

Burton Leonard School Visitors 1913-1919

Research by Class 3, June 2018: first findings*

Church representatives

Rev Compton Evelyn Frederic Rees was the vicar of Burton Leonard during World War One. Because the School was founded as a Church of England School the vicars of the parish play a large part in the management of the school. He visited the School very regularly, perhaps to lead prayers, but also to check that Miss Wilson had completed the registers correctly. We counted that he visited **at least 14 times**, sometimes with Lady Bridgeman, but we think he came more frequently. **Rev G H Stock** visited **at least twice** in 1918.

The **Diocesan Visitor** was a churchman who came from Ripon Cathedral to check that the children were being taught the Christian faith in a proper way. One was the **Rev. H. E. Horton**. He regularly tested the children on their Bible knowledge. We noticed several different signatures on the Diocesan inspection reports in the log books.

Other **Church visitors** came from time to time. We do not always know who they were.

Patrons

Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman and Lady Bridgeman of Copgrove Hall owned the School and the land it stands on, which was part of the village green. Lady Bridgeman's uncle, James Brown, bought the Copgrove estate and extended the School by building the present hall as a new school room in 1864.

We counted that they visited **at least 6 times** between 1913 and 1919 and also hosted parties for the children at Copgrove. They gave generously to the School and to the children of the village, by providing prizes, entertainments and teas.

Attendance officers

Attendance officers from the **West Riding County Council** visited the school nearly every week. We do not know their names but the children would have nicknames for them like 'The Kidcatcher'. Their job was to make sure all children of school age attended regularly and were not absent for no good reason. However, children who were needed to help parents at home or on the farm, perhaps because a parent was ill, were sometimes given permission for long absences. Because there was so much illness during World War One, they must have worked closely with the medical staff who visited the School more and more frequently during this period. We counted **at least 14 visits** but there were many more.

Medical staff

We noted **at least 3 visits** from **Dr Josephine Coupland**, the School Medical Officer for the Harrogate area. We hope to learn more about Dr Coupland later. The District Medical Officer of Health, **Dr Forbes**, closed the school because of infectious illness on several occasions, probably after a report from Dr Coupland. Dr Coupland examined children who showed signs of infectious disease and sent them home if she was concerned. A district nurse was appointed and later there were visits from **Nurse Ford**, **Nurse Witcherley** and others. They checked weighed and measured the children and checked them for skin diseases. The dentist, **Mr Raeburn**, visited in January 1919 and treated 30 children over 3 days. Perhaps we can explore what the treatments might have been and what equipment he used.

Managers

We do not have the names of all the Board of Managers (Governors) of the school but sometimes a different person comes to check the register, so we think they did that on behalf of the vicar. For example, J T Hymas checked and signed the registers on 22 March 1918. He was a well-known local businessman who lived at Prospect House and was the uncle of Alfred, who founded the haulage firm. J T ran a well-sinking business, but was also a member of the Parish Council and the Methodist Church.

Inspectors

As well as having regular Diocesan inspections, the School was subject to inspections by both the Board of Education in London and West Riding County Council, based in Wakefield. Education was now compulsory and the running of schools was the responsibility of local authorities. Each employed their own inspectors who visited schools in their area and then wrote reports. The reports had to be copied by hand into the log book. It must have been very hard for Miss Annie Wilson to copy the reports where her teaching or discipline was criticised, especially as the inspectors usually praised her younger sister, Mary, for her good teaching in the infants' department. In 1917 there was an inspection by the **County Council Inspector, Mr F A Stannard**, and a visit from the government inspector, **Mr Young, HMI**. We found the names of several other official visitors, such as Mr Barraclough and Mr Fotheringham, but we have not yet discovered the reasons for their visits.

Other visitors

One new visitor was Miss Leonard, the Examiner in Physical Instruction, who watched the children drill (do marching exercises) on the green. She must have noticed how difficult that was on the sloping ground that inspectors had complained about for years. The Parish Council and nearby landowners still would not give up any land for a playground...

*We did a very quick survey of 26 pages of the first logbook covering the period from 1913 to 1919. Class 3 and the History Group need to go over them again to record all the details, but in a short time we found lots of fascinating information about how the school was run and all the people who checked up on it. In Session 4 we can find out more about some of them, and the stresses the teachers were under after World War One.

V Ravis, on behalf of Class 3 and Burton Leonard History Group, 21 June 2018