

# ST ANDREW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headington

Early history, 1847–1894

Stephanie Jenkins

Originally written in 1994 to mark the hundredth anniversary of the  
New National Schools (the present Victorian building to the west)

Revised in September 2003 to mark the school's change to a primary school

*Headington's church school has stood on the same site since 1847, but it has been  
known by at least ten different names, including  
Headington Parochial School, the New National Schools, and  
Headington Church of England School.*

*This booklet covers the earliest period, when it was officially known as the  
Headington National Schools (and unofficially as the Field or Turnpike School)*

Copies of this text (without pictures) can be downloaded in PDF format from  
**[www.headington.org.uk/history/schools/standrews.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/schools/standrews.htm)**

# 1847

## Laying of the foundation stone of the original Headington National Schools

Wednesday in Whitsun week, in the year 1847, will be long remembered in the annals of Headington. Such a day the oldest inhabitants (and there are many octogenarians in the parish) never witnessed, and do not look to see again! The joyous occasion of such a vast assemblage was the laying of the foundation stone of the schools and school house about to be erected in that place.

The parish of Headington, which is near to this city, includes the villages of Barton and Headington Quarry, and contains a population exceeding 1,600 souls. It has at present, if we except the Dame Schools, only one small school for the education of six poor boys and six poor girls; and to remedy this grievous evil the inhabitants, early in the year 1845, held a meeting and commenced a subscription for the purpose of providing schools of sufficient size for the education of the children of the labouring classes. The subscription, owing to the poverty of the parish, proceeded but slowly, and it was not until near the termination of the last year that the hopes of the Committee seemed likely to be realized; and even then, but for the liberality of Mr. Tawney (who purchased and presented the parish with half an acre of ground, situated in its very centre, and adjoining the turnpike road), the good work would still have lingered.

The schools now in the course of erection are calculated to contain 120 boys and the same number of girls, besides a dwelling for the master and mistress, and other necessary conveniences. The cost of the whole is estimated to exceed 500*l.*, towards which there has been subscribed 260*l.*, and a grant of 170*l.* has been obtained from the Council of Education, still leaving a deficiency of about 70*l.*

The Committee invited Mr. Drury, of Shotover House, to lay the first stone of the building, and he responded to the call with the utmost alacrity. A small subscription was entered into by the inhabitants for the purpose of giving cakes and wine to the children, who assembled to the number of 300 and upwards, in the orchard of Mr. Burrows jun., one of the Churchwardens, where they were seated on the ground, and waited on by the ladies of the village, who appeared to be as pleased and delighted as the children themselves. The two village bands offered their services gratuitously, and enlivened the scene with many pleasing airs. At four o'clock the procession commenced, and was headed by one of the bands with two flags, then followed by all the children, next came the other band with two more flags, and behind them the Committee and almost all of the inhabitants. Mr Drury's carriage (in which were Mr. Drury, Mr. Tawney, and the Rev. the Vicar of the parish) bringing up the rear. The procession extended in length nearly quarter of a mile.

So great and universal was the interest which the proceedings excited in the villagers, that we believe there was scarcely an inhabitant left at home; the place looked like a deserted village. A platform was erected on the ground for the ladies, and wagons and other vehicles provided, from which a sight of the proceedings could be obtained.

Before laying the stone, Mr. Drury addressed the assembled multitude, which has been variously estimated at from 2000 to 3000 persons, but which address, for want of time and space, we are reluctantly compelled to omit.

The interesting ceremony having been completed, and everybody appearing to be delighted with the scene, particularly the parents of those poor children for whose benefit the good work has been begun, the air rang with loud and hearty cheers in honour of Mr. Drury, Mr. Tawney, Mr. Digby, Mr. Digby Latimer, Mr. Burrows, Mr. Matthews, and others more immediately connected with the work. The bands struck up a lively tune, and returned with the villagers to their homes to take over the events of this memorable day.

The good work thus so auspiciously commenced, cannot be completed without the aid of the charitably-disposed. We feel sure, however, that this aid will not be asked in vain, but that we have only to make the wants of the parish known to ensure a ready response from those who are not only able but willing to contribute to make up the deficiency of £70. Subscriptions are received at the Old Bank, Oxford, and by the Vicar and Churchwardens of this parish.

We think it our duty to mention that, as the people were returning from the ground, a man named Radbourn, a carrier from Ickford and Worminghall, drove his horse and cart at full speed through the midst of them in so careless and reckless a manner that a man and two children very narrowly escaped being killed.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal, Saturday 29 May, 1847*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Old Headington was a small country village, Headington Quarry and Barton were outlying hamlets, and New Headington did not exist. There was a *real* windmill (but no houses) on Windmill Road; Stile Road was a footpath (with a stile) through the fields; there was a tumpike gate and toll-house the new London Road at the main Headington crossroads; and most of Headington as we know it—including the site of St Andrew’s School—was still green fields. Elderly people in Headington today still call St Andrew’s School the ‘Field School’, recalling the time in their childhood when it stood in isolation in the fields that lay between the cluster of shops around the London Road crossroads and the workhouse.

### Background: 1805–1847

Before 1805, the only children in Headington area who learnt to read and write were the handful sent by their parents to a few little dame schools. The vast majority of Headington children had no education at all and were expected to work—both at home and in the fields—from a very early age. The general opinion at the time was that the poor were more likely to know their place if they remained uneducated: in 1802 John Randolph (Bishop of Oxford as well as Regius Professor of Divinity at the University) wrote that educating the children of the poor would ‘puff up their tender minds or entice them into a way of life of no benefit to the publick and ensnaring to themselves’.

