

BEYOND THE GRAVES

Volume 6, Number 1, January 2011

AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

EMPIRE DAY CELEBRATIONS

The Empire League states that, while Empire day is being increasingly observed among school children, its true significance has not always been appreciated by adults.

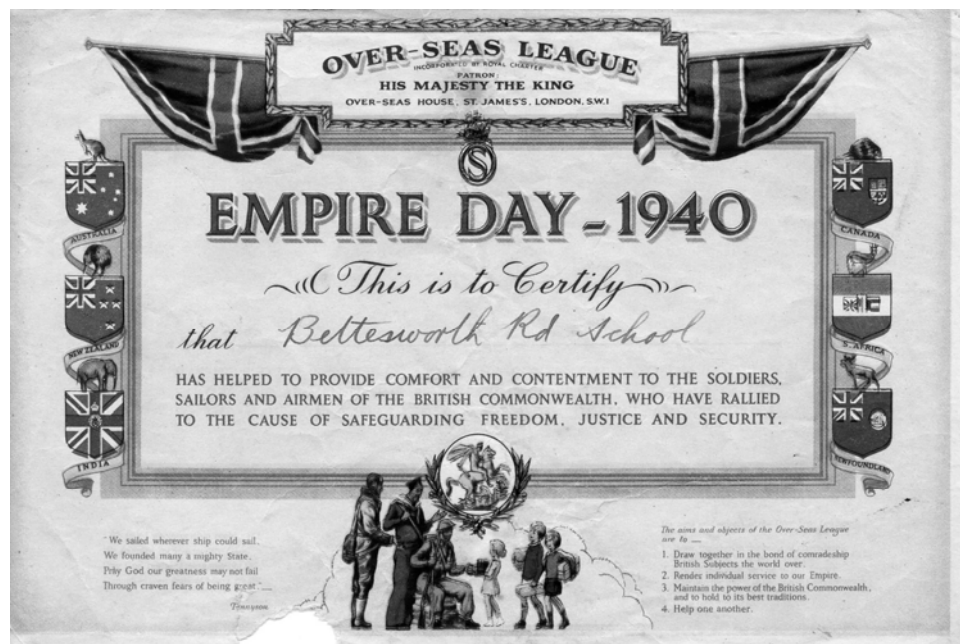
But there has been an improvement this year. Civic services were held on Monday in many towns, and in other ways the attention of the masses was drawn to the realities which the Imperial flag stands for. Rome perished because her dependencies were out of sympathy with the central seat of government. Spain collapsed because her German provinces were alien in policy and ideas. Even our own Empire was threatened by the disastrous war with our American Colonies. But we have profited by our lessons, and in the time of danger, the daughter nations have rushed to the help of the Motherland. Even the Boers of South Africa have become welded into the Empire, and a South African Expeditionary Force to help in the war is a possibility in the near future. All parts of our Dominions recognise the ties of sentiment or blood-brotherhood, and the celebrations on Empire Day have emphasised anew the urgent necessity for personal effort and sacrifice at this hour. For the first time the British flag did not stand alone on Empire day. The flags of our gallant Allies floated proudly side by side with the Union Jack, a symbol of the united, determined spirit of the nations fighting with us to crush the powerful enemy that seeks to enslave Europe and destroy freedom and justice.

Source: Isle of Wight Observer 29 May 1915

Empire Day was first considered as early as 1897. It was to remind children that they were part of a wider community that spanned almost a quarter of the globe with Queen Victoria as its paramount ruler.

However, it was not until after Queen Victoria's death on 22 January 1901 that the first Empire Day was celebrated on 24 May 1902 (the Queen's Birthday). It was not officially recognised as an annual event until 1916. Many schools across the British Empire were celebrating the day before then.

By the 1950s the celebration of Empire Day started to decline as Britain's relationships changed and some countries started to celebrate their own identities. Empire Day also became an opportunity for some dissenters to attack British Imperialism.



In 1958 Empire Day became British Commonwealth Day, later in 1966 the date was changed to 10 June, the official birthday of the present Queen Elizabeth II.

The date was changed again in 1977 to the second Monday in March when each year the Queen still sends a special message to the youth of the Empire and Commonwealth countries via a radio broadcast.

