

100 years of history viewed through the log books of Kildwick School (1872 - 1971)

During the summer term of 1997 Kildwick School held an open day to celebrate the building of a new classroom. The celebrations included an exhibition of old photographs of the school and selected items from the school's log book. This material now forms part of the History Group's archive.

The school log book entries provide an interesting view of the history of the village, reflecting the concerns of the teachers and pupils.

1872 - Trouble at Junction Mill ?

Compulsory full-time education between the ages of 5 and 15 came into effect with the 1944 Education Act. Prior to that it was not unusual for children to attend school on a part-time or half-time basis. When not at school, children would be expected to work, either on farms or in industry.

It appears from the logs that in 1872 Junction Mill was idle for some time in September and that, at that time, children of mill workers who would normally attend school on a part-time basis were absent. Some of them made up the time lost by attending full-time for a while afterwards.

1872	
Sept 2-6	Many of the Junction half-timers attended whole days this week to make up time lost during the time the Mill was standing.
Sept 10	Junction Mill again standing on Thursday and Friday - Some of half-timers absent in consequence.

Could it be that while the mill was idle the children were employed cleaning the machinery ?

It does seem that there was a strong connection between mill work and part-time schooling. The following log entry (also from 1872) illustrates how a child might have to change their place of employment and, consequently, have to change school.

1872 11-18	In consequence of Junction Mill running short time, several of their half-timers have left and gone to Eastburn Mill and School, this considerably reducing <u>our averages</u> .
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1892 - A new classroom

13. VI. 92	School assembled after Whitsuntide holidays Building of new class room began to day
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Remarkably, our archive includes a photograph (one of our very earliest) of the classroom being built. It's not very good quality, but here it is - enhanced as far as we possibly can.



1899 - Typhoid epidemic closes the school

In late 1898 and early 1899 a serious outbreak of typhoid struck Kildwick, leaving 10 people dead and a further 40, many of them pupils at the school, hospitalised. One of the sources of infection was traced to the water trough adjacent to the school gates, shown in the photograph below, and it is likely that this is how many of the children became infected.



On January 22nd 1899 Ascough Rodwell, the surveyor for Skipton council, disconnected the water supply to the village; and the following day the Medical Officer of Health ordered the school to be closed.

1899
Jan. 23rd closed school by order of M.O.H. owing to an epidemic of Typhoid Fever.
April 10th opened school, after the fever, number present 69. Last years average being 107.

From the log book it can be seen that the school did not re-open until April 10th, by which time the epidemic had passed but, perhaps unsurprisingly, not all the parents were keen to let their children return immediately.

Note: There is a series of articles on the Kildwick typhoid epidemic on our website.

1901 - Death of Queen Victoria

On the evening of 22nd January 1901 Queen Victoria died after a reign of 63 years, seven months and two days.



This event was recorded in a black-edged entry in the school log the following day.

1901
Jan^y 23. Reference was made in school to the death of beloved Queen ^{on the day previous (22nd).} & Miss Spencer played the Dead March the children meanwhile standing at attention. The reading lesson was from the papers dealing with the sad news.

1904 - A sad accident

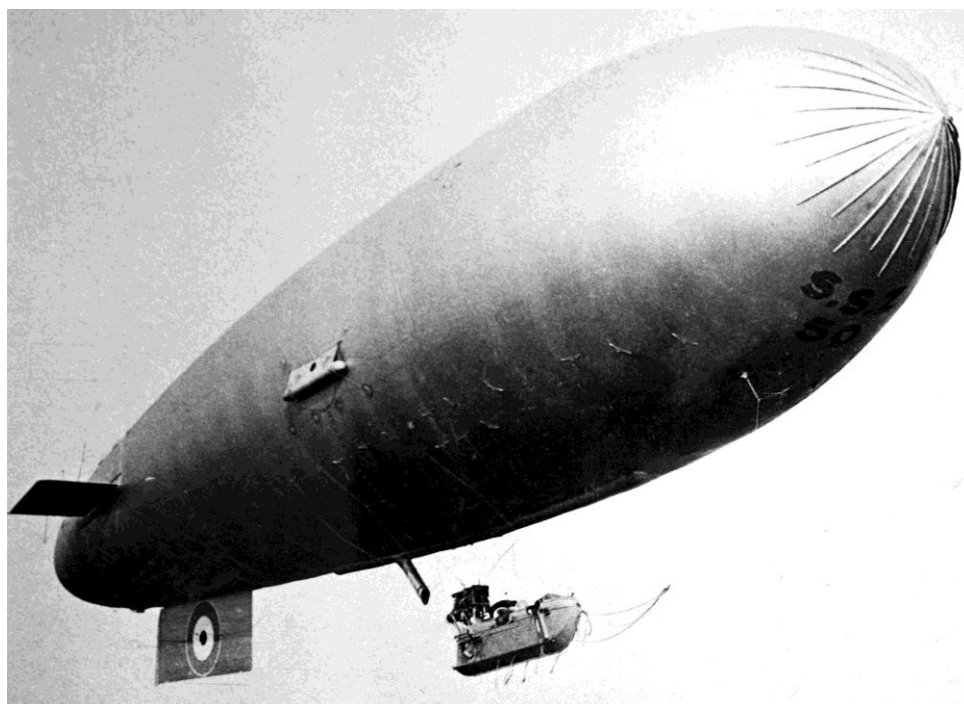
From the log entry for September 1904.

