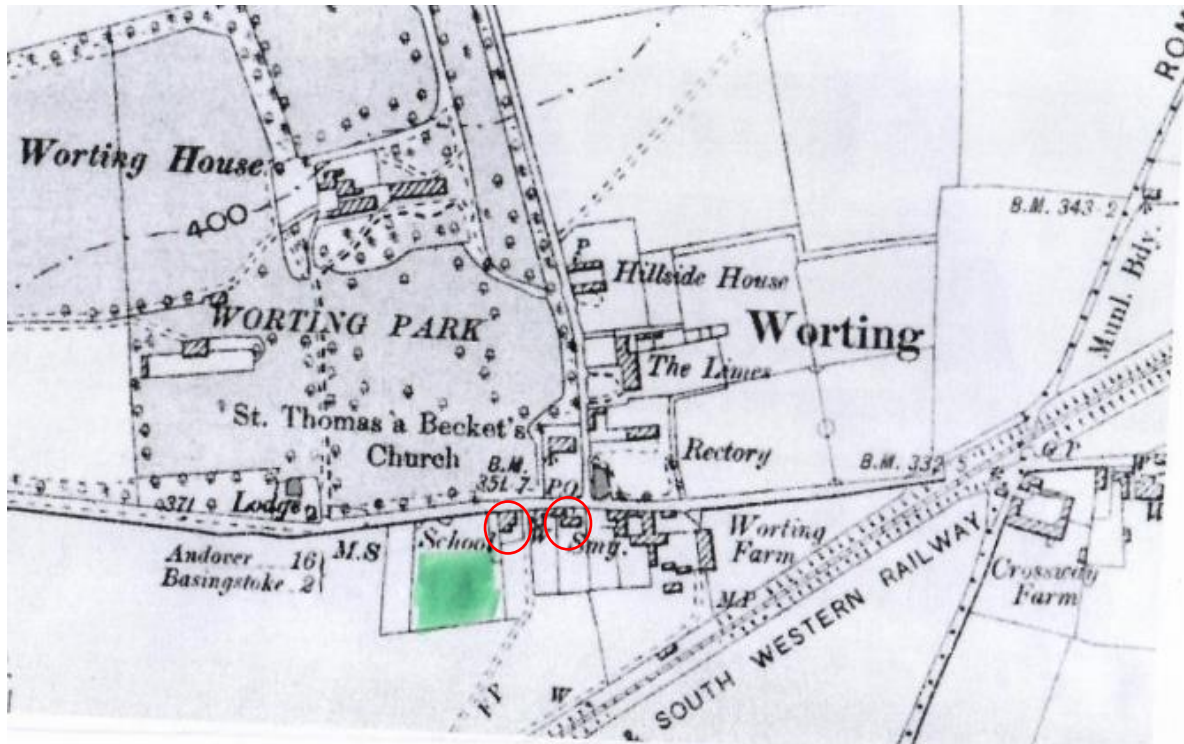


Worting School 1855 - 2004

Presented by Kathleen Frewin

The first known school was in the North West grounds of St Thomas of Canterbury Church, nothing is left of it today. Rev Lovelace Bigg- Wither , a member of the Bigg-Wither family of Manydown was a prominent landowner who lived in the beautiful grounds of Tangier Park. He provided funds to build a new school which still stands today, made of brick and flint and standing on the south side of the Andover -Basingstoke road opposite the church.



The new school building stands opposite the church. The Post Office is to the east, between the school and the smithy.

The 1859 Post Office Directory states the building, constructed in 1855, cost £300.00. The school was built of brick and flint. There were two large rooms with living quarter at the back of one of them. It went on to have further extensions to increase its size over the next 50 years.

The population of Worting at that time was 335 and would average 70 pupils who would be attending the school aged from 4-14 years.

The school day would start at 9 am and at 12 o'clock the children would go home for their lunch, returning again from 2-4pm. If there was a funeral planned the school hours would be adjusted. Many of the children lived in the area but if the weather was bad or they were needed at home they wouldn't return after lunch.



