

# THE LOG BOOKS OF RUISLIP NATIONAL SCHOOLS

*Celia Cartwright*

I looked at the Log Books of the Ruislip National Schools under the following headings: Reasons for Absence; Dates of School Terms; Members of Staff. Ruislip National Schools became Bishop Winnington-Ingram School in 1931 and the Log Books run from 1890 to the present day. Here I shall deal with reasons for absence.

The headmaster's preoccupation with attendance soon emerges on reading the log books so I wondered why. Background research revealed three important Education Acts as giving the reasons.

*The Act of 1870* was designed to provide Elementary Education for all children. *The 1880 Act* imposed the compulsory attendance of all children between the ages of 5 and 10 and thereafter until 14 unless exemption could be gained on grounds of educational attainment or of average level of attendance. *The Act of 1891* made possible free Elementary Education. A government grant of 10s. per child per year was to be payable. Part of this grant depended upon the child's regular attendance at school and the rest upon an additional 'discipline and organisation' item. There was an additional grant if singing, drawing and needlework were offered.

Since Ruislip National Schools were church schools, the headmaster also had to answer to the Diocese as well as Her Majesty's Inspectors. The school was visited by Diocesan Inspectors and the Vicar came to the school each week to inspect the registers.

In 1893 the Government Inspector noted, "Class work is fairly good for a country school .... the female scholars are more teachable than the male, who are rather below the bucolic average." Of the Infant class he wrote, "The standard class



Helen Hoare Collection

*Ruislip National School Girls: 1907*

*Top Row L to R: Nellie Benstead, Lizzie Hearn, Violet Puddick, Ada Bray, Phoebe Hearn, Mabel Bowden, Louisa Bell, Gladys Holford.*

*Second Row: Muriel Davies, ? Taylor, Lucy King, Mabel Lavender, May Neal, Grace Martin, Hilda Woodman, Phoebe Joel, Mary Collins.*

*Third Row: Ivy Mills, Alice Taylor, Nellie King, Beatrice Bray, ? Keys, Lily Collins, Cecil West, Alice Collins, Ellen Bell, Alice Weedon (later Mrs. Hood).*

*Front Row: Amy Butler, Edith Boyles, Lizzie Collins, Lucy Allen, Dolly Lavender, Minnie Boyles, Annie Collins. Names supplied by Mrs. Winnie Watson, née Davies.*

does the work taught to it in this room creditably and the lower are as far advanced as can be expected, considering the difficulty of securing any attendance except in full summer”.

The headmaster offered various inducements to regular attendance. Before school fees were abolished in 1891 he would return their penny or halfpenny if they attended regularly. In 1892 he introduced a system of attendance cards to be shown to parents with a small reward as a prize. In 1897 the children were photographed. “A real attraction” he writes, “all present

but 5''. Frequent calls by school attendance officers do not seem to have had much effect on parents. Mrs. King of Beddingfield Place kept her children from school because she had nothing to send with them to eat but this reason is not found anywhere else in the Log Book.

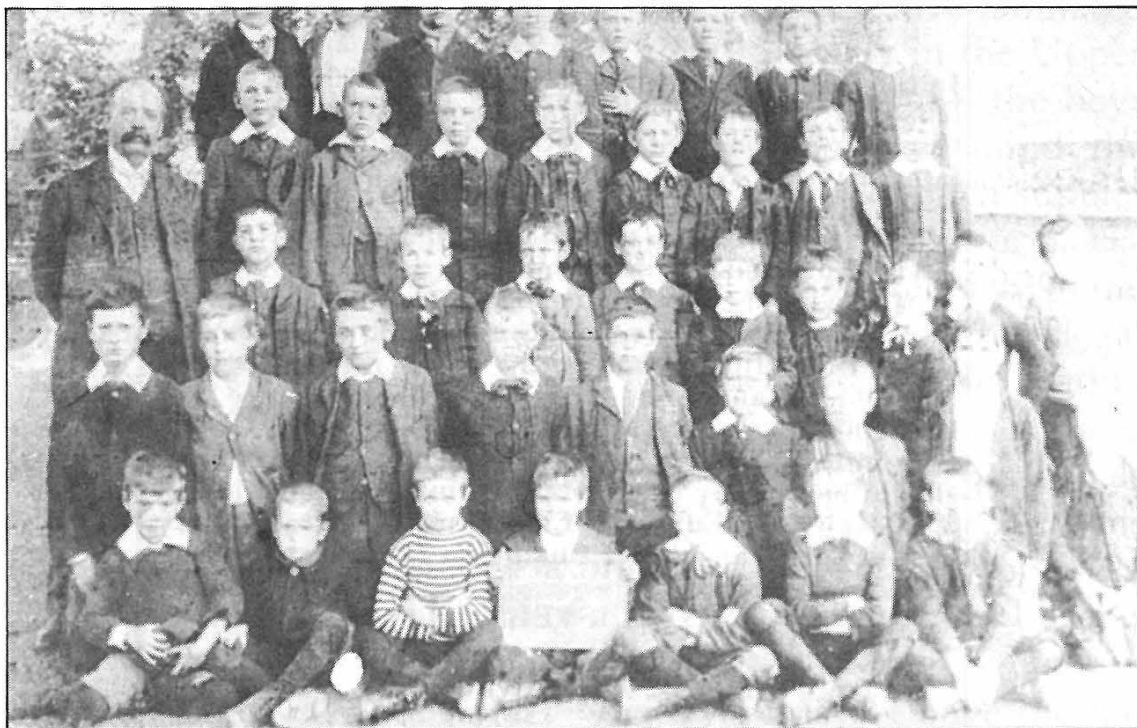
The reasons for absence seemed to fall under four headings, Illness, Weather, Holidays and Work. I shall deal with them in turn: Firstly **illness**. The so-called childhood diseases, whooping cough, measles, mumps and diphtheria are mentioned, also scarlet fever and scarlatina and particularly in the winter months, coughs, colds, flu and unspecified illness.