None the less a small charity school supported by St Andrew’s Church opened in 1805 to serve the children of the poor of Headington Parish. It was situated beside the Chequers Inn in Beaumont Road (until 1849 Headington Quarry was part of St Andrew’s parish) and was officially named the ‘Free School’. It was funded from a bequest from Catherine Mather,<sup>1</sup> who died on 12 March 1807 and left £400 to St Andrew’s Church, the interest on which was to be used to educate six poor boys and six poor girls from the Parish of Headington. A plaque commemorating this gift is on the south wall of the baptistery of St Andrew’s Church (to the right of the main door):

#### BENEFACTION

Mrs Catherine Mather

who died the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1807, by her last Will and Testament bequeathed to the Vicar and Church-Wardens of this Parish the Sum of Four Hundred Pounds, the Interest of which is to be applied for ever to provide Instruction in reading and writing, and to purchase Books, for Six poor Boys and Six poor Girls, residing in this Parish; and also the sum of Twenty Pounds to be distributed among the Poor immediately after her death

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Mather is buried in the church of Stanton St John, where there are several monuments to her family.

Three years later numbers at the school had increased to 30, thanks to a bigger contribution from St Andrew’s Church. When Thomas Henry Whorwood, Lord of the Manor of Headington and the Vicar of both Headington & Marston, was asked to report on schools in the Parish of Headington to Charles Moss, the new Bishop of Oxford, he wrote as follows on 29 April 1808:<sup>2</sup>

*In Headington and Quarry a small Hamlet of Headington there are four schools:*

*One consists of 30 Scholars 12 of whom are supported by a legacy of the late Mrs Mather amounting to £20 per annum, the remainder I pay for myself.*

*There are 3 little Village Schools besides which the Parents of the Children pay for themselves, the Number of scholars about 60, they are taught to read, write and plain work in general.... None of the Schools are kept by Dissenters.*

By the 1840s Headington had a population of 1600 and the Free School was much too small to be able to help more than a fraction of the children there. The next development was a new, purpose-built church school on part of the present site of St Andrew’s School.

#### Postscript on the Free School

The Free School continued to operate after the opening of the new church school. Still supported by the Mather Bequest—but no longer by St Andrew’s Church—it remained in Quarry, reduced to the original 12 children. *Lascelle’s Directory* 1853 states: ‘There is a small SCHOOL at the end of the Village endowed by Catherine Mather, for twelve scholars of both sexes: *Mr James Waring, Master.*’ The ‘end of the Village’ means the hamlet of Quarry, and after 1849 (when it became a separate Parish) directories specifically state that the Free School is there.

Since Headington National School charged fees, there must have been competition for the twelve free places at the older Free School. Indeed, sometimes children transferred from the new school to the old: the National School’s log-book shows eight children doing this in 1865.

James Waring (who until 1869 is also listed in Directories as the Receiver for Headington’s post) was the Master of the Free School from 1828 until he died (aged 88) in 1874. The school died with him, and in May and June 1874 the National School log-book records four children being admitted as ‘free scholars’ owing to the death of the Master of the Free School. Catherine Mather’s money had virtually disappeared (back in 1805 it had been invested in canal shares), and one can only assume that Waring just took an honorarium.

From 1874 to 1902 St Andrew’s School received the interest from the Mather Bequest, and after elementary schooling became free in 1891 it was used by them as prize money.

---

<sup>2</sup> The original letter can be seen at the County Record Office, Oxford: Oxon Dioc Pp d 707, f 81.

## National (or Field) School, 1847–1874

On 22 March 1847 the brewer Charles Tawney of the Lodge in Manor (now Osler) Road gave the Vicar of Headington a portion of the Quarry Field comprising ‘two roods’ (or half an acre) of land sandwiched between the London Road and ‘the footpath leading to Headington Quarry’. The conveyance<sup>3</sup> stipulated that this land and the buildings to be erected on it were to be

*for ever hereafter appropriated and used as and for a School for the education of poor persons of and in the parish of Headington aforesaid and for the residence of a Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress of the said School and for no other purpose whatever.*

The plot given by Charles Tawney is the north-western part of the site on which St Andrew’s School now stands. The National Society gave a grant in 1847 towards the building of the school, and it has remained a Church of England school ever since. Indeed, the 1847 conveyance stipulates that the School

*shall always be in union with and conducted upon the principles ... of The Incorporated National Society for promoting the education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church.*<sup>4</sup>

The conveyance then enjoins that the School should be directed by a Committee of Management consisting of the Vicar, his Curate (if the Vicar so wished) and seven other persons. These seven had (a) to live in Headington, (b) to be members of the Church of England, and (c) to have subscribed at least ten shillings towards the school in the current year. The first seven Managers of the School are named: Charles Tawney himself, Richard Finch (of the Rookery), George Baker Ballachey (of Bury Knowle House), Digby Latimer (of 10 St Andrew’s Road), John Matthews (of Headington Manor House), Thomas Burrows the Younger (of Southfield Farm), and John Coppock (of Quarry). So that the Managers could keep a close eye on how the school was conducted, the Conveyance also states that ‘a Book or books shall be kept at the said School wherein shall be entered from time to time all proceedings relating to the said School and incident thereto’. Log books dating from 1862 survive at the school.

The architect who designed the new school was Thomas Grimsley of Oxford.<sup>5</sup> In 1847 he drew up plans<sup>6</sup> for a

<sup>3</sup> The Conveyance can be seen at the County Record Office in Oxford (Ref. Headington b.20 item h).

<sup>4</sup> The National Society had been founded in 1811 by people who were worried that the British and Foreign Schools Society—founded in 1808—taught the Christian religion too generally and did not lay enough emphasis on the specific teaching of the Church of England.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Grimsley also designed St Paul’s Girls’ School in Walton Street in 1848.