Worthing school

1855 - 1930

Nigel Smith

The first recorded school mistress was in the 1851 census; Harriet Reynold aged 20 years and at this time she was in lodgings at the post office on Worthing Road. The post office building no longer exists - replaced in the last quarter of the 20th century.



The Old Post Office

Robert Brown
collection, 1960s

The school Log Book records the reality of rural schools in the 19th century, noting when children failed in arithmetic, a measles outbreak is reported, and when pupils were off school to help with harvest or digging up potatoes, and helping their mothers with sick children.

Stoves were used to heat these classrooms, with the fireguards draped with the wet clothes of the children if the weather was wet. A report from the Sanitary Officer in 1866 follows:

Excerpt from a Sanitary Officer's Report 1866

Worting School

The National School situated in this parish I consider to be inadequate in point both of size and ventilation to the requirements of the numbers of children attending (average 70).

Cubic space is little over 15,000 feet. Thus, each child has only 216 cubic feet of space. Ventilation is provided by two small zinc ventilators at each gable end, and there are five windows of which however only one pane in each (14 x 26 inches) can be opened. The position of the privy is also open to objection. It is within 8 feet of the passage leading to the classroom and on the occasion of my visit I found the atmosphere sensibly tainted by the effluvia arising from this source.

The well supplying the school and several cottages in its immediate vicinity contains water which on examination I find to be strongly impregnated with organic impurity. This I attribute to the presence of an immense quantity of dead snails of which I found no less than eighteen in a bucketful drawn up for me. [The] average mortality, 23 per thousand, [is] very high for a village.

It is not known what effect the report had; the school continued in these buildings until the 20th century.

Miss Anne Drinkwater held the position of Headmistress at this school for a period of 37 years from 1861 until 1898. Her living quarters were at the back of the classrooms, she had trained in the Teachers Training Collage in Salisbury, the first one opened for Women only, the aim being to give poorer children a better education. Her mother Jemima also came to live with her. Anne was a well-liked teacher and when she retired in 1898 the Hants and Berks Gazette carried a piece reporting an address from scholars past and present thanking her for her long and faithful service in the cause of education.

Mr & Mrs Benwell took over the running of the school in 1904 so it is probable that the following school photograph includes Mr Benwell.



Worting school in 1909.

Following the Education Act in 1920 which stated that every child from the age of 11 years could no longer continue their education in village schools, It was decided that a new council school would be built to accommodate the increase in the number of children attending.



Senior pupils of the 'Old School' before moving to the 'New School'

Plans were passed in 1929 for a new school to be built on land adjoining Old Kempshott Lane, there were to be three classrooms each taking 40 pupils each, with a note that a future extension could be added taking 40 more children. A folding partition would be used to divide the space.

The school would be heated by coke stoves, one in each corner of the classrooms , outside toilets and no kitchen ,so the children would either return home or bring sandwiches at lunchtime .

Desks were arranged in rows and children taught in standards 1-7 so they would be taught together but work at their own pace.

The following table of head Teachers is taken from the publication 60 Glorious Years which recorded the history and memories of the school in its middle phase 1930 - 1990.

