

# *Atworth - A People's History*



The School Masters & Teachers of a  
Village School  
1701 - 1957

Joan M. Coccozza  
Atworth History Group

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Researched & compiled by Joan M. Cocozza  
for and published by Atworth History Group  
October 2010

Cover: Atworth School & School-house – Photograph by David Webb

Atworth History Group is dedicating this book to  
Frederick Donald Brian Sealy.

Known as Jack he was a lifelong resident of Atworth, a former member of the History Group and of Atworth School and he contributed in many ways to Atworth village. After his death in 2003, his family gave a generous donation, which has been used towards the preparation of this book.



# *Atworth - A People's History*

## The School Masters & Teachers of a Village School 1701 - 1957

My sincere thanks to all who contributed to this work –



Joe Barker, Lesley Braund, John Bright, Ted Carter, Richard Cheeseman,  
Pat Curtis, Arthur Diffell, Phyllis Hancock, Wynne Harris,  
Malcolm Hunter, Joy James, Margaret Marchant, Helena Raithby,  
Jim Rawlings, Brenda Sealy, Eileen Stoydin, Joan Thomsett,  
Frederick Townsend, Margaret Williams, Norman Williams,  
David & Joan Webb



Photographs courtesy of –  
Atworth History Group  
Lesley Braund, John Bright, Pat Curtis,  
Joy James, Sue Rawlings & David Webb.





## Foreward



Atworth History Group is indebted to Joan Coccozza for spending many hours on research and for giving much thought to this publication, which follows the Group's first book on education in 2002, 'An Oral History of Education.'

Joan has explored the early history of education and has combed through school log-books to give an insight into life at the school and showing the successes and difficulties experienced by the headmasters and teachers.

As a result of her quest for detail, Joan has included some family histories, memories of former pupils and achievements of pupils in later life.

Joan has again produced a book on social history of Atworth for villagers to treasure and we thank her most sincerely. Her other publications produced for the Atworth History Group under the title, 'Atworth – A People's History', are

'Family Histories'  
'Those Who Served'  
'School Masters 1845 – 1934'  
'Memories of Wartime Evacuees'  
'Atworth Independent Church'  
'History of the Jubilee Clock Tower'



## Illustrations



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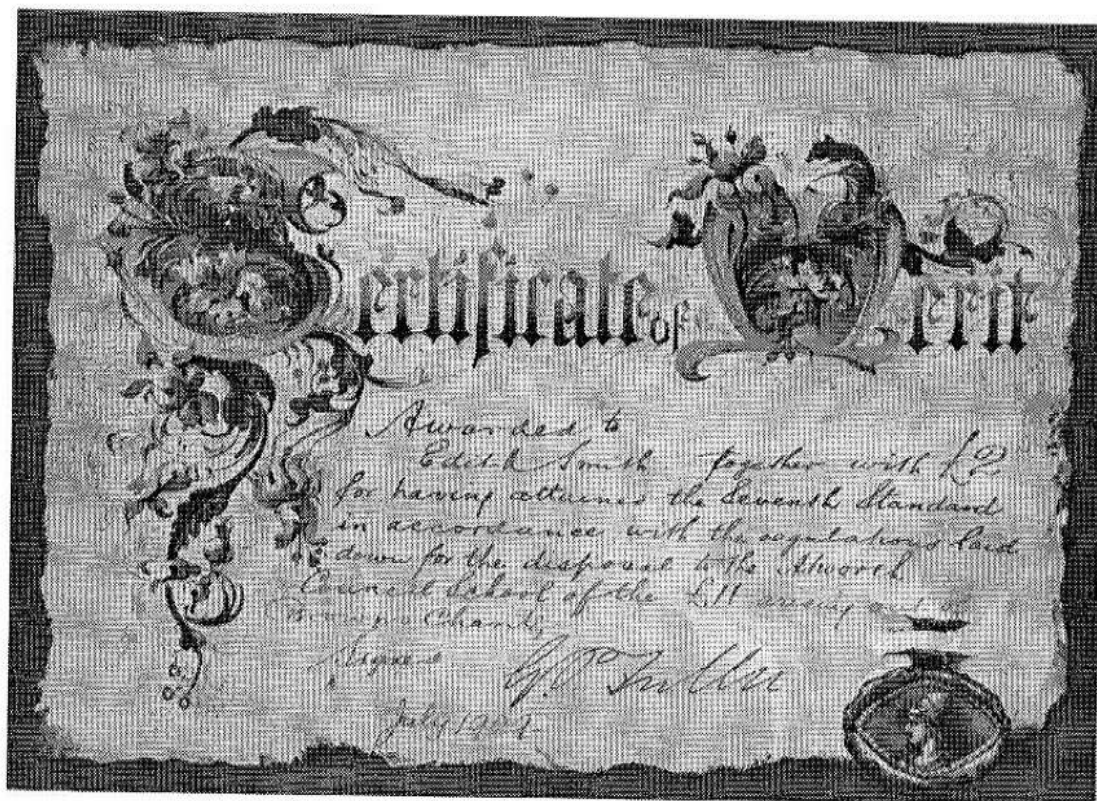
## Part Two

School Teachers



## *Jane Brown's Charity*

Jane Brown of Cottles Estate died on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1706. In her Will she left £26 per annum - to cloth the poor and aged, catechizing poor children of the Parish, for a School Mistress and books for the school.



### *Certificate of Merit*

Awarded to –

Edith Smith together with £2 for having attained the Seventh Standard in accordance with the regulations laid down for the disposal to the Atworth Council School of the £11 arising out of Brown's Charity.

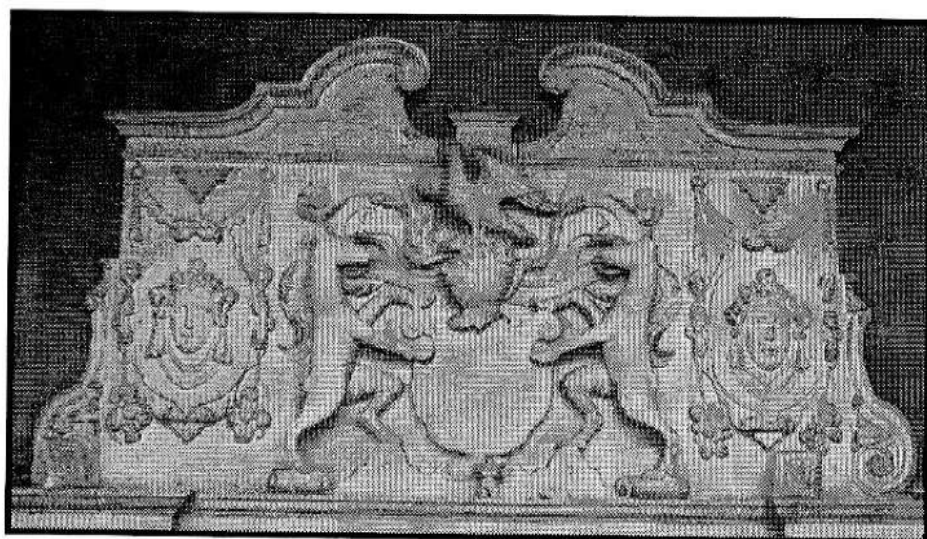
Signed                      G. P. Fuller  
July 1909

This document, the only one known to have survived the years, was kindly loaned to Atworth History Group by Joy James of Brixton, Devon, daughter of Edith Smith.



## *Introduction - Education in Atworth*

On March 31<sup>st</sup> 1687 Bernard Paulet, (please note the many spellings of the family name) owner of Cottles and other Estates declared that Lord Francis Paulet of Englefield Berkshire be the sole executor of his Will. In this declaration Bernard Paulet also stated that he –“Further charges estates at Attworth alias Attford with a £60 annuity for the maintenance of a school and schoolmaster there.”



Coat of arms of Lord Giles Pawlet above the mantelpiece of Cottles House. Giles, the son of the Marquis of Winchester and grandfather of Bernard Poulet died in 1571. Photograph by David Webb

Bernard died at Cottles on December 25<sup>th</sup> 1699. The parish register records – “Bernard Paulett esq. buried January 2<sup>nd</sup> (Being wraped in linen & the penalty paid as by law directed).” He was buried in the grounds of what was then known as the Chapelry of Atworth. (The chapel was later demolished, rebuilt in 1831 and named the Church of St. Michael & All Angels.) Bernard’s sister, Jane, widow of Richard Brown, inherited the Cottles Estate; however she died just a few years later in 1706. In her Will Jane Brown instructs - “... And the yearly sum of Ten pounds more of the said Annuity of £31 to <sup>1</sup>Frances Phillips of Atford aforesaid, widow, for so long time as she shall constantly live and reside there and teach and instruct the Poor Children of the said Parish of Atford to read English, without any other reward; and from and after her failure of so doing or in

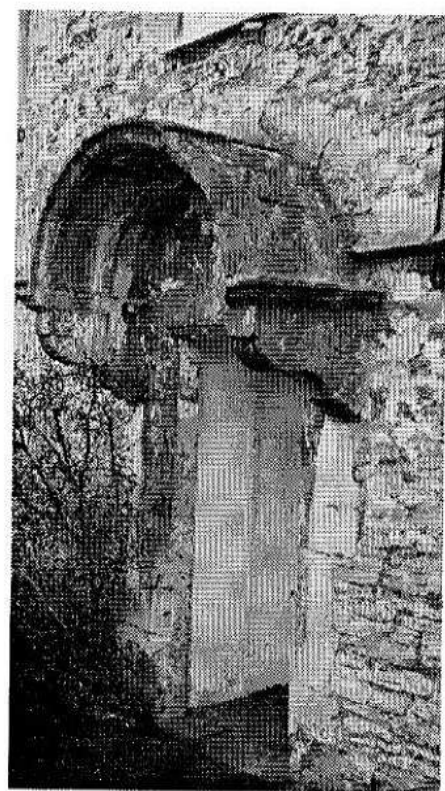


case of her death, then to such other Person or Persons for the time being Quarterly for ever as aforesaid....”

It was this extract from the Will that led many to believe this was the instigation of education in the village; however, the Will contains a Codicil in which Jane Brown continued “... And to Mrs. Phillipps the school miftrefs (mistress) and to Mrs Stammell three pounds apoire (apiece) to buy mourning. ...” Jane Brown continued “... In witnefse (witness) whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale and published the same the one and twentieth day of March Anno domini one thousand and seven hundred and five. ...” This must surely be proof that education in the village had begun several years before 1706.

<sup>1</sup>On September 14<sup>th</sup> 1718 Frances Phillips married William Sheppard in the village church. Frances died of ‘paralysi’ and was buried on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1739 in the churchyard of the Chapelry of Atworth.