<sup>6</sup> The original plans can be seen in the County Record office: Ref. T/S Plans 29.

for a red-brick [Gothic Building](#) with a teacher’s house attached. He used structural terracotta rather than wood to reduce carpenters’ bills (which possibly explains why, only fifty years later, the building was in such a bad condition that most of it had to be demolished). The school consisted of a Boys’ Classroom and a Girls’ Classroom (each measuring 40 × 18 feet), and a room for younger children (measuring 9 × 8 feet). These three rooms were considered quite sufficient to accommodate 180 pupils.<sup>7</sup>

The [foundation stone](#) was laid by Mr G.V. Drury of Shotover House in May 1847, resulting in great rejoicing by over two thousand people, more than the whole population of Headington.

In 1848 Mr John Bird and his wife Anne from Herefordshire were respectively appointed Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress, and moved into the teachers’ house with their seven children. Their house was wedged tightly between the two school rooms and there was not much space or privacy for the large family. On the ground floor there was a living room and scullery; below ground there was a cellar; outside there was a yard with a toilet; and upstairs two small bedrooms.<sup>8</sup>

Although the official name of this new school was ‘Headington National School’, for many years local people—including the teachers filling in the log-books—referred to it as the ‘Field School’. The 1876 map of Headington shows why it was given this name: it is situated in the middle of the Quarry Field, completely isolated from any other building, and beyond any of the local villages.

The Field School served the three villages of Old Headington, Quarry and Barton, and numbers soon grew. Lascelles Directory states that in Headington in 1851 the average number of ‘scholars’ (the name given at that time to any child aged two upwards lucky enough to be able to go to school at all) was 170 (85 boys and 85 girls). The 1851 census, however, shows that in that year there were 307 children under the age of 14 in the village of Headington *alone*, of whom about one-third (107) attended school. Of the other 200, some might have attended infant school in the past but might not have been allowed by their parents to move on to the Field School at the age of six when they could do useful jobs at home; others would never have been to school. This did not appear to concern the authorities: in 1851 the Bishop of Oxford (Samuel Wilberforce) was hardly more enlightened on the subject of the education of the poor than his predecessor half a century before, saying that there was too much fuss about children leaving school early to work on farms, and that if every-

<sup>7</sup>This 1847 building, as can be seen from the 1876 map, was situated behind the present main school buildings at the front. The western (girls’) end of it was demolished by the end of the nineteenth century and the remaining part, which had been used as the infant school from 1895, was condemned in 1927 and demolished the following year when the new senior school was built.

<sup>8</sup> The teacher’s house was enlarged in 1865—at the expense of the girls’ schoolroom.

one became learned and unsuited for the plough, 'the rest of us would have nothing to eat'.

From 1848 until 1875 the National School is often referred to in the School Inspector's reports as 'Headington Mixed School'. It was mixed in the sense that the boys' and girls' schoolrooms were classed as one school, with the Master in overall charge and just one government grant and one log-book; but it is unlikely that the children were ever taught together. It looks from the architect's plan, however, that originally all the children were allowed to play together in the triangular area behind the school,<sup>9</sup> where three outside toilets were deemed adequate for 180 children.

Gardner's *History, Gazetteer & Directory of the County of Oxford*, states in 1852:

*The National School, which is of recent erection, is a neat Gothic structure, with a residence for the teachers in the centre. The average number of children in attendance of both sexes is about 180. The building was erected by subscription, aided by a government grant; and its site was given by Charles Tawney, Esq. The school is very ably conducted by the present teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Bird.*

From 1848–1895 the official age-range of the National School was 6–13 (although most children left by the age of 11). The infants, aged from three (or even under) to six were in the village infant schools: see postscript on these school at the end. A few children aged 5, however, were unofficially admitted to the Field School, and these, together with some older children still struggling at 'First Standard' level, were taught in a separate room known as the 'infants' room' (presumably the room labelled 'VISITORS' ROOM' on the 1847 plan); but this infant section was not deemed by the School Inspectors to be part of the school.

In 1861 the Newcastle Commission, which had been investigating whether the money given by the Government towards education was being well spent, recommended a system of payments by results: i.e. schools whose pupils did not reach an acceptable standard would have their grants cut. In future the Government grant was not awarded to the school until after its yearly inspection in April (just before the start of the new school year on 1 May<sup>10</sup>). Poor attendance as well as

<sup>9</sup> This did not last for long: a later hand has added to the 1847 plan (in addition to new boundary walls) a partition wall 18 yards long and six feet high stretching from the toilets to the Quarry footpath to segregate the girls' and boys' play areas. It is clear from the 1876 map of Headington that the dividing wall had been built by that time, and it seems likely that it dates from 1875, the year that the Boys' and Girls' schools became separately run entities.

<sup>10</sup> During the nineteenth century the school year officially began on 1 May, (but being May Day, the children had that day off). School broke up for three weeks for Whitsun at the end of the same month. The next term was quite short, covering the period from mid-June to the end of July. The Harvest Holidays lasted five weeks, until the end of August, and then there was a very long

poor performance by the children in the tests caused the grants to be reduced.

From this time children from the age of six had to be divided into Standards, ranging from Standard I to Standard VI, each of which was given a separate test. These Standards related to ability rather than age, because at a time when education was not compulsory children could start school at any time their parents chose. For example, the school's log-book for 7 June 1864 states: 'Eliza Baker 12 years of age admitted and John Baker 10, neither able to read a syllable.' This brother and sister would have been put together in Standard I, whereas some of the 6-year-olds coming up from infant school would go straight into Standard 2.