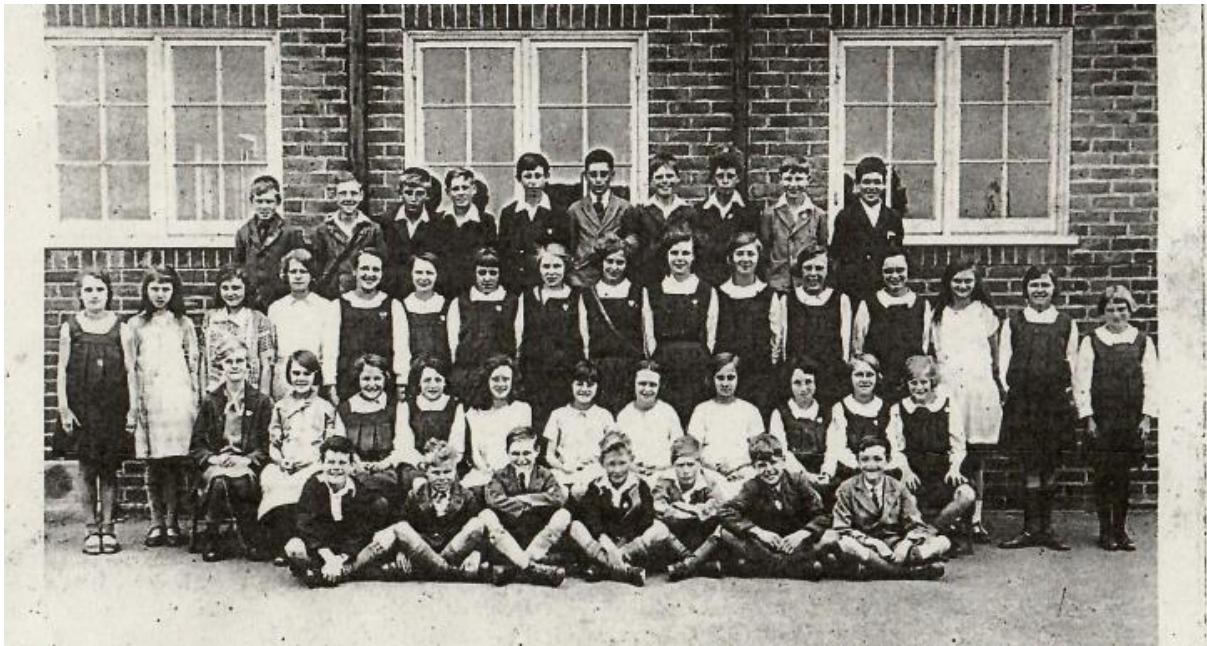
THE HEADTEACHERS OF WORTING SCHOOL

Mr. S. Smith	29th April 1930-22nd July 1932
Miss A. Cannon	29th August 1932-30th September 1932
Miss Amy Isgar	3rd October 1932-11th November 1932 (Miss Isgar died on 23rd November 1932)
Miss E. Davies	24th November 1932-13th April 1933
Miss A. Prettitt	24th April 1933-22nd December 1938
Mrs. M. E. Chant	10th January 1939-5th April 1939
Miss Jarvis	17th April 1939-20th December 1967
Miss Tinley	21st December 1967-22nd April 1968
Mr. S. Blundy	23rd April 1968-4th September 1968 (on 4th September Mr Blundy became Head of the junior school until July 1990)
Mrs. J. Smith	4th September 1968-19th December 1985 (Mrs Smith was the first Head of Worthing County Infants School)
Mrs. V. Peacock	6th January 1986-31st August 1986 (Acting Headteacher)
Mrs. J. Ballard	1st September 1986-present
Mr. M. Ryves	Headteacher Junior School September 1990

Mr Stanley H Smith was the Headmaster from 1930-1932 when the new school first opened and he used his experiences from his life in the army to teach the children. He changed the school from being a very strict church school to a more relaxed and happy place. Worthing School had both a good cricket and football team with many boys going on to play for their village.



The 1930 Worthing School football team with Mr. Smith.



Senior class 1930

Miss Jarvis became Headmistress in 1939 just at the start of hostilities and took the school through the Second World War..

Born in 1907 Miss Jarvis had experienced the First World War and became Headmistress at the age of 32 yrs. She was highly regarded by staff and pupils but a bit like marmite , loved or disliked .She retired after 28 years service with the school in 1967.

As the Hampshire Telegraph reported on 29th December 1939, the school took some evacuees from Portsmouth. The children were taken in by local people, who also provided them with warm clothing and footwear for the coming winter weather.



The school children were asked to Dig for Victory and plant vegetables to help with the food shortage with the front of the school made into a vegetable plot, where the children weeding and caring for the produce.

During 1947 there was really bad weather and due to the trains being unable to collect the coal from the mines the school had to shut for a month, having outside toilets meant that these would also freeze and the children would have even more time off school.



