

LOCAL EDUCATION IN THE 19th CENTURY

The earliest information we have of the facilities provided for the education of children in Feock parish comes from an enquiry made by the Select Committee in 1818. This states that the population was 968 (1811 census) and the number of poor 54 (1815). "The people in general are very poor and but few are desirous of the means of education; at present there are 50 children in want of instruction. Two small schools exist, one containing 16 children who are taught by a woman and another by a man, consisting of 10 or 12 children. Endowments none" (return made by Rev. J. Symons, Vicar).

Two voluntary bodies were providing elementary education throughout the country at this time, The National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, and The British and Foreign School Society, which was un-denominational. An investigation made in 1833, following the Reform Act, had revealed that "out of every ten children of school age in England and Wales, four went to no school at all, three to Sunday Schools only, two to inefficient dame schools or private day school and only one received a satisfactory education". (H.C. Barnard. A Short History of Education).

The Government became concerned and, in order to increase the number of schools, agreed to contribute part of the cost of any new schools built by the Societies. When the National Society made their survey in this area in 1846, it was found that in Feock parish there was one school, used for both day and Sunday scholars. Ten boys and twelve girls attended on weekdays and thirteen boys and six girls on Sundays. The Society decided to build two new schools "in lieu of the present one which is not satisfactory". One was built at Feock and one at Devoran.

The school at Feock cost £308, £243 was raised by local subscription and the Government made a grant of £65. It had accommodation for 108 children. The Devoran school £310, £245 came from subscriptions and £65 from Government grant. The accommodation here was for 111 children. Feock school was inspected by a visiting H.M.I. in the year it was opened. It was described as a mixed school under a

master (untrained) with the younger children placed under his wife. Discipline was 'very fair' with a good tone throughout the school; "much progress is being made and religious instruction is very pleasing." There were 45 children present at the inspection, 21 were reading letters and monosyllables, 15 easy narratives and 9 reading Holy Scripture easily; 26 writing on slates from copies and 9 from memory, 15 writing on paper. Of those learning arithmetic 24 were doing numeration, 15 working at subtraction, multiplication and division, while 9 were doing Proportion and Practice. In addition 9 were learning Geography, 9 Grammar and 25 did vocal music from notes.

The annual income was, by donations and subscription, £55, by school pence £510. Expenditure, Salaries £60. Nothing was listed as spent on books, stationery, candles or fuel. By 1853 the number of pupils was 51 boys and 1 girl. The master received £55 plus £5 for acting as Parish Clerk; expenditure, books £2, fuel £1, repairs £2. The cost per child was given as £1.3s.6d. The corresponding figures for Devoran in 1854 were; Income by endowment (Betton Charity) £5, by voluntary contributions £15, school pence £10. Miss Mary Botheras Towan had been the teacher since the school opened seven years before. She was untrained and ran a school of 30 boys and 32 girls alone. As many as 92 children were present at the last inspection, which suggests that the Monitorial system was still being used. A memorandum notes:- "It should be observed that although funds do not permit the employment of a master in this school, there is a master at the other school, St. Feock, where boys of more advanced age can be educated." Entries in later log-books explain the low running costs of both schools; much of the work was done on slates with the children supplying their own slate pencils. From log-book of 1868 "Much time is sometimes wasted by boys through not having brought their slate pencils, if these were supplied by the school this would, of course, be prevented." When heating was thought necessary children brought extra pence for firing. In 1866 fires were not started in Devoran until November 20th.

A day school attached to the Wesley Chapel in Devoran was opened in January 1868. The master was Charles Fifoot who had been trained at Westminster.

The school started with 68 scholars drawn from rural and seafaring families. Later the number rose to 110. The estimated income was:- Government grant £40, outfit grant (furniture) £25, Grant from Westminster £35, Chapel Anniversaries £5, school pence £45. (Boys paid 6d a week, girls 3d or 2d, infants 2d, according to the position of their parents). Expenditure:- Teacher's salary £86 with £8 for an assistant, books £20, building £50, charwoman £5, fuel £1. This school seems to have closed in 1871, possibly because the master moved to Truro, but was open again by 1873, the master was W.J.N. Oliver with his wife Martha as assistant. The fee for boys rose to 9d, girls 3d and infants 2d. About 75 children attended in 1875. James Whitburn was Correspondent.

We do not know exactly what other schools existed in the parish but there were dame schools and small private school in each district. At one time there was a school in the top storey of a building at the back of the chapel in Carnon Downs and another is said to have been held in a barn at the junction of Old Carnon and Carnon Hill. There was certainly a British School at Point in 1861, but where was it situated? What type of school was at Rope Walk? A Sunday School was provided by the Daniells for their workers at Trelissick and there was a school at Four Turnings near Mount Pleasant in 1842.

Altogether there must have been quite a number of places of learning because in the 1851 census, 322 children are given as scholars, just one being listed as Sunday scholar only. By 1861 the number was 550. There are instances of children remaining at school up to 16 years of age and in 1874 a boy of 18 years was re-admitted to Devoran school when Carnon Mine, where he had been working, closed down.

This is a brief review of the local situation, taken mainly from Privy Council records up to 1863, after which date individual school log-books give detailed accounts of the day to day working of each school and will provide material for a further chapter.

SHIPBUILDING IN THE PARISHES OF FEOCK AND DEVORAN IN THE 19th CENTURY

These notes are only an interim result of an incomplete study of the original sources. Much work remains to be done on the written sources and also in discussion with local residents.

Sources consulted up to date are:-

1. Lloyds register of shipping. Nat. Maritime Museum.
2. The Merchant Shipping Registers. " "
3. Lloyds Certificates of Registry " "
4. Wreck Registers. " "
5. Lloyds Shipping Lists. Guildhall Library
6. Custom House Registers. Truro & Falmouth.
7. Various Documents. County Record Office.
8. Files of the Royal Cornwall Gazette & West Briton By courtesy of Mr. Douch & Mr. Davies.
9. "Merchant Schooners" by Basil Davidson.

During the 19th century small ships were built at many sites on all rivers and estuaries so that it is not surprising to find that there were several yards even in one parish. The most important building site was at Point, where the location is still known as Yard Point, there were also building sites at Pill, Devoran, Cowlands and Roundwood.

1. Pill. The earliest record of building that I have found so far was at Pill, where the following builders worked:-

(a) <u>Hitchins and Ford</u>			
1819	William Thomas	Barge	37 tons.
1877	J.W.T.	Schooner	100 tons.
1879	Lizzie Edith	Schooner	90 tons.
(b) <u>William Hodge</u>			
1863	Glenfeadon	Schooner	128 tons.
1865	A.D. Gilbert	Schooner	177 tons.
(c) <u>Charles Burt</u>			
1875	Reaper	Schooner	94 tons.

2. Devoran. Devoran was not a very convenient site for ship building as there was little depth of water and no good place for building slips. Nevertheless several ships were built there.

(a) <u>W. Stephens, Jnr.</u>			
1844	?	Smack	?
(b) <u>Richard Gilbert</u>			
1881	R.H.G.	Ketch	45 tons.