The teachers, as well as the children, would not have looked forward to the visits of the School Inspector. His report was copied into the school's log-books each year. On 14 April 1863 the Inspector wrote:

*The Headington School is in good order, and Mr Franklin<sup>11</sup> has taken great pains with his pupils. The Religious Knowledge is fairly good, and the writing fair—of 76 individually examined 55 passed in reading, 29 in dictation and 23 in arithmetic.*

In 1864 Headington Quarry (which had become a separate parish from Headington in 1849) was given its own National School. Many children from Quarry who had been attending the Field School moved to their own village school, and in 1865 there are entries in the older school's log-book such as (25 July) 'Numbers getting very low' and (12 October) 'Ellen Hedges gone to Quarry School.' By 1869 there were only 64 boys and 62 girls at the Field School. Numbers soon began to pick up again, however, because of the growth of the village of *New Headington*—comprising the rectangle formed by the London Road, Windmill Lane, Lime Walk and Old Road. All Saints Mission Church was built in 1870 to serve this new village.<sup>12</sup>

---

term from the beginning of September until just before Christmas. After Christmas holidays of two weeks, the last part of the school year covered the period from early January until 30 April (with days off for Good Friday and Easter Monday); but because there was no holiday to mark the end of the school year, the January term effectively ran until Whitsun at the end of May.

<sup>11</sup> At the time of the 1861 census, Henry Franklin, then aged 25, was living at the 'Tumpike School House' with his wife Sophia and their three children. He and his wife were appointed jointly as Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress and live. By 1871 he was living in Old High Street and had become a teacher of a 'Preparatory school of Harrow, Eton etc.' (probably the Rookery).

<sup>12</sup> The street where it was built hence became known as Church Street (later renamed Perrin Street). In 1910 All Saints Church was built in Lime Walk and the old church is now a scout hut.

On 6 January 1868 Samuel Vallis became Master of Headington National School, with his wife Eliza as Mistress; but he died suddenly in September 1870, aged 48,<sup>13</sup> and there was a temporary Master for the rest of that year. Eliza continued as Mistress and remained in the house with her children.

In 1870 Forster's Education Act permitted the setting up of School Boards with the power to make schooling compulsory for children aged from 5 to 14. But areas such as Headington and Headington Quarry which already had a Church school feared that School Boards were 'godless', and decided not to set one up.<sup>14</sup> So Headington never had a Board school, and although schooling became compulsory for many children in this country in 1870, Headington parents still had the option of keeping their children at home.

But the 1870 Act did affect the Field School in one respect: Church schools were, for the first time, forced to accept pupils who did not belong to the Church of England. So entries such as the following (of 17 July 1865) no longer appear in the log-book:

*Maude Taylor left School because notice was sent to her parents that her name would be removed from the books if she again neglected to attend Church on Sundays.*

In return for accepting Non-Conformists, Church schools were awarded a special government grant to supplement their endowment, and the Field School received £42 a year towards repairs and maintenance to the building, which belonged to the Church. But the parents of children at all Church and Board schools at the time still had to pay a contribution towards their children's education. In 1870 the fee was 2d a week for the first child in a family and 1d for each of the others. This, together with the grant awarded after the school's annual inspection, would pay for materials and the teachers' pay (which was £96 a year at this school in 1870).

---

<sup>13</sup> His widow, Eliza, aged 43, is shown in the 1871 census as still living at the 'Parochial Schools' and is described as a 'National Schoolmistress'. She has five children living with her in the tiny house: Eliza, 21 (a milliner); Samuel, 15 (a pupil teacher); Albert, 8, and Ada, 5, who are at school; and Laura, 1. The *Oxford City and Suburban Directory* of 1876 describes her as Mistress of New Headington Infant School.

<sup>14</sup> *Headington Parish Magazine* for July 1871 explains at length to its parishioners why 'it seems highly undesirable to avoid the establishment of a rate-supported school' and says: 'For the small sum of 2d. weekly each child may receive an education which, though it may at first stand in the way of his earning a few sixpences in the field or the shop, will be of incalculable value to him in after life. We trust that the good sense of our Headington poor will lead them to send their children regularly to School, and so prevent the adoption of a system which will fall very heavily upon many of them, and will reflect no little disgrace upon the Parish generally.'

In the 1860s and 1870s, even parents who were willing to pay for their children to attend the Field School often kept them at home for long periods because they needed help in the fields and could not afford to pay anyone else. Although schools gave a 'harvest holiday' from the end of July to the end of August specifically so that children could help to get the crops in, it was obviously not long enough and did not allow for an early or late season. The Field School log-books are peppered with remarks such as 'many boys kept at home to get up the potatoes' (11 September 1863); 'Mr Bateman sent word to say he must keep his boy away for work' (7 March 1864); 'James Elkerton work till after Harvest' (20 July 1865); 'attendance not so good this week: many children wanted in garden' (26 May 1871); and on 11 October 1878 many boys were kept away 'to work at the root harvest'. The Inspector's Report of 1871 states that 47 children (more than a third of the school) had been dismissed during the previous year on account of irregular attendance. (This may seem a rather severe punishment, but the school's grant and therefore its existence depended at the time on children attending regularly).

The poverty of the children in these times is graphically illustrated by the brief entry in the log book on 3 April 1865: 'Ellen Gardner<sup>15</sup> no shoes'.

On 17 November 1871 the Field School's catchment area became more closely defined: the log-book states that the Committee 'resolve not to take any more children from Quarry as they have a School there'.

On 6 September 1872 the log-book records that Mr Yeates (who had been Master since 10 January 1871) deemed it 'advisable to suspend Geography until the Children are more efficient at the 3Rs'; and the entry for 4 April 1873—when the Inspector's visit was imminent—reads 'The drawing lesson was again set aside on Thursday for spelling.' This clearly indicates that teaching was geared towards the annual tests, because the very survival of the school depended on their results. The subjects tested were Reading, Writing and Arithmetic; and in addition the girls were tested on Needlework.

*Headington Parish Magazine* for February 1874 reports as follows on the school:

*Our Schools are now all in good working order. Five years ago the total average attendance was under 150; it is now over 230. And this is accounted for, not by any increase in the population (for there has been none) but by the better accommodation and more efficient teaching which have been furnished, and by the higher value that is now set upon education. And yet there remain some 50 children or more, who either do not come to School at all or who come very irregularly. This*

---

<sup>15</sup> This is probably the Ellen Gardner of New Headington who appears in the 1861 census, aged 6, the fourth of a carter's six children. At the time of the 1871 census Ellen, who would have been 16, has left home and there are four new children.