Two views of Worthing school , in 1930 as a brand new building viewed from the south east, and in the early 1960s before the chimneys were removed and an extension added, viewed from the north west. Courtesy Owen Blissett

The 1960s saw around 209 children at this school and there were now 6 classes. New estates were being built in western Basingstoke, such as Buckskin and Kempshott with more families moving into the area. Plans were made to build a new junior school which would be built on part of Buckskin Farm land and would become Chilton School. These plans would see the old Worthing School become the Infants School and Chilton as the Junior School. Miss Jarvis retired after 28 years' service with Worthing School.

During the time of the building Mr Blundy who was appointed the Headmaster of the new Chilton School and Mrs Joan Smith the new headmistress of the Worthing Infants School shared an office and very cramped conditions. Finally, in 1968, the new school was ready and the old Worthing School now closed as a primary school and became the Infants school.

With lots of houses now planned for Kempshott a PTA committee was formed by parents and with the help of the local MP David Mitchell. The parents fought for the local children of Kempshott to be given their own school, with a lot of hard work the new school was approved and this opened in 1972 as a primary school.

The Worting School reached a milestone in 1990 when they decided to celebrate the 60 year of its history with a Jubilee week. All the children in both schools would come together to mark the special event, a committee was formed of both staff and parents and ideas were put forward so that the pupils both past and present could come together and remember and celebrate their time at Worting School. It was a great success enjoyed by the children who also got to meet the pupils of the past, a book was written by the Jubilee Committee which is still available to read in the Basingstoke Library.

It was decided that the old Worting Infants School building would close in 2004 and a new Infants section be added to Chiltern Primary. The land and old buildings were sold to David Wilson Homes who would build houses on the site. Although a covenant was placed on the old school building which would be sympathetically converted to housing, it was subsequently demolished and new houses stand on the site.

School demolition provokes outrage

AN OLD school building with heritage value has been knocked down without permission – provoking Basingstoke's MP to launch a verbal broadside against the developer.

David Wilson Homes received permission in July 2006 to convert the former Worting Infant School, in Old Kempshott Lane, Basingstoke, into three houses and build a further 45 houses in the school grounds.

Under the plans, the old school building should have been retained and converted. However, it has instead been demolished – and the developer is now drawing up plans to rebuild it as part of the conversion process.

After viewing the space where the old school building should still be, MP Maria Miller accused the developer of "running roughshod" over the planning process.

Mrs Miller blasted: "This developer has no sympathy with the local community at all."

She added: "Developers are changing the face of Basingstoke and if they don't share our vision, and it seems this developer doesn't, then we shouldn't let it continue."

Basingstoke Heritage Society secretary Debbie Beavell thought the original school building dated from about 1920.

"It's sad it's gone," she said. "To keep something that's part of the community gives a development a bit of variety a bit of texture."

Hampshire county councillor Stephen Reid and Basingstoke and Deane borough

By David Connop Price

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councillor Robert Taylor are furious at the developer's actions.

Cllr Taylor, who represents Buckskin, said: "The demolition took place without warning and so quickly that it was impossible for anyone to intervene."

The school used to belong to Hampshire County Council and the councillors believe its demolition appears to breach a covenant placed on the developer.

Cllr Reid, who represents Basingstoke North West, said: "The point of trying to save the old building is that it was an old building – it had its scars and warts and all. To put up a new building is to miss the point."

"We have knocked down too much of our heritage and we wanted to keep this little bit."

He called on county and borough councils to take legal action against the developer.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, which approved the planning application, said it was not informed of the developer's intention to demolish the building before it happened.

Hampshire County Council confirmed it incorporated a restrictive covenant requiring the purchaser of the school site, which became surplus to requirements in 2006, not to demolish the building but to convert it to residential use.

Continued on page two

'This developer has no sympathy with the local community at all'

MP Maria Miller



● **RIGHT (from left):** Councillor Stephen Reid, Hampshire county councillor for Basingstoke North West, Councillor Robert Taylor, borough councillor for Buckskin, and MP Maria Miller outside the building site at the former Worting Infant School

Pic by Sarah Gaunt