In February 1895 we read "I find that a good deal of illness is prevalent in the parish especially among the children. I called upon several of the parents and find that the children are ill either from severe colds and influenza and in some cases chilblains, 94 out of 139 present." In March 1897 he wrote, "A miserably wet week. Nearly all the children have bad coughs and colds. At times the lessons are interrupted from this cause. The reading is at a standstill, 79%". In 1892 the vicar Thomas Marsh Everett actually closed the school on account of measles.

However, by far the most common reason for absence was the **weather**. Many children had to walk several miles to school along roads which were little more than rough tracks. Some typical entries about the weather. February 1897 9.15 a.m. "A shockingly wet morning. It has poured with rain all night. Only 40 children arrived at school in a very wet condition. I do not think it wise to retain them, but have sent a note to the vicar asking for instructions. He replies, Send the children home as the floods are getting very high and the Eastcote children must be cut off. This I at once did". And in March the following year he says "A blinding snowstorm or blizzard rather prevented us from making a school". On February 4th 1900, only 10 children arrived on "account of a heavy snowstorm". In September 1898 there is a more optimistic note: Mr. Ratcliffe writes, "Average attendance 163 out of 183. This is the best we have yet done in the way of attendance. It has been *steadily* rising for two years week by week, quarter by

quarter. The Parish magazine attributes it to the weather. They have similar weather at Harefield and their percentage is 68 for the last quarter, while ours is 86''. But in the following entry we are back to square one (as it were) — September 19th., "Uxbridge Circus Day, on roll 183, present 128. Not quite 79% present. It will be worse this afternoon. Such is the appreciation of our people of the advantages of education. It is enough to dishearten a millstone, Eheu, fugaces....".

The mass exodus of school for Uxbridge Circus brings me to the third heading for reasons of absence which was **holidays**.



Helen Hoare Collection

*Ruislip National School Boys, 1910*

*Top Row L to R: Albert Bray, not known, Jack Rogers, William Brambleby, Sid Butler, Tom Lavender, Fred Collins, Frank Lavender.*

*Second Row: Mr. Youens, Sonny Mills, Len Mills, not known, not known, ? Puddick, Ted Lavender, not known, Eddie Dunford.*

*Among the third row are: Stan Martin, Arthur Boyles, Harry King and John Lavender.*

*Fourth Row: Bill King, Charlie Ive, Archie White, Joe Wallis, Len Bray, Frank Bell, Jim King, Bert Bray.*

*Among the front row are: Percy Bowden, Clem Taylor, George Weedon, Nobby Ive.*

**Three Times Patronised by the Queen.**

**LORD GEORGE  
THE IMPERIAL  
SANGER,**

**T**HE World's Greatest Showman. Great Hippodromatic and Spectacular Exhibition, World-renowned Circus and Hippodrome.

**UXBRIDGE,**

**Tuesday, October 1st.**

**FOUR STUPENDOUS SHOWS IN ONE!**

And a Stud of the most Beautiful

**HORSES AND PONIES**

In the World, numbering upwards of 250. A challenge for £5,000. The Admiration and Envy of all Classes. Among the Novelties, and Purchased at a fabulous price, will be found the

**JAPANESE GOD,**

**OR, IDOL OF THE PEOPLE.**

This Splendid Animal, which is worshipped by the Japanese, is of Stupendous size. The Head resembles that of the Rhinoceros; the Nose and Mouth resemble those of the Hippopotamus, the horns resemble those of the Buffalo; and the whole appearance of the Animal is unlike any other that has ever been seen in this Country, and the first ever imported, and should be seen by every Man, Woman, and Child in Her Majesty's Empire. Engagement Extraordinary of the World-famed and Champion American Flying Trapeze Marvels,

**THE STELLIOS,**

These Artistes stand without a rival. First Appearance and most Expensive Engagement of

**REX FOX,**

The Emperor of all the Japanese, from the Principal Circuses of England and America. First Appearance, and direct from St. Petersburg, of those Beautiful and Accomplished Aerial Gymnasts,

**THE FOUR SISTERS FLORAINEZ.**

First Appearance and Special Engagement of the pearl of all Lady Artistes,

**MDLLE. YETTA,**

Far in advance of any Lady Artiste in this particular line.

First Appearance of the Beautiful

**AMERICAN LADY EQUESTRIENNES.**

Engagement Extraordinary of the Charming

**ITALIAN LADY RIDERS.**

*Part of advertisement for Sanger's Circus (Bucks Advertiser 1895)*



Uxbridge Circus & Wild Beast Show, Pinner Fair, local treats such as tea at Ruislip Park and a Jumble Sale at Eastcote were too great a temptation for enjoyment for the Victorian country child to miss. As the headmaster states, "Outside the school walls they oscillate between work, sleep and vacuity". We must also bear in mind that school holidays were timed to coincide with work in the fields e.g. haymaking and harvest, or religious festivals in the case of this particular school. The school year as we know it now, came into being gradually after the early 1900s.

The last frequent reason for absence which I have tabulated was **work**. Pupils took time off school especially in the Upper Standards to help with, for example, haymaking — the boys helping in the fields and the girls staying at home to 'mind' the house or younger children. Other sorts of work which supplemented the family income were gathering mushrooms or blackberries, picking acorns or beating game. In December 1896 the headmaster wrote, "I have to complain again of the illegal employment of boys not eligible for leaving school in beating game". In October 1893 he wrote, "only 96 children present in afternoon. Scarcity of work and the high price of coals tempts parents to keep their children away gathering acorns and mushrooms. Acorns 1/- a bushel. They are very plentiful this season. I have just heard of a family having sold 17 bushels at 1/- a bushel".

