

THE EARLY YEARS OF BASHALL EAVES SCHOOL

As you travel up the road through the village of Bashall Eaves you will pass the little school on the right, not far from the Red Pump Inn. The school closed its doors to pupils for the last time in the summer of 1981, and the old stone building with its datestone, 1862, is now converted into houses, with the newer extension finding a fresh use as the Village Hall. The every-day life of the school was recorded in the Log Books by the head teacher, and from them an interesting picture of the school days of country children a century ago is revealed.

Attendance was frequently recorded as 'Average' or 'Poor', being affected not only by illness but by rain and snow. The children, many from outlying farms, could not walk the long distances, then sit in wet clothes all day. The headmaster, Peter Livesey, recorded on 20th February 1886 that 'owing to severe weather many children who come long distances are unable to attend at all regularly'.

The children were also kept at home to work at busy times on the farms as many entries detail.-----

20th August 1873 'Henry Ireland, Sarah Ireland and Ellen Ireland kept at home to make hay'.

On 18th September the same year:- 'John Watson, Absent. sent to the smithy'.

17th February 1874 'Shrove Tuesday. Half-day holiday. Henry Ireland, Richd. Towers, Jane Leeming, Ann Towers and Martha Duckworth employed in farm work'.

24th August 1874. 'Opened school at 9am. Attendance better. Morning very fine. Henry Ireland, James Hartley, Thos. Knowles, Richd. Towers, Henry Parkinson, Anthony Parkinson, James Leeming, John and Thomas Leeming, Jane Leeming, Charlotte Knowles, Ann Towers. These scholars are all employed at home during harvest time'.

The fortnightly cattle fair at Clitheroe is regularly mentioned as an excuse for the boys not to attend. Other reasons given for non-attendance are:- Sheep washing in June, Clitheroe Agricultural Show in August, fruit gathering and the Annual Sheep Fair at Whitewell, both in September, and beating for the 'gentlemen' at local shoots during the winter.

Discipline was strict. -----

An early entry, on 25th August 1873, recorded that John and Richard Marsden were 'both punished with the rod for insulting an old man in the road'.

18th November 1874 'kept the scholars till five o'clock for talking and whispering during school hours'.

3rd May 1875. 'Read a Notice Received from the Education Department and cautioned the scholars not to throw stones or anything else at the telegraph wires'. (A novelty at that time, no doubt!)

9th October 1891. 'Punished Mary Ann Marsland for rudeness, and Gertrude for stubbornness'.

13th June 1892. 'Three scholars have not attended school since Thursday because I insisted upon having clogs cleaned and being obeyed in this matter'.

On August 15th 1882 a new headmistress, Mary Alice Eastham, later Ireland after her marriage, commenced duties. She stayed at the school for thirty four years. By 1890 there were fifty children on the register, the school curriculum had widened, and Miss Eastham was still coping single-handed. How relieved she must have been to be able to record on 9th April that year that 'Miss Middlefell commenced work at this school as assistant teacher for three months'. This was the first of several temporary teachers appointed from time to time during the next few years. During her last few years at the school Mrs Ireland was frequently absent through illness. There is no entry in the Log Book as to when she finally retired, but on 1st September 1916 is the entry 'that Dorothy C. Ireland is appointed by the Managers as permanent Head Mistress'. Was she Mary's daughter?