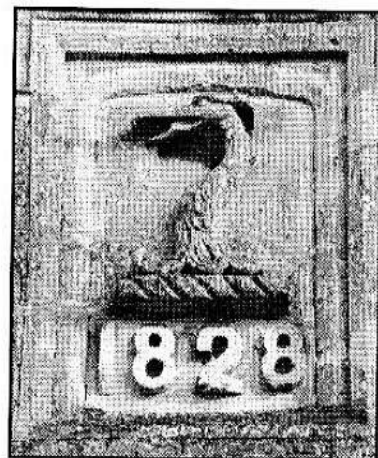
It was the bequest made by Bernard Paulet and later Jane Brown that brought about some formal education to the children of the village. The school was known as the ‘Dame’s School’ and opened about 1701. The schoolroom was at the end of an alley entered through a porch way, which still stands and is now the entrance of 98, Church Street. However, the schoolroom was demolished sometime in the 1960’s. A villager, Ted Carter, recalled seeing the windowsill from the building being thrown amongst a pile of rubble. Ted remarked - “It was covered in initials carved into it. If saved what history it would have revealed!”



Cottages in Church Street were built in the 1600’s.  
Above the porch way that led to the schoolroom.  
Photograph courtesy of David Webb.

Ted Carter's cousin, Margaret Marchant, related - "After my parents married they lived with my mother's family at 98, Church Street once known as the Dame's School. I was born on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1922 at 85, Bradford Road and after my birth we went back to Church Street. ... I can remember the Dame's school - at the top of the stairs was a large window overlooking the fields. In a back bedroom the windowsill was covered in carving and the windowsills were so wide you could sit on them."

In 1716 the Hale family of Alderley, Gloucestershire acquired the Cottles estate and more than a century later, in 1828, the then owner, Robert Hale Blagden Hale M.P. (Member of Parliament) for West Gloucestershire, built a school and school house just a short distance from the Dame's School. A carving on the west wall of the Hale family crest records the date. After the death of Robert Hale Blagden Hale in 1855 the estate was sold to Charles Connolly. Sometime between 1871 and 1875 the estate was again sold. In 1876 the new owner of Cottles, George Pargiter Fuller, built the first extension to the school with further extensions built in 1884 and again in 1897.



A Charity Commissioners report of 1834 states " ...The School-mistress is appointed by the proprietor of Cottles for the time being. Jane Jones is the present mistress; she teaches all the poor children of the tything English gratis. She has now about 20, and a few pay scholars besides. The duties are as well discharged as can be expected. Lady Theodosia Hale, the wife of Mr. Hale herself lays out 1 pound a year, with other voluntary sums, in the purchase of books for the school."

It has been written that upon leaving school the boys were employed in agriculture and many girls went into service – this implying they were only suited to menial tasks. Today many people have little understanding of the skills required in days when everything in a village was handmade. The craftsmanship of the blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter, mason, builder, thatcher, plasterer/tiler and many other occupations is something to be respected and admired.

Having researched the history of Atworth families and perusing the school log-books, my findings have caused surprise to many to learn that from such humble beginnings so many from this small community became successful in business and in other fields. From the mid 1850s I discovered that a number of children attending the village school became 'Pupil Teachers' and having taken the 'School Certificate' examination continued in the teaching profession.

The first known School Master, Joseph Provis, served for seven years. Three others followed - James Mead Price, the second longest School Master who served for twenty-five years, Henry Beck, three years and Frederick Noyce served five years.

With the appointment in 1885 of John Porter Inkpen the standard of education was considerably raised and a number of activities introduced. Children started school at the age of three leaving at thirteen or fourteen. In those days paper was expensive so pupils were taught to write in sand-trays before progressing to slates and finally paper. The abacus, otherwise known as a counting frame, was used to teach arithmetic and the beads of the abacus were a useful tool for learning colours.

In 1888 fourteen year-old Henry Inkpen came to Atworth becoming a 'Pupil Teacher' under the headship of his elder brother John. In 1895 the brothers introduced evening classes for pupils of all ages. After several years at Atworth, Henry took up a position at a school in another county before returning to the village to take over the headship from his brother who had served for thirteen years. During Henry's reign of thirty-four years the reader will be given an insight into his many interests, dedication to pupils and to the community.

The standard of education under Henry Inkpen and the achievements of many of his pupils will surely astonish those of later generations. From the Evening Continuation School Log-Book 1899 – 1906 we discover classes took place three times weekly from 7:05 – 8:05pm and 8:05 – 9:05pm. Subjects included – Shorthand, Commercial Arithmetic, Profit & Loss, Drawing, Commercial Geography and the Science of Common Things e.g. – the lever, pulley, wheel and axle, inclined plane, wedge and screw. Besides academic subjects Mr. Inkpen had many other interests including



photography, astronomy, music, bookbinding and woodwork. It would appear that adults were welcome to attend evening sessions.

People who attended school during the Henry Inkpen era have spoken with much fondness, respect and gratitude telling of their old master's concern for their welfare and success in life. In the early years of the 1900s pupils were passing what would in later years be known as the 11+. In 1909 it was recorded that the son of the village baker – "Fred Watts; a very smart boy has left to attend Bradford Secondary School." Also "Lily Greenman – to Trowbridge Secondary", "Tom Merret left to attend Melksham Higher Grade School." - and others followed.

Several boys and girls went on to become teachers and later held the post as head master/mistress. It is known that two girls and two boys became civil servants serving in the Home Office, Admiralty and Foreign Office. There were bank managers, accountants, and many successful businessmen some of whom served as parish and county councillors and magistrates.

Recorded on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1927, Edward Carter, who was born in 1916, "...won a free place at Bradford-on-Avon Secondary School." From here Ted, as he was known, won a place to Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music. However, due to insufficient funds the family could not afford to support him. After leaving Bradford, Ted went to work for George Thatcher who owned the local company New Mendip Engineering. Here Ted undertook the role of secretary and dealt with the payroll using the shorthand and accountancy subjects he had learned under Henry Inkpen. During the war Ted joined the R.A.F. Pay Corp and was one of only two men who took the accountancy course and had a pass rate of over 90%. Ted recalled -"I looked after the accounts of Officers and War Correspondents in England and abroad." (See 'Atworth – A People's History-The Carter/Button Family.)

Other than knowing Ted could play the piano and deputised for the organist at the local church of St. Michael & All Angels, few in the village knew of Ted's talents and interest. There were occasions when he was invited to play the organ at both Salisbury Cathedral and Bath Abbey. He

was fluent in French and visited friends in Paris. He enjoyed visiting art galleries, museums and the theatre.

Another star pupil was Joan Thomsett (née Clark) who recalled - "... Mr. Inkpen had a great love of people. ... I owe a lot to him as he got me through the eleven plus" Joan continued her education at Fitzmaurice Grammar School, Bradford-on-Avon. Joan loved sport and played hockey becoming Captain of the County Team adding - "I was also in the athletic team and specialised in the long-jump and could jump up to nineteen feet. I was entered in the Inter-County Sports Championship held at Stanford Bridge where I came second in the long jump."

Having passed 'O' and 'A' levels Joan went to Salisbury Diocesan Training College where she trained to be a teacher. Her first post was in Birmingham but during the Blitz Joan's school and lodgings were bombed to the ground. She returned to Wiltshire and served in several schools and in 1959 was appointed Head Mistress of Chapel Knapp where she served for twenty-four years. (See 'Atworth - A People's History. Clark/Sheppard Family.)



Edward John Carter



Joan Alwyn Thomsett  
(née Clark)

On retirement Henry Inkpen returned to the county of his birth. Sidney Luen then held the position for just one year. Thomas Hobday served for

ten years during which time several important events happened including the discovery of a Roman Villa and during the Second World War receiving evacuees in the village and school. Lastly we have John Edward Hunter who came to the village from Cumberland and served for twelve years 1945 – 57. Yet again pupils from these years became very successful in life, including a good number of businessmen, farmers, bank manager, a Circuit Judge, several Magistrates and a very successful advertising executive.



## Part One

### *School Masters*



Joseph Provis 1846 – 1853

Poem by Matilda Hannum Provis

James Mead Price 1853 – 1877

Henry Beck 1877 - 1880

Frederick Noyce 1880 – 1885

John Porter Inkpen 1885 – 1898

Henry Inkpen 1898 – 1934

Sidney Albert Luen 1934 – 1935

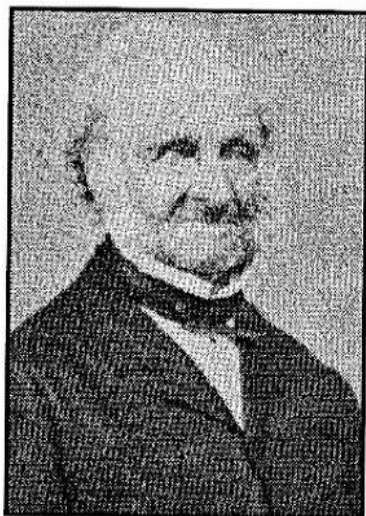
Thomas William Hobday 1935 – 1945

John Edward Hunter 1945 – 1957



## *Joseph Provis 1846- 1853*

The first known master of the school was **Joseph Provis** although the actual date of his appointment is not known. However, *Joseph* and his wife Janetta were listed in Kelly's Directory of 1848 as 'Master and Mistress' of the 'National and an Infant School' Atworth.



*Joseph*, the son of William and Mary Provis, was born on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1807 in Foxham Locks and christened on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1807 in Bremhill in the County of Wiltshire. On April 21<sup>st</sup> 1829 he married Janetta Hannum. *Joseph* and Janetta had eleven children – Frederick, Frances, Louisa, Matilda, Christopher, Joseph, Mary, Caleb and Francis. Janetta was born in the early months of 1847 but died within weeks of her birth. Another baby was still-born.

The 1841 census returns lists the family living at Underdowns, Bremhill, where *Joseph*, then aged thirty-four, was working as an 'Agricultural labourer'.

Records indicate that the Provis family arrived in Atworth sometime between 1845 and early 1846. The family lived in the substantial house adjoining the school, which had been built in 1828 by the local squire, Robert Hale Blagden Hale, of Cottles House. From the census returns of 1851 we find that sixteen year-old Louisa acted as the family housekeeper and her younger sister, fourteen year-old Matilda, a teacher at the school.

From about 1853 no account of the Provis family could be found in any of the English records. The family seemed to have disappeared. However, in May 2005 a request for information about *Joseph* was received from an Australian Jenny Elson. It came to light that the Provis family had all emigrated and the history of the Provis family had been researched and compiled by a descendant, <sup>1</sup>Pat Curtis. Much to the delight of both parties information and photographs were exchanged.



From the history of the village we know that the Squire's son, the Very Reverend Matthew Blagden Hale, served in the parish as Curate and made regular visits to the school to give religious instruction to the children. In 1847 Matthew Blagden Hale decided to accompany his friend, Bishop Augustus Short, to Australia and on September 7<sup>th</sup> of that year sixteen year-old Frances Provis sailed from Portsmouth to Australia acting as governess to the Hale and the Short children.