"21st. The best teacher was out of school for half an hour this afternoon, attending the funeral of Harold Knipston, one of the scholars of this school, who was found drowned in the canal on Sunday last.

1918 - A glimpse of war

It must have been an exciting morning when a pair of airships passed over the school.

1918
March 13. The children were allowed out of school for a few minutes this morning to watch two Royal Air Ships pass overhead.



The photograph shows Royal Naval airship SSZ50 which, together with its sister ship, SSZ51, overflew Farnhill and Kildwick in March 1918.

Note: There is a short piece about the appearance of these and a much more famous airship over Farnhill and Kildwick on our website.

1918 – Armistice Day



Norman Green, who lived in Farnhill, was 12 in 1918 and in his last year at Kildwick school. Written in 1970, here are his recollections of Armistice Day, November 11th 1918:

The Armistice was a tremendous relief to everyone after all the losses and near starvation for over 4 years and I was still at school. The signing was expected at 11:00am on November 11th 1918 and just before 11:00 I was dispatched by the Headmaster to a Coal Merchant's office about a quarter mile away to await a telephone message. After receiving a message that the Armistice had been signed I ran back to school with the news but long before I got back all the factory hooters in Farnhill, Junction and Sutton were blowing, so my journey was an anticlimax. The factories blew their whistles (steam) so long that there was not enough steam left to run the mill and they were closed down for the day and all the schools closed too.

Here's the school log entry for that day.

Nov 11. School reopened today after closure for four days. About 90 children were present this morning. News of the signing of the Armistice reached school this morning about 11-30 am. Children sang "All people that on earth do well" & gave lusty cheers. They were dismissed early. In the afternoon extra play was given & the children decorated the school. The Union Jack was displayed on the school.

1920 - A gift of land

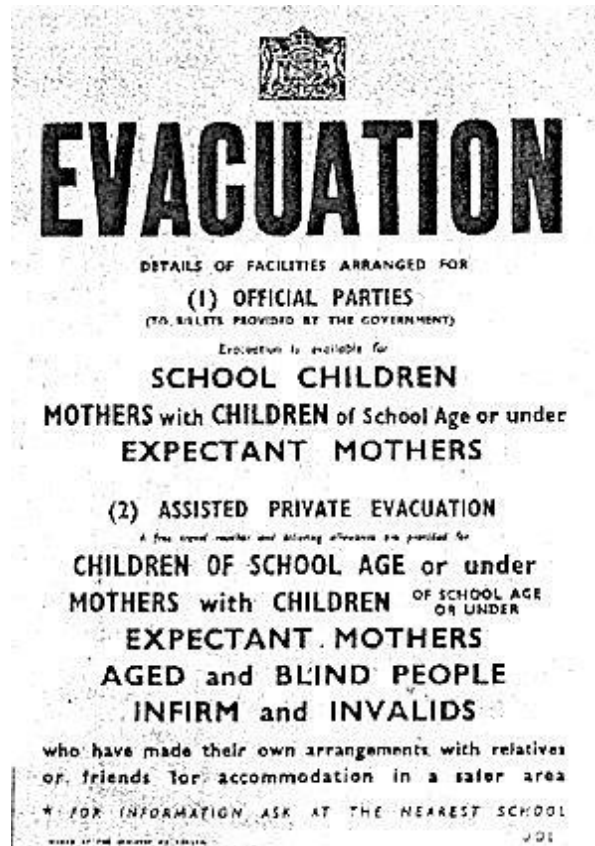
The field opposite was gifted to the school for use as a girls' play area and recreation ground by Colonel Wilson, the owner of the Kildwick Estate.