In October 1898 he wrote: "Today Friday, I have the following boys absent. Those with an asterisk were being ILLEGALLY employed 'beating game'. Letter 'a' means acorning. Mr. Watts, headkeeper for Mr. Bell, appears to have employed most of the boys". There follows a page listing absentees with excuses tendered. Twelve boys beating game; 6 acorning; 6 boys no excuse; 2 with sore arms, one was fetching water, another carrying furniture; 2 were visiting; the 3 Joel children had typhoid; and other excuses were 'visiting'; sore eyes, and one girl even went to a sale. A total of 37 absent. And apart from typhoid, the excuses (as the headmaster himself said) are "paltry in the extreme".

# RUISLIP NATIONAL SCHOOLS Reasons for Absence 1890-1900

| DATE               | ILLNESS        | HOLIDAY                             | WORK                   | WEATHER               | NO. PRESENT  | TOTAL ON ROLL |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------|
| <b>1890</b>        |                |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| April 25           |                |                                     |                        | Very wet              | Attendance thin  |               |
| May 15             |                | Annual Fair                         |                        |                       | Attendance rather thin   |               |
| June 13            |                |                                     |                        |                       | Attendance thin  |               |
| Aug 13             |                | 1st week after hols                 |                        |                       | Attendance below average   |               |
| Dec 15             |                |                                     |                        | Very severe           | Great number of infants away   |               |
| Dec 19             |                |                                     |                        | Very rough and stormy | Many away  |               |
| <b>1891</b>        |                |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| April 28           |                |                                     |                        | Bitterly cold         | Attendance down  |               |
| July 6             |                |                                     | Approach of hay season |                       | Attendance falling off   |               |
| Sept 29            |                | Uxbridge Fair                       |                        |                       | 104  |               |
| Oct 6              |                |                                     |                        | Wet                   | 96   | 161           |
| <b>1892</b>        |                |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| Jan 11-27          | Influenza      |                                     |                        |                       | 94   |               |
| Feb 18/19          |                |                                     |                        | Severe weather        | Infants off<br><i>Children from R</i><br><i>Common absent esp lower part</i> |               |
| Feb 23             |                |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| May                | Whooping Cough |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| June 16            |                |                                     |                        |                       | 100  | 160           |
| July<br>(1st Week) |                |                                     | Hay season commenced   |                       | 92/94  |               |
| Aug 29             |                |                                     |                        | Wet                   | 73   |               |
| Sept 5             |                | Uxbridge Circus and Wild Beast Show |                        |                       | 87am<br>77pm   |               |
| Sept 15            | Measles        |                                     | Harvesting             |                       |  |               |
| Sept 26            | Measles        |                                     | Gathering mushrooms    |                       | 100  |               |
| Sept 29            |                | Uxbridge Fair                       |                        |                       | 92am<br>85pm   |               |
| Sept 30            |                |                                     |                        | Heavy rain and floods |  |               |
| Oct                | Measles        |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| <b>1893</b>        |                |                                     |                        |                       |  |               |
| Jan 2-6            | Illness        |                                     |                        | Severe weather        | 83   |               |
| Feb 3-10           | Diphtheria     |                                     |                        |                       | Avg<br>100   |               |
| Feb 17             |                |                                     |                        |                       | Attendance still low   |               |

**Notes:** The last two columns contain the Headmaster's comments and numbers where given.  
Closure of the school for local elections not included.

| DATE        | ILLNESS                             | HOLIDAY  | WORK                                      | WEATHER                  | NO. PRESENT    | TOTAL ON ROLL |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| April 4     |                                     | Day after Bank Holiday Monday                              |   |                          | 94<br>Av 126   |               |
| May 15      | Measles                             |  |   |                          |                |               |
| May 23      |                                     | Day after Whit Monday                                      |   |                          | 104            |               |
| May 24      |                                     | Pinner   |   |                          | 108            |               |
| May 24      |                                     | Pinner Fair (Eastcote Children)                            |   |                          | 95 pm          |               |
| Sept 18     |                                     | Sangers Circus to Uxbridge                                 |   |                          |                |               |
| Sept 29     |                                     |  | Picking up acorns                         |                          |                |               |
| Oct 2, 9    |                                     |  | Picking up acorns and gathering mushrooms |                          |                |               |
| Oct 10      |                                     |  | Picking up acorns and gathering mushrooms |                          | 96             |               |
| Nov 2       |                                     |  |   | Wet                      | 73 am<br>83 pm |               |
| Nov 30      | Diphtheria – W. Clay, Scarlet fever |  |   |                          |                |               |
| Dec 8       | Illness                             |  |   |                          | Av 85          |               |
| Dec 11      | Illness                             |  |   |                          | 91             |               |
| Dec 15      | Illness                             |  |   |                          | Av 85          |               |
| Dec 20      |                                     |  |   | Rough and stormy         | 20             |               |
| <b>1894</b> |                                     |  |   |                          |                |               |
| Jan 26      | Illness                             |  |   |                          |                |               |
| Jan 29      |                                     | Tea at Ruislip Park  |   |                          | pm             |               |
| March 15    |                                     |  |   | Violent storm and floods | 12 most came   | am<br>pm      |
| June 13     |                                     | Annual Choral Festival of Uxbridge Deanery held at Ruislip |   |                          |                |               |
| June 15     |                                     |  | Harvesting commenced                      |                          |                |               |
| June 21     |                                     |  | Harvesting commenced                      |                          |                |               |
| Aug 7       |                                     | No reason given but day after hol.                         |   |                          | 71             | About 151     |
| Aug 23      |                                     |  |   | Rain                     |                |               |
| Sept 24     |                                     |  |   |                          | 93             |               |
| Oct 10      |                                     |  |   | Very wet                 | 93             |               |
| Oct 30      |                                     |  |   | Very wet                 | 88             |               |
| Oct 31      |                                     |  |   |                          | 79             |               |
| Nov 12      |                                     |  |   | Wet<br>All sent home     | 92 am<br>pm    |               |



