

The Reepham Archive
www.reephamarchive.co.uk

Education in Reepham from the earliest date known.
Volunteers' Notes on Contents held in the Archive

Details held in the Archive on Schooling in Reepham are sketchy and few. We have some good group photographs and would welcome help with the identification of individuals and corrections to the information given on our website. We hold very little about the present schools, only a few example copies of school magazines. We always welcome additional information.

In the local returns to the Select Committee for the Education of the Poor dated 1818 Reepham had a population of 299, Kerdiston 152, Whitwell 355 and Hackford 503 people. **Sunday Schools** and evening lessons were organised by the curates and supported by voluntary contributions. Children of Dissenters had their own **Sunday School**. It was observed that 'the poor children are taught to read and have sufficient means of education'. Booton, population 193, had 18 children attending a school. It was stated here that 'the poor have not sufficient means of instruction', while Salle had no school and 'the poorer classes send their children to the daily school in the neighbourhood'. One has to wonder where they went and how they got there.

The Norfolk Directories and Census returns for the period from 1830 - 1851 mention school masters and school mistresses and several day and boarding schools for boys and for girls. In 1851 **Orlando Horace Cooper** ran a boarding school for 5 boy boarders at **The Mill Hill Academy**, his home at The Limes in Ollands Road. It was a school for farmer's sons according to Harry Hawes. In 1866 Hawes then aged 3 attended **Old Buck's School** in Back Lane and remembered the cots for babies. In the school holidays he went to **Rebecca Goose's School** in the house now known as Swiss Cottage with eight or nine other boys and girls. His mother paid threepence a week. There were other schools in Sall Lane and The Market Place.

In 1847 **St Mary's School**, Norwich Road, was opened for the children from the parishes of Reepham and Kerdiston. It was closed in about 1920 shortly before Wesley Piercy started at the new Hackford and Whitwell School aged 4. He says it was later used for cookery and woodwork classes for children from other schools.

Between 1859-1873 there are records of a small **private school at Whitwell Common**.

There is an Indenture dated 1781 with a decision of a public meeting to repair Hackford Poor House and to appoint a School Master and School Mistress. The parishioners of Whitwell agree to pay £30 towards the costs. In 1837 the Rev. Holley came to live at Hackford House, now The Bircham Centre, and started a school in the building now known at The Town Hall. He employed 3 teachers, Mr and Mrs Buck and a Miss Kemp. His daughter ran a Sunday School. This school was demolished and

rebuilt in 1860 as **The Hackford and Whitwell Parochial School**. A notice on the wall of the present Town Hall in Church Street states that this work was paid for by public subscription. John Burgoin was Head Master from 1862 – 1877. It appears he was also responsible for the **Infant School in Whitwell Street** which was open before 1859. In 1862 both William Spooner and Leonora Woodhouse earned about 6/- a week as infant teachers. When she resigned due to ill health in 1890 she was earning 12/- a week.

In 1873 there was a proposal to unite several local parishes and to extend St. Mary's School and to build a new school at Whitwell Common. This was rejected by the Managers of the H&WPS who felt the present school met the needs of the parishes and did not like the idea of a school for boys and a school for girls.

The School in Church Street closed in 1893 and on 11 October the **Hackford and Whitwell School** opened in Whitwell Road. This school is also referred to as **Hackford School, Reepham County Primary School** and **The Primary School**. It is now **Reepham Primary School**. In 1921 when Wesley Piercy was a new boy the Headmaster was Mr C H Thompson who taught standards 7 and 8 while Miss Ethel Boone taught standards 5 and 6. In all there were 4 teachers for 180 children. There was no electricity, no school uniforms, the toilets were outside and boys were caned, but only occasionally.

A new **Secondary Modern School** was built and opened in 1961 with 200 pupils. The first Head Teacher was Edward Riddell Smith. A sixth form college was opened in 2009 and the school is now known as **Reepham High School and College**. It is a specialist Science, Applied Learning and Mathematics & Computing Centre with around 1050 pupils. Mark Farrer is the current principal.

References:

Tony Ivins' research in the 1970's based on records held by Reepham Parish Council including Hackford Parish Council Minutes Books 1894-1920 and 1921-1935, an Indenture dated 1781, correspondence, letters and WEA course work study sheets.

Wesley Piercy: My Town Page 16, School in Reepham in the 1920's.

Harry Hawes' Walk Page 5.

The Norfolk Heritage Explorer.

Photographs, Magazine and information held in Box 10, Shelf 2 in the Reepham Archive.

Original Documents held in Ring Binder 6.

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