

The following pages show extracts from the School Log Book as written by the Headmistress of Caversham Council Infant School. At the beginning the notes were written when Caversham was still in Oxfordshire and then shows the crossover from Oxfordshire to Berkshire. The school was based at what is now Thameside Primary School and the children from that school moved to Hemdean Road in 1938. The British School for this area was located at what is now E.P. Collier.

12th April 1907

This Infant School was opened for educational purposes on Monday April 15th. I had been in attendance at the school during the previous week, taking the names of the children whose parents applied for admission. We began school on Monday with 94 children, several of these are children from the British School which has been closed by the Education Department. Today we have 103 children on the register. Several of the children appear to be very old for an Infant School. I examined the children on Monday and placed them, as near possible, in the classes fitted for them.

The school is built to accommodate 300. There are 5 classrooms and a central hall. The staff at present consist of: Mrs Frances Elliot Lee, Head Mistress trained and certificated Mistress, late Head Mistress of Caversham National Infant School. Miss Alice Short – Uncertificated teacher –Late Assistant at Caversham National Infant School. Miss Geralinde Vida Rose – Uncertificated Teacher – Late Assistant at Chieveley Council School, Newbury. Miss Gertrude Fletcher – Monitress. Late Monitress at Caversham British School. Miss F. Taylor –Monitress.

June 21 1907 - Attendance not quite so good this week. Percentage 91. Several children are absent through toothache and bad colds. The weather is very cold for the time of year. A holiday will be given on Monday as it is the Biscuit Factory Excursion and children are generally taken out by their parents.

July 3 1907 - There will be a holiday this afternoon, for Henley Regatta. The weather has been so hot this week, that Reading was taken instead of needlework.

Sept 8 1908 - School re-opened this morning. Five new children were admitted and 38 transferred to the Mixed Department.

The Rev. R.H. Hart-Davis visited the school this afternoon. When the children were assembled for dismissal he spoke to them about a flag – The Union Jack - which is being sent to the Children of Caversham England, from the Children of Caversham, N. Zealand.

Feb 25 1908 - In consequence of an outbreak of measles in the school, Dr. Ashby (Medical Officer of Health) has ordered the school to be closed. The class in which the one case was reported last week has been reduced from 42 to 17. 24 children developing measles this week. The other classes are bad but not so bad as Class I.

May 25 1909 - In the presence of a large company of visitors including Rear Admiral Sir Francis Powell, Sir Percy Sanderson, Rev. R.H. Hart-Davis and Mr. Chivers, C.C.s Mr. Dryland (Chairman) and various members of District Council. Rev. C.W.E. Cleaver, Canon Fowler, Father Buscot, the Managers of the School P. Elford Esq. etc. and numbers of parents, the flag was unfurled at 4 p.m. yesterday. Most of the children wore favours of red, white and blue. Rudyard Kiplings's Children's Song – "Rule Britannia", Three Cheers for Red White & Blue & God Save the King were sung.

All the children marched past and saluted the flag.

To the great pleasure of all a Mr Barnett from Dunedin and brother to correspondent of school from the flag came – together with a Mr. Farquahson – (A Rhodes Scholar) a native of Caversham N.Zealand, were with us and spoke a few words.

At the end of the Ceremony a photograph was taken to be sent out to N.Zealand.

May 9th 1910 - *Our beloved Sovereign King Edward VII died on Friday May 6th after an illness of only two days.*

May 23rd 1910 - *School closed on Friday afternoon May 13th but the usual Whitsuntide Holiday (of Monday and Tuesday) was by the Managers extended to a week, on account of the Funeral of our Late King.*

May 24th 1910 - *Two nurses attended school this morning to weigh and measure the children ready for the Medical Examination by Dr. Cheyney this afternoon.*

Today is Empire Day but in consequence of the national mourning no celebrations, beyond Saluting the Flag and singing the National Anthem, took place.