# RUISLIP NATIONAL SCHOOLS Reasons for Absence 1890-1900 (cont.)

| DATE                  | ILLNESS   | HOLIDAY   | WORK | WEATHER                      | NO. PRESENT           | TOTAL ON ROLL  |
|-----------------------|---|---|------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Nov 13                |   |   |      | 1 or 2 roads impassable      | 70                    |                |
| Nov 14                |   |   |      | Roads at Eastcote impassable | 5 + 13<br>am<br>74 pm |                |
| Nov 15                |   |   |      | Roads at Eastcote Impassable |                       |                |
| Nov 30                | 'Friday attendances continue to be the worst of the whole week' |   |      |                              | 98                    |                |
| Dec 14                |   |   |      | Rain                         | 90                    |                |
| <b>1895</b><br>Jan 14 |   |   |      | Weather bad                  |                       |                |
| Jan 15                |   |   |      | Weather bad                  | 79 am<br>81 pm        |                |
| Jan 24                |   |   |      | Weather bad                  |                       |                |
| Jan 25                |   |   |      | Weather bad                  |                       |                |
| Jan 26                |   |   |      | Weather bad                  |                       |                |
| Feb 1                 |   |   |      | Snow                         | No school             |                |
| Feb 8                 |   |   |      | Weather bad                  |                       |                |
| Feb 25                | Colds/Influenza   |   |      |                              |                       |                |
| Feb 26                | Colds/Influenza   |   |      |                              | 94                    |                |
| Feb 28                | Chilblains  |   |      |                              | 88                    | 139            |
| Mar 4                 | Chilblains  |   |      |                              | 95                    |                |
| Mar 6                 | Illness   |   |      |                              | 106                   |                |
| Mar 7                 | Illness   |   |      |                              | 102                   |                |
| Mar 8                 | Illness/colds   |   |      |                              | 98                    | Week's Average |
| Mar 11                | Illness/colds   |   |      |                              |                       |                |
| Mar 12                |   |   |      |                              | 115                   |                |
| Mar 15                |   |   |      |                              | 111                   |                |
| Mar 27                |   |   |      | Very wet                     | 75 am<br>79 pm        |                |
| April 8               |   | Various reasons — list taken  |      |                              | 20 absent             |                |
| June 26               |   | Pinner Sports   |      |                              | Half holiday given    |                |
| Aug 13                | New school year   |   |      | Very wet                     | 59                    |                |
| Aug 16                |   | Day after outing to Hampton Court with Mrs Everett or their parents |      |                              | 98                    |                |
| Aug 22                |   |   |      | Heavy thunderstorms          | 67                    |                |

| DATE        | ILLNESS  | HOLIDAY   | WORK  | WEATHER             | NO. PRESENT                   | TOTAL ON ROLL |
|-------------|--|---|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Aug 26      |  |   |   | Heavy thunderstorms | 64                            |               |
| Aug 28      |  | Tea arranged by Mrs Hope in connection with Band of Hope  |   |                     | 106                           |               |
| Sept 12     |  |   | Gathering Blackberries                        |                     |                               |               |
| Sept 25     |  |   | Gathering Blackberries                        |                     |                               |               |
| Sept 26     |  |   | Gathering Blackberries                        |                     | 105                           |               |
| Sept 27     |  |   | Gathering Blackberries                        |                     | 101 am<br>93 pm               |               |
| Sept 30     |  |   | Gathering Blackberries                        |                     |                               |               |
| Oct 1       |  | Sangers Circus at Uxbridge<br>Jumble Sale at Eastcote   |   |                     | 75am<br>Half holiday given pm |               |
| Nov 5       |  |   |   | Wet                 | Poor                          |               |
| Nov 16      |  | Vicar gave out shoe club cards and children gone with parents to Uxbridge and Pinner to buy new boots |   |                     | 128 am<br>111 pm              |               |
| <b>1896</b> |  |   |   |                     |                               |               |
| Jan 17      | Colds and coughs   |   |   |                     | 102                           |               |
| Feb 17      | Colds and coughs younger children                                    |   |   |                     | Av<br>101.4                   |               |
| Feb 24      |  |   | Minding house while mothers at Eastcote Inst. |                     | 100                           |               |
| April 17    | Colds younger children   |   |   |                     |                               |               |
| May 1       |  | 'Owing to the day'  |   |                     | Few present                   |               |
| May 22      |  |   |   |                     | 96 am                         |               |
| June 5      |  | General holiday given   |   |                     |                               |               |
| June 29     |  |   | Hay (older boys)                              |                     |                               |               |
| July 1      |  | Pinner Sports (Eastcote children)   |   |                     | 76                            |               |
| July 17     | School closed for holiday  |   |   |                     |                               |               |
| Sept 2      |  |   |   | Very wet            | 48                            | 169           |
| Sept 12     |  |   |   |                     | 65                            |               |
| Sept 12     |  |   |   | Wet week            | 126                           | Av 161        |
| Sept 25     |  |   |   | Gale                | Av 121                        |               |
| Sept 29     | Excuses 'paltry in the extreme' Uxbridge Fair (school closed 3.05pm) |   |   |                     | 125 am<br>117 pm              |               |
| Oct 9       |  |   |   | Heavy rain          | 91                            |               |
| Oct 16      |  |   |   | Severe weather      | Av 122                        | 163           |
| Oct 23      |  | Circus at Uxbridge  |   |                     |                               |               |