In 1850, Archdeacon Hale established an Aboriginal mission at Poonindie and required a school teacher to educate the Aborigine children. Matthew Hale wrote to his father asking for assistance. Robert Hale Blagden Hale approached the school-master and in September 1853 all members of the Provis family left England on the sailing ship the 'David Malcolm'. During the voyage tragedy struck, when two-year-old Francis Kirk Provis died and was buried at sea in the Bay of Biscay. A poem composed by Matilda, relates the events and sadness endured by the family upon the death of her young brother. (See following page.)

After a voyage of almost four months the family landed in Australia in January 1854 where they were met by Archdeacon Hale and natives from the mission. *Joseph* Provis taught at the mission for about three years after which he again turned to farming, renting a section of land at Tumby Bay. In her book Pat Curtis remarks - "The Provis family are some of the earliest settlers in the Tumby Bay district and there has been some members of the family there since 1857." The family moved several times until about 1865 when Joseph opened the first official Post Office, which he managed for thirty years. *Joseph* lived to the grand old age of ninety-five and died in 1901. He was buried beside his wife at Port Lincoln.

Extracts and photograph from <sup>1</sup> The 'Provis Family History 1854 - 1984'  
compiled by and by courtesy of Pat Curtis (née Provis),  
Minnipa, South Australia.



Composed by  
*Matilda Hannum Provis*

Upon the death of her brother,  
Francis Kirk Provis  
who died on the voyage from England to  
South Australia  
October 27<sup>th</sup> 1853 aged two.

Lord thou knowest the sensation  
Which thro all my thoughts doth  
run,  
When I think of that dear treasure  
Now from earth forever gone.

'Twas our youngest darling Brother  
That from us was borne away.  
'Twas the Will of God, our Saviour,  
He should live in endless day.

Dearest Brother, quite an infant,  
On this earth, short was his stay,  
Two years thus he lived amongst us,  
Then he died and fled away.

On the ocean he did sicken.  
On the ocean he did die,  
And the angry waves of ocean  
Did to him a grave supply.

But it was a most heart-rending  
And heart-aching sight to see  
Those dear remains so much  
beloved  
Cast into the boundless sea.

Saviour, teach his earthly parents  
How to bear the chastening rod,  
Teach dear father, teach dear mother  
That it was the Will of God.

That thou, dear babe, should go and  
leave us,  
Go to wear bright robes of gold,  
Go to meet the loving Saviour,  
Who in His arms doth infants fold.

Oh, the comfort it doth leave us,  
Surely we can't mourn and sob,  
For his last, his dying words were:  
'Father dear, I'm going to God.'

May I, when Thy summons calls me  
Be quite ready to depart,  
May I with my darling brother  
Shout Thy praise with all my heart.

'Twas hard to yield him to the  
waves  
Yes, harder than the lips can tell,  
I only long to share thy grave  
My Angel brother, Fare thee well.

## *James Mead Price 1853 - 1877*

**James Mead Price** was the next master to take over as head of the school. He was appointed in 1853. Previous to taking up the post he served as a 'Police Officer' in the nearby town of Melksham.

*James*, the son of George and Ezit Price, was born in Warminster in the County of Wiltshire. He was christened on February 24<sup>th</sup> 1813. *James* married Ann Sly in 1836 and the following year their first child, a son, was born and named after his father. Other children were - Ann, George, William, Joshua and Amelia. An entry discovered in the Atworth Parish Register of Burials indicates there was another child, Ezit Amelia Price, who died aged eight and was buried on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1859 in the churchyard of St. Michael & All Angels.

By the early 1860's only the school-master and his wife were living at the school-house. Sometime within the following decade the eldest unmarried daughter, Ann Sly Price, had returned to the family home and was engaged as a 'school mistress' (mistress). After twenty-five years service *James* Mead Price retired and the family moved back to Melksham where in the early months of 1889 *James* died at the age of seventy- six



## *Henry Beck 1877 - 1880*

**Henry** was born about 1821 in Croydon, Surrey. His father, Edward Beck, was a 'Surgeon'. *Henry* is first listed in the census returns of 1841 when at the age of twenty he was residing at his parent's home in Lambeth. Twenty years later *Henry* was living in Coleorton, in the County of Leicestershire with his wife, Kezia, and seven children whose ages ranged from seventeen to four years. Mr. Beck's occupation was given as a 'Schoolmaster & Organist'. Sometime within the following decade the family had moved to the village of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire, where *Henry*, his wife and two daughters taught at the local school. It was in Oxfordshire in 1872 that Kezia Beck died. She was forty-eight years old.



Only months after the loss of his wife *Henry* married newly widowed Catherine Eliza Kerrell (née Knott). Catherine, or Kate as she was known, was born in Croydon where she had worked as a 'Milliner, dressmaker'.

Recorded in the <sup>2</sup>Atworth school log-book we find Mr. Beck commenced his duties at the village school on January 30<sup>th</sup> 1877. His entries reveal that his three years in Atworth were fraught with difficulties, his marriage appeared to be unhappy and both he and his wife suffered ill health.

Early in February *Henry* Beck wrote- "Examined all the children during the week. Attempted to arrange Standards but find them in such a backward state, I scarcely know what to do with them at present." In 1880 entries in the log made by one Frederick Noyce read - January 30<sup>th</sup> 1880 - "Master very ill." February 13<sup>th</sup> - "Master a little better able to take school half days." February 20<sup>th</sup> - "Master takes full charge." On February 27<sup>th</sup> 1880 *Henry* Beck recorded - "Mistress through over exertion and trouble has lost her reason (no needlework)" March 13<sup>th</sup> - "...The Mistress still in same state very ill."

Perusing the Atworth Parish Register of Burials I find an entry that Katherine Eliza Beck died at the age of thirty-six and was buried in the churchyard of St. Michael & All Angels on March 29<sup>th</sup> 1880.

Only weeks later a further entry in the school log-book made by Frederick Noyce dated May 4<sup>th</sup> 1880 - "Mr. H. Beck the late master died this morning." *Henry* Beck died at the age of fifty-nine and is buried with his wife in the Atworth churchyard.

<sup>2</sup> In 1971 a tin trunk was found in the attic of the school-house. This contained three school log-books, which were lodged with the Wiltshire Record Office by Kath Harley then a teacher at the school.

The trunk is on display at the village museum.



## *Frederick Noyce 1880 - 1885*

At the young age of twenty, Frederick Noyce (pronounced 'noise') was appointed Master of Atworth School. *Frederick* succeeded Mr. Henry Beck whose reign had seemingly failed to impress the Government Education Inspectors

*Frederick* was born in 1860 in Broughton, in the County of Hampshire, the elder son of Alfred and Sarah Noyce. *Frederick's* father held the title 'Certificated Teacher' and his mother, Sarah, was recorded as a 'School Mistress'. By 1871 the Noyce family were residing in Broughton Gifford, in the County of Wiltshire.

When the previous Master of the school of Atworth became incapacitated through illness, *Frederick*, who lived in the nearby village of Broughton Gifford, took over duties as temporary Master. In the school log-book of 1880 *Frederick* Noyce wrote May 31<sup>st</sup> - "Commenced duties as permanent master. The infant school was opened this morning and taken charge of by my sister E. A. Noyce."

After the death of Henry Beck, *Frederick* and two of his sisters, Emily and Kate, moved into the school-house. Twenty-one year-old Emily and Kate aged sixteen assisted their brother in the education of the village children.

The school log-book of June 1<sup>st</sup> 1880 records that the new curate, Reverend G. Cooper, visited the school and on July 6<sup>th</sup> - "Josiah Hosier late several mornings. Punished." On August 13<sup>th</sup> 1880 Mr. Noyce wrote - "The children have not attended so well as last week, owing to the harvest." An entry written by one of the school visitors records "October - November 28<sup>th</sup> 1881- School closed on account of Measles with sanction of managers" Signed - <sup>3</sup> John Merrett

Within two years of *Frederick* taking charge the Government Inspectors reported "... to the general success of the teaching and discipline..." and by 1882 the Government grant to the school was greatly increased. Another entry in the school log dated July 10<sup>th</sup> 1885 indicates the

improvement in standards - <sup>4</sup> "R. P. Sloper Esq. attended and gave to the scholars their certificates for passing Government examination."

After five years service it appears that Mr. Noyce suffered some health problems for he made the following entries in the school log – June 8<sup>th</sup> 1885 – "11.0 am Master too unwell to continue. School taken charge of by <sup>5</sup>B. Hampton and other teachers." June 15<sup>th</sup> "The Doctor having ordered me perfect rest and change of air the school has been closed a fortnight the same to be deducted from harvest holidays."

<sup>3</sup>John Merrett, farmer of West Farm.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Pritchard Sloper, farmer of Ganbrook Farm

<sup>5</sup>Bertha - daughter of the village blacksmith Richard Pitt Hampton.



### *John Porter Inkpen 1885 - 1898*

The son of a mason, John Porter Inkpen was born in 1861. *John's* parents, William and Elizabeth, and their children were all born in Sturminster Newton in the County of Dorset.

At the age of twenty *John* was lodging in New King Street, Bath where he was employed as an 'Assistant schoolmaster'. It was in Bath that *John* met and married schoolmistress Sarah Ettry Morris. The wedding took place in the early months of 1885 and later that year a son, William Charles M., was born. It must have been a busy time for *John* and his wife for on September 14<sup>th</sup> *John* Porter Inkpen was appointed Master of Atworth School and commenced his duties on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November. The family moved into the school-house where during the following years three more children were born - Elsie Mary, Margaret Ettry and Dorothy Elizabeth

Margaret died just two days after her christening and was buried in the churchyard of St. Michael & All Angels. On the little grave is a stone cross with the inscription –

"In loving memory. Margaret E. Inkpen. Died November 29<sup>th</sup> 1890 aged 4 months. He shall gather the lamb with his arm." Isaiah 40 v.11.

An entry in the school log-book of September 21<sup>st</sup> 1885 states "Needlework – nothing suitable for children to work with." September 28<sup>th</sup> – "R. P. Sloper visited – to send list of what is required for girls' needlework and knitting." October 13<sup>th</sup> 1885 "Rev. Martin Alford visited and gave scripture lesson." A further entry penned by *John* Inkpen in 1886 lists the names of the teachers – "A. Bushell, Freda Bushell, Edith Bushell & Kate Sealy." (See School Teachers). An entry made on February 7<sup>th</sup> 1890 reads, "Many children are away ill and a few present really ought not attend. Doctor ordered Dorothy Elms not to attend school again during the winter."

In 1888 fourteen year-old Henry Inkpen arrived in Atworth becoming a 'Pupil teacher' under the headship of his elder brother *John*.

