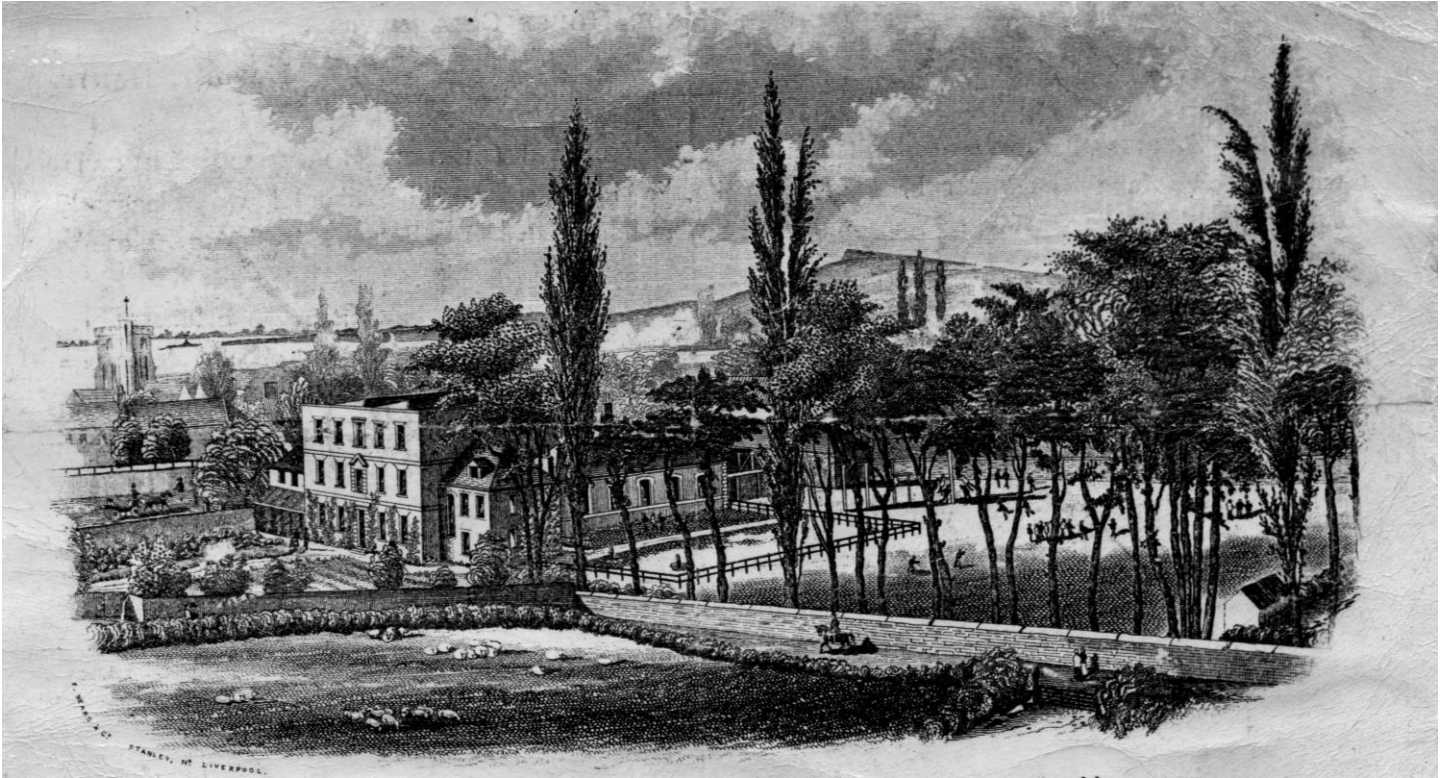
Even with the passing of the fair, the fair field site continued to be a meeting place for local people. During the 1880's an annual procession around Havant was organised by the 'Bonfire Boys'. This was followed by a bonfire on the fair field site, attended by hundreds of local people. A description of the '*The Havant Bonfire Boys*' is given in the Local History series, *The Making of Havant, Volume 3*.

Nowadays, each June the Strawberry Fair, attended by over 1,500 people, is held on the Fairfield School playground, a part of the historic fair field.

## (ii) The Field

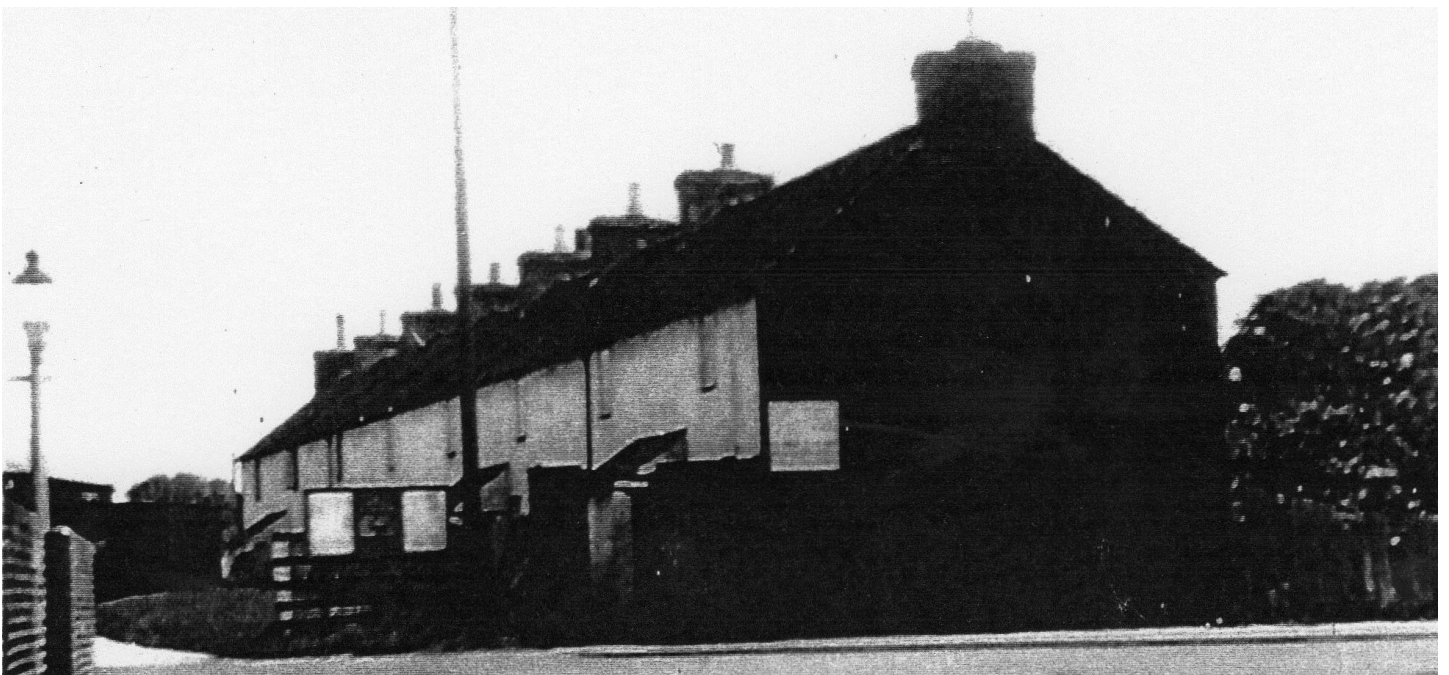
The 1872 Ordnance Survey map shows the parcel of land described as the 'Fair Field' clearly demarcated (ref. no's. 393, 394, 395, 396). It was a large parcel of land and within it is easily recognised the sites of Fairfield School (395), Beechworth Road (393, 396) and Fairfield Terrace (394).

To the south west of the fair field stood Manor House Academy, a private school founded in 1797 and occupying the old Manor House (map ref. 384, 385, 284). The school vacated the house in 1939. It was subsequently demolished, although some of the walls and entrance still remain. The award-winning Manor Close development was built within the old boundary walls. The old animal pound, where stray animals would have been impounded, was at the junction of Fairfield Road and East Pallant near to the entrance to Manor Close.



The Manor House Collegiate School

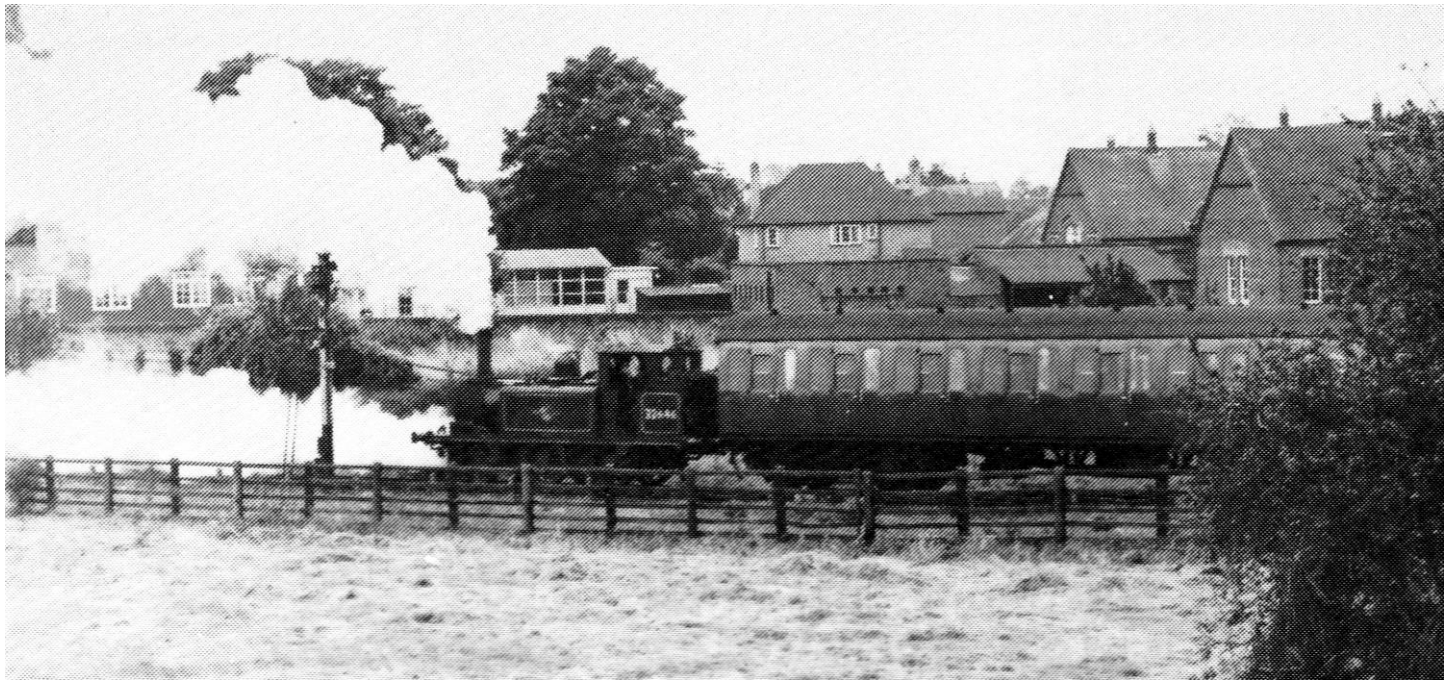
On the northern boundary stood Somerstown Row, known locally as Bugs Row, a small row of terraced cottages. They were demolished in 1962 and Somerstown flats were built by the Local Authority on the site.



Somerstown Row in Fairfield Road circa 1960.

The railway to Langstone, which was opened in January 1865 and extended to Hayling Island in 1867, formed the eastern boundary of the Fair Field and, sadly, was closed on 3

November 1963. The old the railway track is now the Hayling Billy Leisure Trail. The railway ran to the rear of the school.



The Hayling Island Railway ran to the rear of the school. From the left is the old cookery hut, a temporary classroom, which was later used for the Havant Library, the boys' outside toilets, the covered play area and the Head's study. *Copyright A.A.F. Bell*

The Tythe map of 1846 shows the land in the ownership of Charles Beare Longcroft, and by this time was known as the Fairfield Estate. The Longcrofts were a local wealthy landowning family who lived at Hall Place, South Street.

It is interesting to look at how the Estate was gradually divided up and developed.

Fairfield Terrace, with its impressive castle-like appearance, was the first development on the site and was built by the Portsea Island Cooperative Society.

During the 1890s the Estate was divided into plots for development. The school site was by this time owned by George Whicher, a Havant butcher and grazier, who used the ground for grazing. The site was purchased by the School Board in 1895.

The land around Station Road (renamed Beechworth Road in 1905) was sold for residential development during the early 1900s.

The Havant Almanack for 1897

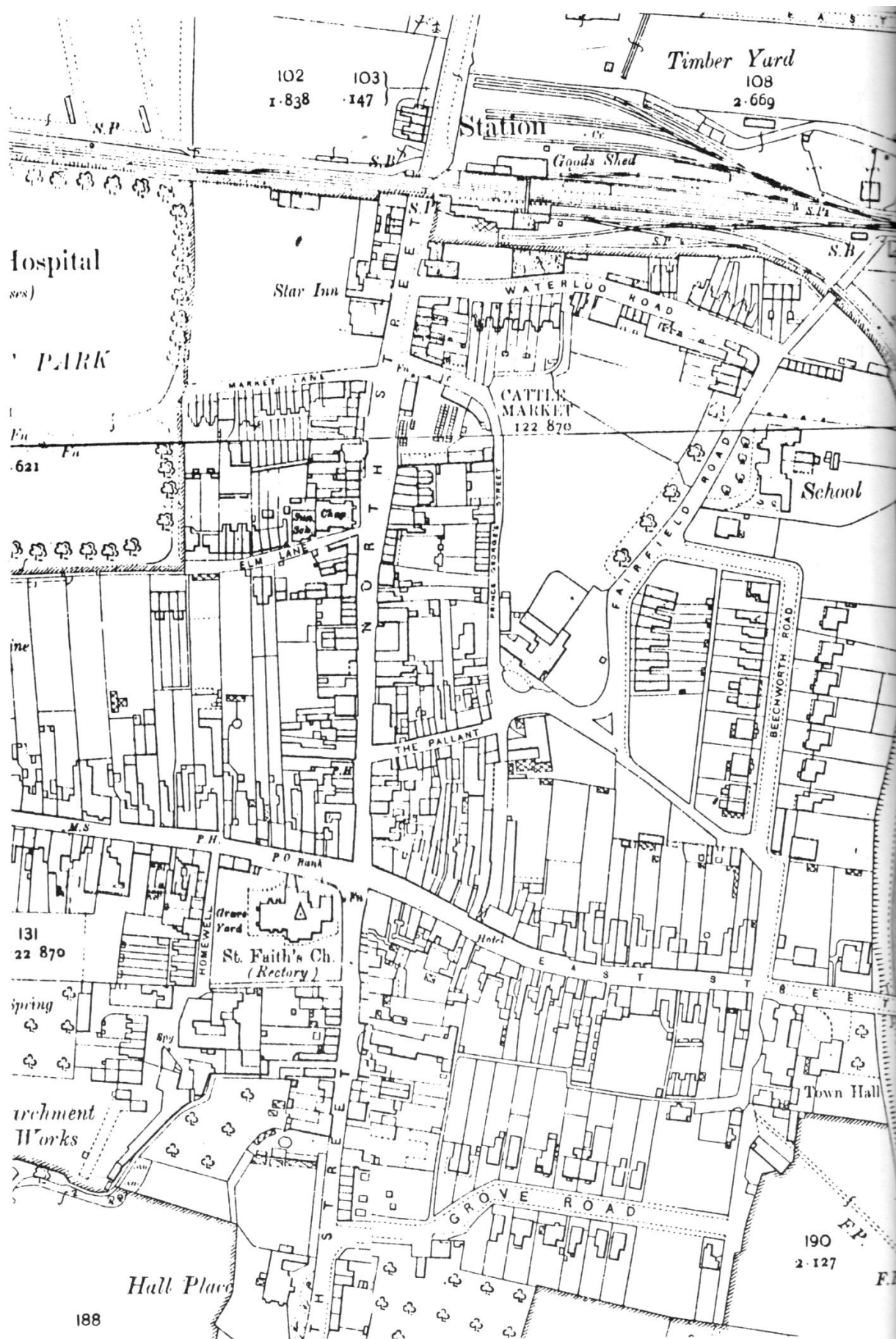
**GEO. WHICHER,**  
*FAMILY BUTCHER*  
**EAST STREET, HAVANT.**

Families supplied with Meat of the Best Quality  
ON THE MOST REASONABLE TERMS.

*CORNER BEEF & PICKLED TONGUES ALWAYS ON HAND*

All Orders punctually attended to.

By 1910 the ancient Fair Field area, the site of the St Faith's Fair from the middle of the 15th century to the late 19th century, had become a fashionable residential area and the site of the Fairfield School.



Reproduced from the 1909 Ordnance Survey Map

Fig. 9

## Chapter 2

### Education in Havant before 1896

There is little information regarding education in Havant before 1700. What records there are show us that the upper room of the Market House, situated next to St Faith's Church, was used as a school room as well as a court-room.

During the 18th century many private schools were established locally. The Manor House Academy, founded by Samuel Spurgeon and situated to the south-west of the Fair Field, was one of the most well-known and had a very good reputation. These private schools would have only provided an education for the small percentage of the population who could afford to pay the fees.

### The Havant Almanack for 1897

#### Manor House Collegiate School HAVANT, HANTS

(In Union with the College of Preceptors)

Principal – THOMAS D. SPURGEON, M.C.P.

ASSISTED BY

RESIDENT AND VISITING MASTERS

*Special attention paid to Latin, Mathematics, Conversational French, Music, Drawing, and English Subjects. The School is very pleasantly situated, with large Field and Covered Playground. Diet on the most liberal scale and of the best quality. New Pupils received at any time, and charged only from day of entry. Drill and Gymnastics taught by a certificated and highly qualified Military Instructor.*

In the 19th century private schooling was well established in Havant, but standards of education would have varied. At this time many of the large houses in West and East Street were used as schools. There were also 'dame' schools in the town until about 1850. In these schools an elderly woman taught the children knitting and 'half taught' them to read. They were poorly equipped and the dames were untrained.

Education for children who came from less well-off families, both nationally and locally in Havant, started when the organised churches began to take an increasing role in education. There were three organisations involved.

Firstly, the British and Foreign School Society, which was founded in 1808 to provide 'undenominational religious teaching'. This Society was supported by most non-conformists and used a system devised by Joseph Lancaster. A local British School, since demolished, was built in 1830 in Market Lane (to the east of today's Havant Park) at a cost



of £242. It was a small school: the average daily attendance in 1875 was recorded as 110 pupils.

Secondly, the Anglican National Society, founded in 1811, whose aims were *to provide Education of the Poor in the precepts of the Established Church*. These schools used a system devised by John Bell. A local National (Church of England) School was established in Brockhampton Lane by 1826.

Finally, the third church organisation to play a part in education was The Roman Catholic Committee. A small Roman Catholic school was built in West Street in 1875 together with the Church and Presbytery. The average attendance at the school in 1896 was just 31 pupils. The old school building has now been incorporated into the church hall.

The British and the National schools both used the 'monitorial system', by which one teacher would have had the task of keeping order in a large school hall while the monitors, boys aged about 14, each tried by mechanical repetition to make the children memorize items of information. This was seen as a cheap and effective way of educating large numbers of children.

These voluntary schools were criticised later as being unimaginative, teaching by rote and practising rigid discipline, however, at the time they played a very important role in 19th century education, before the State became involved.

The British School in Market Lane and the National School in Brockhampton Lane were both Voluntary schools, funded by school fees, local contributions and Government grants. In 1862 a 'payment by results' system was started, whereby School Inspectors examined each child in the three Rs. The school's grant and the teachers' salaries depended on the number of passes gained by the children in the examinations.

