Hope Old School Logbook

Introduction

Items which have appeared in Hope Parish Magazine

Summary of career of one headteacher, Mr Mouseley

Logbook entries

Poster to Parents

Poster about fees

Acknowledgements

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Thanks to Derbyshire Records Office which holds the original Logbook and for their work in photocopying it in its entirety.

The photocopy is in the keep of Hope Historical Society.

I would also like to thank many members of Hope Historical Society who encouraged me and helped me at different times.

In particular, people who had read various sections often commented on their family antecedents who were mentioned in the logbook.

Ann Price was always amazingly supportive and also provided material such as the comment about Schoolmasters.

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Introduction

The only Hope Old School Logbook that we know of runs from February 1863 to May 1893, one of the most interesting periods in English social history as regards education. In 1867 a major extension of the franchise occurred owing to the Reform Act of that year so more Hope male citizens would have been able to vote than ever before. More importantly for the majority of the population, compulsory education was made law in 1870. You can imagine the changes arising from those two Acts of Parliament and the effects on village life. The School itself, changed from being a Charity school, run by the Church of England and fee paying for the most part (there were some 'free' places) to a church and government funded institution where fees of a few pence a week were charged, though even that must have been difficult for some families to pay, and there were still some 'free' places. Children continued to turn up at school for several years, aged 12 or so, without knowing how to read or write.

Universal education had many results. (I read somewhere that people started to carve their names on rocks after they learned to write and certainly there are some old dates on stones in Hope Valley.) One effect was the obvious increase of state involvement. At first, the school existed with the occasional grant; these became larger and annual, accompanied by inspections with some praise and always admonitions that some subject should be better learned or taught. Later on, pupil teachers were recruited often from the local area offering a new kind of job, particularly for women. With very large numbers of children on the books, obviously one schoolmaster plus pupil teacher could not manage every pupil. Monitors were selected and even paid. In the first years of the logbook, pre 1870, girls were definitely in the minority and occasionally the Master commented favourably when a good number turned up, indicating that this was not the norm. Girls were taught sewing and had no choice in the matter. The sewing mistress was often the current Master's wife, one continuing in the job almost until she gave birth.

After the Education Reform Act became law and brought in compulsory education, there was no immediate hundred per cent rush for school. I suppose if school had never been compulsory before, it didn't seem an essential part of life. There were many instances, even in 1890, of older boys being kept at home as they were needed for various agricultural activities, eg the harvesting of hay and other crops such as corn and potatoes. Girls were absent to help at home when someone was ill or just before Wakes Week preparations. So there

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were many cases of half- education at best. By the late 1880s attendance officers visited regularly.

We learn an enormous amount about the weather, as the various teachers were all concerned with the numbers present or absent. The weather was the reason most frequently given why few scholars turned up to school: wind, rain, cold and once or twice, heat. Upon occasion, the children couldn't read or write towards the end of the winter afternoons as it was too dark to see properly, so they had singing or recited poetry. At times the weather was so cold the children had difficulty holding their pens to form letters. In January 1881 the cold was so severe that 'copy book writing impossible without wasting considerable time thawing ink.' Sometimes, the children who have plodded to school through the rain were then sent home as they were too wet. That must have been so discouraging, but probably they didn't have much in the way of weather-proofed clothing. One winter, 1888, the snow was so high that the mail did not get through and 21 men were employed shovelling snow from the road between Hope and Brough.

The School became the first building besides the Church and Chapel which the general public attended for specific meetings. As so many more men could vote with the wider franchise, no doubt people became more interested in elections so occasionally the school was hired for an election meeting. The first time this was mentioned the two Liberal candidates came, the successful one being the son of the Duke of Devonshire. Towards the end of the logbook several entries were made relating to the Master's absence from teaching as he attended a local meeting (for example, at Castleton) of The Primrose League, a society created to encourage Conservative supporters. Presumably the Master felt that it was quite proper for him to attend such a meeting and give that as a reason for absence.

The Schoolroom was regularly hired for the committee of the Hope Valley Agricultural Society, to plan for Hope Show, various school and choir parties and occasions such as the Women's Sick Club Feast.

The Church of England was a very powerful institution then and not only had oversight of the school curriculum (there was a regular Diocesan Education Inspection as well as the one by the HMI) but the current vicar was always a regular visitor, sometimes several times a week, and took classes in religious instruction and Bible study and helped by giving tests in Arithmetic. Rev. Daniel supported a few children as extra 'free' scholars when the school was a private, fee-paying school. Different vicars had rather different expectations and sometimes required children to attend church for specific services. The Bible

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was used as reading material, particularly in the early days when they had few 'readers' or other books and geography included that of the Bible stories. Indeed, reading was described as 'secular' at times, sufficiently important to distinguish from religious reading.

On one occasion, there was a cattle plague or murrain. Everyone attended St Peter's Church for a special service. Rev. Michael Collier (recent vicar in Hope) said he had once attended such a service when he was quite young and he showed me an old prayer book which included the text of such a service. It sounded terrifying for children (or anyone else), as it assumed the plague had been sent as a punishment for the whole village because of something they had done, some sin committed. The school was closed so that all could attend church along with the rest of the village. No animals were slaughtered though.