*irregularity of attendance is one of the gravest difficulties which the Managers have to contend with: it is a great hindrance to the educational work of the School, and it seriously cripples its financial resources. The efficiency of the School, and consequently the amount of Government Grant, are measured by the average attainments of the pupils, and the average depends on the proficiency, not of a few clever children, but of the scholars generally. Irregular attendance must of necessity lower the standard of proficiency. A few irregular children may retard the progress of a whole class. And in proportion as the general standard of efficiency is lowered, the Government Grant is lowered too, and the School suffers alike in its character and its income.*

*We have now provided admirable Schools with ample accommodation, adequate teaching staff, and all the books, furniture, and appliances that are necessary [sic]: we may therefore fairly call upon the Parents to do their very best to send their children regularly and punctually: we ask them to do this in justice to the Managers, the Subscribers, and the Teachers of the School, and also for the sake of their own children for whom they are bound to procure the best education they can.*

### National Schools 1875–1894

In 1875 the National Schools entered a new phase, as a result of the decision of the Managers on 27 June 1873 that the boys and girls ‘should be separated into distinct schools’. From 1875 the National (or ‘Field’) Schools are always referred to in the plural, with the boys’ and girls’ classrooms being treated as completely separate schools, each with its own grant, its own head teacher and, of course, its own log-book.

So on 4 January 1875 the Girls’ School opened after the Christmas holidays under the management of its own Mistress, who now had powers equal to those of the Master. Miss Harriet Crozier,<sup>16</sup> a student from Whitelands Training College, was the first head, and she taught 51 girls with the help of a young monitor, Elizabeth Steff. Thomas Yeates continued as Master of the Boys’ School only.

Discipline in the Boys’ School appears to have broken down in the 1870s. The entry in the log-book for 8 October 1875 reads:

*On Thursday the master gave Frederic Taylor a stripe for playing—the boy immediately jumped up and in a boisterous and saucy manner threatened to throw a slate at the master. He further incited his younger brother to assist him in kicking the master’s legs.*

Frederic ran away to avoid being flogged, and was later dismissed by the Committee.

<sup>16</sup> Miss Crozier was known as Mrs Yeates after her marriage on 7 June 1877, which is rather confusing, as it was not the Master whom she married, but George Yeates, a clerk.

On 3 August 1877 Thomas Yeates ceased to be Master of the Boys’ School,<sup>17</sup> and for over a year it had a succession of Acting Masters. During this period discipline deteriorated still further. On 3 July 1878 the log records that two boys refused to do their sums because they were not allowed to have the slates they desired; and another was dismissed for ‘saucy behaviour’ towards the Master. Mr Cox, the Acting Master, wrote on that day, ‘It is impossible to carry on the regular lessons or manage the school properly.’ In the same year the Inspector reported that ‘the discipline and attainments of the boys are very unsatisfactory’, and in consequence he deducted one-tenth from the government grant. On 11 July Mr Cox wrote that ‘there seems no way of getting order now’. He did not return after the Harvest Holidays, and Mr Burroughs, a fourth temporary Master, took charge of the school for a month.

Then on 15 October 1878 George Stace became Master of the Boys’ School. He certainly provided stability: he held the post for 42 years until 1921, and handed the job over to his son—also called George Stace—who remained Head for a further 31 years until 1952. The Inspector’s Report for 1879 states: ‘There has been a decided improvement both in the discipline and attainments of the boys in this school since Mr Stace took charge of it.’

Mrs Yeates (née Crozier) had no such problems in the Girls’ School next door. The most heinous crime reported is eating fruit in class for which the ‘usual punishment’ (a stripe with the cane on the hand) is given. Otherwise, the great emphasis in the logbook is placed on needlework and knitting.

By this period the teachers do not live in the school-house: the 1881 census shows the family of a retired publican called Humphreys living at what is described as ‘formerly school house’, and in 1891 it is occupied by the family of a stonemason called Danbury, while the Master, George Stace, lived with his family in a better house round the corner in Windmill Lane.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Yeates was living in the Croft in 1871. He was evidently very young (21) when appointed as Master, but he does not seem to have fared better at his next school. He is almost certainly one and the same as the Thomas Yeates (1849–1940) who was Head of Sutton Courtenay Church School from October 1877 to April 1916, as well as organist at the parish church there. See Pamela Horn, *The Victorian and Edwardian School-child*, p. 31, where it is stated that the boys of Sutton Courtenay kicked him and threw slates at him! There is also a photograph of him on p 29 of that book.

<sup>18</sup> The 1891 census shows the Stace family living at No. 2 West View in Windmill Lane, with Elizabeth Drake, the Mistress of the Girls’ School, lodging next door at No. 1 West View. These houses are now respectively numbered Nos. 27 and 25 Windmill Road.

The year 1878 marked the first Diocesan inspection at the School. Henceforth the children were given, in addition to the School Inspector's annual tests, an extra one on Religious Knowledge by the Church, who wanted to check that the National Society's investment in the school was producing good results.

Mundella's Education Act of 1880 made education compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 and 10 (and older children who had not reached a satisfactory level could be made to stay on until they were 13). The Act must have seemed particularly unfair to parents who hitherto had the benefit of their children's labour because schooling, though now compulsory, was not free. In the 1880s the fees at the Field School for labourers whose weekly earnings were under £1 were 3d a week for the first child and 2d for others. Those fortunate enough to earn more than £1 a week had to pay 4d for the first child and 3d for the others; and those who were comparatively well off—assessed to the poor-rate at or over £10—had to pay 6d a week for each child.