# RUISLIP NATIONAL SCHOOLS Reasons for Absence 1890-1900 (cont.)

| DATE        | ILLNESS              | HOLIDAY  | WORK                | WEATHER  | NO. PRESENT     | TOTAL ON ROLL |
|-------------|----------------------|--|---------------------|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Nov 5       |                      | Half holiday   |                     |  |                 |               |
| Nov 20      |                      |  | Beating game (boys) |  |                 |               |
| Nov 25      |                      |  | Beating game (boys) |  |                 |               |
| Dec 4       |                      |  | Beating game (boys) |  |                 |               |
| Dec 18      |                      | 'Making purchases in Uxbridge'   |                     |  |                 |               |
| <b>1897</b> |                      |  |                     |  |                 |               |
| Jan 8       |                      |  |                     | Wet  | 100 am<br>88 pm | 171           |
| Feb 5       |                      |  |                     | Shockingly wet sent home   | 40              |               |
| Mar 3       |                      |  |                     | Floods out school closed pm  |                 |               |
| Mar 5       |                      |  |                     | Wet  | Av 134          | 169           |
| Mar 13      |                      |  |                     | Rain all night   | 22              |               |
| Mar 19      | Whooping cough       |  |                     |  | 126             | 170           |
| April 1     |                      |  |                     | Cold and sleety  | 73              | 170           |
| June 11     |                      |  |                     | Drenching morning  | 67              |               |
| Jun 21-28   |                      | Week's holiday to celebrate Diamond Jubilee<br>Ruislip Jubilee celebration ½ day holiday |                     |  |                 |               |
| June 28     |                      |  | Work in hayfields   |  | 150             | 172           |
| Sept 21     |                      | Chapel treat at Ruislip Common   |                     |  |                 |               |
| Sept 22     |                      | Sangers Circus at Uxbridge   |                     |  |                 |               |
| Sept 29     |                      | Uxbridge Fair  |                     |  | 129             | 173           |
| Oct 22      |                      | Pinner Circus  | Beating game        |  |                 |               |
| Nov 15      | Several children ill |  |                     | Wet and cold   |                 |               |
| Nov 24      | Several children ill |  |                     | Foggy and damp   |                 |               |
| Dec 8       | Several children ill |  |                     |  | 133             | 174           |
| Dec 10      | Great many ill       |  |                     |  | Av 141          | 173           |
| <b>1898</b> |                      |  |                     |  |                 |               |
| Mar 25      |                      |  |                     | Blinding snow storm and blizzard 'prevented us from making a school' |                 |               |
| June 24     |                      |  | In hayfields        |  | Av 154          | 182           |
| Aug 15      |                      | Chapel treat and visit to Hampton Court  |                     |  | 149             | 180?          |
| Sept 19     |                      | Uxbridge Circus  |                     |  | 128             | 183           |
| Sept 30     | Typhoid (Joels)      |  |                     |  |                 |               |

| DATE                  | ILLNESS                               | HOLIDAY                | WORK                                       | WEATHER                            | NO. PRESENT                 | TOTAL ON ROLL |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Oct 21                |                                       |                        |  | Very wet, drizzling                | Half infants away           |               |
| Oct 25                | List of absentees given with excuses  |                        | Beating game<br>Acorning                   |                                    | 12 boys away<br>5 boys away |               |
| Dec 2                 | Colds                                 |                        |  |                                    | Av 153                      | 178           |
| <b>1899</b><br>Jan 11 |                                       |                        | Beating (12 boys)                          |                                    |                             |               |
| Jan 12                |                                       |                        |  | Wet                                | 136                         | 176           |
| May 11                |                                       | Garland Day            |  |                                    |                             |               |
| May 15                |                                       |                        |  | Heavy rain                         | 57 away                     |               |
| May 24                |                                       | Pinner Fair            |  |                                    | 139<br>124                  |               |
| June 22               |                                       | Local treat            |  |                                    | 107                         | 178           |
| June 30               |                                       |                        | Haymaking                                  |                                    | Older boys away             |               |
| Aug 21                |                                       | 1st day after holidays |  |                                    | 30 away                     |               |
| Sept 1                |                                       |                        | Blackberrying and<br>mushrooming           |                                    |                             |               |
| Sept 18               |                                       | Circus at Uxbridge     |  |                                    | 71                          | 121           |
| Nov 10                |                                       |                        | Beating game                               |                                    |                             |               |
| Nov 23, 29            |                                       |                        | Beating game                               |                                    |                             |               |
| Dec 12                |                                       |                        |  | Very cold                          |                             |               |
| Dec 15                |                                       |                        |  | Slight snow                        |                             |               |
| <b>1900</b><br>Jan    | Colds and<br>influenza                |                        |  |                                    |                             |               |
| Jan 23, 31            |                                       |                        | Beating game (many older<br>boys)          |                                    |                             |               |
| Feb 14                |                                       |                        |  | Heavy snowstorm<br>(school closed) | 10                          |               |
| April 27              | Mumps and Scarlet<br>fever            |                        |  |                                    |                             |               |
| May 5                 | Mumps                                 |                        |  |                                    |                             |               |
| May 11                | Mumps                                 |                        |  |                                    |                             |               |
| June 8                | Mumps                                 |                        |  |                                    |                             |               |
| June 22               | Mumps decreased                       |                        | Haymaking (boys in field<br>girls at home) |                                    |                             |               |
| July 6                |                                       |                        |  |                                    | Attendance still<br>poor    |               |
| Oct 26                | Colds<br>Whooping cough               |                        |  |                                    |                             |               |
| Dec 7                 | Whooping cough<br>Scarlatina (1 case) |                        | Beating game                               |                                    |                             |               |

C. Cartwright

*The school Log Books present a view of schooldays in Ruislip at the turn of the century through the eyes of the headmaster. Denise Shackell has recorded conversations with a number of older Ruislip residents some of whom may have been, or knew, the children already mentioned. It is interesting to learn what they remember of their schooldays.*

## MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

*Denise Shackell*

These are extracts from tape recordings made by four Ruislip residents and one who lived elsewhere. They talk about their childhood and out of school activities, illustrating Celia Cartwright's research into the Ruislip National Schools Log Books.