Attendance at school at this time was not compulsory and both the schools were too small to provide schooling for all the local children if they had wanted to attend.

Compared to the rest of Europe, Britain was rather slow to set up a State system of education. There was a general fear that too much education might make the working class discontented with their lot. However, with the need for a better-educated workforce, the State became more involved in education and a dual system of State and Voluntary schools evolved.

In 1870, The Elementary Education Act, also known as Fosters Act, was passed by the Houses of Parliament. This legislation, which was one of the most important events of British history, laid the foundations for a national system of education, from which Fairfield School had its beginning.

The three main provisions under the 1870 Elementary Education Act:

Whenever there were insufficient school places for children between the ages of 5 and 13 years, the ratepayers were to elect a School Board, with the authority to draw upon the rates to build and maintain as many schools as were thought to be necessary.

1. The voluntary bodies had two years in which they could claim grants to increase their school places to the numbers required.
2. The Boards had the authority to compel parents to send their children to school.
3. At the Board schools the Bible was to be read and explained, but no religious instruction in any one religious denomination was to be given in school hours.

There was widespread strong opposition to the formation of School Boards from the Church of England and the Catholic Church both locally, in Havant, and nationally. The Churches objected to secular education and also to the cost involved. The non-conformists locally were in favour of forming a School Board.

The way round the problem for the Voluntary schools was to increase the number of school places by expanding the existing schools with the use of Government grants. This is what happened in Havant. The National School was rebuilt in 1872 rather than being expanded because of a complicated legal problem regarding the school Deeds. There was one building for boys in Brockhampton Lane (now demolished) and one for girls and infants in Durley Road (later named School Road). The school provided 500 places and the attendance figure in 1887 was 450.

The photograph on the next page shows the former National School for girls before it was demolished. The building was in use as the Havant Church of England Primary School, St Faith's, until 1962. Havant County Infants School (later re-named Bosmere Middle School) used the building as an annex from 1963 to 1974. It was then used as an industrial unit.





The former National School for girls in School Road before it was demolished.

So strong was the opposition from the Church of England and the Catholic Church to the formation of School Boards that in 1871 a staggering 3,342 applications for grants to increase school places were received by the Government.

Because these additional places were provided, no School Board was formed in Havant at this time, but as education was now compulsory, an Attendance Committee was formed to ensure that all local children attended school.

However, it was difficult to enforce compulsory attendance while the fee system (weekly payments of 3 old pence (1p)) continued. Changes in the 1870s and 1880s regarding the employment of children created more demand for places and finally, in 1891, the Free Schooling and Elementary Education Act abolished charges.

### The Havant Almanack for 1897

#### Schools

National School for Boys, Brockhampton. *Master*—Mr DAVIS.

School for Girls, Brockhampton, *Mistress*—Miss RYDER.

School for Infants, Brockhampton, *Mistress*—Miss GAIGER

St. Joseph (Roman Catholic) West Street, *Mistress*—Miss UNSWORTH.

All these factors, combined with Havant becoming an Urban District in 1894, ensured that the Established Churches could no longer oppose the formation of a School Board. On 9 July 1894, over 20 years after the passing of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, the School Board was formed with the non-conformist Pastor as Chairman.

## Part II

### 1896 to 1925 – Mr Beeston's Headship

#### Chapter 3

##### The School is Built

The Havant School Board was formed on 9th July 1894, following an election and comprised five members, who were the local Clergyman, the dissenting Minister and well-known local figures (as was the case with most other School Boards.)

Rev. R.J. Wells, the Chairman, was Pastor of the Congregational Church in Elm Lane, Rev. S.G. Scott, the Vice-Chairman, was Rector of St. Faith's Church, Mr. S. Clarke, Mr. W. Fletcher and Mr. T.A. Stallard were all well-known people in Havant. There were no women on the Board, although women candidates were eligible, and no parental representation. It was suggested that parents should be represented on governing bodies when the 1870 Elementary Education Act was drawn up, but this idea was rejected, (i)

#### The Havant Almanack for 1897

##### Havant School Board

Chairman – Rev. R. J. Wells

Rev. S. G. Scott, Mr W. Fletcher, Mr S. Clarke, Mr T. A. Stallard

*Head-Master* – Mr H. Beeston

*Assistant Certificated Teacher* (Mixed School) – Miss E. Jones

*Head Mistress* (Infant School) – Miss G. E. Van Linchooten

Mr E.R. Longcroft, the Clerk to the Board of Guardians of Havant Union (the Workhouse) acted as Clerk to the Board.

The Board's first task was to purchase a site on which to build a new school. The Fair Field site was ideal, being close to the centre of the town, and the plot was purchased from George Whicher on 15th July 1895.

Mr A. Edwin Stallard, F.S.I., Architect and Surveyor, designed the new school. It was to be a single storey red brick building banded with stone, with high arched windows and pitched tiled roofs, complete with a bell and weather vane. His water coloured drawings are themselves a work of art.

### Footnote (i)

In 1897 the Governing Body included two Parent Governors (increased from one in 1985 and due to be increased to three in 1988) and one Teacher Governor. There were nine members: Mr P. Marshall (Chairman), Mr J. Burrows (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. A. Buckley (Parent), Mrs J. Garratt (Parent), Mrs E. Gleadall, Miss V. Johnson (Teacher), Mr J. Marchant, Mrs T. Meechan and Mr F. Vine.

Mr Stallard also designed the Congregational Church in Elm Lane, built in 1890, and the Cemetery Chapel (now demolished) in the council cemetery in Eastern Road. His drawings of the chapel are now displayed in Havant Museum.

The Havant Almanack for 1897

*Mr. A Edwin Stallard F. S. I.*

*Architect and Surveyor*

Surveyor to the Havant District Council

West Street

Havant

According to the local trade directories, the school was built at a cost of £3,439 in 1895, well within the permitted budget of £4,000. The building accommodated 250 boys and girls and 150 infants. The builder was Mr J.W. Perkins of Southsea.

The school had three entrances, one for boys, one for girls and one for infants. An iron fence stood on top of the low brick wall at the front of the school (fig. 15). Like so many other iron railings, this was removed during the Second World War to provide scrap metal. The fence has now been reinstated between the original brick piers, which are still standing, as part of the landscaping scheme for the front of the school.

Behind the school building were the covered play sheds, one for the boys and one for the girls and infants, and also the outside toilet block. There were no toilets inside the school, the 'lavatories' shown on the plans in the three cloakrooms would have in fact been wash hand-basins. An iron fence ran the length of the playground from west to east, dividing it in two: one side for the boys, the other for the girls and infants.



*Part Elevation of front railing  
and entrance gates*

Fig. 15

Inside the school the building structurally was much as many will remember it before the building work commenced in 1983. The only two major structural changes over the years were the installation of the false ceiling in the hall in 1975 and the re-roofing of the school in 1981. The false ceiling made the hall much warmer, but the original view of the high vaulted ceiling was lost. A photograph taken by the builders during the recent building work, when this false ceiling was removed, can be seen in Chapter 9.

Lighting inside the school was provided by gas and heating was from coal fires.

The school equipment and furniture was very different from what we see today. The Moss's Patent School Board desks, first made in 1870 and used until after the Second World War, had sloping fronts and were attached by an iron frame to a seat. These heavy desks were arranged in rows and were designed for two pupils, but in later years as the school became overcrowded, often accommodated three.

On the walls there would have been pictures and maps, which would have often remained in place for many years.

It is interesting that even on the original drawings an extension was planned. Despite dreadful overcrowding in later years, 90 years were to elapse before the building was extended.

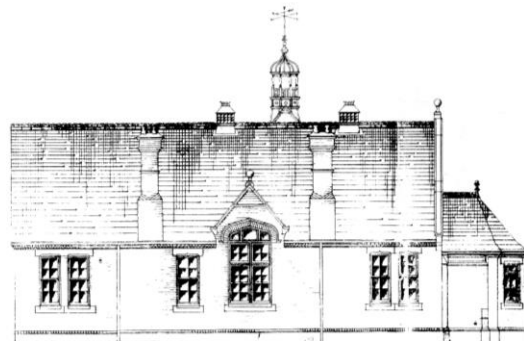
The school is not a Listed Building, but is considered to be of architectural interest and stands in a Conservation Area.

Some later drawings of the school are of interest as they show the layout of the school and grounds in 1934.



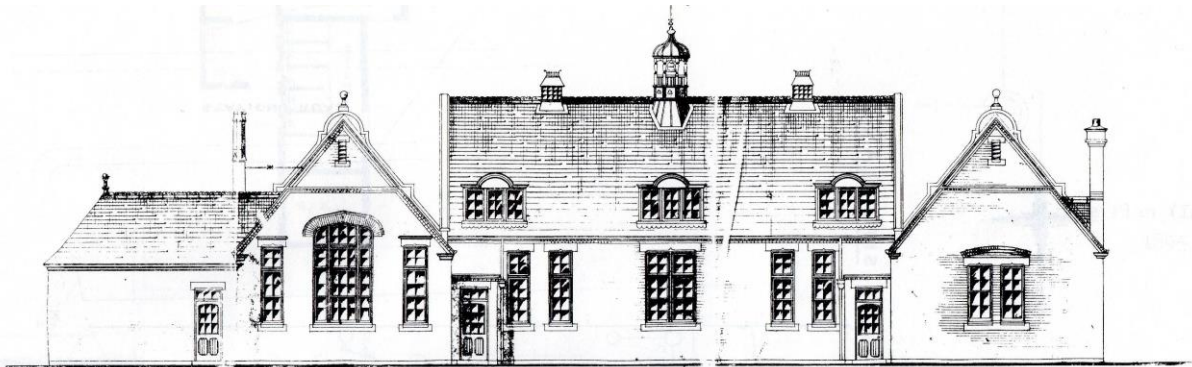


Elevation facing West

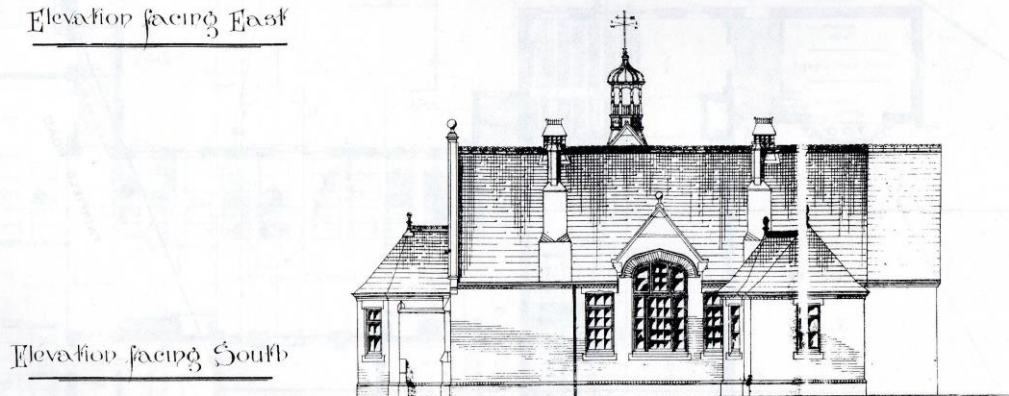


Elevation facing North

Mr Stallard's drawings dated 1894. No-one can remember exactly when the school bell and weather vane were removed. They were not included on the architect's drawing dated 1934.



Elevation facing East



Elevation facing South

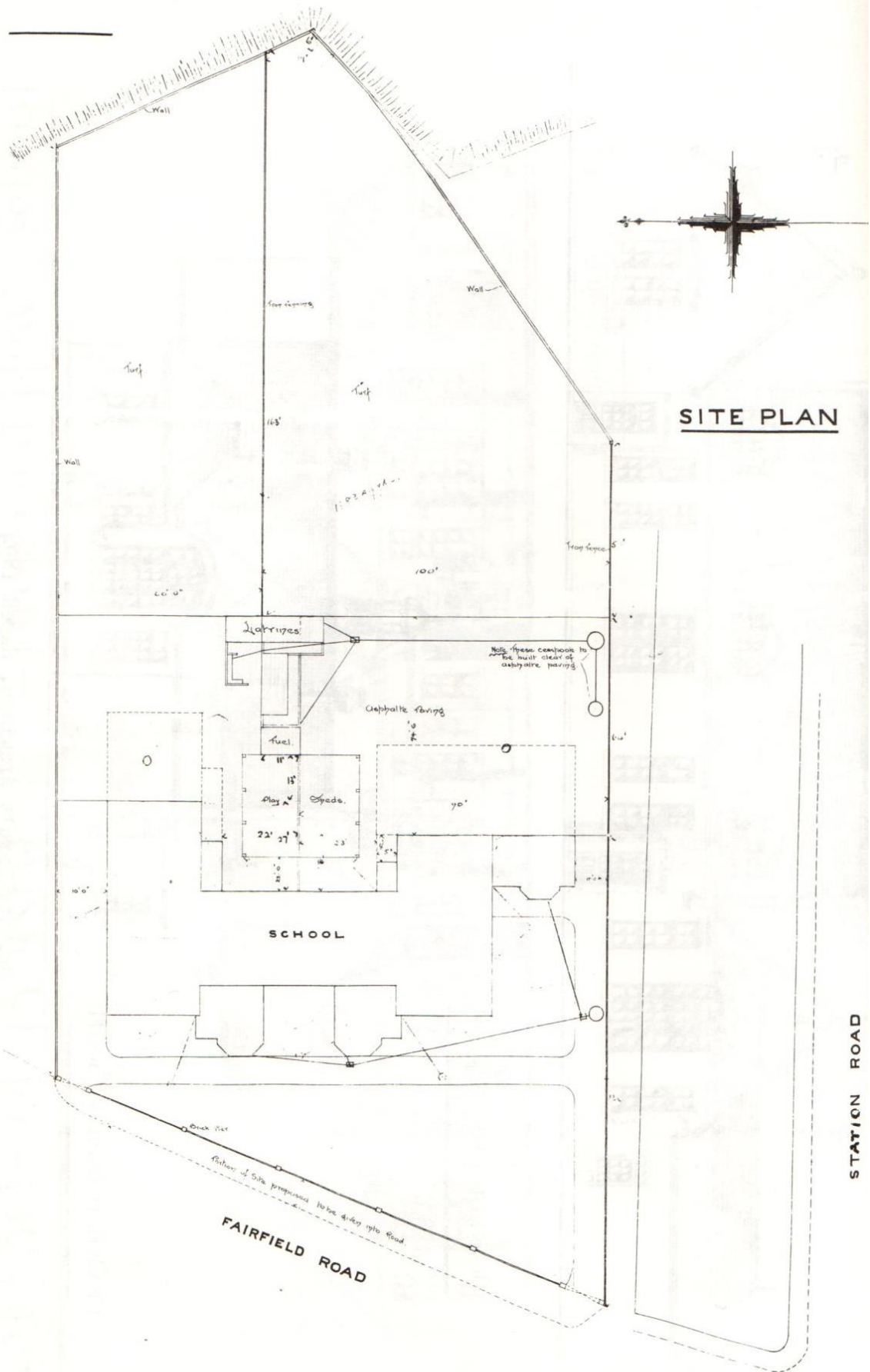
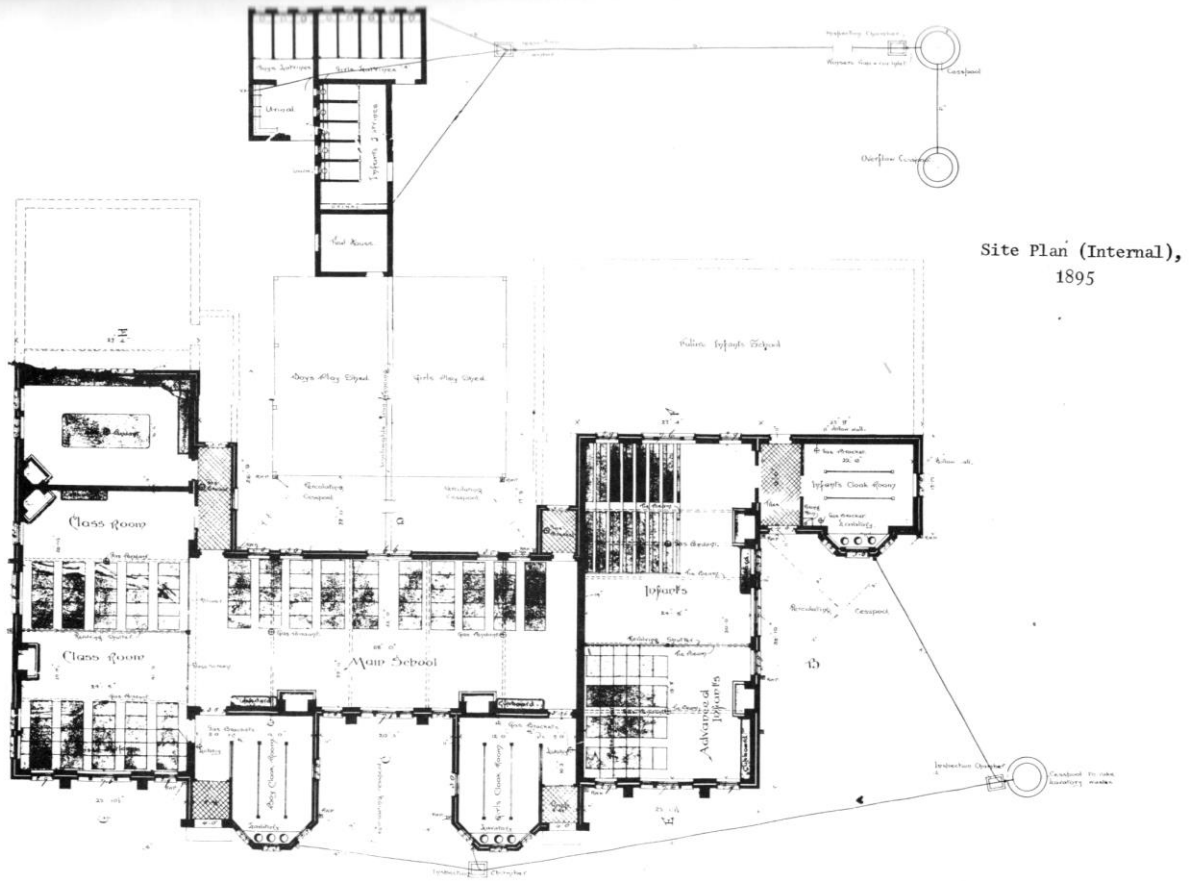


Fig. 18



Site Plan (Internal), 1895

## The Official Opening of the Havant Board School

Opened by Lady Fitzwygram

*The opening of the new Board School at Fairfield, Havant, was celebrated on Thursday by an entertainment given by the Rev. R.J. Wells, Chairman of the Havant School Board. The proceedings were most enjoyable, and the building was crowded to excess, amongst those present being Sir Frederick Fitzwygram, Bart, M.P., and Lady Fitzwygram, the Rev. R. J. Wells, the Rev. S. G. Scott (Rector), and the Rev. Hamilton Gordon.—During an interval the Rev. R.J. Wells gave a short statement of the work accomplished by the School Board, in the course of which he observed that the school buildings would be sufficient for several generations. He pointed out that although the Educational Department allowed the Board to go as high as £10 per scholar for building, they had not reached anything like that sum. After alluding to the confidence felt by the Board in the head-master (Mr. Beeston) and the staff, the rev. gentleman requested Lady Fitzwygram to declare the school open.*

*Lady Fitzwygram, having graciously declared the building open, was, on the proposition of the Rector, seconded by Mr. Fletcher, accorded a vote of thanks for her kindness in attending.*

*Sir Frederick, on behalf of his wife, acknowledged the compliment in a few well-chosen words. Mr. Wells then proposed hearty thanks to Mr. Samphire, Mr. Rule, Mr. Williams, and the children who provided the programme. Mr. Samphire, in acknowledging, apologised for the absence of Mr. T .A. Bramsdon, J.P. Chairman of the Portsmouth School Board.*

*The entertainment, which was sustained by about 130 children of the Portsmouth Board Schools, assisted by their teachers, was bright and enjoyable. Solos were well rendered by Master Seidenstucker and Master C. Ward; Miss Hilda Hine (an accomplished little pupil of Mr. Curran, of the R.M.A. band) played a harp solo, which drew forth warm applause; and Miss Hine, Miss Hilda Hine, and Master Percy Hine gave a pleasing instrumental trio with violin, mandoline, and piano. One of the best items of the evening was the duet "Agatha and Ben Bos'un," by Miss K. Burden and Master C. Ward. An infant dialogue by little Lily Basset and John Andrew caused roars of laughter, and the infants of Fratton Board School went through a musical drill with great precision. After the entertainment the children and their teachers were served with light refreshments in one of the class rooms.*

*Hampshire Telegraph, Saturday, January 25, 1896*

The school opened to pupils on Monday, 27th January 1896.