1920
Jan 23. The Rev. Mr. Hodge & Mr. Broughton agent for Colonel Wilson this afternoon & to the they inspected the piece of ground given by Colonel Wilson for a girls' play ground & recreation ground. The ground covers about an acre & is opposite the school.

The field would later become known as the [Peggy Wilson Playing field](#), in memory of Col. Wilson's daughter Margaret who died, aged 18, in 1912.

1939 - Outbreak of WWII

In September 1939 the school was preparing for the anticipated arrival of evacuees.



In the event, no mass evacuation happened although some families did come to Farnhill and Kildwick later.

1939

Sep. 4th

On account of outbreak of war with Germany (Sunday Sep. 3rd) school has been closed for 1 week. According to present arrangements no evacuees are coming to Kildwick or Farnhill. Teachers are reporting at school each morning at 9 am to attend to anything that may arise, and children who want milk attend at 10 am.

1939

Sep. 6th Mr Priestley, the Authority's Liaison Officer, and the Divⁿ clerk, met the Headmaster and Staff this afternoon to discuss any necessary arrangements, but as there are no evacuated children, the school will carry on under normal conditions on re-opening on Monday Sep. 11th.

Note: There is an article about WWII evacuees and POWs in Farnhill and Kildwick on our website.

Arrangements were also made for air-raid protection. They don't sound as if they would have been very effective.

1939

Sep. 18th A.R.P. Arrangements. In the case of air raid warning whilst school is in session, children who are within easy reach of home or home of relatives are to go - remaining children, 18 in number are to be accommodated in the small room at West end of the school.

1946 - A rocky start for a new Head Mistress

Margaret Watson started as head mistress in November 1945, taking over from the well-regarded Edgar Auty. Almost a year later the school was inspected and the Inspector's report suggests that things were less than happy at the school. Here is the first page of his report.

Report received from Mr Black. H. M. & I
on 13th January.

Inspected on 31st October 1946.

The Head Mistress of this unorganised village school was appointed in November 1945, this being her first post of sole responsibility. She took the place of a Head Master who had been in charge for nearly 20 years.

The 80 children now in attendance are housed in cramped and ancient premises which have long outlived their usefulness and are now lacking many modern and necessary educational facilities. In consequence, though much painstaking work is done here, the more formal aspects of the children's training are given an undue emphasis, especially where the younger children are concerned. Written English, in particular, suffers from the fact that it is not spontaneous enough.

The Head Mistress has made a promising beginning and there are already signs that some of her original

Margaret Watson remained as head mistress until 1953.

1959 - A headmaster makes a sad farewell

We have only one log entry from the time that Gordon Bottomley was headmaster - it's a rather sad farewell.

This is my last entry in this log before leaving to take up duty as Headmaster of Bramham C.E. School, near Wetherby. I leave with great regret, having spent seven very happy years here. My successor will find an excellent assistant in Mrs. Armstrong who has served me with the utmost loyalty throughout the whole of my time here.

Five children have left the school today; three to Bramham with me and two who have removed to Glusburn, reducing the number on roll to 43.

There is some indication that the numbers will increase somewhat in about two years' time but there seems no likelihood of a permanent increase, as the village has no building programme. The tendency is for families to move away to Council properties as they increase in numbers.

Log books will be found in the staffroom cupboard dated from 1869.

I close this log at 5pm, on the 22nd day of December, 1959.

Gordon Bottomley

Headmaster : January 5th 1953

to December 22nd 1959.

1971 - Decimal currency

Decimal currency replaced the old pounds, shillings and pence on 15th February 1971.

15. 2. 71 In honour of Decimal Currency Day all the children received a new 2 penny piece. Dinner money (44p) was received from dinner children



The new coins, shown above, included a ½-penny, penny, two-pence, five-pence (replacing the old shilling piece), and ten-pence (replacing the old florin).

1971 - A trip to the cinema

It must have been a big event: a major movie picture, filmed in Keighley, being shown at a cinema in Keighley. Kildwick school organised a trip.

22.4.71 Thirty six children saw "The Railway Children"
at the Ritz Cinema, Keighley.



The image above shows the poster for the Keighley premiere of the movie, Sunday December 27th 1970 and the following week. It must have returned a few months later.

What next – can you help ?

Do you have any photographs or stories about Kildwick and Farnhill that you would be willing to share with us ?

If so, please contact us by email to history@farnhill.co.uk. Alternatively, why not come along to one of our monthly meetings – details on the website.