Perhaps only your grandparents can remember Empire Day now, and several million loyal Canadians who still celebrate Victoria Day on the last Monday before 24 May.

ASHEY SCHOOL

Ashey Board School opened in Ashey Road, Ryde on Monday 12 June 1876 at 10am. Miss Marion Bayne of Glynde, Lewes was appointed Mistress and was allowed £5 for the removal of her furniture to the Island. The school, originally planned to take 50 children, was built to take 70 boys and girls following approval from the Education Department, Whitehall.

The School Board requested plans be submitted from interested architects in February 1875.

"The Board resolves the building to comprise of: Schoolroom for 70 children allowing a space of not less than 8 square feet per child; Classroom for 20 with a gallery, also no less than 8 square feet per child; water closet arrangement for a mixed school with separate playgrounds; a residence adjoining the school for the teacher. There must be no extraneous ornament or unnecessary expenditure incurred in the buildings."

The school closed in December 1916 and is now a private residence but the plaque can still be seen on the front wall of the house.



Children and Teachers Ashey School (date unknown). Photographs courtesy Isle of Wight Record Office.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.			
Mr. POLLARD brought up a report from the School Attendance Committee, and the following table of average attendance:			
NOVEMBER, 1885.			
<i>Public Elementary Schools—</i>			
	Number on books.	Average attendance.	Percentage.
St. John's-road Board	Up. Boys 116	101	87·
	Boys.... 159	137	86·1
	Girls .. 236	195	82·6
Ashey Board.....	Infants .. 174	144	82·7
	Mixed .. 52	43	82·6
Bettesworth-road Board	Boys.... 154	124	80·5
	Girls .. 122	103	84·4
	Infants .. 130	88	67·6
Ryde National	Boys.... 150	115	76·6
	Girls .. 122	103	84·4
	Infants .. 162	125	77·1
Holy Trinity National .	Boys.... 112	92	82·1
	Girls .. 90	71	78·8
	Infants .. 90	61	67·8
Haven Street National ..	Mixed .. 61	54	88·5
St. Mary's Roman Cath...	Mixed .. 39	32	82·0
<i>Certified Efficient Schools—</i>			
Albert-street.....	Junior .. 95	79	83·1
West-place	Junior .. 149	121	81·2
	2713	1788	80·7

Isle of Wight Observer 5 December 1885

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION.	
TO THE ELECTORS OF THE UNITED SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT OF RYDE.	
<p>LADIES and GENTLEMEN,—When fifteen years ago the School Board for this District was constituted, I was honoured by being elected one of its members, and through your kind confidence have been confirmed in that appointment at each subsequent triennial election.</p> <p>I trust you will believe that my services in the cause of education have not been without satisfactory results.</p> <p>It has always been my endeavour to faithfully discharge the duties of the trust so often conferred upon me, in securing for the children of our schools, a sound, useful, moral and religious training, suitable for their positions in life, at the smallest possible cost to the ratepayers.</p> <p>In seeking re-election, I warmly acknowledge the kindness I have "on former occasions" experienced at your hands; I now ask a repetition of your support, and assure you if successful, it will be my aim to bestow the same amount of time and energy in the future that I have given in the past.</p> <p>Now that full accommodation has been provided for this district, it will be my aim, while strictly exercising that economy which is a necessity devolving on the Board, to see that the education bestowed, is thoroughly efficient and free from all party feeling.</p> <p>Having no organised committee, it will be impossible to solicit your suffrages, may I therefore, in this way ask your help on the day of Election, and a share of your favours?</p> <p>I beg to remain,</p> <p>Your obliged and obedient Servant, JOSIAH CUTLER.</p>	

Isle of Wight Times 11 February 1886

ASHEY SCHOOL HOSPITAL

The Public Health Committee reported to the County Council at their meeting on Wednesday, that they had received from Ryde Town Council a resolution to the effect that though approving of the disused Ashey School as an Emergency hospital, during the war were strongly of the opinion that it was most undesirable as a permanent site, on account of its proximity to the borough, also because it abuts on the main road and is in the midst of an important milk centre. After careful consideration the committee could not see their way to take any action in the matter.