Compulsory schooling caused a big increase in numbers, and by 1882 there were about a hundred children in each of the two National Schools. It appears that a new schoolroom had to be added in 1882.<sup>19</sup>

The Girls' School now has a series of heads. From September 1881 to October 1883 Emily Hartwell of Cheltenham College was Mistress; from November 1883 to August 1884 Fanny Chambers; from September 1884 Elizabeth Drake;<sup>20</sup> from June 1892 Mary Ann Jordan; from November 1892 Elizabeth Hewitt; and from January 1894 Ada Bridgwater, who remained Mistress for 19 years until March 1923.

In 1890 the 'Payment by results' system—and hence the annual tests—was abolished, and in 1891 the Goschen Education Act stated that schools which stopped charging fees could claim 10/- per pupil per year from the Government. *Headington Parish Magazine* for September 1891 reads:

*From September 1st Free Education will be introduced in our National Schools—that is, for all children between the ages of three and fifteen. We hope that one effect of the new measure will be a marked improvement in the regularity of the attendance of children. As some misunderstanding seems to prevail as to the source from which the fees, no longer paid by the parents, are to be procured, we take this opportunity of explaining that the Education Department in London is directly responsible, and the money is not obtained from the local rates, or, at present, by any extra taxation. Although parents are not now expected to pay—at least directly—for the education of their children, we hope that this will not lead them to think more lightly of the responsibility of supplying their children with such education as shall*

*best fit them to be useful and independent members of society.*

Attendance at the school seems to have improved: the Girls' log-book for 18 September 1891 reads:

*The school-room is inconveniently crowded. The Class room is too small and the schoolroom only accommodates 90 children, whereas 115 were present on the day of inspection.*

In the *Headington Parish Magazine* for December 1891, the Vicar of St Andrew's Church, the Revd. John Holford-Scott, recorded the proposal for new schools:

*On Thursday, November 19th, our School Committee met at the Vicarage at 4 p.m., and passed a resolution to the following effect:— "That further accommodation being necessary, in the opinion of the School Committee the erection of new Schools will prove the best means of providing it."*

*There were six members out of eight present at the meeting, the two absent members much regretting their inability to attend.*

*Of the need of schools adequate to the necessities of the Parish there can be no question.*

*The present schools are mean in appearance, and very badly furnished. There is no class-room, for it is a stretch of imagination to call a room capable of containing eight children according to Government requirements a class-room. In addition to want of accommodation the condition of the whole building is deplorable. The wet is streaming down the walls, and we spend on an average £20 to £30 a year in repairs. The outside offices are wholly unsuitable, and do not tend to that modesty amongst our children which it is our duty to inculcate. In wet weather the boys' playground is a sheet of water. Is it not the privilege of the parish, and especially of Church people, to aim at making the lives of our children bright and happy, and can we expect our children's character to be as refined as they ought to be amidst gloomy surroundings and in unattractive school-rooms?*

*The School Committee propose to build Schools on a central site, and to include under one roof Boys, Girls, and Infants. No general appeal has as yet been made, but the following subscriptions have been already promised:—*

Miss Watson-Taylor.....	£400
Miss Nichol.....	£100
Mrs. Wootten-Wootten.....	£100
Rev. J.H. Scott-Tucker.....	£100

*In addition to the sum of £100 given by Miss Nichol, a further sum of £100 has been promised by her, contingent on her life being spared till next year.*

*When plans and estimates have been sanctioned by the Committee, and the site finally settled, further and fuller particulars of the proposed scheme will appear in the Parish Magazine.*

*There was a unanimous opinion expressed by the School Committee that the representation should be enlarged by the addition, say of three members of the artizan class, whose children are attending the schools. We commend the above scheme to your earnest sympathy and prayers.*

<sup>19</sup> See *Kelly's Directory* for 1883.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Drake gave up teaching to marry John R. Mattock of New Headington, the famous rose-grower.

## Postscript: Where were the Infants from 1848 to 1895?

The raising of the school-leaving age to 11 years in 1893 must have exacerbated the problem of overcrowding.

*Headington Parish Magazine* for April 1893 contains a long letter from Alfred J. Pilkington, the Architect of the National Society, outlining his plans for a new school for 240 children at an estimated cost of £1700.<sup>21</sup> During 1893 and 1894 the Parish collected money to build the school, both by individual donations and by fund-raising events. *Headington Parish Magazine* for November 1894 reports as follows:

*On Tuesday, October 23rd, a most successful 'American Fair' was held in the Girls' Room of the old Schools, on behalf of the Building Fund of the New Schools. The sale opened at 2 p.m., when the room was immediately filled with purchasers. Our best thanks are due to the school teachers and other kind friends who came forward so readily to assist at the sale. We also tender our most grateful thanks to all those who sent contributions of old and new wearing apparel and household furniture, and of fruit, flowers, pot plants, tea, cakes, sweets, &c. Everything was sold by eight o'clock when a Dance took place in the Boys' School-room; and we have again to thank Mr. Stace and Mr. David Taylor for their musical contributions towards the evening.*

The Foundation stone was laid on Tuesday, 12 June 1894 and the children had two days' holiday—on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 June—to mark the occasion. But there were problems with the builders: the Inspector's Report of June 1894 states: 'It is to be hoped that the new schools will be ready in a few months' time if there are no more strikes.' In fact, although the new schools were officially opened by the Vicar on St Andrew's Day (30 November) 1894, it was not until after the Christmas holidays, on 7 January 1895, that the 95 boys and 103 girls moved from their old schools into the new building. The schools were now known as the *New National Schools*, and a fresh chapter begins.

