

Barton School

The school was built on land given by the Prestons. Rev Poole took religious study here every morning. Starting with slates and pencils the children learned to use a copybook style of writing. The school leaving age was fourteen and all the children stayed at the school until that age.



Sam Chapman, the miller had two daughters, Eva and Gladys. Gladys was taxi driver Dick Yaxley's mother. The girls attended the village school and while Gladys was there she became a pupil teacher and then progressed to be the teacher in the infants room. Mrs Yaxley started as a pupil teacher when she was eighteen. There were about 30 infants in the class, "Standard One", from four years old to seven – or eight if they were slow learners. They all learnt reading, writing and their tables and rules of arithmetic, before moving up.

It was noted in the Parish Magazine that in October 1916 Assistant teacher Miss Charlotte Pigott left to teach in Kent. (She returned to Barton to be an infant teacher in the mid-30s)

Absenteeism was rife, with days off for Ingham fair, shooting matches, beating for shooting parties, acorning, blackberrying, turnip picking, caring for members of the family and gleaning at harvest time.

In the parish magazine for 1915 it was stated that the children from the school collected and sold acorns to obtain funds to buy eggs for the wounded soldiers at Hoveton Hall.

The children had to walk to school twice a day in all weathers. All the Barton children walked to the school in School Lane, from the staithe, Pennygate and from near to Neatishead Street. They used to go home at dinnertime and back again in the afternoon.

There were no school meals but in the wintertime, when it was snowy children took sandwiches to eat at school by the fire. People paid if they kept a child at home on school days.

Children behaved well at school. The Headmistress kept them all in order but the cane was not often used. A boy was not allowed to be rude or unkind to any girl. Children all used to line up at the door and march into school. They had slates to write on and slate pencils to write with. They used to have sand trays at the school, the sand was a bit dampish and you could write or draw on it with something like a skewer.

The closet at the school was of the bucket and chuck it system.

All the school children had a half holiday on Shrove Tuesday. They came out of school at 12 o'clock and had pancakes for dinner with syrup. They then ran down the road to watch the Sparrow Shoot and Ploughing Match

Very few children had bicycles in those days. The children played marbles, whip tops, Diablo and conkers. Sometimes they had a hoop which they used to take to school. Children used to paddle and swim in the dykes in the marshes in Pennygate as there were hard bottoms in places and freshwater springs.

Scholarships were available to North Walsham

The school was also used as a Polling Station and for other meetings and social events.

The Parish Magazine notes that in 1916 a concert was held in the school attended by 140 which made £5.13s 0d for serving village men. Each parcel contained a warm vest, socks, mittens, cigarettes, soap, bootlaces, notepaper, pencils and handkerchiefs

In the summer a tea party for all the children was held at the Hall. There was also a Sunday School held in an upstairs room at the Hall. This extract about the Sunday School is from The Waxham Rural Deanery magazine of April 1917

The Sunday School Treat for Barton was held at the Vicarage. During the evening, magic lantern slides were shown to the great amusement of the children. Prizes for regular attendance were awarded to Eva Chapman, Blanche Rose, Doris Chapman, Kathleen Cox, Edith Shepherd, Alfred Cox, Reginald Cox, James Yaxley, Keith Nuttall, Percy Yaxley and Joseph Shepherd.

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Barbara Pilcher, August 2014

Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf Community Heritage Group