*Mrs. Alice Hood*

The first speaker was **Mrs. ALICE HOOD**. Her maiden name was Weedon. She was born in 1898 and was 81 years old when recorded. She lived in Field End Farm, now demolished. Her father was an agricultural worker. Asked about chores she said:

“We all had to do chores. Coming home from school I had to get the morning's wood in, and fetch the milk from Sherley Farm across the road.

On Saturdays I had to clean the knives, clean the boots and shoes all before I went out to play. The knives were rubbed on an emery board until they shone, this sharpened them as well”.

On discipline at school:





*Field End Farm, the home of Mrs. Alice Hood. Drawing by Denise Shackell.*

“They used to get the cane from the headmaster. The teachers always had the cane in front of them on the desk. The children would be rapped over the knuckles with it if they weren’t good. Mr. Youens the headmaster used to actually thrash the boys sometimes. Some boys were most unruly, they used to live at Ruislip Common. If the headmaster used to hit one boy, his brother used to come and hit the headmaster. They used to frighten the other children nearly to death sometimes.”

Mrs Hood and her friends used to walk perhaps on Sunday afternoons when she was in her teens, across Clack fields, and over the road to New Years Green Lane to Denham. They stopped there and had a cup of tea, then walked home again. She said she didn’t know how they did it because it was such a long walk. “On winter evenings we would walk to Pinner Green and get a cup of cocoa at an old lady’s shop. She used to have an oil lamp on the table, this was before gas lamps. After

the cup of cocoa we would walk back to Ruislip just for the sake of walking”.



*Mrs. Kate Webb*

**Mrs. KATE WEBB**, seven years older than Mrs. Hood was 89 years old when the recording was made. She lived in Elsenham, Essex, a deeply rural area much as Ruislip was. It is interesting to compare other areas with Ruislip. She lived on a country estate where her father was head stockman in charge of a pedigree herd.

Wet weather was mentioned as a frequent reason for being absent from school. “In wet weather” Mrs. Webb said, “we wore capes but didn’t go out much in the rain, because of the problem of getting thick clothing wet”.

“We went for walks, go out picking blackberries, go looking for mushrooms. In those days they always kept chickens and a dog. The farm implements were so different that after they had cut the corn and reaped it, they’d leave an awful lot still on the ground and we’d go out gleaning for it. They would collect a lot of wheat or barley this way and put it into bags, to keep for the winter, to feed the chickens”.

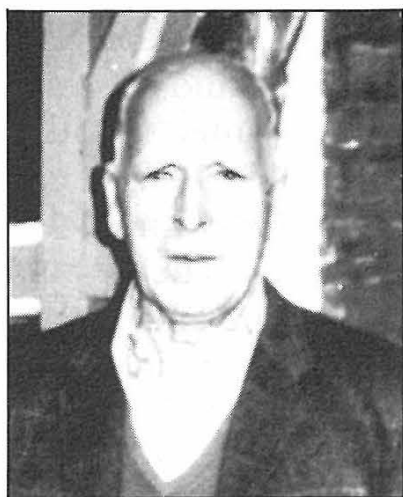


*Mrs. Lucy Hayward*

**Mrs. LUCY HAYWARD**. Her maiden name was Allen and her mother was a member of the Bell family. She was born in 1900 and was 81 years old when recorded. Born in a cottage at Down Barnes, she later lived in Ruislip village opposite the present Police Station. Her family was the poorest of those I have recorded.

They used to go wooding, acorning, blackberrying and mushrooming. They used to get up early in the morning and take a pram, mother, aunts, as well as the chil-

dren. Mr. Dick Ewer used to give them 4d or 5d a bushel for acorns. They used to go blackberrying for money. They didn't collect all these things for love, it used to buy the coal in "them's" days. It helped to contribute towards the family income. Her mother left her father when the children were quite young. She didn't get any family allowance and the father was not made to pay maintenance. They used to go mushrooming all over the fields where she now lives (in Shenley Avenue). She used to go thistle cutting with her brother, and earned about 4/- to keep down the weeds in the fields.



*Mr. Philip Tapping*

**Mr. PHILIP TAPPING** was born in 1913, much younger than the previous speakers. He lived in Eastcote village where his father was a wheelwright and his two uncles were blacksmiths. They worked in wooden sheds where a bungalow now stands, with the anvil from the original forge in the front garden. Although his father had plenty of work it was very hard for the family to manage on his earnings. Any extra cash earned by the children was always

welcomed.

The family cottage, known as Mr. or Mrs. Tapping's, High Road Eastcote, as it had no number, was spacious having a very large kitchen, 4 bedrooms, and a separate pantry where they washed in cold water daily. An outhouse had a copper in which they stood and were bathed once a week in hot water. Mr. Tapping remembers that his mother was very clean and that they all looked neat even though the children were dressed in "hand me down" clothing and they had to cram their feet into shoes that did not fit properly, thus deforming their toes. His father always had plenty of work but it was poorly paid.

Mr. Tapping was delicate as a child with a continuous cough, he was taken to Great Ormond Street Hospital in London several times. Bread and dripping was a regular part of his

diet, even though there was a garden at the back of the cottage where potatoes and other vegetables were grown as well as apples and other fruit. He says he never had bacon or eggs. As a child coming home from the school at Northwood, he called on Mr. Golding of Myrtle Farm in Joel Street where he used to help with the milkrounds. He also helped at weekends.

### *Beating in Eastcote Woods*

While still at school, on Saturdays Mr. Tapping would go to the keeper, Mr. Alf Watts' house in Coteford Close, dressed in leather gaiters and an old coat. He would get a stick and with a group of others he would go beating in the woods. The pheasants and rabbits would run so that they could be shot. This was done once a week throughout the winter months, after the pheasants, bred in pens by the keeper's house, had reared their young, and been released in the woods. There was one central path through the woods at this time. They would beat one side of the path first, leave the pheasants and rabbits already shot in the "pride" then beat the other side. The payment for each Saturday was 10/-, a bottle of lemonade, a piece of cheese and a loaf of bread. They were never given a pheasant or a rabbit.