After thirteen years service in 1898 Mr. J.P. Inkpen resigned on April 29<sup>th</sup> and the family moved to a nearby village where *John* took the position as Head of Neston School. After a short spell teaching at another school Henry Inkpen returned to the village and followed his brother becoming Master of Atworth School.

*John* and Sarah's son, William, did not follow his parents into the teaching profession but at the age of sixteen was working as an Engine Fitter. By the age of twenty-five William was serving as a Private in the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards. His regiment was stationed at Hislop Barracks, Trimulgherry, Deccan, India. *John's* daughter, Elsie Mary, along with her mother, was employed as an 'Assistant Elementary Teacher' at Neston School.

Sometime between 1905–8 *John's* parents left their home in Dorset and moved to Atworth where they lived with their son Henry and family. However, after the mother's death in 1910 *John's* father, William, then moved to Neston with *John* and his family where he died in 1912 aged seventy-six





## *Henry Inkpen 1898 - 1934*

Henry Inkpen was born in the County of Dorset in 1874. We first find *Henry* listed in the census returns of 1881 and discover that his father, William, whose occupation was a 'Stone Mason', his mother, Elizabeth and three brothers - Walter, Albert and Arthur, were residing at Pave Stones, Sturminster. In that year *Henry's* elder brother John Porter Inkpen was employed as an assistant schoolmaster in Bath in the County of Somerset.

It was in 1888 fourteen year-old *Henry* Inkpen came to Atworth becoming a 'Pupil teacher' under the headship of his elder brother John. In 1895 the brothers introduced evening classes for pupils of all ages. After several years at Atworth *Henry* took up a position at a school in another county before returning to the village to take over the headship from his brother.

During the summer holidays of 1898, in Maidstone in the County of Kent, *Henry* married Charlotte Annie Clements. Charlotte, known as Annie, was born in 1873 in Gosforth, Cumberland; however, from a young age Annie and her parents lived in Kent. Before her marriage Charlotte had been a 'Pupil Teacher'. *Henry* and Annie's children were all born in Atworth - Lottie Elizabeth and sons William Robert and Richard Aubrey.

It was sometime between 1895 and 1898 that the 'National School' of Atworth was now referred to as the 'Public Elementary School.' This is confirmed by an entry written by *Henry* Inkpen in the school log-book of May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1898 - "I commence duties as Head Teacher of the Atworth Elementary School."

The Evening Continuation School Log-Book of 1899 - 1906 record classes continued Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 7:05 - 8:05pm and 8:05 - 9:05pm. Subjects included - Shorthand, Commercial Arithmetic, Profit & Loss, Drawing, Commercial Geography and the Science of Common Things e.g. - the lever, pulley, wheel & axle, inclined plane, wedge and screw. On November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1898 Mr. Inkpen penned - "The

students are taking greater interest in Shorthand, and some of them do remarkably good exercises. ...”

Back row – left to right - teachers  
Edith Rawlings, Hubert Sawyer  
& Rosa Jane Burry.

Middle row – Lottie, Henry,  
Richard  
& Charlotte Inkpen.

Sitting on ground - William  
Inkpen

Photograph c. 1910



In February 1901 a report from the County Council was received – “The Girl’s School – This school continues to be taught by Mrs. Inkpen in a pleasant and effective manner. ...” Boys School – “This school continues to be conducted in a painstaking and successful manner by Mr. Inkpen. Com Geo: Science, Com Things and Drawing had been well taught, and the work in books was well and neatly done. Drawings Maps and Sketches being particularly good. I was pleased to note that the lessons in Science had been illustrated by experiments. The Registration and order were both excellent.”

Besides academic subjects Mr. Inkpen had many other interests including photography, astronomy, music, bookbinding and woodwork. It would appear that adults were welcome to attend evening sessions. One ex-pupil told of how his father, Tom Carter, had attended woodwork classes and made a wardrobe.

An accomplished musician, *Henry* often played the organ at the parish church of St. Michael’s & All Angels. His interest in music and

photography is borne out by the number of entries in the Atworth Parochial magazine when he is thanked for giving lantern shows and as organist. From about 1910 he also served as assistant overseer and clerk to the Parish Council until his retirement. In 1920 he was also honorary secretary of the Atworth Institute.



Recently an old school photograph was discovered. A young girl in the front row is holding a slate on which is written 'Atworth School 1898'. The school log-book revealed Mr. Inkpen took the photograph on September 14<sup>th</sup>, the year he commenced as Master. He recorded the event – "The children were photographed this morning. Work commenced at 10 o'clock instead of 9.45."

It is said that *Henry Inkpen* was somewhat of a disciplinarian demanding good behaviour and good manners from all the children. This was borne out when Frederick Townsend recalled – "I was fighting with Walt Sealy in the playground. Gaffer caught hold of my ear and marched me to the classroom and gave me six of the best."



*Henry's* interest in drawing influenced many of his pupils including local baker's sons Basil and Herbert Watts who attended school in the 1890's – early 1900's. In 2004 during a conversation about her schooldays Wynne Harris (née Watts) told how Mr. Inkpen had taken up the hobby of bookbinding and asked Winnie, as he called her, if she would like to help. She showed me three small bound books about three and a half by five inches and one inch thick in size, which she had made under Mr. Inkpen's instructions. Looking through them I found one full of drawings. Wynne was amazed; she had no idea that her father, Basil Watts, had used one for sketching. There were sketches of cottages, people and country scenes. Wynne concluded "... the book would have fitted nicely into my father's pocket and therefore easy to carry around." It was said that when teaching the subject, Mr. Inkpen had been keen on 'cube drawing' to teach perspective and we find that many years later Basil was still practicing what he had been taught as a boy.



Class of 1924

Middle Row – left Norman Williams - Third left - Joan Clark.

Front Row – third right Wynne Watts



Joan Thomsett (née Clark) who attended the school during the 1920's related – "I was five and my first memory of Mr. Inkpen was keeping me behind after school with my three older sisters. Later I discovered that Mr. Inkpen had broken the news to my sisters that our father had died earlier in the day. Mr. Inkpen had a great love of people. He taught all my brothers and sisters and was very fond of my family. I was in his class for more than three years and he taught me to do long division. I owe him a lot as he got me through the eleven plus. I have happy memories of wintertime for when there was a deep frost the pond at Church Farm would freeze over and on those occasions Mr. Inkpen would announce, "The pond will bear." He would let us out of school a little early so we could go and have a skate before going home."

A story related by Norman Williams about his mother – "When Mum (Alice Williams née Allen), left school at the age of fourteen she was immediately employed by Mr. & Mrs. Inkpen as nursemaid to their daughter Lottie. Mum looked after all three of the Inkpen children and stayed with the family until her marriage in 1912. Mrs. Inkpen was a wonderful cook and passed on her skills and many recipes to Mum. A favourite of mine - salmon fishcakes. They were really something."

About his schooldays Norman recalls - "Between the tennis court and the garden plots stood a wonderful old walnut tree and during a hot spell children in the babies class sat under the tree to have lessons. I still remember the wonderful smell of the walnut leaves." Norman continued, "In the early days adjacent to the tennis court was a vacant area set up as twelve gardening plots. In my day each boy had a spade, fork, hoe and rake. Mr. Inkpen ordered the seeds from Toogoods. We grew a variety of vegetables including peas, beetroot, onions and potatoes. The ground had to be just right before sowing. Mr. Inkpen understood soil. He had a greenhouse and taught us about potting up and introduced us to the joys of gardening. Three afternoons a week we would be out weeding and hoeing. I had a plot for three years. We were allowed to take our produce home. "

Norman concluded – "He was a wonderful, wonderful teacher with a great love of teaching. I remember that once a week we had 'Question Time' when we could ask a question on any subject. We were put under pressure to ask interesting questions and Mr. Inkpen with his vast

knowledge of so many subjects always seemed to be able to give us an answer. Mr. Inkpen taught us perspective enabling us to draw three-dimensional objects. It was due to his dedication and love of teaching that I passed the exam for Bradford Secondary School.” Norman modestly added – “Where I passed my art exam with distinction.” (See ‘Atworth – A People’s History The Allen/Williams Family’)



Mr. & Mrs. George Pargiter Fuller of  
Neston Park Estate.

Entries made by *Henry Inkpen* in the school log-book paint a vivid picture of the period – May 16<sup>th</sup> 1898 – “<sup>6</sup>Andrew Bushell examines registers.” On May 20<sup>th</sup> – “Two boys George Elms and Hubert Davis are

away from school, being in the employ of Mr. York at a stone quarry." July 13<sup>th</sup> 1900 - "Many children are being employed picking peas on one of the farms. There are little more than 50 per cent present." October 11<sup>th</sup> 1900 - "Poll declared Mr. Fuller elected." January 11<sup>th</sup> 1901 "H. R. Hampton tested registers. Found correct and signed." November 30<sup>th</sup> 1901 - "Scarlet Fever reported." December 1<sup>st</sup> 1901 - "I have received intimation from Dr. J. Adye that no children from 2 cottages at Waterloo Bottom are to attend school." June 8<sup>th</sup> 1903 - "William Elms is employed underground." June 30<sup>th</sup> 1905 - "G.P. Fuller Esq. has kindly sent a harmonium which is loaned to the school for the use of the scholars."

1909 - January 21<sup>st</sup> - "After repeated cautions I have had to punish AB. for bullying little boys in the school yard - one stroke on each hand with the cane: - He immediately ran out of school." January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1909 "This morning I have spoken to AB about running out of school and he showed me his boot and told me he would give it to me if I didn't mind. - After some difficulty during which he kicked my shin I put him into a classroom. I afterwards made him apologise to the whole school, and called his parents who expressed much sorrow for his bad behaviour. September 15<sup>th</sup> - "Fred Watts; a very smart boy has left to attend Bradford Secondary School and Lily Greenman to Trowbridge Secondary School."

June 27<sup>th</sup> 1910 - "Hubert J. Sawyer, the Pupil Teacher has passed the Preliminary Examination for certificate with distinction in Elementary Science. His apprenticeship terminates on July 31<sup>st</sup> next." September 6<sup>th</sup> 1912 - "Tom Merrett left to attend Melksham Higher Grade School." September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1913 "Hector & Stanley Diffell taken to Isolation Hospital. Diphtheria." (Hector Diffell emigrated to America and lived in Michigan where he became a professional soccer player.) Over the years many more pupils passed exams including Wilf Greenland, Ted Carter, Joan Clark, George Coombes, Norman Williams and Kathleen Sealy are just some who won a free place to Bradford Secondary School later known as Fitzmaurice Grammar School.

On a personal note Mr. Inkpen recorded September 27<sup>th</sup> 1910 - "Death of Mother in my house." September 4<sup>th</sup> 1911 - "Lottie Inkpen awarded scholarship at Trowbridge Secondary School." April 19<sup>th</sup> 1926 "Mrs. Inkpen absent - death of her father at Schoolhouse" April 21<sup>st</sup> "School



closed 2 days. Funeral of father-in-law Kent.” On July 16<sup>th</sup> 1923 the result of an inspection were recorded in the school log-book which included the following, -“The Infants who are managed in a kind and sympathetic manner are orderly and steady at their work....”



