

Upwood Village School

The first record of a school in the village dates from 1871 but some form of education for children was obviously taking place in the village before this time. The 1851 census return records two school-mistresses — Hannah Hall and Maria Kington and a school-master William Allen Walker, a lodger in the home of Thomas Key.

The National village school was built in 1871 with funds donated by R.H. Hussey Esq., the Lord of the Manor at Upwood, with space for 63 children. The census return for that year records that Emily Young was the National School Mistress, supported by a pupil teacher, infant teacher and 2 monitors. Conditions at that time must have been less than ideal as the census reveals 90 children of school age in the village.

The 1891 census return shows Jane Carpenter as the Head Mistress with Sarah Ann Raby (a lodger with Miss Carpenter) as the Infant Teacher. The school house was somewhere in the High Street.

In 1893 the school was enlarged at a cost of over £300, funded again by R.H. Hussey Esq. The plans for the extension show two main rooms — the Infant room and the Mixed room — both being 32ft x 18ft. There was also a boys' lobby, a girls' lobby and an infant cloakroom. Two playgrounds, one for boys at the back and one for girls and infants at the front together with two outside blocks of earth closets are also depicted.

Unfortunately the Log Books for the school cannot be traced but the Admission Register does give an insight into reasons for children leaving school. In 1880 the school leaving age was set at 10 years, rising to 11 years in 1893 and 12 years in 1899. It was not until 1918 that the school leaving age was raised to 14 years, increasing to 15 years in 1944.

Many of the children leaving Upwood school went straight to work, either on the land or in industry. Some of the other reasons given for leaving include 'gone into private service', 'burned to death', 'required at home' and 'not strong enough to come in winter'. Some children were fortunate and gained a place at the local grammar school in Ramsey. The Admission Register also shows any previous school attended and, between 1891



*Upwood School 18th April 1921. Back row — Reg Thompson, B Job, W Edwards, F Gaunt.
Middle row — H Shelton, A Gaunt, M Woodward, H Murfin, Ena Ingle.
Front row — A Thompson, J King, I Townsend, M Lambert, D Elderkin, M Hempsted.*

and 1900, families with school-age children were moving into Upwood from places as far afield at Stockton, Sheffield, Leeds, Colchester, and Portsmouth.

The early Managers of the school are unknown since the only available Minute Book dates from 1903. The first recorded Managers were Revd. Cooksey (chairman), Mrs. Cooksey, Messrs. Thomas Smith, Frederick Townsend, F. Kidman and George Thompson. The Managers were responsible for administrative matters such as appointing and dismissing staff, setting holidays and dealing with Reports from the Inspectors. Typical business for 1903 included permission to close the school on Wednesday 12th August 1903 for the Choir Outing to Hunstanton and agreeing a six week holiday for Harvest. In May 1904 it was considered unnecessary to allow a half-day holiday for Ramsey Show but the Thursday and Friday of Feast Week (30th June/1st July) were given as holidays. There were staffing problems with many changes of Head Teacher over the years. In May 1905 the salary offered was £65 per annum plus house and coal. In January 1915 things were not as they should be at the school. The Managers reported that they were 'so dissatisfied with the management of the school — the work and the discipline — that they have decided to terminate the Head Teacher's engagement'. The newly vacant post was advertised at £75 per annum plus house and coal.

In March 1917 Mabel Gaunt was appointed monitress and she worked at the school until 1921 when she resigned and her place was taken by Grace Gaunt.

In 1903 Mrs. Jacobs is recorded as the school cleaner. She wrote to the Managers asking for 2/6d for cleaning the school, saying that she had previously cleaned for less because it was made up to her in other ways. It was agreed that she should be paid 2/6d per week but the payment was to include two thorough cleanings for which she had previously been paid extra.

By March 1920 Mrs. Slack was cleaning the school. The fires had to be laid and the cleaning completed by 8.30am.



*Upwood School Football Team 1936-37. Back row — Doug Shaw, Fred Deighton, Hubert Hart.
Front row — George Edwards, Gerald Gaunt, Basil Fuller, Derek Parker, Keith Edwards.*