## Chapter 5

### The Headmaster, Mr Harry Beeston and Mrs Betsy Beeston, and the Staff



Mr and Mrs Beeston are seated in the centre, Mrs Tomlin is on the right.

Mr Harry Beeston was Headmaster of the school for 29 years from 27th January 1896, when the school first opened, until 9th April 1925, when he retired. For most of this time Mrs Betsy Beeston was Headmistress of the Infants School.

The couple met in a small Wesleyan school in Tunstall, Staffordshire, where Mr. Beeston was a teacher, then described as a first assistant. The future Mrs. Beeston was also employed at the same school as an assistant teacher. After six years at the school the couple were married at Woolstanton Wesleyan Church, Staffordshire. Mr and Mrs Beeston then took up the posts of Headmaster and Headmistress of the Board School, Rothwell, near Kettering, Yorkshire.

Mr and Mrs Beeston moved to Havant in 1895 and lived first in a house called Hawkstone in Langstone (in those days spelt Langston). In 1907 they moved to a large house called Sunnymead, now 55 South Street, Havant. As residents in Havant, they regularly attended the Congregational Church in Elm Lane.

Although the couple never had any children of their own, they played a very important part in the lives of many pupils at the Board School (known as the Council School from 1903).

Mr Beeston was a keen naturalist, interested in ornithology, botany and particularly conchology – the study of mollusc shells. His enthusiasm for these subjects, passed on to many generations of pupils, is recorded in the School Log Books, and can be recalled by former pupils to this day.

Mr. Beeston belonged to several scientific societies and was the local recorder for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Birds. The Bird and Tree Club which Mr Beeston organised at the school was responsible for planting many of the trees in Havant Park, known at the time as the Recreation Ground, and also in the school grounds.

When Mr and Mrs Beeston retired in 1925, they continued to live locally and they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1938. Mr Beeston re-married in his eighties after Mrs Beeston's death and lived well into his nineties.

Mr Beeston's staff at the school from the start were well-trained employees and compared to their colleagues in the Voluntary schools were very much better paid. Until the 1920s, when the system was abolished, pupil teachers were apprenticed for three or four years at the age of 15 (16 from 1903). Then they would have gone on to training college for a further two years and, on satisfactorily completing their studies, would have become Certified Teachers.

One such training college was Bishop Otter in Chichester, which has always had an excellent reputation and continues right up to present times to have links with Fairfield School.

Throughout the period of Mr Beeston's headship, teachers at the school would have belonged to the National Union of Elementary Teachers (later the N.U.T.) which was founded in 1907. However, the terms and conditions of employment did not always change for the better. In 1922, three years before Mr Beeston retired, teachers' salaries were cut and State funding of education was reduced. In consequence, the number of teachers employed at the school was cut and the number of pupils in the classroom per teacher was increased.

One other employee at the school who must not be forgotten was the Caretaker. He would have been kept very busy in the winter months, lighting fires to keep the school reasonably warm, which, as the Log Books make clear, was a difficult task. Although the Education Act of 1906 empowered schools to recruit kitchen staff to provide midday meals if necessary, there was no meals service at Havant Board School. Most of the pupils went home for lunch. Those who travelled a long distance to school: from Hayling Island,

Durrants (Rowlands Castle) or West Leigh, brought their own food, which was eaten in one of the classrooms. It is probable that most children here, including those who lived in the Union Workhouse, were reasonably well-fed, unlike their contemporaries in large urban areas at the time, and therefore no kitchen staff were employed.

## Chapter 6

### School Life

Day to day life at the school in the past was recorded by the Headteachers in three Log Books which cover the period 1896 to 1925.

The first, the Infants Log Book, was compiled by the Headmistress of the Infants Department, Miss Van Linchooter, for the period 1896 to 1899. She was succeeded by Mrs Betsy Beeston in 1899.

The second, the Mixed School Log Book, was compiled by the Headmaster of the Mixed School, Mr Harry Beeston, who faithfully recorded all notable events from 1896 until his retirement the same day as Mrs. Beeston's, 19th April 1925, in his own words *29 years, 2½ months later*.

The third, the Evening Continuation School Log, was again compiled by the Headmaster, Mr Beeston. Evening classes covered topics such as Agriculture, Domestic Economy, Needlework, Physiology, Vocal Music, Botany, Elementary Chemistry, Drawing, Shorthand and Cookery. Both Mr and Mrs Beeston taught at these evening classes, which were eventually discontinued in 1899 because of poor attendance.

The Log Books give us a fascinating insight into school life and the entries record pupil attendance (probably some three-quarters of the entries), epidemics of disease, poor sanitary conditions, staff appointments, problems concerning the staff, pupils and their parents, school premises, the curriculum, visits by the Board of Governors, the School Inspector, the Attendance Officer, the School Nurse, and celebrations marking special days and the recording of National events at home and abroad.

The prominence given to the recording of pupil attendance daily was due to its importance as a basis of the size of grant awarded to schools from 1890. Bad weather often resulted in poor attendance and to encourage attendance prizes were awarded to those pupils with a good record.

Numerous other entries in the Log Books are a reminder of the prevalence and seriousness of childhood illness; outbreaks of scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough and diphtheria caused the school to be closed for many weeks on end. The occasional deaths from these diseases are also recorded.

In 1907, the School Health Service was set up because the Authorities had been so appalled by the poor state of health of the troops recruited to fight in the Boer War. Subsequently, there were regular visits by the School Nurse and a gradual improvement in the health of the children can be observed from the entries in the Log Books.

The rising patriotic fervour in the country in the years leading up to the 1914-1918 War also found a place in the Log Book. Empire Day was celebrated at the school from 1906 onwards, on 24th May (Queen Victoria's birthday), with a ceremony involving the raising of the flag.

It is noticeable in the Log Books that there was some rivalry between the Board School and the National School in Havant. This is reflected in the constant movement of pupils between the two schools.

The Log Books also give us some insight into the school curriculum.

Principally, it comprised elementary subjects, i.e. the 3 Rs and Scripture, but also included Drawing, Elementary Science, Geography, Singing and Music, Woodwork (for the boys), Needlework (for the girls), Physical Drill and Exercise, Nature Study and, from 1907, Cookery.

The curriculum entry for Standard I (generally 5- to 6-year-olds) in 1904, tells us that in Geography the children were making a plan of the school and playground. In Drawing, they were sketching and drawing lines, angles and triangles. In Nature Study, groups of eight to 12 pupils at a time were being taken out for nature walks once a week.

It was in Nature Study that the school was exceptionally fortunate in having a Headmaster who, to quote the Inspector's Report of 1922:

*... himself a distinguished naturalist, no doubt feels that the cultivation of orderly and scientific habits of observation are at least as valuable as a taste for literature.*

Such was the standard that students from the acclaimed Bishop Otter College, Chichester, visited the school to study methods of teaching Nature Study.

Other entries in the Log Books note that parents were present at prize givings and nature talks, but it was not until 1922 that a 'Parents' Day' was formalized and parents were given an opportunity to visit and see the work of the school.

The school was organised into seven classes, known as Standard I to VII. It is evident from the Log Books that until 1908, when the local Education Authority changed the minimum age for admission to the Infants Department to five years, children as young as three had

been admitted to the school. The school leaving age was 13 until 1918, when it was raised to 14 years, (it was not changed again until 1947).

During Mr Beeston's Headship, the school day ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a one-and-a-half hour lunch-break.

Much of the information in the Infants Log Book and Mixed School Log Book is the same and they were combined from 1925 onwards. Mr Beeston kept a very comprehensive record, especially during his first ten years as Headmaster. Consequently, most of the extracts are taken from his records. Those taken from the Infants Log Book are marked with an asterisk.

# Extracts from the School Log Books from 1896 to 1925

Compiled by Ann Buckley, Nicola Grant and Pamela Salmon and reproduced by kind permission of Miss R, Dunhill, the County Archivist, Hampshire Records Office.

1

## Diary of Havant Board School. Opened January 27<sup>th</sup> 1896.

1896

Jan<sup>ry</sup> 27<sup>th</sup>

I, Harry Beeston, Certificated Master, commenced duties this morning in these Mixed Schools.

In consequence of the Assistant Mistress, who has been appointed as a teacher, not being able to commence duties today, I have been under the necessity of taking charge of all Standards, in the central room, with the assistance of a Monitor, William Joy.

The number admitted this morning is 39 boys, and 41 girls, total 80

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board visited the schools this morning at 9 o'clock, and the former said a few words to the children present, encouraging attendance, punctuality, regularity & good behaviour.

" 28<sup>th</sup>

Admitted five more scholars today.

The school was visited this morning by the Chairman & Vice-Chairman

" 29<sup>th</sup>

Attendance today not so good as two previous ones.

Illness is the chief cause of irregularity. The attendance

1896

\*January 27th - I (B. Beeston) opened School this morning. I am taking charge this week as the appointed Mistress is unable to be here. There were 27 children admitted.

January 30th – School visited today by Mr Perkins, builder, & Mr Stallard, architect of the school to inspect the ventilating apparatus and bell ropes, both of which do not work properly.

\*February 3rd – I (F.E. Van Linchooter) commenced duties this morning, was assisted by Blanche Foy and Maud Blackmore.

March 16th – Minnie Royle commenced today as a Candidate on trial for Pupil Teacher. Aged 14.

June 22nd – Gave \ Holiday in consequence of Hay-making at Warblington. Only 74 children present out of 104, i.e. 30% absent,

September 17th – 17 fresh children admitted this morning, mostly from the Warblington and National Schools.

### Organization of Classes

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Standard I          | Assistant Mistress with monitor.                          |
| Standard II         | Assistant Mistress  |
| Standard III        | Candidate   |
| Standard IV         | Assistant Master Assisted by Pupil Teacher                |
| Standard V, VI etc. | Head Master assisted by Pupil Teacher                     |
| Needlework          | Assistant Mistress with help of Pupil teacher and monitor |
| Drawing             | Head and Assistant Master with help of monitor            |
| Music & Singing     | Standard I & II – Assistant Mistress                      |
| Music & Singing     | Standard IV to VII – Assistant Master                     |

November 2nd – Military Drill for the Boys changed to Tuesday morning. The Girls in the meantime taking Dumb-bell Exercises.

December 4th – The following scheme of prizes has been drawn up & passed by the Board at the last meeting for the year ending 30th June 1897.

#### Attendance Prizes

1st Prize value about 3/6d. (17½p) for full number of attendances.

2nd Prize value about 2/6d. (12½p) 5 attendances less than possible.

3rd Prize value about 2/- (10p) to minimum (probably 400).

Certificates to 10 children below the minimum number at the discretion of the Board.

### Additional Prizes

Prizes also offered by the members of the Board for the following subjects:-  
Hand-writing, Scripture, Composition, Map Drawing, Needlework, Drawing, Elementary Science, Punctuality, Cleanliness & Good Conduct.

1897

\*April 29th – It was strongly advised by H.M.I, that a musical instrument should be provided for this department.

\*June 15th – Received Harmonium today.

June 24th – Poor attendance: circus in town.

\*June 28th – Several children absent today, no doubt this is owing to Coronation Day, other schools being closed.

1898

June 16th – Nearly 40 children absent today, attending Congregational Band of Hope outing to Goodwood.

July 19th – *I visited the school, tested registers and counted out every class, finding all accurate.* S.G. Scott, Vice Chairman.

1899

\*January 9th – *At the Board Meeting, January 2nd, I was appointed Head Mistress of the Infants Department.* B. Beeston.

September 6th – *The state of the school deserves high praise. Discipline is very good & instruction is sound, zealous & enterprising.* E.R. Longcroft. Clerk to the Board.

\*September 6th – Received list of Object lessons from H.M.I. Signed and Approved.

1900

April 5th – Magic Lantern Lecture & Prize Distribution (prizes presented by Lady Fitzwygram).

May 21st – School closed in commemoration of the Relief of Mafeking.



July 12th – Today, was much gratified to hear that Harold Croft had successfully obtained a County Council Scholarship. This boy has received no other instruction to prepare him for the examination but the ordinary daily instruction of this school. My opinion is that this is as it should be, and that all candidates should be disqualified for the Junior Scholarships of the County Council if they have been coached & specially prepared out of school hours, (See Chapter 8).

\*September 13th School closed this afternoon for Langstone Regatta.



All the fun of the fair when this photograph was taken in front of the Ship Inn. There was great entertainment with roundabouts and side shows. Shellfish was on sale and a good supply of water pistols that could be a nuisance but taken in good part. It was a public holiday in Havant and was well patronised by people from around the area. The highlight was a water carnival on the mill pond in the evening with private pleasure boats, owned by local residents, were launched and illuminated with candle fairy lights for the boat procession. An oil merchant in West Street owned such a boat.

November 26th – I am sorry to report that three cases of scarlet fever are reported and have been taken to the Fever Hospital.

1901

February 1st – School closed for the rest of the day at 12 a.m. *in respect for our Dearly Beloved Queen.*

February 4th – Mr. Jolliffe, lecturer to the Hants Band of Hope Union, visited the school and gave a lecture to the Upper Standards on 'Alcohol & the Blood'.

March 28th – First 'country ramble' with scholars taken today. Started at 3 p.m. & finished at 5 p.m. Plants observed – 9; flowers in bloom – 11; birds seen – 7; nests – 2; insects – 1.

June 4th – Opened school with quite a large number of absentees, mostly cases of measles.

July 4th – The epidemic of measles has now practically died a natural death.

\*July 19th – No. on books 61.

September 5th – Took 10 children out for Natural History ramble. Direction: New Lane. About 25 kinds of flowers were collected.

\*October 4th – The railway men are having a holiday now, so some of the children are absent.

\*November 8th – I have a little child of 3 years coming occasionally.

\*December 10th – Louise Watts .... received prize for attendance today.

December 19th – Today the Annual Prize Distribution took place .... The Rev. S.G. Scott (Vice Chairman) also spoke to the children about their good behaviour, & encouraged the children to become depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank.

1902

\*September 1st – Havant Board – Summary of Inspector's Report: *This is an excellent and model Infants School in all respects.* Clerk of the School Board.

October 15th – Rain again pouring into the school through the roof from the turret & is lying in a pool in the centre of the floor. This happens always when it rains heavily & the wind drives strongly from the south west.

1903

January 14th – Weather extremely cold. Rooms very cold & uncomfortable, especially the main room, where the children sat shivering with cold all the morning, scarcely able to hold pencils or pens.

June 26th – School closed today for King's Birthday.

September 30th – Today at 2.30 p.m., Rev. R.J. Wells, late Chairman of School Board, distributed the prizes to the school, no other representative of the Board being present.

### Exit the School Board (See Chapter 8)

October 2nd – Hants Council School – Havant

October 21st – Aubrey Bisnell has eaten a horse chestnut and is too ill to attend school.

December 2nd – On the recommendation of the Chairman of the Managers (Rev. R.J. Wells), a half holiday was given to enable the children to visit the Poultry Show at the Town Hall.

December 23rd – Closed school today for X'mas Holidays. School reopens on Jan. 12th 1904.

1904

March 11th – Surveyor today testing the drains. He informs me that the drains connecting the offices with cesspools are leaking & defective, & those in the other parts of the building are not at all satisfactory.

March 15th – Every child present at school this morning.

June 30th – Number of scholars on books 131.

July 22nd – Closed school this afternoon at 4.30 for the Summer Holidays. School will reopen on September 5th.

September 5th – Summary of Inspector's Report, Havant Council School, year ended 30th June 1904:

### Mixed School

*This is a well-organised, disciplined and, in most respects, well-taught school. All details receive due attention and Nature Study and the training in habits of observation in connection with it form a prominent feature in the routine. Cannot a Cookery class be organised at this school?*

November 14th – I have today received a letter from Rev. E. Hammond, Principal of Bishop Otter College, Chichester, asking permission to allow about 10 students to visit the school for the purpose of studying methods, etc. especially our plans of following out Nature Study, more particularly the practical part (i.e. children's rambles, note-taking and observation lessons).

November 16th – 10 students accompanied by two mistresses from Chichester College visited the school this afternoon from 2.15 to 3.35 p.m. They seemed much pleased with our plans and work and expressed the hope that we would allow them to visit the school again soon.

December 15th – Today, Sir Frederick Fitzwygram is being buried at Redhill: probably this may be the cause of several children being absent.

\*December 21st – A young boy had to stay at home yesterday to help with the turnips. He is only 7 years old.

1905

February 24th – Prize Distribution today at 3.30 p.m. ... Several of the children's parents accepted an invitation to be present.

March 28th – Having occasion to stay behind after afternoon school today until 4.20 p.m. I was surprised to find a large number of children being detained in the classroom, in direct contravention of my instructions on the point issued to the teachers on December 15th. I at once ordered the pupils to be dismissed.

May 8th – Today Miss Foy has informed me that she is intending to leave the profession to get married.

June 19th – Opened school this morning, but a large number of absentees, chiefly measles cases. The Medical Officer of Health has issued an order to me to close the school for a fortnight from today.

August 29th – Opened school this morning, after being closed for 11 weeks. The measles epidemic seems to have died out.

\*October 11th – Two children absent as they had no food to eat – father has no work.

December 22nd – Before dismissal, the older children very kindly entertained infants of Standard I to a feast of sweets, nuts, oranges, etc. and each little one was presented with a toy cut by Father Christmas from a X'mas tree. Needless to say, both givers and recipients thoroughly enjoyed the good things and the fun.

1906

June 25th – Every child present at school this morning.

October 1st – Mabel Cox, aged 15, commenced as a monitor today.

\*October 31st – Miss Clarke (one of the School Managers) paid a visit and checked registers. Spoke to her of the necessity of a stove in the lavatory to dry the children's garments in wet weather.

November 20th – A case of scarlet fever reported in the Infants.

December 12th – Case of diphtheria reported. Patient taken to hospital.

1907

February 1st – The drains, soak-pits & cesspits have all been overhauled & cleaned out. When opened they were found to be very foul & much in need of attention.

February 7th – Bird & Tree Festival. Holiday in the afternoon. I planted a Laburnum tree at 11.30 a.m. & photos taken of school children and B. & T. team. In the Bird & Tree Competition for 1906 the School succeeded in obtaining Third Prize.

April 19th – Today I have an application from Rev. E. Hammond, Principal of Bishop Otter College, Chichester, for 4 students to attend the school next week for the purpose of practical teaching. I granted the application on condition that notice was duly sent to the Director of Education, Winchester, & no objections raised by the Education Committee.

April 22nd – Yesterday I received a reply from the Director of Education refusing point blank to allow the school to be used by the students from Chichester for the purpose of practical teaching.