Apart from the weather, the other consistent cause of absence was the prevalence of infectious diseases. Measles and scarlet fever caused the most trouble, and smallpox and leprosy were mentioned. Scarlet fever was so widespread in 1886 – 7 that the school was closed for a month by the area medical officer and the whole building disinfected and thoroughly cleaned. The village was said to have 'fever panic.' Coughs and colds were mentioned in passing, being ordinary occurrences.

An attempt was made to encourage adult education but doesn't sound particularly successful, unlike the situation in some other villages. It is difficult to say if this was truly the case, as the comments are not clear cut.

Holidays were given for a number of occasions, even Guy Fawkes Day so presumably they had bonfires then. The various Masters inveighed against the local fairs, as pupils were frequently absent on such occasions. Perhaps teachers took their cue from vicars, who nationally were very opposed to local hiring fairs. There is no evidence in the logbook as to what the vicar felt but definitely the teacher was annoyed not only at the attraction of Hope Fair but also Castleton Fair and those of other villages where pupils allegedly went instead of attending school. After a few years the Master decided it was better to cut his loss and just make Hope Fair Day a holiday and so May 13th remained a holiday, presumably until the Fair itself was ended.

The one contemporary description of Hope Fair makes it sound extremely enjoyable but possibly the pubs were open all day and with an influx of visitors it was easy for vicars to criticise. Hannah Mitchell, in her autobiography *The Hard Way Up* was born in Alport Dale 1871 and certainly had a hard life in her

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youth – as no doubt many of the people round about endured. She did like Hope Fair though and wrote rather a romantic account of it:

> ‘This village [Hope] has always been my “Land of Heart’s desire”, an old-world, green, little spot greyed over with the dust of many centuries. Standing in the churchyard facing the single street, fringed with small stone houses and gay little gardens, all facing the church, I always experienced a feeling of peace and rest as one who came home after long absence.….
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> The fair at Hope was the time from which all contracts for service were dated and early in the day youths and maidens wishing to “better themselves” by a change of situation gathered in the village, grouping themselves by the churchyard railings to be interviewed by prospective employers who, after some preliminary bargaining about wages, would hand over the “fastening penny”, usually a florin [two shillings or 20p], and after mutual agreements as to the date of entering service, it being the custom to take a few days holiday at this time, all were free to enjoy themselves.
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> First the dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, which all the inns provided on fair day. Next we sampled the various entertainments, bought nuts, gingerbread and “fairings” from the stalls which lined the streets. These were usually shawls, handkerchiefs, beads and brooches. Then games and dancing on the village green till twilight fell. For lovers the walk home in the scented darkness crowned the day’s delights.’

Much of the logbook was very repetitive being complaints about absences, so you can skim through it to find interesting comments about the village. Individuals were mentioned by name and as many of the names still exist in the Valley these will be relevant to some families in particular. It is good to find that some pupils did quite well, despite being mentioned in deprecating tones in the logbooks. Fanny Watson, as well as a few other pupils, passed the tests on the annual Inspection Day and therefore moved up a grade or standard. However, when the new master, Mr Chadwick, was appointed August 10th 1891, he decided that these pupils were not ‘up to standard’ and demoted them. Robert Watson (in 2015) said his ancestral relative married quite well and had a successful life – after she left school, at any rate.

I have tried to be as accurate to the original as possible, which therefore means that there are plenty of the original misspellings as well as some gaps where words are missing. Occasionally the handwriting and the problems of a faint

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photocopy meant that I couldn’t really decipher the words. I may well have got some of the surnames wrong.

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Footnote: taken from *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature Volume XIV. The Victorian Age, Part Two.*
The Reform bill of 1832 had led the state to assume a very small measure of responsibility for public instruction; but mere trifling could not satisfy the demand for popular education heightened by the much greater extension of the parliamentary franchise effected in the bill of 1867. Nearly as many children were believed to be without schools of any kind as were in attendance at all schools, state-aided or uninspected, put together. Abortive bills and resolutions in parliament urged the imposition of an education rate, the provision of free education and the safeguard of a conscience clause in schools. Outside parliament, there was loud and persistent agitation, which centred chiefly about the question of religious instruction and the rights of conscience. Finally, in 1870, the government introduced a bill to provide for public elementary education in England and Wales, which was passed after six months of contentious debate…..

But the full significance of the Education act of 1870 lies in the fact that the English state then definitely assumed direct responsibility for public education, whose provision became a state service like that of defence or the administration of justice; it was no longer a matter of private charity conducted by the well-to-do for the benefit of the poor. For the time being, this responsibility was confined to elementary instruction; but its extension was unavoidable.

Ann Price: I have been checking the Trade Directories for Hope for schoolmasters also being sub-postmasters. Thomas Henry Mousley combined the functions of receiver of mail and master of the Free School according to Harrison and Harrod's Directory of Derbyshire in 1860, White's Directory of 1861 and Kelly's directory of 1864. In Harrison and Harrods Directory for 1870 George Turner is listed as master of the National School and also as sub-postmaster. "Letters arrive at 8am, and are dispatched at 5.30" Perhaps he was too busy delivering the mail to be in time to take the registers in the morning!
By 1876, according to Kelly's Directory, David Brearley is master of the National School and James Proctor is the receiver of the mail. I hope this will be of interest to you.

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