They looked forward to Christmas when they put up a stocking and if they got an apple and an orange, they were lucky. The Christmasses became better as the children began to earn money to bring home. He was given as a child 1d. a week for sweets. He remembers the Lido freezing solid on two occasions when hundreds of people went on the ice.

### *Local Deliveries*

Mr. Lucas the greengrocer made deliveries and Mr. Tapping "would go with him to help in the evenings just for something to do. Other deliveries were made by Peters the baker of Pinner, who used a high box cart on two wheels. There was Warboys the butcher of Northwood; he had a box cart with a back flap and Finch the fishmonger. All would come first on a tradesmen's bike to get orders then they would return later

with the orders in a cart. Deliveries were brought to all houses, not just to the large ones. Westacotts Farm in Field End Road had a barn with two big doors where pigs were reared. The pigs used to cross the road where the memorial now stands, and rolled about in the muddy pond. There were sheep in the fields where Abbotsbury Gardens now is. It was very flat country as far as the eye could see.

Field End Road where it leaves the junction with Bridle Road wound its way towards Eastcote Station. It was lined on either side by large elm trees. In wet weather when the leaves were falling, this section was filthy. The road went behind what is now Bishops where there was a big house called Devonshire Lodge, now demolished.”

### *A Vacation*

When he was ten years old a new baby was expected in his home. The school authorities decided his mother needed a rest so he and his sister Mabel were sent away to All Saints, Eastbourne, to a home run by nuns. Here he caught scarlet fever and was sent to the fever hospital where he stayed for six weeks. When he came out he convalesced at one of the nurse’s homes until he was fit enough to return home.

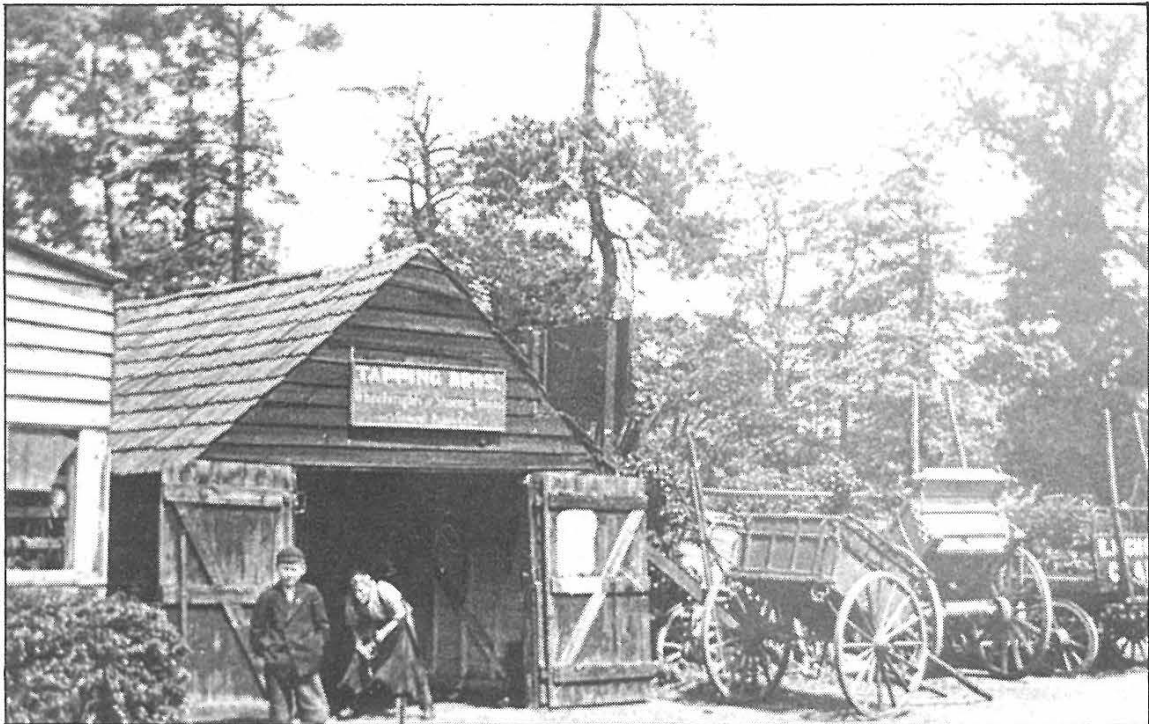
### *Work*

On leaving school he went to work as a milkroundsman at Myrtle Farm. He got up at 4.30 a.m. and went to the farm. In summer he would go into the field to get the three horses, feed them, harness them to the three milk floats with their milk churns and measuring jugs. On the first round he went along Eastcote Road to Sharps Lane, while the other two floats were taken elsewhere. He went back to the farm and had breakfast at his home. Then he went on a second round, back to the farm to wash up everything. Every two to three weeks the horses were taken to the forge to be shod. At 5.30 p.m he had to go to Brown’s Farm at Northwood for more milk. If the weather was dry he took a short cut through a gate by the ‘Woodman’ and across the field to Fore Street. If it was wet he went all the way





*The Tapping's childhood home, now demolished.* Helen Hoare Collection



*Tapping Bros. Wheelwright and Shoeing Smiths.* Helen Hoare Collection

round via Joel Street. He would be lucky if he was back home by 6.00 p.m. He worked seven days a week and was paid 15/- to £1 when he first started.

Once he got an afternoon off and he decided to go to the pictures at Harrow. He never got there, his mother found him fast asleep on his bed all dressed up and with his cap on.