Mr. & Mrs. Henry Inkpen.

A keen photographer *Henry* Inkpen took many photographs and gave Magic Lantern slide shows to pupils and the villagers. He records that two were shown at school on - December 8<sup>th</sup> 1898 “Magic Lantern on France” and on December 6<sup>th</sup> 1900 “Nansen’s Latest Expedition to the North Pole.”

Mr. Inkpen taught many subjects and skills including music, carpentry, astronomy, and gardening. He organised school-outings. *Henry* was one of the enumerators of the 1901 census returns for Atworth. In 1920 he was also honorary secretary of the Atworth Institute.

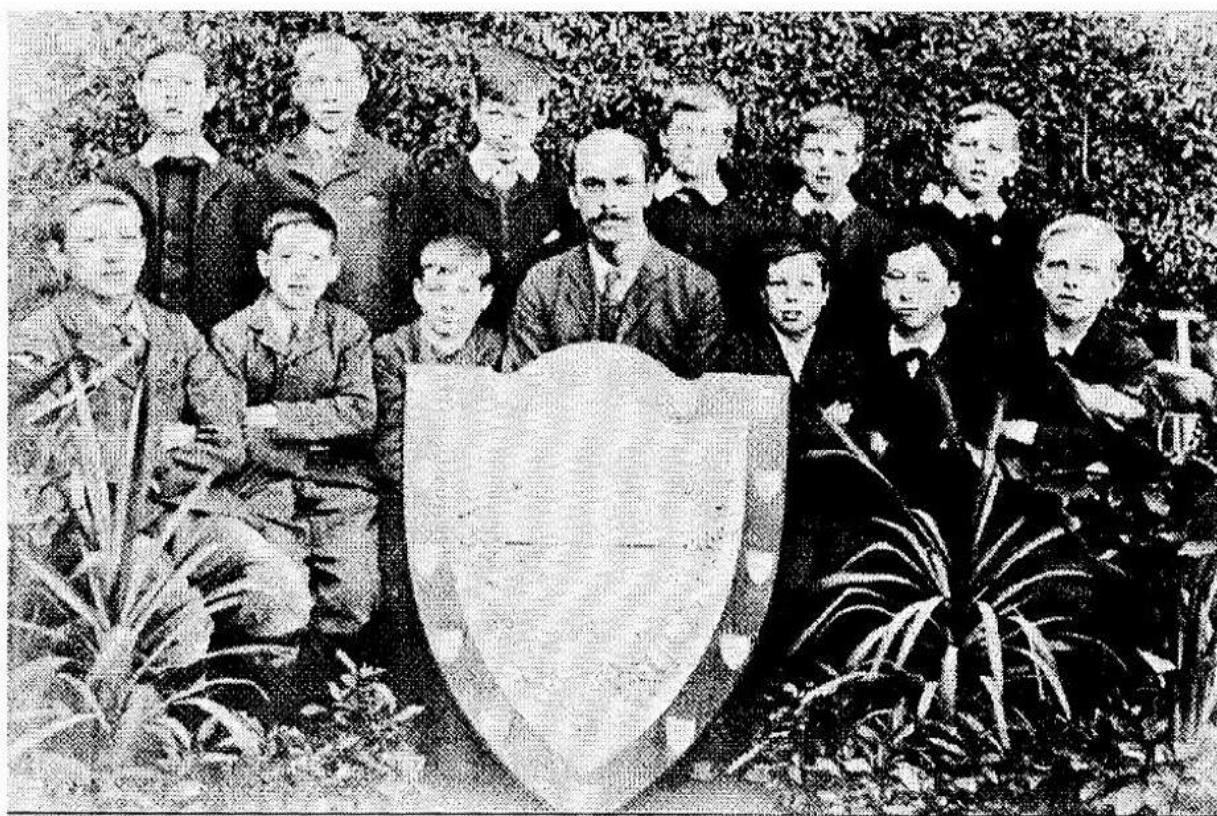
To date, in the history of the school, *Henry Inkpen* is the longest serving Headmaster. On August 18<sup>th</sup> 1934 in the school log-book he wrote "I resign my position as Head Master today but I am retaining the control of official correspondence, registers and Log Book, until the appointment of my successor." It was sometime before his retirement that he made a mahogany fireplace which he took to Swanage for his new home. *Henry Inkpen* returned to Dorset where, in 1964, he died at the age of ninety.

<sup>6</sup>Andrew Bushell – Steward to G.P. Fuller, Neston Park.

<sup>7</sup>Herbert Richard Pitt Hampton - Blacksmith

### *Bathurst Challenge Shield*

Awarded to Atworth School in 1911  
for the best kept school gardens in Wiltshire.



Back Row, left to right – Jack Sawyer, Jack Pratt, Ted Hayward, Fourth boy unknown, Bill Watts, Reginald Diffell.

Front Row, left to right –George Smith, Fred Sealy, Harold Brooks, Henry Inkpen, ? Alford, Charles Webb, Tom Merrett.



About *Henry Inkpen's* service as Head School Master, a manager of the school, Mrs. Norah Forestier Walker of Cottles House, copied the following report into the school log-book –

### *Copy of Inspectors Report*

The Head Master began his teaching service in the school 46 years ago and after a period of work in a neighbouring county returned to take charge of it.

When he retires at the end of the present term, the school will have been under his able direction for 36 years.

During the whole of this long period, he has done all in his power to promote the welfare and progress of his pupils both in school and in their after careers: and it is well known what an influence for good his work and example have been.

It is not necessary at this stage to give a detailed account of the work of the school.

It may however, be stated that not only has the standard of efficiency during the past few years been maintained at the high level it has usually reached but that commendable developments have been made in Handwork (Bookcrafts).

Norah Forestier Walker.



### *Sidney Albert Luen 1934 - 1935*

**Sidney Albert**, was born in Barry, South Wales on February 1<sup>st</sup> 1894, the son of Albert and Rebecca Luen.

During the First World War *Sidney* joined the army serving with the Cameron Highlanders in France. His rank was that of Second Lieutenant

and later promoted to Lieutenant. In 1924 *Sidney* married Annie Evans. A son, Sidney Campbell Luen, was born in 1925. *Sidney Albert* died in 1982.

*Sidney* served as head of Atworth School from October 1934 – November 1935. On October 1<sup>st</sup> 1934 in the school-log he recorded – “Commenced duties as Headmaster.” October 11<sup>th</sup> 1934 – “Fire Drill Practice School emptied 40 seconds.” October 16<sup>th</sup> – “School entered the School Football League, played their first match against Neston School this afternoon and won three goals to two.” February 5<sup>th</sup> 1935 – “Attendance fallen to 65% owing to Chicken Pox and Influenza.” February 25<sup>th</sup> - “The School heard with deep regret, of the sudden death at sea of Mrs. Norah Foriester Walker the chairman of the school managers.” March 8<sup>th</sup> “A short memorial service to Mrs. Norah Foriester Walker was held at 11.45 – 2 p.m. ...” April 17<sup>th</sup> - “Geoffrey Timbrell and George Sheppard leave today at reaching age limit.” - July 30<sup>th</sup> “School Flower Show.”

About her school days the late Margaret Marchant recalled – “When Mr. Luen was headmaster I thought he dragged the school from the Middle Ages. That year our school trip was to Barry Island and the docks. He also arranged a visit to the ship the ‘Mauritania’ at Southampton. We then went on to the Isle of Wight. Mr. Luen chose one child whose parents couldn’t afford the trip to go free.”



### *Thomas William Hobday 1935 - 1945*

**Thomas William**, son of schoolteachers, Charles Frederick and Mary Caroline Hobday, was born on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1906 in the village of Whixall, in the county of Shropshire.

In the county of Lancashire in the March quarter of 1932 *Thomas* married Ada Lightfoot. *Thomas* Hobday commenced duties as Headmaster of Atworth School on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1935. Only days later in the school log-book he recorded - “My duties - a Poll Clerk at the Election tomorrow. During this time Miss Burry will be in charge”



The Hobday's two children were born in Wiltshire - a daughter Elizabeth known as Pippa, and a son Charles.

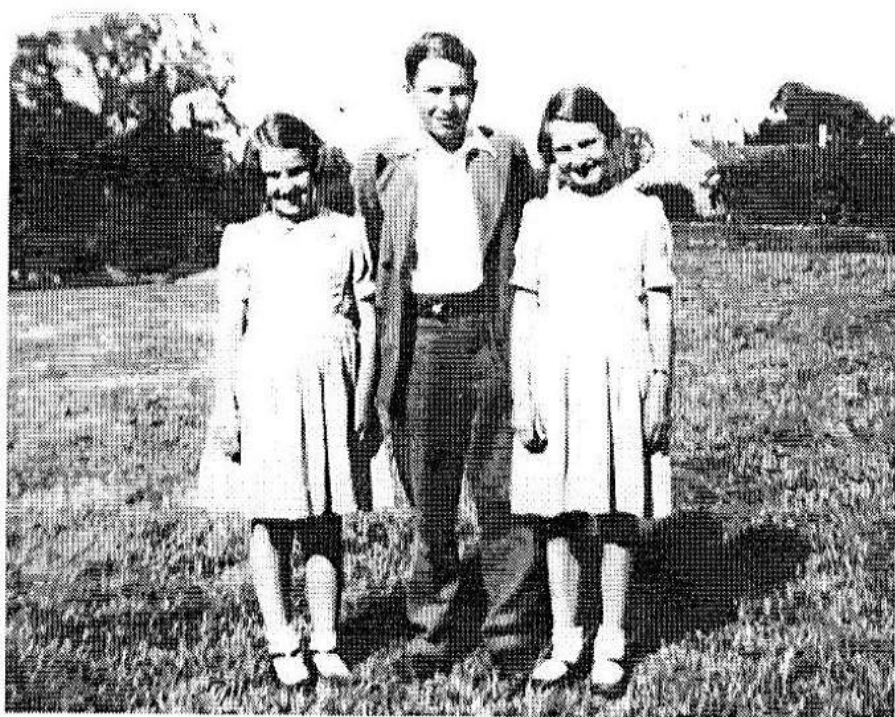
During Mr. Hobday's reign a number of significant happenings occurred - finding and excavating the Roman Villa, the arrival of evacuees, wartime and the installation of electric light.