July 4th – School closed until after the Summer Holiday – a very large number of cases of whooping cough.

September 16th – Cookery classes commenced this morning, 12 scholars to the class, who I think will benefit.

September 25th – Took six scholars this afternoon at 2.00 p.m. by train to South Hayling for Nature Study work.

\*December 14th – The fires were very poor this morning and it is a bitter cold and wet morning.

December 19th – Bird & Tree Festival. The day's proceedings were as follows:

1 Planting of two trees – a Red Hawthorn & a Weeping Willow on the green of the Girls' and Infants' playground at 11 a.m.

2 Photographing the chief actors in the ceremony.

1908

February 26th – I have this morning sent a long explanatory letter to the Managers respecting the Time-Table & the Education Authority's proposal to reduce the Nature Study excursions to one a week. This I have explained would be farcical & completely disorganise the plans & teaching of the subject in the school. The present scheme has been in operation for nearly 12 years, & is in every way satisfactory.

March 3rd – Two students from Bishop Otter College, Chichester, visited today for practise, & will be in school for the two following days. I have arranged for each student to prepare & give seven or eight lessons to various Standards, the teachers and myself certifying the lessons.

May 11th – Admitted one fresh scholar from Catholic School whose parents require exemption from religious instruction. This is the first instance of the kind since the schools were opened in 1896.

May 18th – Two more families of children removed from the school today; the cause – sent to National School because younger ones under 5 years can be taken in; the older ones sent to take care of them.

A large number of children have been removed from the school in both Departments in consequence of the Education Authority's decision to close the Infants Department against children under 5 years of age.

It is quite likely that there are other families who will do likewise presently, as there is a spirit of unrest & annoyance against the Education Authority's unwise decision.

The Infants School is not increasing in numbers & the Mixed Department is very seriously diminishing in number for the reasons stated above. Parents aver that *where the little ones can go, the big ones shall go too*, and they have already commenced to put this into practice to the detriment of both Departments.

May 25th – Celebration of Empire Day. The whole of the scholars in the school this morning were given a lesson on 'Empire'. At 11.30 a.m. the Rev. L.E. Dowsell (Manager) gave a short address to the assembled scholars in the playground. The Union Jack was saluted & the National Anthem sung.

July 31st – Closed school this morning at noon for summer holiday. Never were holidays more welcome!

September 17th – This afternoon, after marking the registers and seeing all in order, I took 10 scholars (4 boys & 6 girls) on a Natural History Excursion via New Lane & across the meadowland to Rowlands Castle, from there through the Stansted Avenue, returning by the Home Farm & through the woods back to Havant by W. Leigh & railway station. The ramble ended at Havant about 8.30 p.m.

November 9th – The Bird & Tree team have won the County Challenge Shield in this year's competition.

December 24th – Bird & Tree Festival. Last night's meeting was in every way a success. The room was quite full & was quite a representative gathering of the townspeople. The shield and medals were presented by Lady Fitzwygram.



The Bird & Tree Team planting one of the Horse Chestnut trees in the Recreation Ground (Havant Park), 1908

Continuation of Festival:

- I Nursery Rhymes & Children's Play by the Infants.
- II Santa Claus & X'mas Tree for the Infants.
- III Planting of Tree (a Purple Maple) by Bird & Tree Team on the School Green.
- IV Photographing of scholars, & Bird & Tree Team, while tree planting, & also with shield and medals.
- V General 'kick-up' for older scholars in main room, when 'scupping for nuts and sweets' was indulged in; oranges were distributed and the school dismissed at 1.30 p.m.





School photograph, 1908. Mrs Tomlins' son, Charles, is standing in front of his mother on the far left of the photograph.

1909

February 1st – This morning I am sorry to record the death of a scholar ... who died yesterday of tuberculosis of the brain. He was a bright & cheerful little fellow. It is proposed by the teachers & scholars to subscribe towards a wreath to express our sympathy & condolence with the parents.

March 25th – L. H. Hicks, H.M.I., visited the school this morning for holding a Labour Examination, (ii) One child only presented. I explained to him our proposed Nature Study Scheme in all its aspects & he signed the scheme for the year, considering that it fulfilled both the letter & spirit of the code.

(ii) Pupils could leave school before they were 13 years old if they passed this examination.

March 30th – A miserable wet day, a large number of children away in consequence.

September 15th to October 4th – School closed by order of Medical Officer of Health – outbreak of diphtheria.

\*October 29th – Weather very dreadful. Several families have their homes flooded. Attendance has suffered.

December 7th – Rev. S.G. Scott visited the school today to enquire into the matter of the W.C. accommodation for teachers.

1910

January 25th – The Medical Officer visited the school today & examined all the special cases.

\*April 12th – 62 names on books. Just enough desks, that is 31.

April 20th – Pupil Teacher again late for school; reason stated 'delayed by cattle', & not satisfactory.

1911

April 6th – At opening of school at 2 p.m. I informed the caretaker that for the future the children were to remain in the school on cold & wet days & not to be sent out of doors, as some of the parents desired their children to be kept warm & not turned out when they had eaten their food.

June 19th – There is to be a holiday this afternoon for the Havant and District Sports.



Sports Day in the Recreation Ground

1912

February 13th – School closed for one month on account of the epidemic of measles.

September 30th – Today informed the teachers that it is my intention to abolish the system of giving bad marks for minor offences as punishment. The plan now abolished has been in existence for nearly 17 years, & was chiefly instituted as a teacher's safeguard under the old Pupil Teacher regime, but as only Certificated and responsible teachers are employed in the school, I have thought it best to make teachers responsible for the discipline of their own classes & to use their own discretionary powers in the matter of rewards and punishments in future, reserving to myself the responsibility of punishment for flagrant or serious breaches of discipline.

1913

July 16th – School closed today in consequence of Congregational Sunday School Treat & Flower Show.

\*December 10th – Had a nasty accident in the gallery.

December 12th – Absent this morning from school, having been instructed by Dr R.A. Lyster to attend the Havant Police Court as a witness in three prosecution cases respecting children with unclean heads. I have made a very strong protest to Dr Lyster & also to the Managers of the School against being called into court for such a purpose, but he (Dr. Lyster) refuses to excuse my attendance.

1914

March 12th – I am sorry to record one of the scholars in Standard I is dead, having been in hospital for some weeks suffering from consumption & complications.

October 8th – Miss Fletcher is taking a Bible lesson.

1915

January 25th – 4 children removed from the school and sent to Girls' National School, in consequence of having to speak to them of nits in their hair.

May 4th – Routine medical examination today by the Doctor, accompanied by Nurse Long.

\*July 7th – Band of Hope treat; a few children away on this account.

July 22nd – School visited by Medical Nurse, who thoroughly examined the heads of all the girls, & also tested the eyesight of several children.

1916

\*February 5th – It is very cold in school. The children have been wearing their wraps.

February 14th – As this is the last occasion on which Rev. Canon Scott will visit the school in the capacity of Chairman of the Managers of the School, as he is leaving the town, I should like to say on behalf of the teachers (Mixed & Infants) & myself how much we regret the Canon's severance with the school after a period of 21 years' service as Vice Chairman, & afterwards as Chairman of the Managers.

September 26th – Zeppelin Raid over Portsmouth last night. This, together with a terrible storm today, has made havoc with the attendance today – no less than 37 children absent.

October 6th – Yesterday I had occasion to punish 8 boys for stone-throwing in the road outside the school.

December 21st – Terrible inclement morning. 33 children absent.

1917

February 9th – Quite a large number of children are suffering badly from chilblains on feet & hands. Eight absent through being unable to walk in consequence of swollen feet.

July 20th – Managers' meeting today at 2.30 p.m., to whom I reported the unsatisfactory attendance & low percentage, owing chiefly to children being kept away half or whole days by parents to go holiday – making, running errands, minding babies, etc., etc.

October 12th – Admitted one scholar, who I find is suffering from 'Air Raid nerves'.

1918

July 9th – Afternoon session of school at 1 p.m. today until 3.05 p.m. to give children an opportunity of visiting Broncho Bill's Wild West Show.

September 10th – I find that one boy who is under 14 years of age is being employed as an errand boy without legal right, not having passed Labour or other examination. I have reported the circumstances to the Education Authority.

September 30th – Some of the porters are beginning their holidays & the children will be away.

October 16th – I have received notice from the M.O.H. to close the school at noon today in consequence of the influenza epidemic, to reopen November 4th next.

November 11th – The Great War ended. Armistice signed this morning – town en fête (holding a celebration), so in conjunction with all the other schools of the town, the children had a half day holiday this afternoon to celebrate the event.

1919

March 31st – End of School Year.

*Havant Urban District.*

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**PEACE CELEBRATION**

**Saturday, 19th July, 1919.**

Admit *Blanche Irslio*

Aged *12*

THORBURN A. STALLARD,  
Chairman.

Not Transferable.

**Programme.**

- 2 p.m.**—Meet in Park to form up for Procession by **2.45 p.m.**
- 3.45 p.m.**—Complimentary Dinner to Officers and Men who have served in His Majesty's Forces during the War, at Havant Town Hall.
- 3.45 p.m.**—Tea for people 60 years of age and over, Widows of Men who fell in the War or died on Service, and for children 15 and under, at Havant Park.
- 6 p.m.**—Form up in Park for Decorated Procession which will leave there at **7 p.m.**

Invitation to the Peace Celebration.

July 21st – Peace Week. Half-holiday this afternoon for Peace celebration.

September 5th – Number on registers: 135 (Mixed School).

November 28th – Working under great difficulties. The children are far from well & there is a great deal of coughing.

1920

By consent of the Managers & the L.E.A., the afternoon session will commence at 1.30 p.m. & school close at 3.35 p.m., i.e. 2 hours 5 minutes session. This alteration in the time-table is for the purpose of effecting economy in coal & gas during the winter.

January 20th – Routine medical inspection this morning with Nurse present. Two parents (mothers) attended to see the Doctor.

1921

June 9th – Opened school afternoon session at 12.55 p.m. & closed at 3 p.m. to enable children to attend a circus.

July 2nd – Children photographed. (See chapter 7).

July 5th – Photographs sold to children.

July 13th – The Managers this year refused to close the school for the Congregational Sunday School Treat, as has been the custom for many years past. 39% absent.

November 7th – Nature Study Excursion.

## 1922

January 20th – This afternoon parents of the scholars were invited to an Educational Display of Physical Exercises, Dances, Action & School Songs, Nursery Rhyme, Plays, etc. by the scholars of the Infants and Mixed Schools from 2 – 4 p.m. A large number of parents were present & expressed their appreciation of the privilege accorded them of seeing a little of the work done in the school.

February 28th – Holiday all day: Princess Mary's Wedding.

April 12th – Today I have received the Inspector's Report:

### Mixed Department

*The School is in first rate order & is doing very good work. Its distinctive feature is to be found in the very clearly defined principles which govern the policy of the Headmaster. The formation of the character rather than abstract knowledge is the primary objective.*

May 1st – Messrs Fletcher & Stallard (Managers) visited the school this morning at 9.15 respecting my list of repairs etc. submitted to the Managers a month ago.

July 4th – Miss Ansty – Drill Instructor, saw the assembling of the children & was very pleased with the deep breathing & cleanliness of the whole school.

August 28th – I have received information that two boys have successfully passed the Churcher's College Scholarship Examination.

November 15th – School closed for the day for General Election.

December 22nd – This afternoon the ordinary routine work of the school was suspended. The parents of the scholars were invited to attend an Educational Display. The room was crowded to overflowing. The Rev. N.R. Rodgers, Rector of Havant & a Manager of the school, spoke a few commendatory words to parents, children & teachers.

## 1923

April 26th – Holiday for the wedding of the Duke of York by request of the King.

August 17th – Reopened school this morning. Arthur Herbert Martin (born January 1906) commenced apprenticeship in school today as Pupil Teacher.

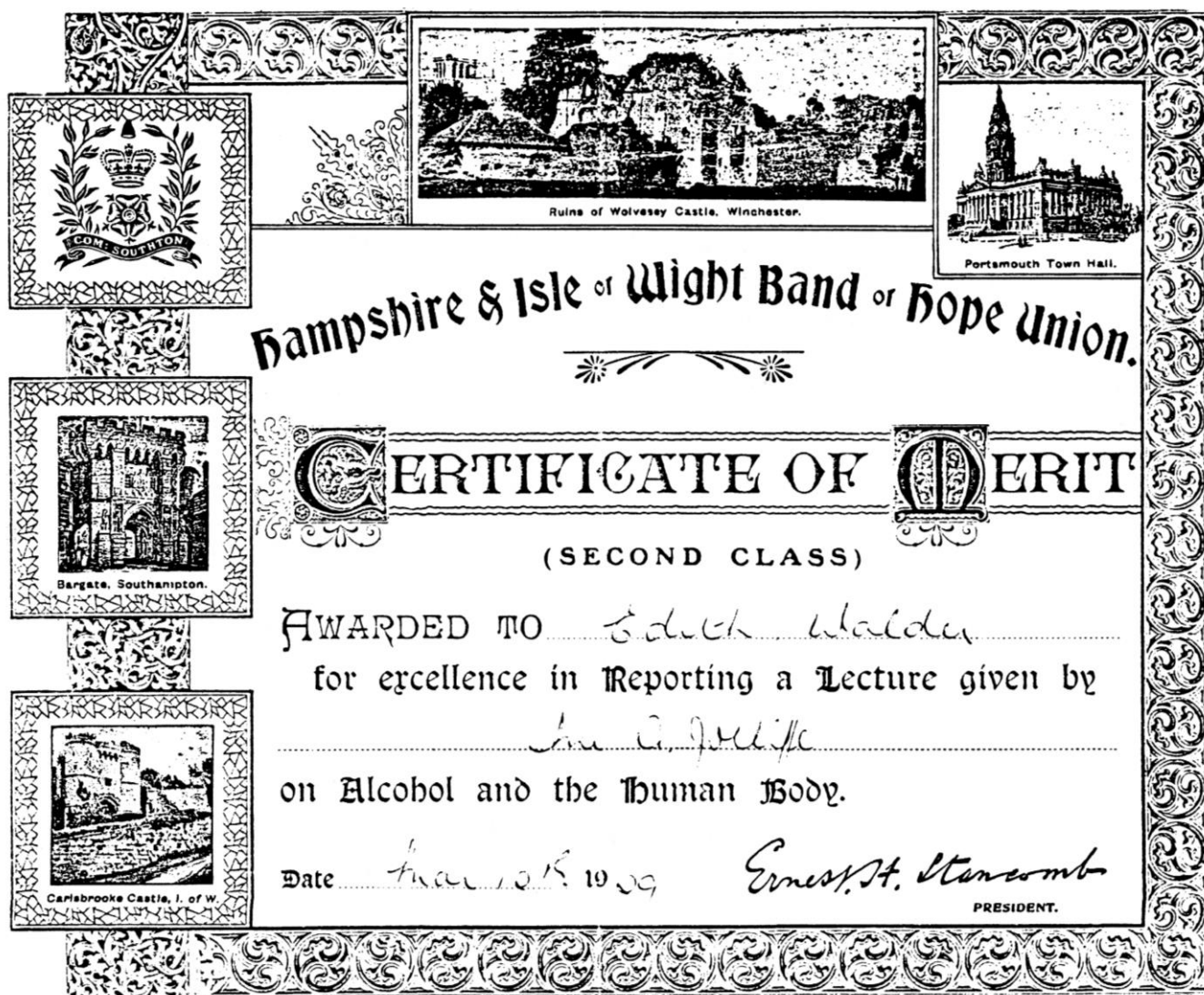
Two children have gained scholarships; one proceeds to Churchers College, Petersfield,

the other to Cosham Secondary School.

December 1st – Child absent – no shoes to wear.

December 6th – School closed today as rooms are required for General Election purposes.

December 20th – 'Parents' Day,' 2 – 4.30 p.m. The children entertained parents & friends with an excellent programme of Music, Dances, Songs, Recitations & X'mas Plays. The main room was crowded with an enthusiastic & appreciative audience.



Mr Jolliffe first lectured at the school in 1901.

1924

January 9th – A very cold, windy day. All rooms uncomfortable temperature, not more than 48 Degrees at 11 a.m. A fresh supply of coal has been delivered today – this may improve matters.

February 13th – Another visit from School Nurse at 9.30 a.m.



March 4th – Shrove Tuesday – The Managers granted a half holiday this afternoon. This holiday has been suspended for several years – since 1918, but I am gratified that it has been again revived – this my efforts with the Managers. Long may it survive.

March 31st – Nearly all the examination work has been completed & the children promoted to the various classes. No. on register 123.

April 14th – Very stormy morning keeping many children away from school.

July 14th – School closed for six weeks in consequence of an epidemic of scarlet fever. The school to reopen on August 25th next after summer holiday.

October 29th – School closed today as it is being used for purpose of General Election.

October 30th – Visit of School Nurse again from 1.30 to 2.45 p.m. At my request, she wrote the following report of the visit:

Havant Council School,

October 30th, 1924

*I have today examined the children at the above school, numbering 136. They are exceptionally well behaved children & all are clean & tidy; hands & nails clean and well-kept & all heads free from vermin & nits; clothing & general appearance good. Great praise is due to Mr. Beeston, Headmaster, for the high standard of cleanliness in this school; teaching of hygiene & morning inspection from him being invaluable.*

(Signed) V.M. Saunders, S.R.N.

(Health Visitor & Nurse of Hants County Council)

November 6th – The Cookery classes were held today for the first time on the school premises, in the recently erected Red Cross Army Shed at the eastern end of the Recreation yards.

1925

January 15th – I have today posted to the Director of Education my wife's & my own resignation of our Headships in connection with this school.

April 9th – Harry Beeston's last day as Headmaster of the Havant Council School.

This is my last attendance at school here, as I retire from scholastic work on April 19<sup>th</sup> next. It is 29 years 2½ months since I took charge of the school - & this Log is a very good record of my work here since the Commencement.

The school closes this morning for the Easter Holidays - & will reopen on April 20<sup>th</sup> under new supervision - the Head Teacher under new arrangements having to take charge & supervise both Mixed & Infants Schools. An unexperienced Assistant has been appointed to assist with the Infants. The Mixed School staff to remain as at present. I have placed all books belonging to the school not under the charge of ~~the~~ the Senior Assistant Mistress until the newly appointed Head takes charge.

Before taking final leave of the school I should like to place on record how very happily teachers & scholars have all worked together with me in maintaining the highly efficient conditions which at present exist in the school (vide Inspector's last report p. 429).

My 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Mistress (M<sup>rs</sup> S. S. Tomlins) has been with me since Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1896 - a period of 29 years, & has

proved herself an excellent teacher, conscientious, painstaking, trustworthy & punctilious in all she does. It is with great regret that I sever my connection with such an admirable & highly efficient Colleague.

M<sup>rs</sup> S. S. Sheek has served in the school since Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> 1919 - 6 years. On her behalf I need only say that she has assisted greatly, since appointment, in maintaining the efficiency, high standard & traditions of the school for the past 29 years. Her happy & cheery disposition adds greatly to the excellent tone & good discipline which we pride ourselves obtains throughout the school.

Candidly now the time has come to lay aside my scholastic work I feel how much I owe - especially during the past 6 years - to the untiring energy, good will & generous, ungrudging work of my two lieutenants.

Then, I would also like to express how much I owe to my wife's splendid work in the Infants' Department for 26 years. Year by year the new class (St I) has been sent up excellently prepared with few or no duds. This year the Inspector (E. Wynne-Williams Esq) asserts that the class is

fully prepared to go straight into ST-II. This too after a critical examination (!) by himself.

This splendid foundation has made the work of progress in the Mixed School easily attainable, & added very greatly indeed to the success year by year of the Mixed Department.