Source: Isle of Wight Times 3 June 1920

HARRY D WILLIAMS



St John's School, Ryde (date unknown)

On the pending retirement of Mr Harry Williams as Headmaster of the St John's Road Boys' School in 1919, he spoke to a reporter from the Isle of Wight Observer about his 50 years in the profession.

Born in Gosport, where he received his early training, he recalled accompanying his mother, a teacher, to her lessons with reading cards, and later when 12 or 13 years of age helping the staff of the old British School in the evenings introduce the intricacies of decimals and vulgar fractions to the soldiers and sailors there.

On the introduction of the Education Act of 1870 he was persuaded by his parents to study for the profession, and was one of the many senior boys and girls who were called on to help in the schools. He recalled this time as being a "terrible drudgery" with primitive conditions and ink almost unknown.

On completing his pupil teacher training at the Wesleyan Day School in December 1874, he was keen to gain London experience and found employment as assistant master at the Middle Class School, Kingland. He taught a class of 50 boys, earning £50 per annum, from which he had to pay £4 a month for board and lodging! He stayed at this school for three years during which time he became certificated, and was then chosen to take charge of All Saints National School in Islington in 1877 which had 130 boys. With only young lads to help him, he found it very hard but eventually an assistant master was appointed.

In July 1880 Mr Williams came to Ryde Holy Trinity as headmaster. There were about 125 boys on the roll with only a pupil teacher in his second year to help him. At that time it was a Voluntary school relying mainly on the Government grant and voluntary subscriptions. Mr Williams managed to gain excellent reports and to turn out some smart boys. The school gradually found itself in financial difficulties and, as old subscribers died and new ones were hard to find, there was talk of it closing. When the position of headmaster of St John's Road Boys' School became vacant in 1887 (Jubilee year) Mr Williams decided to apply.

He was successful in getting the position and stayed there until his retirement. He was very proud that some of his pupils had gained scholarships to Sandown. Some had entered teaching and many had joined the Army and Navy and received a rank of some sort. He was also pleased that many old boys still kept in touch.

Mr Williams, by now a widower, had a family of five, two daughters and three sons. One daughter kept house for him, the other had settled in Canada. His three sons all followed him into the teaching profession. His second son Ernie was a well-known footballer and cricketer.

Mr Williams was in the IW Rifles for 27 years where he did some excellent work.

Source: Isle of Wight Observer 7 June 1919

GASSIOTT GIRLS' SCHOOL

GASSIOTT SCHOOLROOM OPENED

On Friday, the 30th ult., a very interesting ceremony took place at St John's. The new Gassiott Schoolroom was opened, and there was a large attendance of parishioners and others on the occasion.

This school is built in memory of the late Mr Gassiott, of St John's House, by his son, Mr C Gassiott, and it supplies a want that has been for long felt in the district. Until now both boys and girls have been educated together in the National School at Oakfield, but the place has grown beyond this, and the managers of the school were anxiously longing to find a remedy for it. It has come in an unexpected manner, and in a most magnificent form to them. The schoolhouse for girls, which is just built, is a really fine and spacious building, and Mr Charles Gassiott has conferred a lasting benefit on the Parish of St John's by his great liberality.



On the occasion alluded to, after a hymn and a few prayers for the blessing of God in the undertaking, Mr Ewbank expressed, in the name of his parishioners and in his own name, the deep sense of gratitude which they all felt to Mr Charles Gassiott for the boon he had conferred upon the neighbourhood. The only drawback, he said, was the absence from home for a time of General and Mrs Tate. He trusted the former would return home much invigorated.

Source: Isle of Wight Observer 7 September 1878

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Miss R May Tyler, headmistress of the Gassiott Girls' School, is to be congratulated on her splendid idea of equipping the girls for the careers they wish to take up on leaving school. A special demonstration was given at the school on Wednesday morning, when parents were invited and among the guests were the Mayoress of Ryde (Mrs E C Goble) the Rev Gillson Gill, Mr T Brougham, Miss Johnson, Dr W and Mrs Carpenter, Mrs A Triggs, the Rev A Wardroper and the Rev Samuel Street, Councillor F A Saunders and Mrs Ashwell Cobham.