Joseph Barker recalls - "I started school when I was three and a half. I was about eight when the new headmaster arrived - Gaffer Hobday had dark hair and a little thin moustache and wore horn-rimmed glasses. He was a disciplinarian who re-introduced corporal punishment to the school. He introduced the keeping of chickens. During my time the school took over a field, which was part of Webb's farm and kept poultry. Weekends we took it in turns to go and feed the chickens. The cockerel would run at people and on one occasion I had a carrot in my hand and swung out at him and knocked him out. He recovered. In winter we fed them mash which we made up with hot water from the schoolhouse and it was the first time I saw hot water coming from a tap. Although I was in the top class, not being eleven, I couldn't go to Corsham for woodworking class so I had to stay behind and weed the school garden." Joe continued - "Mr. Hobday instructed and supervised the building of a fishpond in the school garden by the boys in the top class. He also had the boys build a bicycle shed using best building practises in the boys' playground. He had a long row of cold frames installed and was keen on teaching best gardening methods. He kept bees but I don't think any pupils were involved in that. It was in his kitchen that I first marvelled at hot water coming from a tap!!"

Joe continued - "Mrs. Hobday organised a Maypole dancing display and sword dancing (I took part in that!!!) in the rec. (recreation ground) at either a village or school fete. I can only remember this happening once but I moved to grammar school about this time so there could have been more. I passed the exam and went to Fitzmaurice Grammar School in Bradford-on-Avon. I used to ride with my pal Jim Rawlings and when we got to the Poor Houses at Little Chalfield there was a dip in the road and when the brook over-flowed we would ride backwards and forwards and arrive late for school saying the road was flooded."



Joe added – “Mr. Hobday was a parish councillor, and led with my mother and others in objecting to a cheap scheme the local district council wanted to push through to bring mains water to the village. The mains would be laid on the surface or just buried where essential. This would replace the Neston Estate supply, and would still mean fetching your water from stand pipes instead of the estates pumps. The scheme would be put in properly later. A lot of money for not much improvement. It was felt that the only keen supporters were the few who owned their own property because it gave the local fire brigade a good supply of water! The scheme was abandoned. This is my memory of Gaffer Hobday. Happy days.”



Jim and his sisters  
Helena and Doreen.

Sidney James Rawlings was born at Poplar Farm on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1926. Known as Jim, about his schooldays he related – “I started school at the age of three and enjoyed my school days. I

passed for Fitzmaurice Grammar and rode to Bradford-on-Avon with Joe Barker who lived at the New Inn. I enjoyed Chemistry and got to A Levels in Maths and Physics.”

Jim recalled – “Over many years the farm staff hoed up coins. I dug some up that I thought were Roman and took them to school. I showed them to Mr. Hobday and he contacted Shaw-Mellor. I took both of them to the field and showed them where I found the coins and in the end Dr. Shaw-Mellor started the dig. We found a good Hypocaust and much coloured plaster. I also found a short bone handle, which looked to be part of a dagger. The handle eventually went with my collection to Devizes museum. My friend, Jack Sealy, found an oval seal ring with a red carved

stone. On Sunday mornings Jack and I did regular trips to the excavation for our own little dig."

Margaret Williams (née Ash) donated the notes she made at school about the dig to the Atworth History Group. These are on display in Atworth museum. Margaret recalls - "Mr Hobday took the class to the fields where we dug up coins and pots and could see where they had under floor heating. Mr. Shaw-Mellor was very strict and made us dig carefully. The eleven to fourteen year-olds kept a record and wrote essays and made drawings as you found the items." Margaret continued - "When I got to Mr. Hobday's class I was made milk monitor and gave out Horlick tablets to those who could afford them - they were 1d (one penny) for five. In cold weather we used to warm our bottles of milk on the pipes. We had gardens to look after and some fowls, which we took in turns to feed. I got on well with Mr. Hobday although he was strict and caned the boys. When I left school I got a prize for always getting the money right that I collected for the Horlick tablets. The prize was a book - Mrs. Beaton's Household Hints."

Recorded by *Thomas Hobday* in the school log-book - September 7<sup>th</sup> 1937 - "I shall be out of school for a short period this morning owing to the fact I have to see Colonel Fuller with reference to a letter from Dr. Mortimer Wheeler, chief archaeologist for the British Museum in connection with Roman Villa site found by the schoolchildren on Mr. Rawling's field. Miss Burry will be in charge during my absence." November 8<sup>th</sup> - "Mr. Shaw-Mellor called and took the following items from the museum. a) All the coins. b) The perfect specimen of 3<sup>rd</sup> century pottery (New Forest Ware)."

Mr George Hillier, local correspondent of The Wiltshire Times recorded in the school log-book - "As a whole the school is doing sound work along many interesting lines all calculated to arouse in the children a love of the countryside and its doings and at the same time to develop their powers of individual thought and action."

School-log September 1939 Mr. Hobday penned - "Opened school today nine days later than anticipated on account of the outbreak of war." He continued to list the number of children on the school roll.

As part of Operation Pied Piper we know that teachers had escorted Jewish children from their school in Kensington and that the Church Hall, (then a corrugated iron construction) had been set-aside as a schoolroom for them. One Jewish girl, Dorit Bader, and her family escaped from Austria in 1938 and Dorit spent over a year in the village. Her story has been recorded in <sup>8</sup>'Atworth – A People's History'.

Moved school today nine days late.  
 Then anticipated on account of  
 the outbreak of war.  
 The numbers on roll today are  
 made up as follows:-  
 Atworth Children 76  
 Evacuees  
 Basic Group 85  
 (Children from the Solomon  
 Wolfson Jewish School,  
 South Kensington)  
 Remainder Group 16  
 (Private Evacuees)  
 M.F. 1 177

Sixteen children from the East End of London were also in the party and these took lessons in the school. Between September and December more evacuees arrived and a few have been traced and their account of time spent in the village documented. These included private evacuees - Oct 7<sup>th</sup> - "Clive Chown." and on the 14<sup>th</sup> - "Richard Cheeseman." Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 1940 - "Admitted Martine Chown This little girl is 6 and has never been to school before."

<sup>8</sup>In September 2008 'Memories of Wartime Evacuees' was presented to Atworth school, (now re-named 'Churchfields – The Village School') by David Webb, Chairman of Atworth History Group.

Entries continue - October 11<sup>th</sup> 1941 - "The children have now collected 371 lbs of blackberries & elderberries for the National Fruit Preserving Scheme – all in their own spare time."



Early in December 1939 *Thomas* Hobday wrote to the head teacher in charge of the Jewish children offering him to use the playground. Mr. Mendoza replied as follows-

5.12.39.

Dear Mr. Hobday,

Thank you for your letter.

I feel that as regards to the use of the playground for playtime, I feel it would be better if we remain here and not come across to you.

With reference to P.T. I should be pleased to come and see you either tomorrow morning Wednesday at 10:45 or Thursday at 11.

Yours sincerely,

D. Mendoza.

After the meeting Mr. Hobday reported – "...We have decided the playground shall be available during the afternoon sessions when his classes take their P.T. lessons."

Arthur Diffell attended the village school between 1933 – 43. Of those days he recalled - "The school kept bees. One time they got in my hair and I got stung. I had bad reaction and was quite ill. During the War the school kept hens. Potato peelings were collected and me and another boy used to go to the bottom classroom and cook them up with the mash. The cooker was near the window and one day the 'black-out' curtain caught fire. ('Black-out' curtains were used during the war to cover windows to block out lights from being seen by enemy aircraft) We were expecting the cane but fortunately the Headmaster, Mr. Hobday, realised it was an accident and we were let off with a caution. Harvest Time we would go to the fields to catch rabbits hoping to get one for the pot. I can also remember the Roman Villa excavation and the archaeologist, Archibald Shaw Mellor who drove an Austin 10 car that had a <sup>9</sup>Dicky seat."

<sup>9</sup>Austin 10 – a two-seater car with a large boot that opened to reveal another seat known as a Dicky Seat.

Evacuee Richard Cheeseman wrote – "One event which is worth relating in connection with the school was the occasion when some enemy planes were passing overhead. I can well remember being ushered with three others under a desk top cabinet, containing some Roman artefacts,



where the rest of the class went to I am not sure, as there was certainly very little room for anyone else where we were. I can clearly recall the master, Mr. Hobday, standing under cover just inside the front door peering up to the sky, monitoring the situation."

From 1943 *Thomas Hobday* applied for a number of positions in other schools from north to the south of the country. On March 6<sup>th</sup> 1945 he was interviewed for the headship of Wootton Bassett School. On June 29<sup>th</sup> 1945 Mr. Hobday recorded "I have completed my period of Service."



### *John Edward Hunter 1945 - 1957*

*John Edward Hunter* was born on January 8<sup>th</sup> 1909. *John* trained as a teacher and qualified in 1931. Three years later he married Maud Lily Wheeler. Maud, known as Christine, was born on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1910. Three children were born in the county of Cumberland – Kathleen Patricia, known as Pat, Malcolm, and Michael Stuart.

*John* began his preaching ministry in the towns and villages around Carlisle. During the war he served in the R.A.F. teaching navigation skills. After leaving the R.A.F. for a short while he returned to teaching in Carlisle. In 1945 the Hunter family moved to Wiltshire where their fourth child Colin was born.

*John Hunter* was appointed head of Atworth School and on July 9<sup>th</sup> 1945 in the school-log he recorded – "Today I started my period of service as Headmaster." He continued – "Mrs. Leadbetter is away from school this week whilst her husband is on leave. There are only two teachers in school, Mrs. Hobday and myself. Mrs. Hobday is taking the infants and lower juniors, I am taking the seniors and upper juniors"

In May 1952 *John Hunter* attended a meeting of the Bradford & Melksham Council where the Chairman, Mr. S. C. Tucker, when told that several schools in Wiltshire still have a bucket system of sanitation remarked – "I'm amazed to hear it." A councillor said that the headmaster at Atworth sometimes emptied the buckets. Mr. Hunter responded – "I

have emptied the buckets only when the woman caretaker was ill. My job is to dig, and then fill in, a trench 6ft. long and two feet wide twice a week."

About his time in Atworth, Mr. Hunter's son Malcolm, who now lives in California, recalls – "I attended Atworth School for three years, after my father was discharged from the Royal Air Force. His nerves had been badly affected by his experience in Bomber Command, which is the reason why he took the job in a quiet country school in deepest Wiltshire instead of a position in a big town. Atworth was a good experience for us as a family as my father recovered his equilibrium and discovered his real gifts that led him to become a well-known Bible Teacher around the world. We lived in the schoolhouse adjoining the school with a door that led straight from our entrance hall to the senior classroom. That was very convenient for my father as in the winter times he had to get up early and light the coke stove in the boiler room that provided the only heat in the school. He and my mother had to keep it going all day so they had to take periodic exits from the class-room to the boiler room. I remember that my father even had sometimes to empty the toilet buckets through little doors in the boys and girls lavatory that provided the sanitation system in the days before water came to the village. When we first arrived in Atworth I was amazed to see people still carrying their buckets of water on wooden yokes from the hand pumps scattered along the village roads!