To Miss E. M. Baker I would also render my unqualified appreciation of her sterling qualities, as a teacher, & as the right hand supporter of my wife. Miss Baker's work in preparing the "Babies" has achieved splendid results. My best wishes are for her success & progress in the future.

Lastly, I would like to express my pleasure & appreciation at the way our efforts for the benefit & progress of the scholars have been supported by the parents. They have fully helped us to attain a high state of cleanliness, punctuality & good conduct in the school. without their interest & assistance the work would have been much less beneficial & harder of attainment.

To my successor (unknown to me) I can only say "Every Success & God Speed".

Signed Harry Beeston

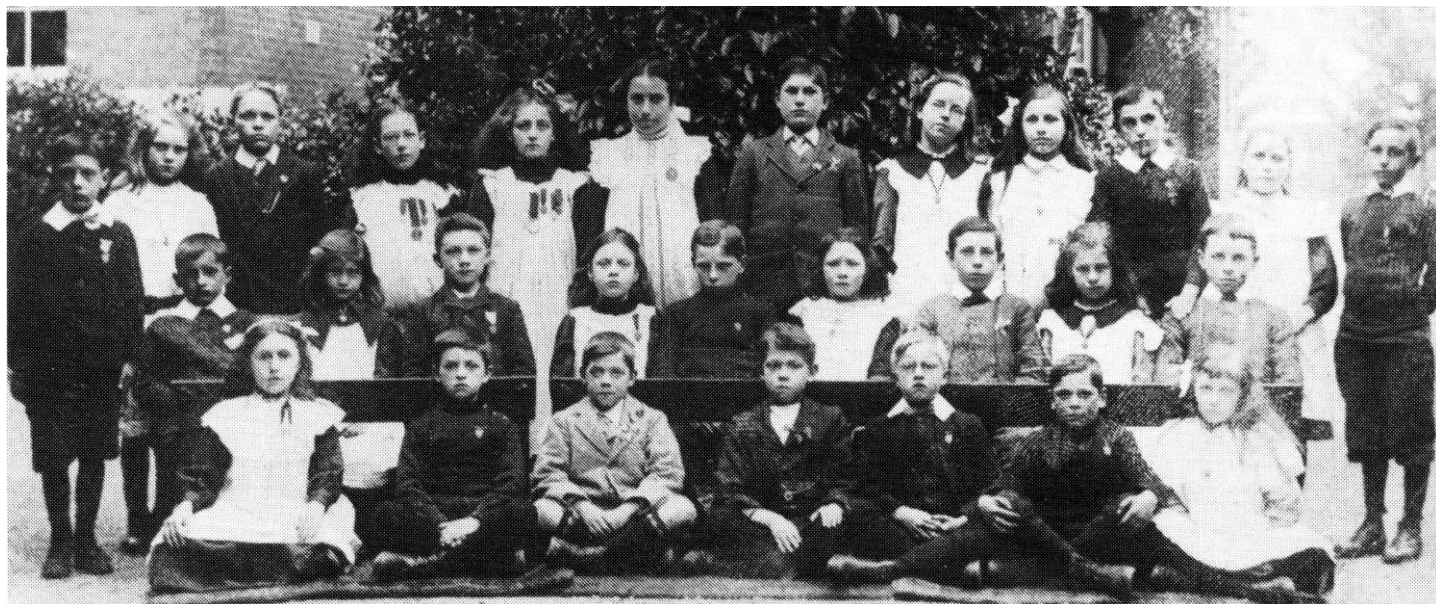
Apr: 9<sup>th</sup> 1925.

## Chapter 7

### THE PUPILS

Interviews of former pupils were carried out by Stuart Binnie, Philippa Baker, Claire Palmer, Mark Robson, Adam Routledge, Robert Thomas and Elizabeth White (pupils at Fairfield School in 1985) on 3rd July 1985 during the school's Open Day.

A press report about the Open Day may be seen in Chapter 10.



May Ruffell is fourth from the right in the second row. (i) Miss Ruffell's great niece is photographed in Chapter 13.

*"My name is May Ruffell and I live in Havant. I started school here in 1905 at the end of January. When I was a little girl I lived down near the Town Hall and I used to just have to walk up Beechworth Road to school. We used to wear petticoats that tied round our necks. Our classroom was not very warm because we used to have a big old stove to keep it warm in winter. We had forms and desks and when we misbehaved we used to have to stand on the form with our hands on our heads."*

*"I used to love history, grammar and composition. I was dreadful at sums. I was Standard 5 when I left for sums and Standard 3 for needlework. I was hopeless at needlework."*

*"I remember when King George V was crowned and we were taken in a big cart round the park. It rained and I was wearing a new white dress with a broderie anglaise top and I carried a flag and by the time I got home I was all red, white and blue."*

*"My name is Leslie Cozens and I live at Waterlooville. I came here in World War I, 1915. I walked to school."*

*"In the winter time I wore a woolly jumper and a pair of short trousers. A light shirt in the summer time. Boots in the winter, shoes in the summer. There were heaters and a fire.*

*"I had about 12 months in the infants school and then moved up into the main school and went through forms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Drawing was mostly my favourite lesson. I didn't like sums.*

*"I remember Empire Day, Christmas time and the summer holidays. When we got older we used to take it in turns to ring the bell for a week and when it came to one boy's turn, he pulled the rope a bit harder and pulled it over the top, so we didn't get any more bell for a week. If you came in late they couldn't check on it." Mr Cozens died in November 1985. Mrs Cozens has kindly consented to having this interview printed.*

*"My name is Mrs Maggie May Luckin (née Muston). I was at Fairfield from 1919 to 1922. I walked to school. I can remember wearing long button boots, very long serge-y type of dresses, very rough really, and a big bow ribbon in the hair.*

*"As far as I can remember, my classroom was rather dark and quite nice and clean, but grubby-looking desks really.*

*"My favourite lesson was writing. I used to like writing essays, stories and things like that.*

*"I didn't like the porch, where we used to hang our clothes, very much because we used to have to leave our sandwiches in the pockets; it always smelt of sandwiches.*

*"I remember when we had a concert at Christmas and I was in one and I was a fairy named "Bright-Eye". I remember Mr and Mrs Beeston (he was Headmaster) and they lived in South Street, Havant."*

*"My name is Lena Rose Mitchell (née Till). I was at Fairfield from 1918 to 1927. My mother started school on 27th January 1896. My son and my two grandsons also attended the school.*

*"I lived in Waterloo Road, near the Masonic Hall, where the car park is now. The back of our house overlooked the grounds of the Manor House Academy. The playground at Fairfield was beautiful with laburnum and May trees. We had some of our lessons outside in the summer.*

*"I did not like maths, but I enjoyed knitting and used to knit socks for my teacher's husband. When my mother found out I had to stop."*



*"My name is Mrs. Edith Nash (née Walder) and I was at Fairfield from 1920. I walked to school from Town Hall Road. I could hear the school bell from my house. The monitors stood at the gate and took your name if you were late. When we were late we were punished by writing lines.*

*"At dinner-time we could hear the hooter at the Hygeia Laundry in Waterloo Road. I enjoyed my schooldays."*



Standard 1, 1921

Left to right, back row: Mrs Beeston, Emily Shepperd, Doris Ralph, David Wishart, Ken Makins, Vera Creese, Phillip Tassle. Middle row: Elsie Far, Leonard Thorne, Violet Paraham, Betty Morris, Hetty Parham. Miss Baker. Front row: Cecilia Cobb, Edith Walder, Ronnie Budd, Henry Brittain, Doris Hobbs, Peggy Fox, Len Morris, Dorothy Brown.

*"My name is Mrs. Baker (née Morris), Philippa, Alexandra, Matthew and Victoria's Grandma. I was at Fairfield from 1922 to 1928. I walked to school through the Havant Park.*

*"I think I wore jumpers and skirts to school. In my classroom there was a fire and if you were lucky you sat next to it. On the whole it was pretty cold. We put things round*



*the wall, but it was really rather dull. The ceilings were a long way away and looked grubby.*

*"History and arithmetic were my favourite lessons. I didn't really like the knitting and needlework because most of the people were older than I was.*

*"On May 24th, Empire Day, we always went up to the park for races. It was one of the few days that we really celebrated, otherwise there were no Christmas parties or decorations or anything like that.*

*"Really there weren't a lot of games you could play in the playground. We really, more or less, chased around or we were always skipping: everyone had a skipping rope. We played ball games, as long as you didn't get too mad and kick them into the boys' side, or you never got them back. There was a girls' side and a boys' side. I can't remember doing any P.E.*

*"I remember when I first came to the school I was really amazed at the old-style reading books which we were given. They were very old and tatty and the children in the pictures were so old-fashioned. I mean, we weren't really very up to date, but at least we didn't have these high-necked pinafores which they all had on in the pictures.*

*"I went in for the scholarship from here when I was 10 and I went to Purbrook from here. At the end I was in Standard 6 or 7, although I was only 10, and I was really frightened of the boys in that class because they seemed so big, like men, to me: they were 14. I always remember this one boy who came from Langstone and for a dare he drank an ink pot and I was quite convinced he'd die." (Betty and her brother Len are in the photograph of Standard 1 on page 52.)*

*"My name is Mrs Dorothy May Tagg (née Brown). I was at Fairfield from 1921. I walked to school.*

*"I wore clothes my mother made for me to go to school.*

*"My first classroom had about six rows of steps that went round the classroom."*

*"My name is Mrs Ella Burchall (née Goodall). I was at Fairfield from when I was five till I was 14. I walked to school. I wore nothing special to school; no uniform.*

*"My classroom was a big room with just a fireplace at each end and you were lucky if you sat near the fire when it was cold. Needlework was my favourite lesson. I didn't like history. I remember when Mrs Streek got us our first concert party, we hadn't had any here before. We had to dress up and give the concert at Christmas.*

*"I didn't like going outside to the toilets, I can tell you, in the cold weather. We had to have our nails looked at mornings and when we came back dinner-times. Our shoes were looked at every morning to see if they were clean."*



Standard 2, 1922

Left to right, back row: George Tee Edith Waller, Fred Hellyer, ? Wilfred Broad, May Offer, Ken Makins. Middle row: Patricia Cobb, Aubrey Hicks, Cecilia Cobb, Ethel Grant, Don Watts, Doris Hobbs, Vera Creese. Front row: Edith Waller, Eric Brain, Dorothy Brown, Walter Keens, Emily Shepherd, Leonard Morris, Doris Ralph, Henry Brittain, Mrs Streek. Kneeling: Violet Parham, Leslie Chandler, Mollie Outram.

*"My name is Ken Makins. In the 1920's I lived at 49 South Street, and the Headmaster of the Havant Council School, Mr Beeston, then lived at No. 55. He was a keen gardener and naturalist. It was pleasant to have two ways to walk to school, either through the Pallant passing St Faith's Church Hall (built in about 1925) or through Grove Road, across East Street and then through Beechworth Road."*

*"Black boots, knee-length socks and short trousers were the order of the day with a blue belted mackintosh in the winter. The school cloakrooms were real Victorian with brown and white glazed internal brickwork and brown glazed washbasins. The lavatories, too, were a real Victorian invention with the seats of each compartment set over a long large-diameter pipe which occasionally "flushed through," fed from a huge tank at one end. Paper boats were sometimes seen 'en passage'."*

*"The school building was probably an advanced design in its time. It must have been built high in order to have high windows and sufficient daylight and the airiness was supposed to be healthy. The glazed partitions between the teaching spaces also had to be high, but the flexibility put into the arrangement never seemed to come about. The partitions were never opened, they creaked with air movement and loud-voiced reproving teachers could frequently be heard in the next classroom.*

*"School days commenced at the southern end, superintended by Miss Baker and followed by Mrs Streek. Then into the "big hall," where three classes sat and somehow we managed to listen to 'our' teacher whilst ignoring what was going on in other parts of the hall. Yearly progress led pupils on into Standards 6 and 7 at the northern end of the school, where various teachers, Miss Grimes, Mrs Tomlinson and Miss Deal made their impressions. The older boys were very fond of the young Miss Deal.*

*"Mr Beeston instilled an air of patriotism into the school; sometimes visitors from Canada would talk to us. He became keen on the school having a tall flagpole and made a long speech in the hall one day, stating that if we all brought two pennies (1p) per week the school would soon have sufficient funds to support the cost of such a project – the cost of the pole, erected, was 10 pounds.*

*"Every May, on Empire Day, the whole school would assemble round the pole, the Union flag aloft and, after a few words, we would all sing a hymn (O God our help in ages past), Land of Hope and Glory and, of course, the National Anthem.*

*"On another occasion the whole school attended the old Empire cinema in North Street to see a silent film of Scott's journey to the South Pole. Shots of the expedition showing Scott's party dragging their sledge, and their attempts to keep warm, were interspersed with moving black dots on a white featureless map.*

*"Many boys at the school welcomed the innovation brought about by the provision of a woodwork hut which was built on the grassed area of the east playground. The more simple tasks of shaping and joining wood were taught and this complemented the homely tasks of sewing and knitting taught to the girls in their practical periods.*

*"The ability to assemble the whole school in the hall was a feature of the start to the day, with the piano being played by a senior pupil to the march tune of 'des Troubadours'.*

*"Happy days? Yes, I think so."*

Mr Makins can be seen in photographs in this Chapter and also in Chapter 10.

## PART III

### Chapter 8

#### The Emergence of Fairfield School

After the protracted opposition to its formation, Havant Board remained in existence for just eight years. The School Board, however, left a physical reminder to us of its existence and to this day the initials S.B. may be seen, set in the stonework, above one of the windows on the west elevation of the school, facing Fairfield Road.

#### HAVANT SCHOOL BOARD

##### THE CLOSING MEETING.

*The final meeting of the Havant School Board was held on Tuesday evening at the Board Schools. The Rev. B. J. Wells presided.*

*This being the closing meeting, and as the Board's funds and properties would pass over to the County Council on the following day, all the accounts were closed and paid, and it was understood that there would be nothing to hand over to the County Council in the form of money.*

*The business over, the Chairman briefly alluded to the work done by the Board, and the harmonious manner in which they had worked together, and tendered the thanks of the Board to all the officials.*

*In the afternoon, speaking at the last distribution of prizes at the Havant Board School under the control of the School Board, the Rev. B. J. Wells, Chairman of the Board, before giving the prizes to the children, reminded them that they were taking part in an historical event, being scholars in the school at the time when the education of the young passed out of the hands of the School Boards to the County Councils. Instead of having in the future to say they were School Board children, they would say they were Council School children. Behind that new name there lay a great deal, far more than he was going to refer to that afternoon. There were some people who might think the change was calculated to be a benefit to the future children of the country. For his own part he was very sceptical as to that. One thing they would retain in that school which they would not have in any of the other schools of the town. In other schools, both the National and Roman Catholic, the religious teaching would be essentially sectarian. He was not prepared to say he had any quarrel with that, but he desired to say that the children who came to that school would be taught the Bible, whether their parents were what were called Church or Chapel people.—The prizes were afterwards distributed.*

*Hampshire Telegraph, 3 October 1903 (i)*

(i) See Chapter 6, 1903 entry for October 2nd

As the Board School, children were accepted from five to 13 years, and occasionally as young as three years.

From 1903, as a result of the 1902 Education Act, the school ceased to be in the control of the Havant School Board and responsibility for it passed to Southampton County Council. For the next 45 years, until 1947, the school was officially known as Havant Council School and, during this period, the school leaving age was raised to 14 under the provisions of the 1918 Education Act.

Each year a few children were selected to sit scholarship examinations. Success meant that those children could gain entry to local schools such as Purbrook Park High School, Petersfield Girls' School or Churcher's College for Boys, where funds were available to pay for school fees, and their further educational opportunities were greatly enhanced as a result. Sadly, however, many academically-able children were prevented from taking up their scholarship places because their parents could not afford the additional expenses of providing a school uniform, sports equipment and travel to and from school.

## HAVANT

*A CREDIT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD – We have before had occasion to congratulate the Havant School Board upon the excellence of its system and results, and now a further gratifying report reaches us. In the past two years the school secured three County Scholarships, and this without any extra coaching, the work being absolutely the school curriculum. One of the above, Harold Croft, went up to Churcher's College, Petersfield. After a short time he was moved up into the Fifth Form, passing over the Fourth. At the end of last year his report showed him head of his form, 1st in seven subjects, 2nd in three and 3rd in two. There has now just come to hand the results of the Junior Cambridge Examination, and Croft is 1st Class Hon. First Division, distinguished in Religious Knowledge, French, Mathematics, Drawing. Out of 5,122 candidates, 231 obtained 1st Class First Divisions and of these only 13 obtained more distinction than Croft.*

*Hampshire Telegraph, 8 March 1902 (ii)*

(ii) See Chapter 6, 1900 entry for July 12th

The 1944 Education Act and the raising of the school leaving age to 15 years in 1947 brought about the division of schooling nationally into Primary and Secondary schools. It was at this time that Havant Council School became known as Havant Primary School, accepting children from five to 11 years old. The older children, 12 to 15 years, were taught at a separate location at South Street, Havant, in the strangely-named H.O.R.S.A.

(Huts in Operation for the Raising of the School leaving Age,) on the site of what is now Bosmere Middle School.

The re-organisation of education in 1957, which began the system of schooling more similar to that of today, once again brought a change in the school's name: from Havant Primary School to Havant County Infants School. The school then accepted children from five to seven years.

Havant County Junior School was opened in South Street to educate children aged eight to 11 years. Warblington School opened in 1955 and took pupils from 11 to 15 years of age. The school leaving age was raised to 16 in 1972. Havant Grammar School opened in 1960 and closed in 1974, then becoming Havant Sixth Form College.

The Hampshire re-organisation in 1978 brought about further changes and, inevitably, another change of name for the school: from Havant County Infants School to Fairfield First School, which then took children from five to eight years. Also at this time the name of Havant County Junior School was changed to Bosmere Middle School, which then accepted pupils from eight to 12 years of age.

Today, knowing Fairfield as a First School and being familiar with the system of first, middle and secondary schools, it is difficult to imagine that for over 50 years, from 1896 to 1948, the school provided the total education available for most of Havant's children.



Council School, Havant, 1909



## PART IV

### Chapter 9

#### Mrs Lawrence's Headship, 1981 to 1986

##### The School is Remodelled and Extended

Mrs R. Lawrence

Improvements to the accommodation began in 1981 when the school was re-roofed. At this time seven of the eleven classes were housed in temporary classrooms which were situated in the playground. A Portakabin served both as a staffroom and as a stockroom. The children's lavatories and the school kitchen were also some distance from the main building. The scattered nature of the accommodation, therefore, was most inconvenient for adults and children alike and presented major difficulties in the management of resources and the curriculum.



The temporary classrooms in the school playground, not visible from the road, accommodated middle and top school pupils for many years.