### 1. Old Headington Infant School

In 1840 an infant school for the poor children of Old Headington was built in North Place. In the census of 1851 the occupation of one Emma Cantwell is given as 'Mistress of the Infant School'. Two years later Lascelle's Directory for 1853 states:

*There is also an INFANT SCHOOL in the Village. Average number of scholars 60. Miss Ann Bird,<sup>22</sup> Mistress.*

In 1854 the Vicar of Headington, answering the questionnaire he was obliged to fill in prior to the Bishop's Visitation,<sup>23</sup> stated that there was in the Parish 'an Infant School supported by a private individual—average number 60'. This 'benefactor was Mrs Maria Ballachey,<sup>24</sup> who paid for the schoolhouse,<sup>25</sup> which was conveniently situated just outside the gate of her home, Bury Knowle House, and gave £20 year towards the running of the school. Consequently it was known as 'Mrs Ballachey's School' until in 1873 it came under similar management to that of the National School and was henceforth known as Old Headington Infant School (although its official name, inscribed in its log-book of 1873, was 'The Headington & Barton Infant School').

The school was designed for 90 infants (aged from 3 to 6), and measured 40 x 18 feet. Until 1884 the fees were a penny a week for the first child in each family, and a halfpenny for each subsequent child.

The Mistress of the Old Headington Infant School from October 1873 was M.A. Crozier (who succeeded E.M. Walter); and Mrs Ellen Crozier took over for the next 30 years, from August 1876 to September 1906.

The school's log-book—itself a gift from Mrs Ballachey—records numerous visits both by herself and by her daughters. Many of the infants were extremely young, and so the presents included bricks and rag-dolls for the 'babies'. Not surprisingly the Inspector did not approve of the presence of these babies, and his report for 1874 states:

*The presence of children under three years of age in the same room as the rest of the infants interferes with the efficiency of the school.'*

---

<sup>22</sup> The eldest daughter of the Master and Mistress of the National School, who was called Ann Bird, was 16 this year, and they are almost certainly one and the same.

<sup>23</sup> Oxon Dioc Pp d 701.

<sup>24</sup> Her husband, George Ballachey, who died in 1858, was one of the original Managers of the Field School.

<sup>25</sup> The infant school has now been converted into a house—No. 3 North Place.

---

<sup>21</sup> In the event, it cost £2,200.

On 24 September 1875 the Committee decided that ‘in future no child under three years of age should be admitted into this school’. (This decision was not implemented until 1902, however, and the Inspectors’ Reports of 1878 and 1900 again mention the problem.)

The infant log-book makes fascinating reading. Clothing is frequently distributed by Mrs Ballachey, and children are sent home ‘to be washed & made fit for school’. It is recorded on 26 January 1874 that one child had been removed from the infant school by his parents ‘because (it was said) he was taught to say bad language’.

On 6 November 1877 there is an entry which clearly indicates the dual control that Mrs Ballachey and the Church had over the school:

*Ada Morris left school on Friday because she could not be allowed to wear her necklace, as Mrs Ballachey & the Rd A.W. Pearson have a great objection to such ornaments being worn at school.*

Needlework started when the girls were very young: the entry for 3 February 1879 reads: ‘Taught some of the very little girls (3 years old) to thread their needles.’ The Misses Ballachey and other ladies of the village such as Miss Wootten Wootten came in frequently to help with the knitting and sewing lessons and to hear children reading. It appears that the boys as well as the girls did needlework: the Inspector’s Report for 1889 reads: ‘The Needlework is only just passable, the boys being somewhat worse than the girls’; and in 1891 it says: ‘the needlework ... of the boys does not deserve any Grant’.

The connection with the Ballachey family ended in 1884. The entry in the log-book for 3 March that year reads:

*Owing to the lamented death of Mrs Ballachey [in February, aged 86], the sum of £20, which had been so liberally given by her annually to the Old Headington Infant School, having ceased, the Managers feel it necessary forthwith to raise the fees at that school to be equal to those now paid at the New Headington Infant School.’*

The parents must have lamented her death: school fees doubled overnight to 2d for the first child in a family and 1d for each subsequent child. That paying these fees was a real hardship is shown by the log entry of 5 January 1891:

*The adverse weather still continues, & many of the parents of the children are out of employment, & cannot pay the school fees, consequently the children are kept at home.’*

In 1892 the Inspector’s report says ‘The building will I hope be replaced some day by one more worthy of the village’; and that of 1893 lists numerous defects. In 1894 the Inspector recorded:

*The Managers propose as a temporary measure to remove the children to one of the rooms now used by the older children as soon as the new buildings for the boys & girls are ready for occupation.*

Old Headington Infant School moved from North Place into the former Boys’ Schoolroom on the London

Road site on 29 April 1895. Despite the fact that it was originally regarded as a ‘temporary measure’, there is no indication that they ever moved back to North Place. They kept their old name, however, so that there are photographs of “Old Headington Infant School” dated March 1904 that confusingly show part of the 1847 building on the London Road and not the original school in North Place.

## 2. New Headington Infant School

In November 1873 a second, purpose-built infant school costing £441 opened in New Headington on the corner of Windsor Street and Church (now Perrin) Street.<sup>26</sup> It was designed for 100 children, although even as late as 1893 the average attendance was only 54.

There are several derogatory entries about New Headington Infant School in the log-books of the senior schools, such as this for 8 June 1883 (Girls’ School):

*Admitted twenty-five children from the Infant Schools on Monday and Tuesday—three for Standard II, the remaining twenty-two for Standard I. The children from Old Headington [Infant School] are well up in their work—those from New Headington are behind.*

Although the school is mentioned frequently in the log-books of the Field School, its own log-book is not with them. We can learn from directories, however, that Mrs Vallis was its Mistress in 1876 and Miss Atherton (who married the next year and became Mrs Price) in 1887. When New Headington’s first Council School opened in Margaret Road on 9 September 1908, Mrs Price transferred there with the infants, marking the end of the New Headington Infant School.

<sup>26</sup> The former school building with the teacher’s house attached can still be seen.