I began in the middle class where my mother was the teacher and moved into the top class where my Father was indeed a very strict but energetic teacher. Thanks to his determined efforts at extra coaching for me I got one of the county scholarships to Dauntseys School where I studied from 1948 – 1955, before I went to Bath University to do Mechanical Engineering"

Brenda Sealy spoke of the time when – "I attended Chapel and when the new headmaster, Mr. Hunter, came for the first time he came and sat by me. I felt quite important. I was friendly with Mr. Hunter's daughter Pat and sometime after school would go to the schoolhouse where Mrs. Hunter would read to us. I remember liking stories by Enid Blyton. There were other times when Pat and I would go for a walk with her father. We liked

walking. When we left school Mr. Hunter gave every child a bible. In mine he had written "To wish you all the happiness in the coming days. All you really need to know is found in this book." I have used the Bible so much it is now a little worse for wear."

Lesley Braund (née Townsend) contributed her memories – "As a small girl I can remember thinking that Mr H. was absolutely wonderful, with his big smile and wavy hair, although I was always on my best behaviour when he was around as he could, and did really shout at anyone being naughty, especially the boys.

I vividly remember him shovelling the coke into the boiler that kept the pipes warm, I thought he was so strong, and in his best headmaster's suit too! I don't think that I was ever actually in his class as I think he left when I was still with Mrs H. (Hunter) although we had odd lessons with him, but remember all the girls cried when he left.

He had a great presence and I loved it at assembly when the whole school would be there and he would sing the hymns at the top of his powerful voice and play the old organ (which was rather out of tune by now) at full blast.

There was also a piano in the big room, it was usually covered by a big sheet that someone had taken lots of time to embroider with the alphabet and nursery rhymes etc. Sometimes when we all got together for singing, Mr H. would sing and play with such enthusiasm that the poor old piano shook, at least it was in tune, which is more than can be said for the organ!"

Lesley also recalled – "One of his favourite things if there was a bit of time to spare was flash cards. He had a whole stack of mental arithmetic and times table questions on cards, which he would hold up in turn to see who was the quickest to answer.

My favourite time with him was, if we had been exceptionally good or if there was some unexpected time at the end of the day he would read

Enid Blyton adventure books to us, we were all spellbound by him, nobody moved and you could have heard a pin drop."



Back Row - left - Mrs. Hunter. Right - teacher Miss Uncles.  
Middle row centre - Mr. Hunter. Second right - Lesley Townsend  
Front row second right - Colin Hunter.

Lesley continued - "One day we all gathered in the big room and Mr H said he had a special visitor for us to meet. It turned out to be Gladys Aylwood the missionary who rescued all those children from China (or was it Tibet?). She was a tiny little lady and she wore her eastern costume for us to see. She told us all about what had happened with the children but I think we were a little too young to appreciate what a privilege it was to meet her and what a wonderfully brave woman she was. Little did we know that a few years later the film of her story would be made (Inn of the Sixth Happiness) starring Ingrid Bergman as Gladys. Although I have to say there was no physical resemblance whatsoever!

I remember Mr H. as being very much a 'headmaster'. He was respected by all, adored by the girls and slightly feared by the boys."

John Bright, who lives in Australia, and kindly contributed the photograph of planting the Coronation Oak tree, wrote - "I can't recall too



much about 'Gaffer' Hunter, other than that he was a very pleasant and friendly man. At the age of eleven I came to Atworth School from a very large school in the mining valleys of South Wales, and it is fair to say that when compared to Atworth it was a fairly 'rough and tumble' upbringing. Maybe that is partly why I have the recollection of Mr Hunter being kind and attentive to his students. In Wales there were so many of us that this same degree of personal attention was not possible."

John continued – "I can recall being 'auditioned' for the school choir, and despite my welsh background Tom Jones I was not. Possibly, only to save my feelings Mr Hunter told the smirking assembly that this awful sound was a result of my voice breaking. I used to really enjoy the Friday afternoon sessions where we had quizzes associated with country living, i.e., questions such as how many gallons in a milk churn or what colour is a pheasant egg. To me whom the only rabbit I had ever seen was hanging on a hook in the butchers they were most enjoyable sessions."



Planting the Coronation Oak 1953. Left to right – John Hill, Bernard Humphries, Wilf Allen, Michael Taylor, John Bright, John White, Mr. Hunter, Chris Webb, Trevor Laws, Derek Laws & Roy Wyatt.

Norman Williams spoke of the time – “It was in December 1945 and I was home on leave from the army when I first became acquainted with Mr. Hunter. We met at Atworth Chapel and during our conversation Mr. Hunter asked if I would like to come to the school and talk to the children about my travels to and in India. One morning I arrived at the school at about eleven o’clock and told the children about my journey to India, sailing through Gibraltar, the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal to Bombay. I also gave a general talk about the Indian railways. I had spent several days on a journey to Rawalpindi on the famous train the ‘Frontier Mail’. During my time there I travelled to many places on the Indian railway going to Quatta, Lahore, and finally ended up in New Delhi where I served at the Indian Army General Headquarters. This was situated close to Government Buildings and the Viceroy’s Palace. I flew home from Karachi. The children showed much interest and asked many questions about the Indian way of life, their clothing and food. I pointed out my journeys and places visited on a map.”

Norman continued – “During Mr. Hunter’s time in Atworth he took many services in our chapel. He was a very gifted speaker. About 1981 my family and I moved to Norfolk and it was here that I attended a country church where John Hunter was the speaker at a bible study convention. I met up with him and we talked of Atworth.”

1953 - Recorded in the notes of St. Michael & All Angels Parish Magazine – “Coronation Service will be held in our church on Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30. p.m. It will be an interdenominational Service and a special form of Service will be used issued by the British Council of Churches. Mr. Hunter kindly consented to preach the sermon.”

In 1957 the Hunter family moved to Cumberland where *John* was appointed the Head of a school in Kendal. After many years *John* left the teaching profession and became a missionary and as a gifted speaker he preached throughout the world. *John Edward* Hunter died in 2005.



## Part Two

### *School Teachers*



Fanny Salter

Bertha Leonora Hampton

Annie Elizabeth Edwarda Janetta Bushell

Ada Mary Cleverly

Frances Mabel Ada Adams

Edith Henrietta Rawlings

Gertrude Slade Scott

Hubert Joseph Sawyer

Rosa Jane Burry

Lucy Anne Boait



## *Fanny Salter*

**Fanny Salter** was one of the schoolmistresses who served under Mr. Provis and his successor Mr. Price. *Fanny*, the daughter of Lieutenant Edward and Fanny Salter was born in Atworth in 1819. Edward Salter died on August 28<sup>th</sup> 1830 and was buried in St. Michael & All Angel's churchyard. *Fanny* and her widowed mother lived in a cottage in Salter's Lane that was situated just past the Forester's Arms in Bradford Road. In later years the cottage was demolished and the name Salter's Lane no longer exists. On May 16<sup>th</sup> 1858 in the village of Holt, *Fanny* married George Poulson a farmer of one hundred acres. After only eight years of marriage *Fanny* was widowed. A nephew, William Lucas came to live with her. *Fanny* farmed ten acres and William worked as her farm labourer. William married and by 1891 was still residing with his aunt. By that time he was recorded as a 'Milk Seller'. *Fanny* died aged seventy-seven in 1897.



## *Bertha Leonora Hampton*

After being educated at the village school a young local girl **Bertha Leonora Hampton** continued in the capacity of teacher until 1885. *Bertha*, the daughter of the village blacksmith, Richard Hampton, was born in 1864 and lived opposite the school in 'Hampton's Forge' now known as the 'Old Forge'. During school time the children could clearly hear the noise of hammering as horseshoes and farming implements were being made. The school log-book documents that on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1880 *Bertha* was "...away from school through indisposition." On June 8<sup>th</sup> 1885 the headmaster, Frederick Noyce, was taken unwell and *Bertha* was put in charge of the school. On November 20<sup>th</sup> 1885 "Bertha L. Hampton has left".

Early in 1890 *Bertha* left Wiltshire and travelled to the beautiful county of North Yorkshire where she boarded with 'Confectioner' Ellen Clark who lived in Church Street, in the delightful small town of Settle. *Bertha*



was employed as a 'Teacher at Boys National School'. It was here that *Bertha* met her future husband Stephen Parker who, on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1892, was appointed Head Master of the school of Giggleswick, a village only a short distance from Settle. Stephen and *Bertha* were both aged thirty-one when they married in Blackpool on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1896. A son, Hampton Wildman Parker, was born in 1897. Hampton was the author of many books and in his later years held the position of 'Keeper of the Department of Zoology' at the Natural History Museum, London. (See 'Atworth - A People's History - Hampton's Forge.')



### *Annie Elizabeth Edwarda Janetta Bushell*

Annie Elizabeth Edwarda Janetta was born in London in 1868. The daughter of Andrew and Elizabeth Bushell, the family returned to Wiltshire in about 1877 and they lived in the 'New Inn' in Atworth. References to *Annie* in the school log record that on - November 27<sup>th</sup> 1885 "Annie Bushell monitress taking Standard 11 wishes to become qualified." The following month of May *Annie* is "... recognised as qualified to serve under article 84." September 4<sup>th</sup> 1887 "Annie Bushell left." In the early months of 1892 *Annie* married Herbert Hampton, (brother of *Bertha*) the Blacksmith who lived opposite the school in 'Hampton's Forge.' In 1899 at the age of thirty-one *Annie* died in childbirth leaving three very young daughters. She is buried with her husband in St. Michael & All Angels churchyard, which is only a short distance from the family home. (See 'Atworth - A People's History The History of Hampton's Forge.')



### *Frances Mabel Ada Adams*

Born 1885 Frances Mabel Ada was one of ten children born to 'Stone Quarryman Ganger' Daniel Adams and his wife Eliza. *Frances* lived with her parents in Bath Road. She attended the village school and on June 27<sup>th</sup> 1899 was given the position of monitress. *Frances* remained at the school and on October 13<sup>th</sup> 1900 she sat the candidate examination. An entry in

the school log-book dated January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1905 – “Frances Adams completed apprenticeship.”

After leaving the teaching profession *Frances* assisted her brother, Alfred George Adams, in the running of the family coal merchant business. The coal yard was located in what was then known as “East Farm”. Joan Thomsett remembers Miss Adams as someone who was “... tall and always wore decorative hats.” *Frances* lived to the age of eighty-seven. She died on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1972 and was laid to rest in the churchyard of St. Michael & All Angels with her brother Alfred.



### *Edith Henrietta Rawlings*

*Edith Henrietta Rawlings*, the daughter of James and Sarah was born on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1887 at the farm in Streets Green, Cottles. After her grandfather's death the family moved to Poplar Farm. *Edith* was appointed teacher on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1906. Edith continued to teach until 1925 when at the age of thirty-seven she married William H. Usher of Trowbridge.