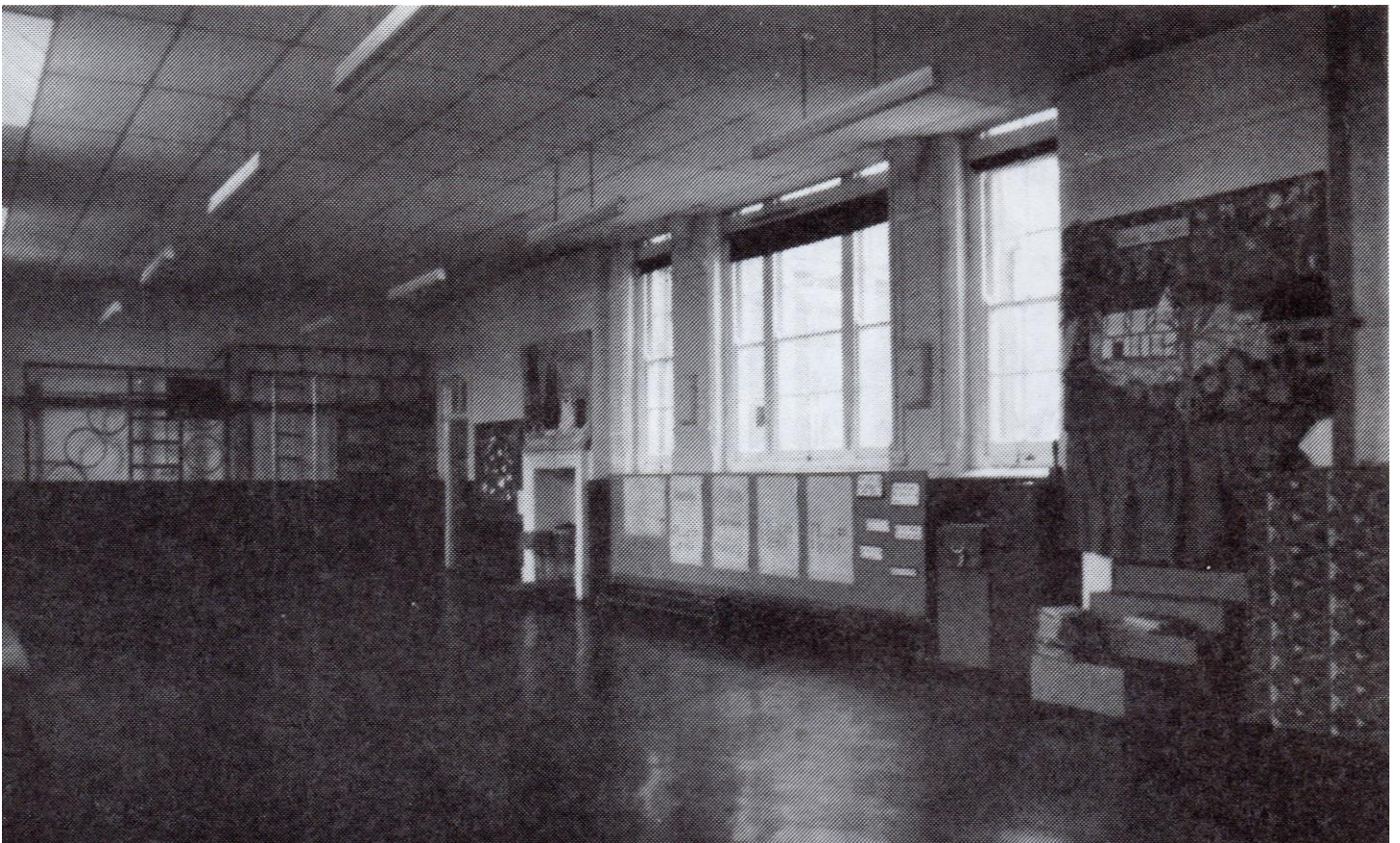
The remodelling of the school began in 1983 and the three phases took two years to complete. First a new wing was added to the north side of the original building, to provide a hall, music and drama studio and school kitchen.

The style and beauty of the old building was skilfully reflected in the new, so that little of the original atmosphere was lost.



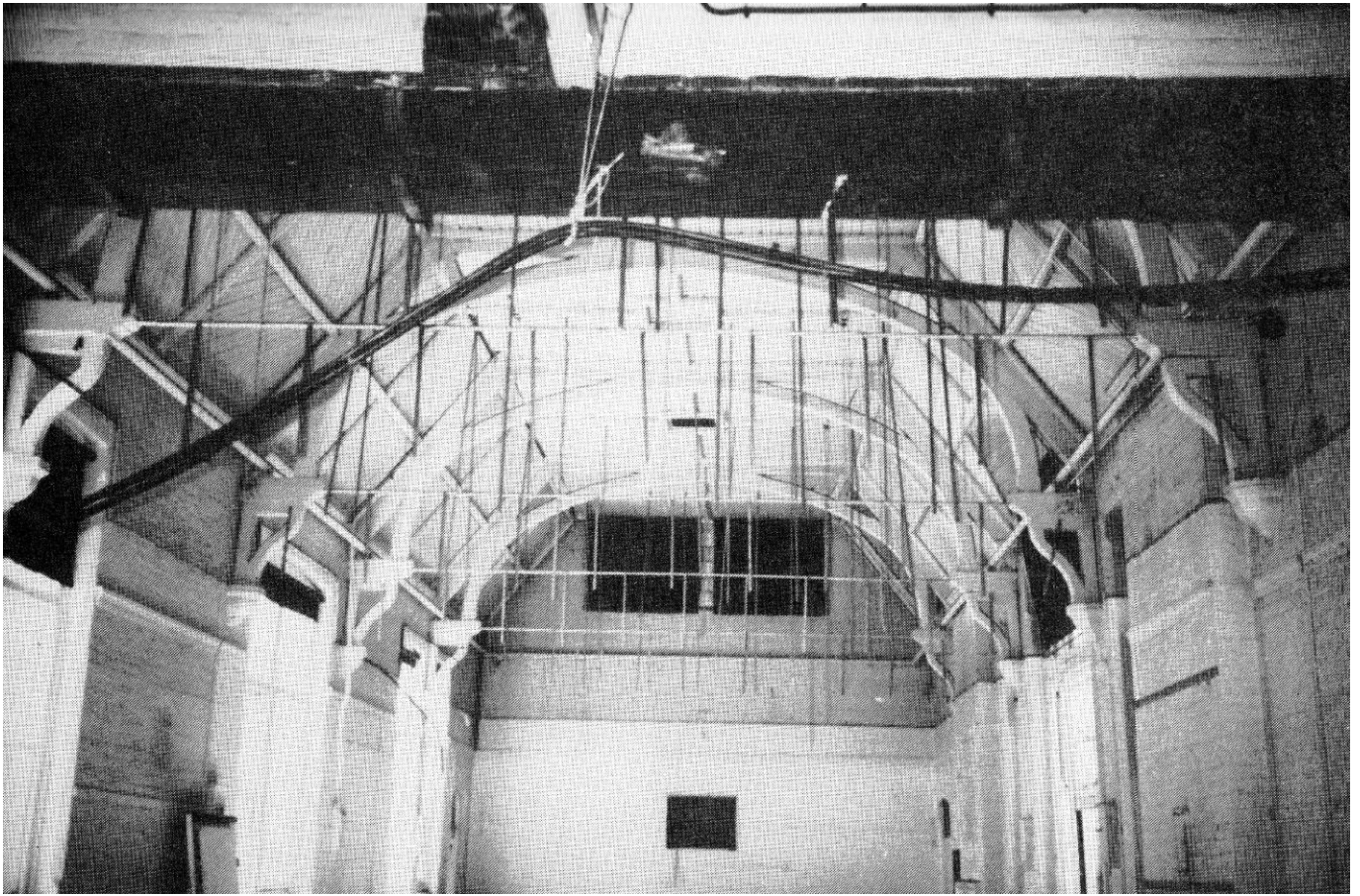


The view from the playground, showing the original girls' toilet block and the school kitchen

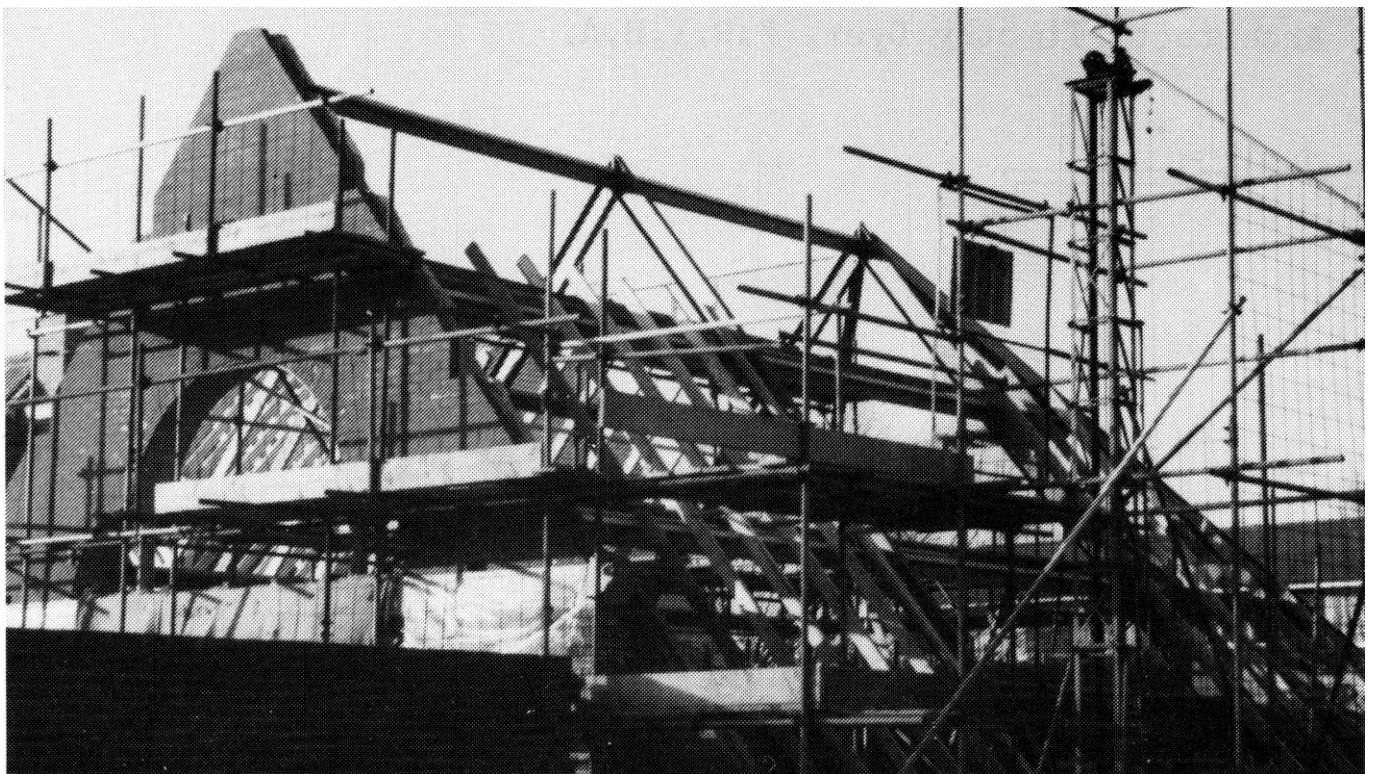


1984. The old school hall. The false ceiling was one of the few structural alterations that had taken place in the school before its remodelling.





June 1984. The suspended ceiling was removed and we see it as it would have been in Mr Beeston's time



The new hall under construction behind the old toilet block

Acquiring a new building and working alongside builders was not always easy. There were many difficulties which were only overcome because of the total dedication of the staff who worked unstintingly to maintain high educational standards despite the upheaval going on around them. Everyone became adept at coping with all situations and in all weathers; for example, 'angels' had to be carried across wet and muddy playgrounds to ensure that they would appear calm and spotless at the appropriate moment in the Nativity play!

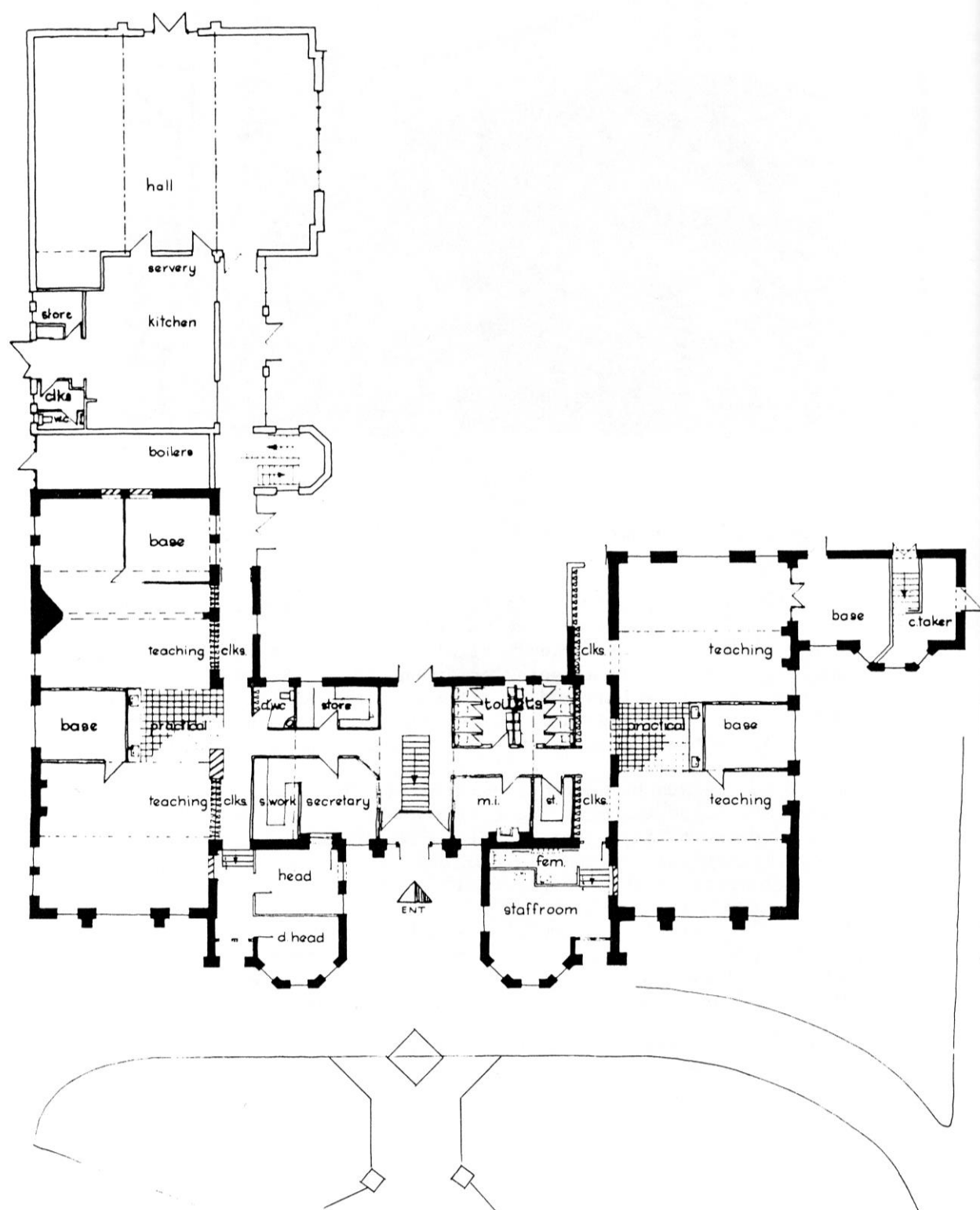
Phase II led to classes being continually moved from one location to another. The problems which the teachers and children had to solve together were securely rooted in reality. For example, how can three hundred children move across a newly-laid tarmac playground to reach the lavatories and yet keep the new carpets in the school clean and bright? What a challenge!

Phase III produced still more problems – the playground area was now cut to an eighth of the original size. Children had to be taken across the Hayling Billy Line to enjoy the freedom and space of the Warblington playing fields. This led to many more organisational problems, but at least the end was in sight.

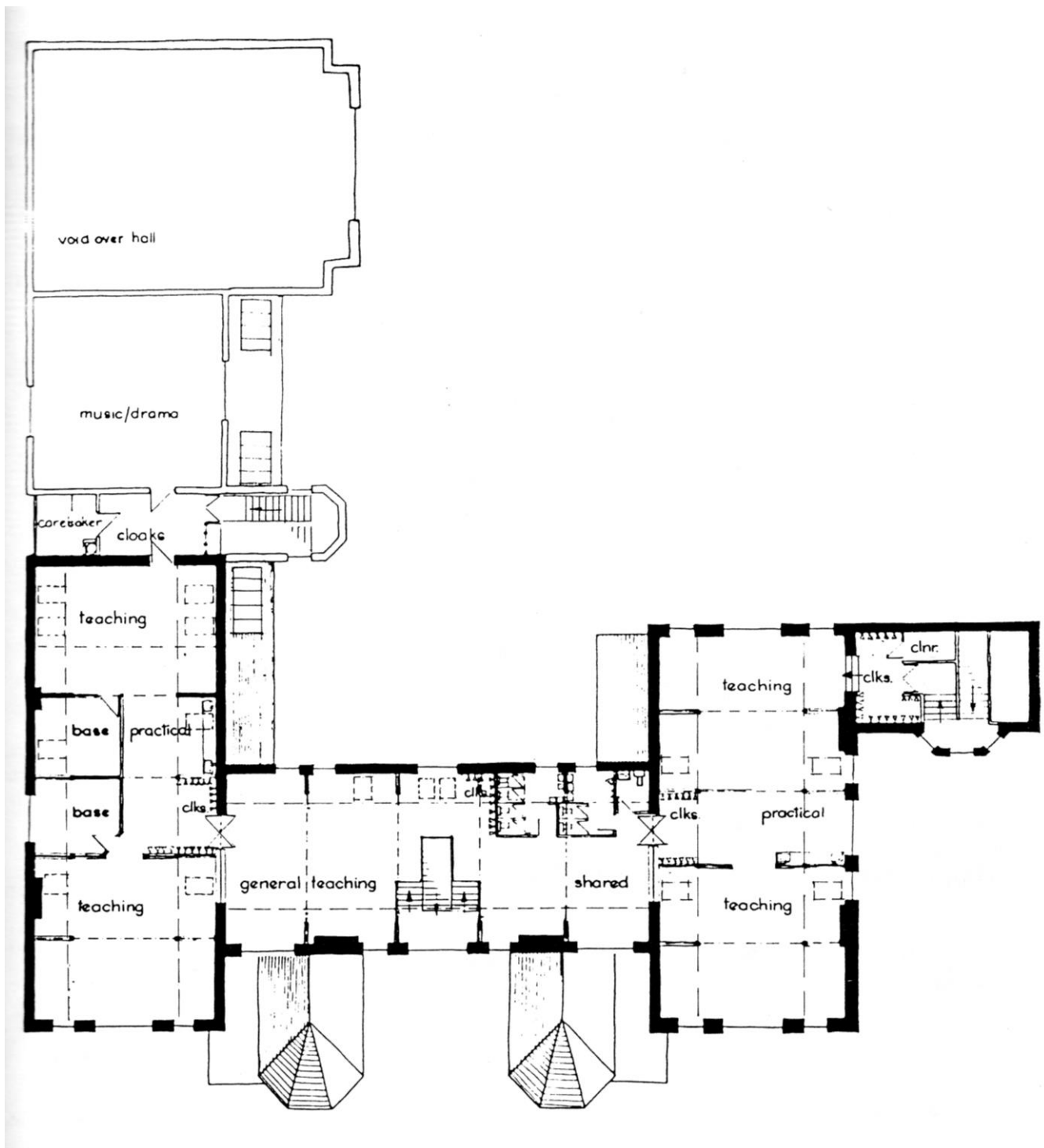
However, all these difficulties are behind us and we now enjoy the pleasure of working in convenient and aesthetically pleasing surroundings.

Architects' drawings, 1983. County architect: Colin Stansfield Smith, MA, Dip. Arch (Cantab), ARIBA. Project architect: Timothy Dyer, FRIBA.

### Ground Floor Plan



# First Floor Plan



## Open Day



Former pupils, Mary Smith, (née Outen), Nellie Parham (née Far) and Ken Makins being interviewed by a current pupil. See chapter 7.