“When the blacksmith’s forge was in full swing they shod forty horses a week; milk horses from Robarts farm, Pauls of Ruislip and Saich’s of Ickenham; big horses from Clarks at the Plough, a contractor who hired them out for building work. Harry Neil the builder from Northwood had shire horses used for tip carts. These had a pin, which when released made the cart tip up and the load fall out. On one occasion the big pond at the corner of Fore Street was being filled in. The cart was taken too near the edge of the pond, when the pin was pulled, the cart tipped up and the horse went in with it and was drowned.”

His blacksmith uncles also made iron gates, weather vanes and went out repairing house guttering. They made tin plates, which fitted into fireplace chimneys, these were pulled back when the chimneys were swept. They burnt away and needed replacing. Tin chimneys were also made. Later they went to the races and to stables cold shoeing the horses, fitting aluminium shoes. This took them far away from Ruislip.

His father, a wheelwright, repaired carts needing new tyres. The old worn iron tyre was easily removed, the ‘fellies’ were then repaired and put on the spokes. When he had ten or twelve tyres ready, he would take them to the ‘Plantation’ where there was a large round iron frame with a hole in the middle, the iron hoops were put on top of this and covered with wood. This was set alight and left until the hoops were red hot. The wheel was placed on a platform nearby. Three men would hook out one red hot tyre and put it onto the wheel where it was knocked into position. Mr. Tapping as a boy would then pour water from a can onto the wheel to cool it down. Nails were then put in to hold the tyre in position. This work was also done in batches.

Mr. Tapping's nephew was in a London museum once looking at carts and on close inspection he saw that a haycart had his grandfather's name plate on it, 'Tapping Brothers'.

One of Mr. Tapping's aunts did dressmaking in Eastcote making garments for the people living in the bigger houses. Sometimes she would employ five or six girls to help her. One of his sisters went away to work 'in service', two others worked in service locally, returning home each night. Two brothers went to live in Australia, one brother worked for Lady Warrender as a bootboy at Haydon Hall\* (sic), later moving to Belgravia where he rose to become a butler.

One of his uncles had a sweet shop in Eastcote. In summer they served teas to day trippers in the garden behind the shop.

Opposite the blacksmith's forge was a field where Mrs. Combs ran the Cromwell Cricket Club in summer. Men with great big beards came down from London to play. Mr Tapping took a quart of cream to Haydon Hall where Capt. Bennett Edwards provided cricket club teas. In winter the Eastcote Football Club used the field.

In Joel Street near where the tennis courts are now, was a barn in which was kept a landau. Mr. Wright the coachman would take Capt. Bennett Edwards and Sir John Anderson of Griffenhurst‡ (sic) to and from the station each day. Mrs. Wright, his wife, would act as caretaker at Haydon Hall when Mrs Bennett Edwards and her niece were away taking with them their German butler and his wife the cook. Mr. Tapping remembers that straw was put on the road outside Mrs. Wright's cottage when she was in her final illness.

The Black Horse Inn had stables where the horses were changed on the brake which came from London and went on to Ascot Racecourse. The horses were also changed on the return journey. Day trippers were taken by brake from the Cavendish Pavilion to the Black Horse Inn or to the Ship, where games were held on the field behind.

\* Lady Warrender lived at Highgrove House, not Haydon Hall.

‡ Griffinhurst (now demolished) stood on the corner of Bridle Road and Field End Road. Sir John Anderson lived at Eastcote Place, not Griffinhurst.

After the war Mr. Tapping worked as a gardener at Lady Anderson's house in Eastcote, where the garden was famous for its rhododendrons. Five gardeners were employed. He finished his working life as head gardener at Northwood College.



*Miss Joan Braybrooke*

**Miss JOAN BRAYBROOKE** born in 1915, only two years younger than Mr. Tapping. Her family was one of the earliest to move to Ruislip from London. She lived in Frog Lane (Fore Street) in one of the Ruislip Manor Cottage Society houses. Her recording reveals the more enquiring minds of the new Ruislip residents. This extract emphasizes the overlap of the old and new ways.

The walk from Eastcote Station to her home in Fore Street after the Pantomime was a very long walk. She was the eldest. She had twin brothers who used to take it in turns to have a 'piggy back', but she had to walk all the way. Once they left Eastcote Station there were no more buildings until they got down to the farm where the barn has now been restored opposite Eastcote Library. There were tall poplar trees that met overhead. She can remember the rustling of those trees in the dark eerie night. They walked along to the pond, where the war memorial is now, there was no fence round it, so that they had to be very careful to walk round and not in it.

According to everyone else, her mother underdressed her children. As a child all she wore was a vest, knickers and a dress; if the dress was particularly thin a petticoat, socks or just sandals.

Once, as children will, after investigating the clothes of other children, and what one particular girl had on, she can remember coming home and relating to her mother that she had on a flannel petticoat, a white petticoat, then a dress. It was a hot day too.

Mrs. Heinman started up a Women's Institute for local people, where the infants school is in Fore Street. That was originally built as a community centre, it wasn't built as a school. It had lots of classes that her mother went to, and she got a lot of education that way.

Mrs. Hayward and Mr. Tapping, members of the poorest families said they had little time for fun, whereas Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Webb both from farming families told me of pleasant social activities. Their family income supplemented by garden produce was sufficient to feed and clothe the family adequately, leaving them spare time for social amusement.

Miss Braybrooke's horizons were much wider, including trips to London not just to Harrow and Uxbridge, the limit of most old Ruislip families. Work such as that mentioned by all the others played no part in her childhood at all.

*These reminiscences revealed the differences of life style between the newcomers to Ruislip and the indigenous population. An earlier group of newcomers who moved into Field End Villas in the middle of the last century must have had a significant influence on the area. Karen Spink gives an interesting account of this early development in Eastcote.*

## FIELD END VILLAS EASTCOTE

*Karen Spink*

When I moved into a Victorian house in Field End Road, Eastcote about three years ago, I was surprised that so little was known about it. Our predecessors thought it was 140 years old, which did not seem quite right, and local knowledge, including W. Kemp's 'The History of Eastcote', suggested it was late Victorian.