## CHRONOLOGY 1804–1894

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1805</b> Headington's first Church School opened at the Chequers Inn in Headington Quarry</p>   | <p>came the first Mistress to have full charge of the Girls' School</p>   |
| <p><b>1811</b> <b>Foundation of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church</b></p>  | <p><b>1878</b> (October) <i>George Stace</i> senior became Master of the Boys' School.</p>                                |
| <p><b>1839</b> <b>Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools first appointed</b></p>   | <p><b>1880</b> <b>Mundella's Education Act—education now compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 and 10</b></p> |
| <p><b>1847</b> (March) Land for a church school given to St Andrew's Church by the brewer Charles Tawney, and a grant to build the school awarded by the National Society<br/>(April) Thomas Grimsley designed the school<br/>(May) Laying of foundation of the church school by Mr G. V. Drury of Shotover</p> | <p><b>1881</b> (September) <i>Miss Emily Hartwell</i> became Mistress of the Girls' School</p>                            |
| <p><b>1848</b> Headington National School opened on London Road.<br/>Master: <i>John Bird</i>; Mistress: <i>Mrs Ann Bird</i></p>  | <p><b>1883</b> (November) <i>Miss Fanny Chambers</i> became Mistress of the Girls' School</p>                             |
| <p><b>1849</b> Headington Quarry became separate Parish</p>   | <p><b>1884</b> (September) <i>Miss Elizabeth Drake</i> became Mistress of the Girls' School</p>                           |
| <p><b>1852</b> Start of development of New Headington</p>   | <p><b>1890</b> <b>Abolition of 'Payment by results' system</b></p>  |
| <p><b>By 1861</b> <i>Henry Franklin</i> and <i>Mrs Sophia Franklin</i> became Master and Mistress of the School</p>   | <p><b>1891</b> <b>Goschen Act—grants given to elementary schools which abolished fees</b></p>                             |
| <p><b>1862</b> <b>Lowe's Revised Code of Practice—'Payments by results' system</b></p>  | <p><b>1892</b> (June) <i>Mary Ann Jordan</i> became Mistress of the Girls' School</p>                                     |
| <p><b>1864</b> A separate National School opened in Headington</p>  | <p>(November) <i>Elizabeth Hewitt</i> became Mistress of the Girls' School</p>  |
| <p><b>1868</b> (Jan) <i>Samuel Vallis</i> and <i>Mrs Eliza Vallis</i> became Master and Mistress of the School</p>  | <p><b>1893</b> <b>School-leaving age raised to 11</b></p>   |
| <p><b>1870</b> <b>Forster's Education Act</b> Headington refused to set up a School Board, but henceforth the school was forced to accept Non-conformists</p>   | <p><b>1894</b> (January) <i>Ada Bridgewater</i> became Mistress of the Girls' School</p>                                  |
| <p><b>1871</b> (January) <i>Thomas Yeates</i> became Master of the National School</p>  | <p>(June) Laying of foundation stone of the New National Schools</p>  |
| <p><b>1873</b> (November) New Headington Infant School opened in Perrin Street</p>  | <p>(November) The New National Schools were officially opened by the Bishop of Oxford</p>                                 |
| <p><b>1874</b> Free School in Quarry closed on the death of James Waring</p>  |   |
| <p><b>1875</b> (January) Complete separation of Boys' and Girls' National Schools<br/><i>Miss Harriet Crozier</i> (later <i>Mrs Yeates</i>) be-</p>   |   |

# 1894

## Laying of the foundation stone of the Headington New National Schools

The Laying of the Foundation Stone of the New National Schools, Headington by the Bishop of Oxford took place on Tuesday, June 12, the weather fortunately remaining fine during the ceremony, although there were a few showers after its conclusion. The New Schools have been rendered necessary by the action of the Education Department in insisting upon larger and better accommodation than the present schools furnish, the Managers being informed by the Department that unless further accommodation was provided the Grant might be withheld. The site of the new buildings is between the Field Schools and the London Road, and the walls are already built several feet above the ground, it being expected that the work will be finished about the end of August or the beginning of September, when the old School will be used exclusively for infants. The builder's contract amounts to £1,912, of which £1,700 has been already realised, but the architect's fees, boundary wall, and furniture are estimated to cost about £300 more. The main room is 22 feet wide by 90 feet long, equally divided by sliding doors and at each end there is a classroom 25 feet by 20 feet, arranged for dual desks, one being for boys and the other for girls, for whom there are separate entrances. The building is of red brick, with box-ground Bath stone dressings, Ruabon tile roof, and wood block floor. The architect is Mr. A.J. Pilkington of Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, whose designs are being carried out by Mr. J.S. Kimberley, of Banbury. The Foundation Stone is a large block of Portland, bearing the following inscription:—

“Headington National Schools. To the honour and glory of GOD this Stone was laid by William, by Divine permission Lord Bishop of Oxford, on the 12th day of June, A.D. 1894.”

It is placed outside the wall of the main room between the two class-rooms, and facing the road, where a platform was erected for the occasion.

A large number of the inhabitants of Headington and the district assembled to witness the ceremony, the crowd extending across the road, while flags and bunting affixed to the scaffolding floated gaily in the breeze, pot plants in abundance being also used in the decorations....

The Service commenced with a Procession from the Field School of the Bishop, Clergy, and Choir, headed by a banner, and singing the hymn “The Church's one Foundation”. When it had reached the site the Bishop offered prayers, after which Psalm cxxvii, “Except the Lord build the house”, was sung.

*Headington Parish Magazine, July 1894*

*The magazine then reports the long speech of the Bishop of Oxford (William Stubbs). The Foundation Stone that he laid can be seen inside the school, under an empty niche where the statue of St Andrew used to stand. This wall was originally outdoors, at the back of a railed recess at the centre front of the school. When this garden was infilled by infant cloakrooms, spoiling St Andrew's view over to Bury Knowle Park, he was moved to a less prestigious position at the back of the school. Headington Parish Magazine for November 1894 shows that the cost of the statue and its erection was £8.0.0, and gives a list of all the people who contributed towards it*