The girls gave an excellent entertainment and explained in a very interesting manner how part of their time was given to learning the rudiments of the careers they wished to take up on leaving school. As an example the girls who wished to become children's nurses, hospital nurses or stewardesses paid visits to the clinic and Children's Welfare Centre where they learnt how to take care of babies. A charming nursery has also been fitted up in the school so that the real atmosphere is created for the work. The ambitions of the girls naturally vary, but all are provided for. Miss Tyler's plan is that girls of 13 years of age and over (irrespective of ability) give some time during their last year at school to their future work.

Source: Isle of Wight Times 10 December 1931



Today's Oakfield CE Aided Primary School. Photograph thanks to David Earle.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT COLLEGE

This newly-established institution has opened with encouraging prospects, the number of scholars being quite satisfactory to the promoters. Dr Pentreath, the master, seems highly qualified for his position, and like the great Arnold, seems able to secure the love and respect of his scholars, as is shown by the fact that about 40 of them followed him to Ryde from Wimborne!

Source: Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle Saturday 31 January 1880, Issue 4952



On Tuesday afternoon the prizes were presented to the scholars at the Isle of Wight College, this being the end of the first two terms. The schoolroom was crowded with friends of the boys and those interested in the College, to whom the beautiful grounds were thrown open. It was intended to have had a military band on the occasion, but the disaster in Afghanistan has thrown a gloom over the place, and many of our local gentry who have friends with the army in India are waiting with the utmost anxiety for further news. Under these circumstances it was thought best to make a few alterations in the original arrangements.

Dr Pentreath, in a lengthy address, expressed his great satisfaction at the success which had attended the opening of the College, and remarked that they had started with a greater number of scholars than he ever remembered a public school of the character to start with before. He was sure the splendid situation of the College would do a great deal to tempt parents, but he pointed out how valuable a scholarship would be. He hoped to see one in connection with the College before many years had passed.

Source: Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle Wednesday 14 August 1880, Issue 5009

ISLE OF WIGHT COLLEGE (Limited), NEAR RYDE

President - The Right Hon. Lord Rollo.

Chairman of Council - Sir Richard Webster QC, MP

Vice-Chairman - Lieut-General Sir Henry Daly GCB, CIE, JP

Head Master - The Rev William Goldsborough Whittam, MA, late Scholar of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Assistant Masters - W G Smith, Esq., MA, late Exhibitioner of Worcester College, Oxford, A T Richardson, Esq. MA, late Scholar of Hertford College, Oxford.

French - M Louis Le Bouvier.

German - Herr F Von Hacht.

Music - Mr W W Harvey, FCO (Piano), Mr J Beazley, RAM (Violin).

Drawing - Mr W Cox.

Classical and Modern Departments. Army and Navy Classes. Special arrangements made for Indian boys.

The College stands in 21 acres, and enjoys all the advantages of a southern climate. Private Chapel, Gymnasium, Racquets and Five Courts, Sea Bathing and Boating. Reduced fares on the Isle of Wight Railways for Pupils attending the College.

For Prospectuses apply to the Rev the Head Master, or the Secretary, Town Hall Chambers, Ryde.

ISLE OF WIGHT COLLEGE, LTD., RYDE.

ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION, December 15th and 16th. Four £40 and five £30 per annum - For particulars apply to the Head Master or Secretary.

Source: Isle of Wight Observer Saturday 7 January 1893, page 4

A stained glass window is to be placed in St John's Church to commemorate the old Isle of Wight College which for many years occupied the house and grounds which form the present St Cecilia's Priory. The initiative was taken by Mr R E Loveland, of Winchester, and Headmasters, masters, and Old Boys are combining in the gift.

The window will represent the figure of St Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors, scholars and children, and a lower panel will contain the College Arms against a background showing the old College. The artist is Mr Harry Grylls, and the window is being made by Messrs Burlison and Grylls.

Source: Isle of Wight Times 5 January 1933



GOOD EXCUSES FOR HOLIDAYS! - GREEN STREET INFANTS SCHOOL LOG BOOK 1887

29 April Monday morning being very wet, a great many children were kept from school, and again Wednesday afternoon about 20 were absent owing to the attraction of some races in the neighbourhood.