*The News*, 5 July 1985

## School Brought Back Memories

*SCHOOLDAYS may not be the happiest days of your life but they are certainly memorable. And the memories came flooding back to past pupils of a Havant School when they returned this week. Fairfield First School has undergone a complete renovation, and to celebrate threw open its doors to all past pupils — and other interested Havant residents.*

*Mayor Mrs Tessa Dairies was given a conducted tour by headmistress Mrs Ros Lawrence. The mayor was "most impressed with the penthouse classrooms," and remarked on the improvement over the previous lofty building. A team of pupils interviewed visitors about their memories of life at the school in days gone by. The results will be published in a book the school is planning as part of its 90th anniversary celebrations next year.*

*Many of the past pupils could hardly believe they were in the same place — it is so different from the Victorian school they remember.*

*Mrs Nellie Parham (68) left the school in 1931, and had never returned until she heard about the open day. She arrived with her old school friend, Mrs Mary Smith (63), with whom she has kept in touch ever since their days at Fairfield. Mrs Parham was delighted with the 'new-look' schools, saying: "If a lovely — definitely altered for the better. If my grandchildren could come here, I'd be very happy.*

*One of the younger visitors was Emma Galloway (11), who attended the school until three years ago. Looking round the spacious new classrooms, she sighed wistfully: "I wish I could come back again!"*



*Robert Thomas (eight) of Langstone and a member of Gold class at Fairfield School, Havant, makes a recording of the memories of three former pupils of the school, high up among the original roof trusses In a modernised re-built classroom. Going on tape were (left to right) Mrs Mary Smith of Emsworth, a 1937 pupil, Mrs Nellie Parham of West Ashling, a 1930 pupil, and Mr Ken Makins of Waterlooville, a 1928 pupil.*

## Chapter 11

### The Headteacher, Mrs Roslyn Lawrence, and the Staff

#### Teaching and Office Staff

Mrs. Roslyn Lawrence was educated at Newport High School, Gwent and undertook her Teacher Training at Froebel College, London. Before being appointed Headteacher of Fairfield School in 1981, Mrs Lawrence was Deputy Head at Petersgate First School, Clanfield. Prior to this she held eight teaching posts in Nursery, First and Middle Schools in England, Wales, Scotland, France and Malta. Mrs Lawrence has two daughters, one granddaughter and a grandson.



The Teaching and Office Staff Photograph, 1986

Left to right, front row: Mrs S. Capp, Mrs R. Drake, (School Secretary), Miss J. Maidment (Deputy Head), Mrs R. Lawrence (Headteacher), Mrs S. Tunmore, Mrs V. Wilson (now Deputy Head of Morelands First School, Purbrook). Back row: Miss G Smith (now Deputy Head of Denmead First School), Mrs P. Davies, Mrs D Foxall, Miss V Johnson, Mrs J. Butler, Mrs J. Robinson (non-teaching Assistant).



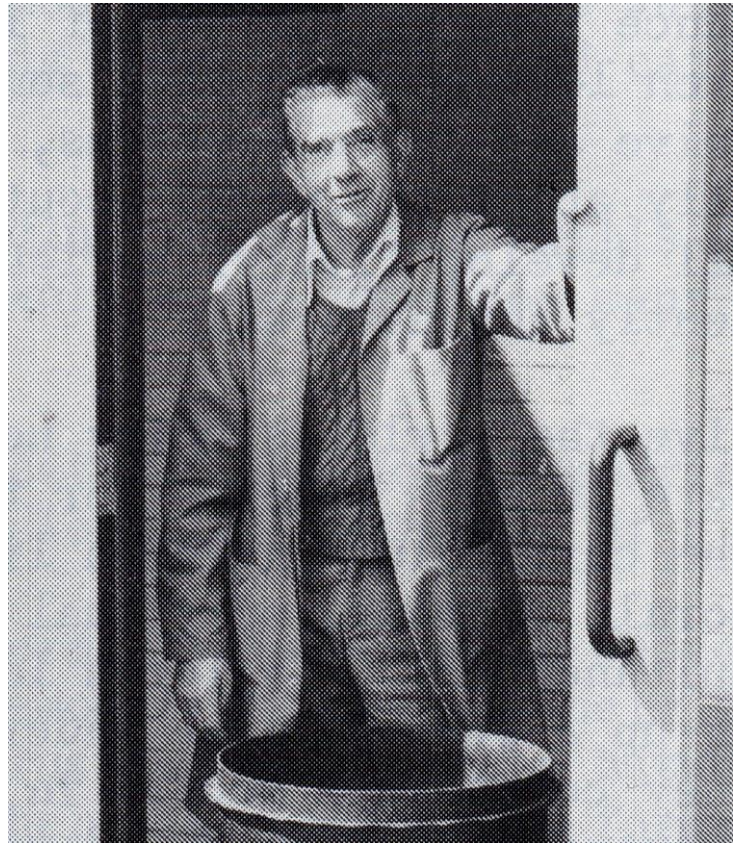
Miss Maidment was appointed in 1984. Miss Johnson is the longest-serving Teacher at the school, having joined the Staff in 1964. Mrs Capp and Mrs Foxall retired from teaching in July 1986. Mrs Turner was absent the day the photograph was taken.

### Non-Teaching Staff



### Supervisory Assistants and Kitchen Staff

Left to right, front row: Mrs J. Hedger, Mrs S. Spencer (Supervisory Assistants), Mrs P. Robson, (Kitchen Assistant), Mrs M. Tanner (Cook Supervisor), Mrs J. Cutler, Mrs S. Sykes (Kitchen Assistants), Mrs T. Sander (Supervisory Assistant). Back row: Mrs B. Fuller, Mrs S. Leggett, Mrs S. Duffy, Mrs C. Cantwell, Mrs H. Cole, Mrs L. Ashley (Supervisory Assistants). The new kitchen opened in September 1984. Until this time pre-cooked meals were brought to the school. School meals are popular and are eaten on average by over half the pupils. The remaining children bring a packed lunch.



John Parsons and Mr George Phillips, Caretakers

John Parsons retired from the police force in 1906 and for a number of years after was the caretaker at the Havant Council School.

Mr Phillips joined the staff in 1977. He is a keen gardener and a first-prize winner at the National Vegetable Show, London, City of London Show, Southampton, Portsmouth and many local Shows. Annually he prepares a superb display for the Harvest Festival assembly held in the school.

Mr C. Ford, the 'lollipop man,' sees the pupils safely across the Fairfield and Beechworth Roads in the morning and afternoon.

## Chapter 12

### School Life Today by Mrs R. Lawrence

I became Headteacher of Fairfield County First School in April 1981. Since that time there have been significant changes to the school building and to its curriculum.

The aim of this school is to promote in its pupils the greatest possible social, emotional and intellectual development. We try to show children how to build good relationships, to help them to communicate in many different ways and to introduce them to the joy of learning and in the mastering of skills. Children learn how to take some responsibility for their own learning, to perceive and solve problems, to take part, experience and think carefully about the world about them. In this way, we trust that our pupils will develop lively, curious minds and learn how to approach problems confidently and naturally.

Young children do not perceive the world as being neatly divided into subjects. All subjects relate to each other. For these reasons we adopt an integrated approach to the curriculum in which linguistic, mathematical, aesthetic, technological, moral, ethical, spiritual and social skills and attitudes are developed simultaneously. Children learn best from their own experiences, slowly building up a framework of understanding to which they can then refer, and which they constantly modify in the light of new experiences and deeper understanding. Second-hand experiences, such as verbal explanations, written descriptions or well-produced illustrations, can be meaningful if they are built on to earlier first-hand experiences which have made sense to the child.

We value listening, talking, reading and writing as fundamental to the learning process. Mastery of language in all its aspects increases a child's range and rapidity of thought and gives him/her the tools to reason and to organise information. Within each class the children will vary significantly in their personalities, experiences and attainments. Teachers work hard to plan and organise activities which best match each child's individual level of performance so that learning continually progresses over the weeks and years.

Children at Fairfield First School are expected to work hard, and play is part of children's work.

Just consider how much a child of five has learned before he/she comes to school by playing, doing and talking. In this school, play is an important vehicle which teachers use to enhance and develop children's learning and understanding. By the careful provision of play material, setting tasks, evaluating the quality of the play and, by expecting high standards, teachers ensure that all pupils build upon the activities which they have previously enjoyed. Planned play activity involves children with new ideas and concepts

and it allows them to be in control and to take the lead. We encourage children to play hard, not to play about.

Teachers plan their lessons round a particular topic or theme, for example, our school, the sea, Havant, etc. All the skills, concepts, knowledge and attitudes which relate to particular subjects or areas of experience have already been worked out by the staff, who now choose a theme which best suits the particular aspects of learning which need to be developed.

Early historical and geographical ideas could arise from a study of Havant's buildings and the network of roads around the town.

Mathematical work might include work on the use of scale and the making of scale plans which the children could then relate to their map work.

Science would be mainly concerned with the making of models of the main features of the town, looking carefully at the different building materials used and making careful observation of the birds, animals, plants and insects in the local environment.

Moral and social attitudes can be developed while considering the care of our local town. Thinking about sharing and caring for our school, homes, etc.

Listening, talking, reading and writing skills are made more interesting when linked with topic work which provides many opportunities for more varied language work.

In this way, all the facets of the school curriculum can be brought together through the exploration and study of a particular topic.

An important factor determining scholastic success is the interest and support which parents demonstrate toward their child's schooling. Education is best achieved by a trusting partnership between parent and teacher. To that end, a Parent-Teacher Association was formed in 1981, and this has grown and developed. A large group of parents and friends volunteer their time and support the work of the school in a range of ways. They have made an important contribution to the development of an active and thriving establishment.

The last five years, therefore, have seen exciting changes and developments. Much has been achieved. However, every new year brings forth challenges, whether concerned with new technology, a better balanced curriculum or the management of children's learning. I hope that with the support of the parents and the wider community the school will go from strength to strength in its efforts to provide a firm foundation for its pupils' education.





Off to school. Amanda Toner and Peter Charrett at the front of the building which has not been changed by the re-modelling of the school. Photo. *The News*

## Extracts from the School Log Book in the 1980s

1981

Three Teachers visited the school. They have to be redeployed from their own schools because of falling rolls in primary schools. A new scheme has been started for admitting new entrants to the school. The September rising fives will visit on four different afternoons in order to meet their Teachers. The Headteacher will use these times to talk to their parents about the philosophy of the school and the school curriculum.

A Parent-Teacher Association has been formed.

A meeting was held today to start the organisation of Reading helpers. Mrs Gamble (parent) is going to help to organise this work.

The Speech Therapist visited the school to see three children and to talk to the Staff. The P.T.A. held a Beetle Drive and Craft Fair in the evening.

1982

School opened at 8.50 a.m. All outside toilets were frozen. Classes Gold, Silver, Bronze, Orange, Green and Purple were sent home. Lower school was open as usual. All new entrants started mornings only.

The Health and Safety Officer visited the school to see the home corner cooking area. He considered that this area could continue to be used for this purpose. The School Psychologist came today to see three children. She met their parents to discuss the children's progress.

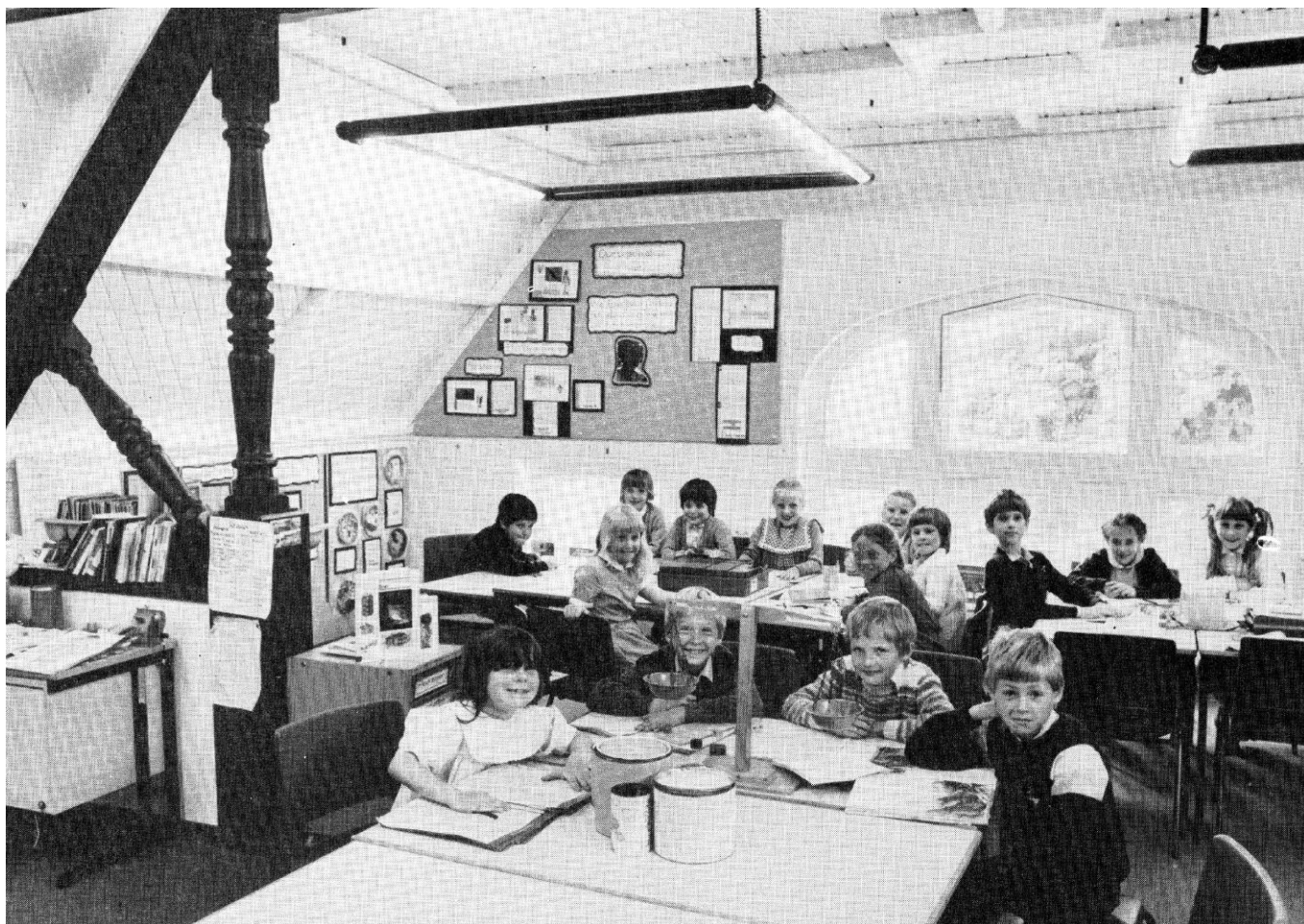
School medicals were held for last term's new entrants. The School Nurse did sight and hearing tests.

P.C. Leighton visited the school to talk to the children in assembly – sharing and caring. The Staff met at the end of the school day for a mathematics workshop.

Mr Gigg, Road Safety Officer, visited to discuss road safety with the children. Two hall windows were broken during the night.

An extraordinary meeting of the School Governors was held to discuss the school curriculum.

Mr Martin, Fireman, visited the school to discuss 'taking care', linked with the school assemblies. Approximately £800 was raised at the Strawberry Fair at the weekend.



Once a lofty ceiling, now a classroom: pupils of Gold Class high up in the roof among the Queen posts. Photo. *The News*

The Headteacher visited Waterloo Library to purchase second-hand books. The school held their sports day.

The school was informed today that building improvements are to be made. A new school hall and kitchen are to be built.

The video recorder arrived. The whole Staff stayed behind after school for a lecture on the use of audio visual equipment in teaching. The second-year Nursery Nurse started today.

The school was closed for the staff to have curriculum discussions. The following programme was presented and all staff attended.

1. Mrs V. Wilson talked to the staff about the Cockcroft Report and led staff discussions.
2. The Headteacher talked about the recent report on gifted children.



Mrs Wilson discussed the provision in the school in mathematics and her work with calculators. Mrs Moore talked to the staff about her new Scale 2 responsibilities – Humanities Consultant. There were also general staff discussions on the Hampshire Evaluation Document.

The Weights and Measures Inspectors visited to check the oil delivery which was found to be correct. Dr Seymour visited to inspect the school premises. A Violin Recital was held (from the County Music Centre in Winchester).

1983

The Headteacher held a meeting for pre-school playgroup leaders. Mrs Turner had taken over responsibility for liaison work with the playgroups. Blue Class visited the local Post Office. Mrs Capp attended a meeting on the 1981 Act – children with special needs.

The Strawberry Fair was held, raising approximately £1,400 for the school computer and tape recorders.

A fire drill was held. All children left the building in one minute and had assembled on the Hayling Railway cutting in a further four minutes. The drains were blocked yet again in the road outside the school, causing flooding at the south gate.

Open Evening was held at 4.30 p.m. with displays of Country Dancing, Maypole Dancing and a recital by the School Choir.

The school rebuilding started during the summer vacation. Fences were erected. We have started a new system of dismissal at the end of the day. 133 children leave by the back gate and 115 by the front.

The following clubs are to be organised for the children this year - Guitar, Recorder, Music, Singing, Chess, Library, Stamp, Country Dancing and Science. They will be held in the lunchtime break. The new Area Psychologist visited the school to meet the teachers and discuss problems concerning one of the handicapped children.



Pupils play against a backdrop formed by the new extension to the school, which retains the character of the original building. Photo. *The News* 1984

The Headteacher visited Winchester Library to order new fiction books for a lending library in the new building.

The first school computer arrived.

Two classes moved out of the main building into temporary accommodation ready for Phase II of the rebuilding plan. We now have six classes in temporary accommodation and two in the south end of the school.

The P.T.A. held their annual Strawberry Fair on the Warblington Field; £1,500 was raised.

Phase II of the new building continues. Mrs Tanner opened our new kitchen.

The Headteacher spent her last day in her 'cell'. The space she has been using for the past three months as an office measured 4' x 5' and was the D.R.A.'s cloakroom in the old kitchen.

The school opened in the new building (Phase II). We now have five classes in the building and four classes in temporary accommodation.

1985

Two teachers from another school visited to see 'good practice'. The Headteacher showed parents of possible new entrants around the school. More and more parents are requesting appointments since the 1981 Act giving parents the right of choice.

All classes in temporary accommodation finished packing up all equipment ready to move into the main building. Mr Phillips, School Caretaker, lit the Coleman heaters for the last time, we hope.

The school received its second disc drive and first printer to go with the two BBC computers already in the school.

The Staff, parents and children are to support the Band Aid Appeal for flour and sugar. This will be sent to Ethiopia via Red Star, British Rail, free of charge.

The counting of the postal ballot for the new Parent Governors was held. Two Parent Governors were elected.

A group of Science Consultants from other schools at present on a diploma course at the West Sussex Institute visited and were shown around by Miss Smith, our Science Consultant. Two degree students also visited and plan to work in the school on the use of structured materials in mathematics and the use of the environment.

All staff attended in-service work on the use of robot toys in problem-solving – Big Trak and George.

1986

P.T.A. held the annual Strawberry Fair. A profit of £1,800 was made. We are taking a student from the Youth Training Scheme to work with us this year. Miss Maidment held a meeting for Reading helpers: 18 parents have offered their services for this year. We also have 16 other volunteers to help with Cookery.

It was the school's 90th Birthday today. A special assembly was held to mark the occasion. The P.T.A. presented the school with a bouquet of flowers. An Anniversary cake was enjoyed by all.

1987

Information has been received on AIDS.

The Headteacher attended a course on 'Child Abuse'. This was followed up at a Staff meeting – all staff attended.

## Chapter 13

### The Pupils

The following are transcripts selected by Kathleen Portlock from recorded interviews by Miss J. Maidment, Deputy Head, with some Fairfield schoolchildren in July 1986.