### *Ada Mary Cleverly*

The daughter of clock maker Henry John and Hannah Cleverly, *Ada Mary* was born in Melksham on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1878. Before taking up the position in Atworth, *Ada* Cleverly was a ‘Pupil Teacher’ at a school in Melksham. In an entry in the school log-book by Henry Inkpen we find that *Ada* was appointed on February 25<sup>th</sup> 1901 at a salary of £40 per annum. She served for more than five years leaving on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1906.

In 1908 *Ada* married ‘Carpenter & Joiner’ William Howard Gerrish. According to the census returns of 1911 *Ada* and William were residing in ‘West View House’, West End, in the town of Melksham.



## *Gertrude Slade Scott*

**Gertrude Slade Scott** was born on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1888 in the village of Broughton Gifford. Her father, Edward, was a 'Plasterer and tiler'. In 1901 fifteen-year-old *Gertrude* was living with her parents and three sisters at Broughton Common. She attended and was monitress at the National School at Broughton Gifford. On October 7<sup>th</sup> 1918 *Gertrude* Scott was appointed to the position as teacher of Atworth School. An entry in the school log-book of March 30<sup>th</sup> 1919 states – "Miss Scott absent thrown from her bicycle."

During the 1920s Phyllis Hancock, (née Brown) attended the village school and well remembers Miss Scott. Phyllis recalls - "In my early school days I was inclined to sneeze a lot. This annoyed a teacher by the name of Miss Scott. One day she threw a handful of papers she was holding straight towards me and a paper caught me in the eye." When Mrs Brown discovered what had happened to her daughter, *Phyllis* recalled, "My mother was so cross and went to the school and told Miss Scott off."

About Miss Scott another pupil Margaret Williams (née Ash) told – "Miss Scott was very strict but a good teacher. She kept a cricket bat in her desk, which she took out to remind the boys to behave. If you sneezed she said it was vulgar."

Joan Thomsett (née Clark) well remembers how Miss Scott used to cut hazel sticks from a hedge in Bradford Lane, which she used as a cane. Joan recalls, "Miss Scott always carried a cane. She would put twenty sums on the blackboard and if children failed to get less than ten they would be made to stand on a seat and she would cane them. One day I got less than ten. I was made to stand on the seat. However, I was not caned as Miss Scott said it was unusual for me to get such low results."

About Miss Scott Norman Williams remarked - "Although strict she was a lovely, lovely teacher giving basic reading, arithmetic in junior end. Miss Scott also played the harmonium."

An entry made in the school log by the Headmaster Mr. Thomas W. Hobday and dated September 30<sup>th</sup> 1937 records: - "Miss Scott died at 1:30 this morning as a result of a haemorrhage on the brain. I have notified the Education Office and the School Managers." Miss *Gertrude Slade* Scott was fifty-one years-old.



## *Rosa Jane Burry*

**Rosa Jane Burry** was born on November 26<sup>th</sup> 1878 in All Cannings in the County of Wiltshire. *Rosa* was the daughter of a carpenter, Edward Burry and his wife Jane. While living at Townsend in All Cannings she became an assistant schoolmistress. On October 16<sup>th</sup> 1899 *Rosa* was appointed to the position as a primary school teacher for Atworth where she replaced the former teacher, Miss Archer.



For many years Miss Burry lodged with the Rawlings family at Poplar Farm. She became much respected and loved by everyone in the community. Former pupils recall that Miss Burry had a unique way of punishing the children. She wore a silver thimble and when children were naughty she would use the thimble to tap them in the middle of their backs.

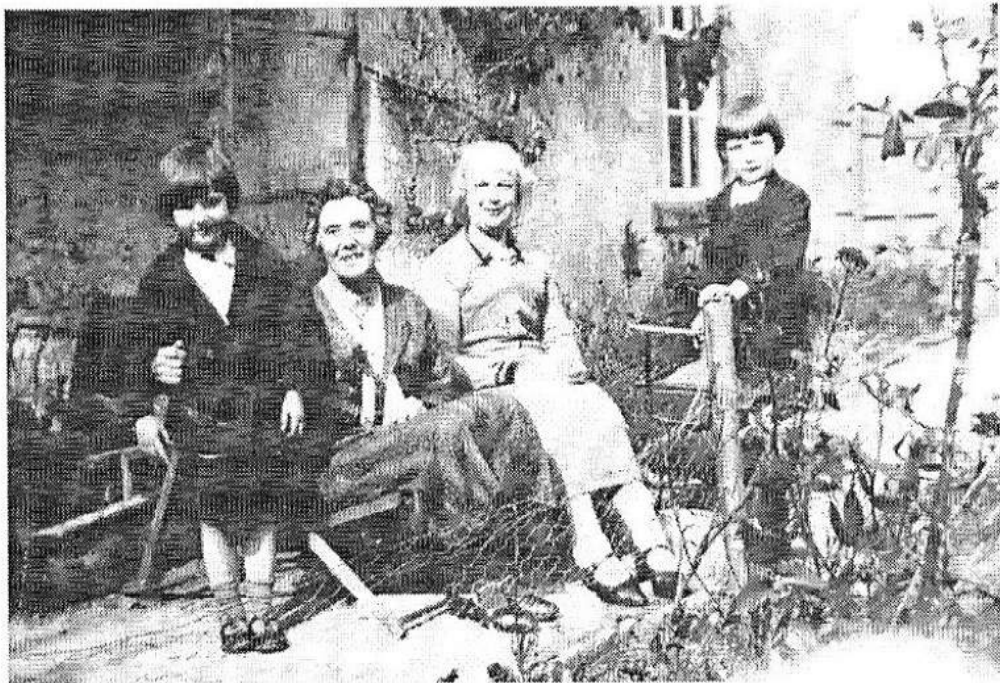
Helena May Raithby (née Rawlings) recalled – "I started school at the age of three in Miss Burry's class. She taught in what was known as the bottom room, which was a long room, and the windows were high up. There were two cupboards where the rush mats were kept. In the afternoons we had a nap. I remember if you were unwell you lay on a mat and Miss Burry had a grey cushion to put your head on and you were given a Nutall's Mintoe."

Helena continued – "We learned to write in sand trays. I was very good on the three R's and we were taught arithmetic using the abacas. If you



were naughty Miss Burry would tap you on the head with the thimble she wore on her finger.

When Miss Burry moved from our farm across the road to the cottage she named 'Little Home' I used to tend the garden for her and she gave me a little wheelbarrow. I still have the school bell that she kept on her desk. Miss Burry did not like cooking so every week Mum sent a Sunday lunch over for her. Miss Burry's nephew worked at Fry's Chocolate Factory and used to bring mis-shaped Crunchie Bars, which she used to give to me. I remember the times when I would sit on the poufee by the fire and Miss Burry used to make Mars Bar sandwiches."



Left to right – Helena Rawlings, Rosa & her sister Kate Burry & Doreen Rawlings in the garden of Poplar Farm

Helena's brother, Jim Rawlings, told of the time when – "Miss Burry used to take me to the brook which came down from Neston to the stream at Waterloo Bottom to sail the little boats we made."

As a child Wynne Harris has many memories of her school days. She recalls that one afternoon when she was going home Miss Burry saw that Wynne was crying and asked what was wrong. Wynne said "My tooth

wobbly." Miss Burry took her into a room and gently pulled out the loose tooth.

Mentioning the name of *Rosa* Burry to Norman Williams he recalled how she was held in great regard by his family and all who knew her saying - "Miss Burry was in her 20's when she came to Atworth and she stayed at Poplar farm with my Aunt Sarah (Sarah Rawlings). She was very kind and such a help to the village and all pupils had so much joy from her teaching. She was a very devout Christian and a member of Atworth Chapel. She sang in the choir and had an alto voice. One Sunday when I was about twelve years old I was asked to read Psalm 46 or 47 at the evening service. Afterwards Miss Burry came to me with tears in her eyes saying "Oh, to think I first taught you to read." " She was a lovely lady."

Norman continued - "About 1935 Aunt Sarah and Uncle Jim (Rawlings) moved to Crewkerne and *Rosa* Burry had to leave Poplar Farm. Lewin Sealy and my father, Sidney Williams, built her a small cottage next to Joan Thomsett at 74, Bradford Road. While Dad was putting the roof on I carried the tiles for him. Miss Burry named the cottage 'Little Home'.

For many years *Rosa* and Herbert Watts of Prospect Farm were close companions. Herbert was choirmaster and organist of the Chapel where both worshipped.

When *Rosa* fell ill the Misses York and Sawyer and the Clark family nursed her. Joan Thomsett (née Clark) sat with her old teacher the night before she died. *Rosa Jane* Burry died on January 28<sup>th</sup> 1956 aged seventy-seven and was interred in the Chapel graveyard. Norman Williams recalls - "Permission was obtained from Cedric Edwards for Miss Burry to be buried with her friend Annie Rawlings. Cedric was Annie's nephew." The grave is eighth in the third course from the south wall.



*Hubert Joseph Sawyer*

***Hubert Joseph***, the son of 'Carpenter', John York Sawyer and his wife Ann, was born in Atworth on April 28<sup>th</sup> 1892. *Hubert* was educated at

Atworth School under the Headship of Henry Inkpen. Upon finishing his education he remained at the school in the position of 'Pupil Teacher'.

In the school log-book, Henry Inkpen, recorded - June 27<sup>th</sup> 1910 "Hubert J. Sawyer, the Pupil Teacher has passed the Preliminary Examination for certificate with distinction in Elementary Science. His apprenticeship terminates on July 31<sup>st</sup> next." According to the census returns of 1911 *Hubert*, then aged eighteen, was living at home with his parents and continuing to teach at the school as 'Elementary School Teacher.'

In 1914 *Hubert* married 'Elementary School Teacher' Charlotte Short. Charlotte, the daughter of 'Bootmaker' James and Mary Short, was born in 1888 in Larkhall, Bath. A son, Geoffrey, was born in 1919.

About Geoffrey, Joan Thomsett recalls- "Geoffrey was about the same age as me. The family lived opposite us in Bath Road and Geoffrey used to come across and swing on our gate. In later years he became a bank manager.

*Hubert* died in 1976 at the age of eighty-four.



## *Lucy Anne Boait*

**Lucy Anne** the daughter of 'Carpenter' Henry and Ellen Boait was born in Winsham in the county of Somerset on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1879. In the school log-book Mr. Inkpen recorded - July 13<sup>th</sup> 1900 "New Mistress - Lucy Anne Boait. Last school All Cannings National, Devizes." And on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1900 "Miss Boait leaves tomorrow."

After only a few months teaching at Atworth *Lucy* left the school and married *Rosa's* brother, Frank William Burry. After the marriage the couple lived at 9, Ivy Place, St. Edmund's, Salisbury.



The British Census Returns 1841 – 1911



Kelly's Directory 1848



Atworth School Log-Books 1877 – 1957  
held by Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre,  
Cocklebury Road,  
Chippenham,  
SN15 3QN.