13 May A holiday was given on Tuesday afternoon in consequence of a show being held in the town.

24 June Holiday on Tuesday in celebration of the Royal Jubilee.

22 July Attendance good in the earlier part of the week but bad Thursday and Friday owing to Sunday School Treats in the neighbourhood.

26 August Tuesday afternoon 40 were absent, the regatta taking place.

16 September Holiday given Friday afternoon in order that the children might join in some sports with other schools in the town.

4 November Monday 131 present in the morning and afternoon but Tuesday morning only 30 came due to a very heavy storm. It was thought advisable not to open the school but to dismiss the children as soon as weather permitted.

6 December Friday morning such a terrible storm of wind and rain that only 21 children came. School not opened and after the children dried their clothes they were dismissed when the weather permitted.



SCHOOL TREATS JANUARY 1893

On Tuesday the Hon. Mrs Somerset Calthorpe gave a New Year's treat to the St John's infants' school at Oakfield. The room was prettily decorated with evergreens, Chinese lanterns and flags. A large Christmas tree, from the branches of which hung many toys, lighted wax tapers, bright coloured banners, and glittering ornaments, occupied the centre of the room.

The children, to the number of 189, began to assemble at 4 o'clock, and under the clever management of Miss Burston, the school mistress, the little people, ranging from three to six years old, went through a musical drill very creditably. This was followed by a recitation, given with much spirit by a little girl of six. Mrs S Calthorpe and her daughter then handed in turn to each child, with a few kindly words, a toy, a bun, and a miniature hamper of sweetmeats and crackers.

Source: Isle of Wight County Press Saturday 7 January 1893, Page 8

THE CHILDREN'S EXHIBITION, TOWN HALL, RYDE, 1894

Living Chess

For the first time in Ryde, there was a display of living chess. The two sets of "pieces" were very well distinguished, the black pawns being represented by little boys dressed in dark clothes, and the white by little girls dressed in that colour. The other pieces were also distinguished by suitable dresses, - king and queen by crowns, the bishop by mitres, the knights by helmets, &c. The children moved promptly at the word of command, and a short and brilliant game between Blackburn and Steinitz was played, Mr L Stevenson superintending. The performance evidently greatly interested the spectators.

Entertainments

In the afternoon the Volunteer Band played a suitable selection. On Wednesday evening the large hall was crowded, when an entertainment was given. The Infants under Miss Adams, sang a number of songs very prettily, and gave an exhibition of flag, fan and musical drills, which delighted the audience. The girls, under the direction of Miss Butchers, also sang extremely well, and the way in which they went through the musical and hoop drill was very clever. The boys, under Mr Trodd then had their turn, and went through the manual and firing exercises with admirable precision. The audience were especially amused with the bayonet exercises, and a mimic battle in which the wounded were carried off in the ambulance, and had their wounds attended by four little girls who represented the Red Cross Brigade.

Thursday

On Thursday evening the Hall was so crowded that many were unable to obtain admission. The St John's Road Infants, under Miss Watson, sang very prettily, and went through a number of exercises, the scarf drill especially delighting the audience, the colours being blended so tastefully. A dialogue by two little mites, who looked under four years of age, was a remarkable exhibition of juvenile precocity. The song of the little cooks, too, was very charming, and the performers were loudly encored. The girls under Miss Bell, followed with songs, drills, &c. The action song, "The Merry Little Milkmaids", in character, being loudly encored. Their voices blended beautifully. The fan drill also was a charming exhibition of clever concerted action. This too was encored. Mr Williams' boys then came on, and sang extremely well. Their performance of physical exercises was also loudly applauded. The recitations were excellent. The Upper Grade Boys, under the direction of Mr Crisp, sang most harmoniously, their voices being really beautiful. Their modulator practice - manual signs and sight test - were almost perfect. Five boys recited Mark Anthony's oration with marked elocutionary ability, and twelve boys, under Sergt-Major Barber, gave clever exhibitions of single stick exercises.

Source: Isle of Wight Observer 21 July 1894