*I am eight. I like doing paintings. We painted pictures of houses because we went on walks with people from the West Sussex Institute to the church and around Havant. Some of the buildings in Havant are very old.*

Yinka Okunade

*"I belong to Recorder, Country Dancing and Science Clubs. In Country Dancing we decorated the maypole for the Strawberry Fair. We have the Strawberry Fair to raise money for the school to buy equipment like draughts and computers."*

Richard Smith



Left to right, Back row: Children who live on the Fair Field today: Elizabeth Johnson, Matthew and Hannah Fluck, Philip Hooper, Sarah and Polly Young.

Front row: Children who are relatives of former pupils of Fairfield School: Rachael Hedger – great-niece of May Ruffell, (whose interview and photograph appear in Chapter 7), Matthew and Alexandra Baker – grandchildren of Mrs. Baker, a pupil when Mr Beeston was Headmaster, also interviewed in Chapter 7. Children who live closest to the school, in Manor Close: Rowan and Olive Garratt and Harry Pearson.

*Every year we have a Sports Day, before Top School go to Bosmere. On Sports Day we have all sorts of different races and we can choose which ones we want to go in. Last year I won the relay race with my team.*

Anna Baynam

*We walked to Bosmere Middle School to do Country Dancing. We did 'Lucky Seven' and 'Red River Valley'.*

Rachael Cater



Miss Maidment and Yellow Class, Lower School



Mrs Davies and Red Class, Lower School



*There was a Music Festival. Some of us played instruments and some sang. We did the songs in assembly for the whole school. Mr Ford comes into school sometimes. He is the lollipop man and helps us to cross the road. P.C. Addy also comes and talks about being safe.*

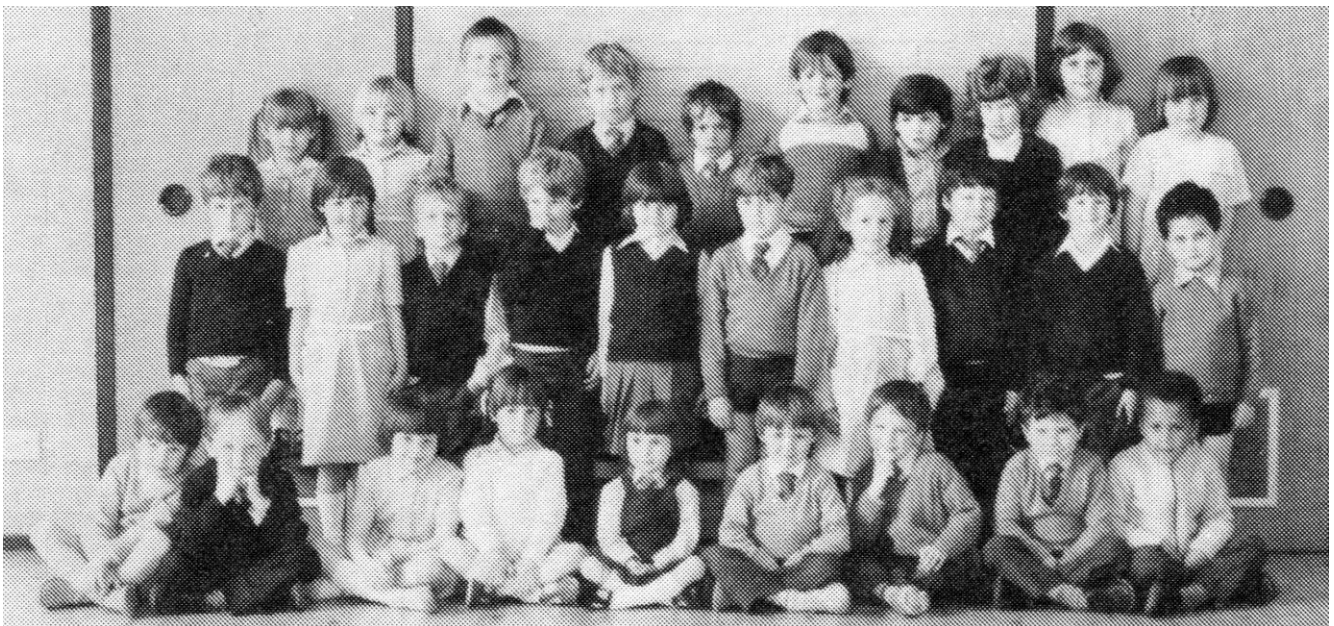
Catherine Marshall

*At school we've had a new chess set, made by one of the mums. It's quite a big one and we've got the markings on the ground in our playground. There's also hopscotch, a plane, some trains and a maze. And there's a quiet place where you're not allowed to run.*

Harry Pearson



Mrs Butler and Pink Class, Lower School



Blue Class, Lower School. (Mrs Turner, Class teacher, was absent)



Mrs Foxall and Green Class, Lower School

*"Sometimes I walk to school, sometimes I go by car. It is about a mile and a half. Once we went pond-dipping and had to wear old clothes. We walked along the railway track. Along a bit there is a bog and we got some plants. The second time we got animals. We put the things in a pond which we made at school. We had to draw one and write about it. I chose the Water Iris. It was quite hard. We put some information on the computer."*

Gregory Taussik



Mrs Tunmore and Purple Class, Middle School





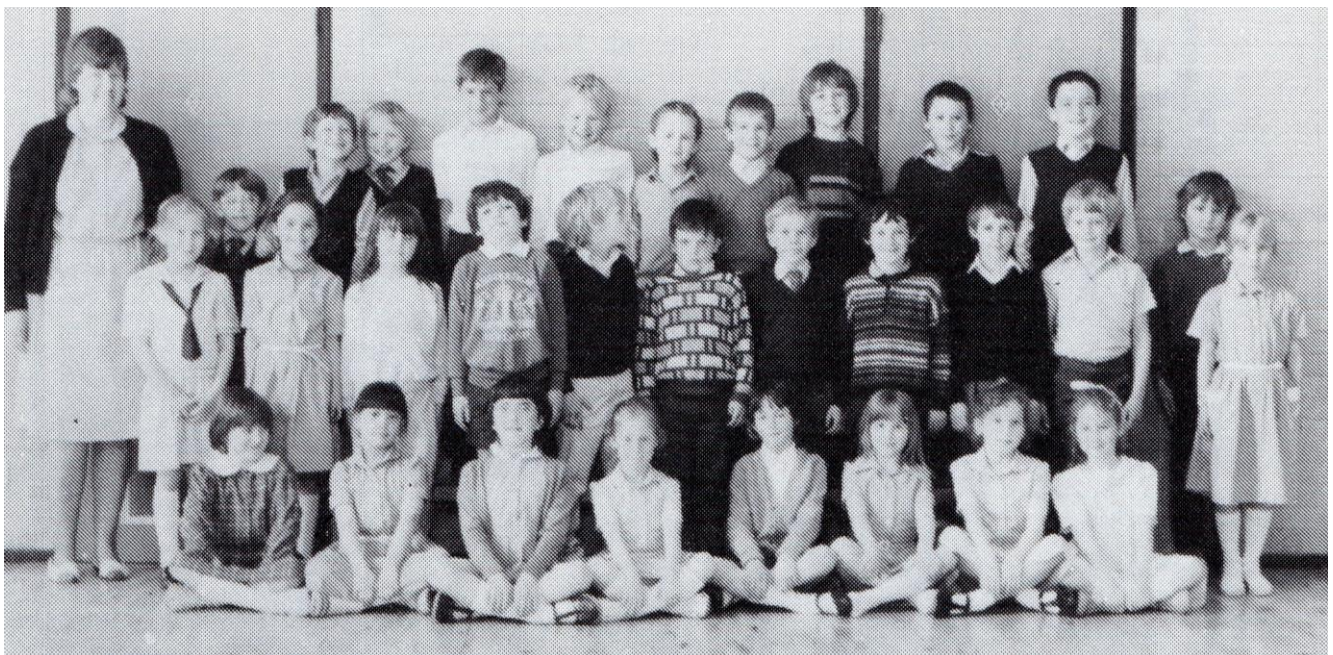
Miss Johnson and Orange Class, Middle School

*The classrooms are quite big and we have a quiet corner and each group has a table, but some groups have bigger tables than others. Sometimes we work on the floor – with the teacher. The floor has carpet on it. My favourite lesson is Maths, but I like it all.*

Kelly Sellwood

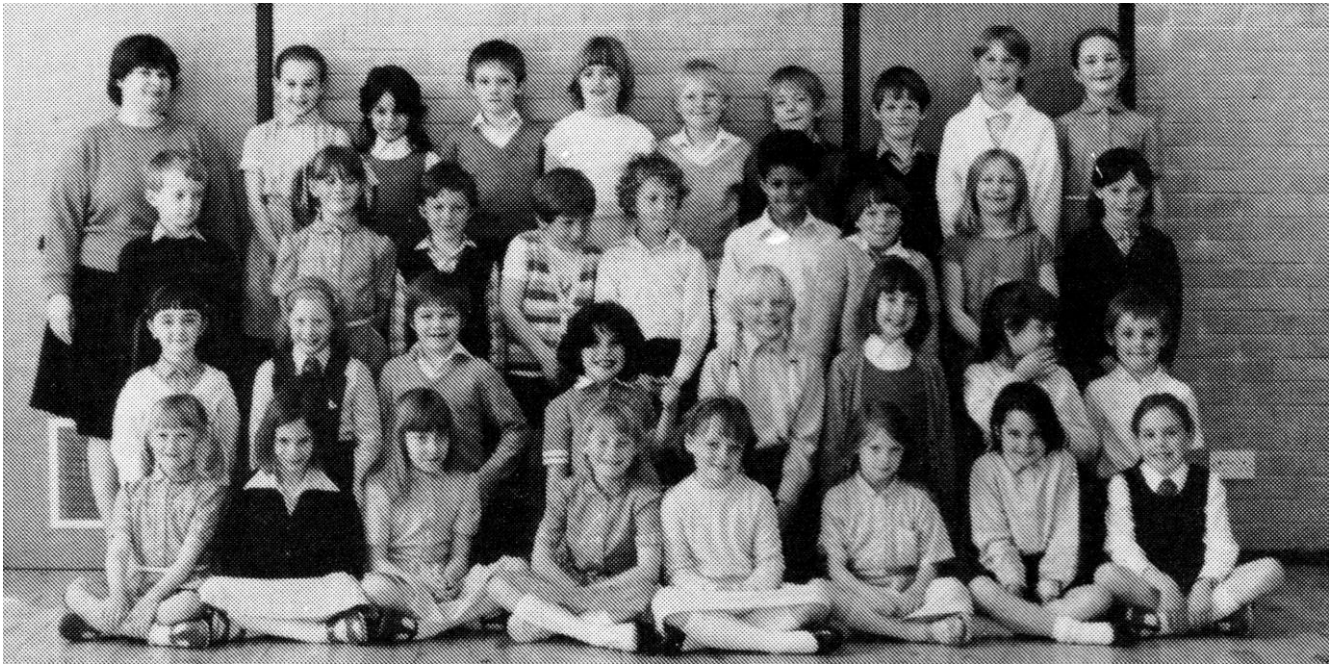
*In the summer I wear a blue and white checked dress with sandals, in winter a grey skirt, blue blouse and shoes. In Silver Class we've got a book corner, a quiet area and some tables. We've got some painting areas and we put on aprons. We've got sinks and drawers and cupboards for our equipment.*

Katy Whiting



Mrs Wilson, Bronze Class, Top and Middle School





Miss Smith and Silver Class, Top School

*I went to school by car. I remember last Strawberry Fair. We had different competitions. We had the Fancy Dress, the Miniature Garden and Animals Made from Vegetables. I went as Punch and Judy with my friend. We had different games and stalls and Maypole dancing. I take a packed lunch to school and an apple to eat at playtime.*

Claire Buckley

*Our topic is on Old Havant. We have been writing about our walks and drawing pictures. The model under the stairs is ours. There are some old buildings and the park with the park-keeper's house, the pavilion and the toilet block. I go to Calculator Club. We do games and adding. One is Space Invaders and you have to take away numbers until you get down to nought.*

Thomas Germain



Mrs Capp and Gold Class, Top School



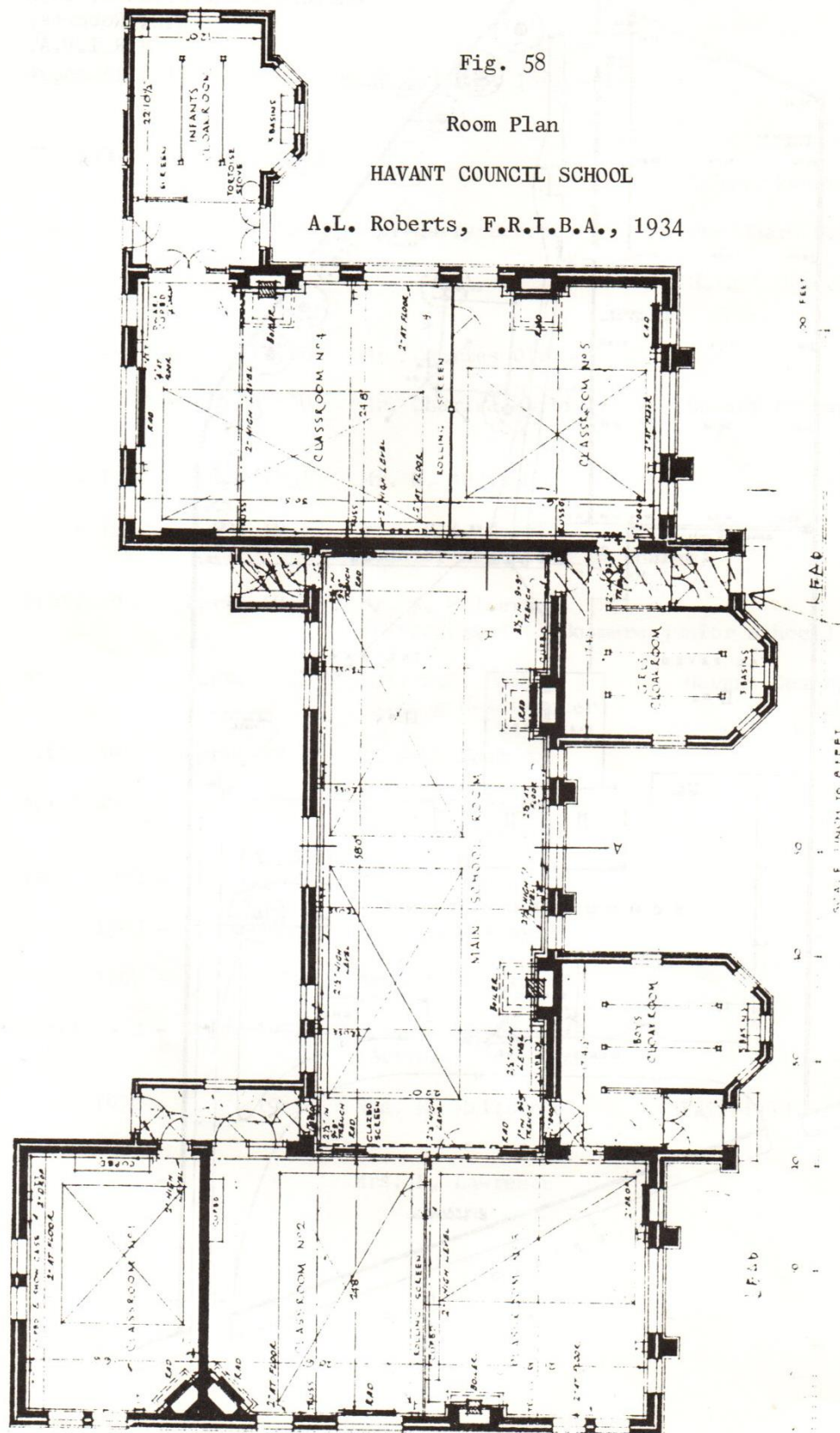
## Appendix 1

### Headteachers 1896 to 2016

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Jan. 1896–1925       | Mr Harry Beeston   | Havant Board School 1896<br>Havant Council School 1903 |
| 1925–1929            | Mr Charles Olding  |  |
| 1930–1950            | Mr Charles Burbidge                                      | Havant Primary School 1949                             |
| Sept. 1950–Apr. 1951 | Mr H. Addison  |  |
| Apr. 1951–Sept. 1951 | Miss R. A. Cole<br>(Senior Assistant in Charge)          |  |
| Sept. 1951–Apr. 1957 | Mr E Colverson<br>(Transferred to Bosmere Junior School) |  |
| Apr. 1957–Sept. 1957 | Mrs B. G. Blake<br>(Acting Headteacher)                  | Havant County Infants School 1957                      |
| Sept. 1957–Apr. 1961 | Miss Deakin  |  |
| Apr. 1961–Jan. 1962  | Mrs B. G. Blake<br>(Acting Headteacher)                  |  |
| Jan. 1962–1963       | Mrs E. South   |  |
| 1963–1968            | Miss G. M. Waring  |  |
| 1968–1972            | Mrs B. Sparkes   |  |
| Apr. 1972–Sept. 1972 | Mrs M. Clarke<br>(Acting Headteacher)                    |  |
| 1972–1981            | Mrs M. Millson   | Fairfield First School                                 |
| 1981–2015            | Mrs R. Lawrence  |  |

Plan of Havant Council School  
Buildings and Grounds, 1934  
A.L. Roberts,  
F.R.I.B.A.

[illegible]



## Appendix (iv)

### Museums

Old schoolrooms are on display at the following Museums:

Museum of Childhood, High Street, EDINBURGH  
Staffordshire County Museum,  
Shugborough, near STAFFORD  
Museum of East Anglian Life, STOWMARKET, Suffolk  
North of England Open Air Museum, Beamish Hall, STANLEY, County Durham  
Weald & Downland Open Air Museum, SINGLETON, West Sussex (West Wittering School)

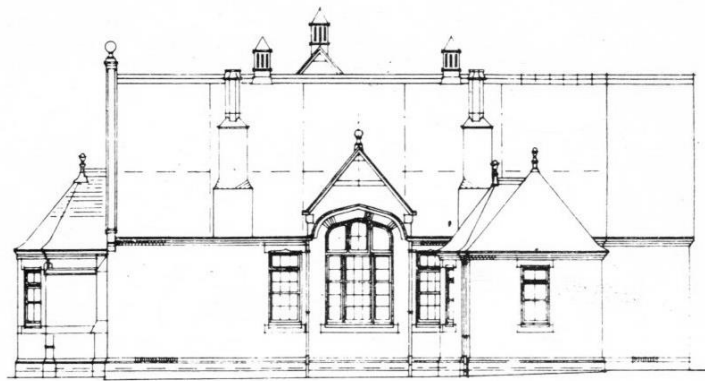
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*Bosmere School, Past and Present*, 1984, S. W. Pike  
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*Havant and Bedhampton Past and Present*, 1975, A. J. C. Reger  
*History of Hampshire*, 1892, T. W. Shore  
*History of Hampshire*, Vols 1, 2, 3  
*Ordnance Survey Maps*, Havant Museum and Havant Library  
*The Hundred of Bosmere*, 1852, C. H. Longcroft  
*The Making of Havant*, Volumes 1–5  
*The News, Portsmouth*, 1883–1986  
*Local Trade Directories*

#### Education

*1870 Education Act*  
*A Short History of English Schools*, C. Martin  
*At School in 1900*  
*Edwardian England*, S. Noel-Smith  
*One Hundred Years of London Education, 1870–1970*  
*Policy Making in Elementary Education, 1870–1895*  
*School Log Books, 1896–1986*, Stuart Maclure  
*Schools*, A. Dures



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

FEET 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 100 FEET  
 SCALE. 8 FEET TO 1 INCH.