May 27th 1910 - *The Medical Examination was finished this afternoon. 50 children have been examined. The nurses commented on the cleanliness of the children.*

Dec 1st 1910 - *I checked the registers this morning and found them correct. Out of 146 children on the Books 62 were absent because of Whooping Cough. R.H. Hart-Davis*

Dec 2nd 1910 - *In consequence of the very serious outbreak of Whooping cough. The doctor has advised the closing of the school until after Xmas.*

Jan 10th 1911 - *School re-opened this morning when 117 children were present. 30 children being absent. Several of these have now got "Mumps".*

Feb 20th 1911 - *Dr. Cheyney called this morning and told me that he had had instructions from Dr. Morton (Oxford) to close the Infant School until March 6th. Consequently there will be no school after this morning. (This being due to the outbreak of mumps and whooping cough).*

June 30th 1911 - *School re-opened on Monday after the Coronation holiday, with a very bad attendance owing to the outbreak of measles. On Tuesday afternoon a holiday was given so that the children might go to the Electric Theatre to see the pictures of H.M. King George's Coronation. This treat was given by the Directors of the Theatre.*

This afternoon we have 54 children absent and our percentage has fallen to 75.

July 28th 1911 - *This afternoon the Rev. R.H. Hart-Davis on behalf of Managers, teachers and scholars presented me with a Diamond and Sapphire ring and a silver rose bowl as memento of my work here as head mistress. Today I resign my position as such. School closes this afternoon for the Midsummer Holiday and re-opens Sept. 5th. I have finished examining the classes this week and considering the absences through illness the children have done very well indeed.*

Oct. 13th 1911 - *Yesterday I received from the Reading Education Committee a form for each teacher to fill up and forward to the Reading Education Office by Saturday (14th inst.) This is in consequence of the pending incorporation of Caversham into the Reading Borough.*

Nov. 1st 1911 - I (Annie M. Halstead) take up duties as Head Teacher in this school.

May 24th 1912 - Empire Day was celebrated this morning. Lessons were given in Class Rooms on the meaning of Empire Day. The children assembled in the hall and a tableau of Britannia and all her dependences was formed. The scholars joined in singing patriotic songs and the National Anthem. The Union Jack was saluted and cheers given for the King and Empire.

The school closed at 12 O'clock until Wednesday May 29th for the Whitsuntide Holidays.

May 29th 1912 - School reopened, attendance is not so good as before the Holiday. Two cases of diphtheria reported.

August 27th 1912 - School reopened. Attendance not very good; fourteen children from Class I are still excluded from attendance owing to being "carriers" of diphtheria germs.

March 4th 1913 - A child in Class III pinched her finger in the class room door. The hurt was not serious and was caused by the child's disobedience in touching the door. The matter was reported to the Education Committee.

June 24th 1913

A child attending a neighbouring school lost his life whilst getting tadpoles. At the inquest it was stated that "the boys were asked by their teachers to bring tadpoles and many other things to school for object lessons, and even threatened with the cane if they did not bring them."

S.R. Wilson Esq. H.M.I. The Coroner and the Education Secretary visited the school to make enquiries as to the methods used in this school for procuring such specimens and asked if I could offer any explanation for the statement made by the mother. The children in this school are encouraged to bring specimens for nature lessons if no danger or wrong doing is involved but tadpoles and minnows are procured by the teachers themselves.

June 24th 1915 - The attendance gets worse and worse owing to an epidemic of measles. Only 123 children present out of 187 on the Roll.

July 2nd 1915 - Still more children fall a prey to the measles. 107 children present out of 188 on Books.

July 5th 1915 - The school is closed for four weeks on account of the prevalence of measles and will not reopen until after the summer holidays.

Feb 2nd 1917 - The children were sent home again for the day as the heating apparatus was not on owing to the non-delivery of coke, and the thermometer being below freezing point.

Feb 6th 1917 - A meeting for parents was held in the Hall during the afternoon and a War Saving Association was inaugurated. Councillor Norris was selected Chairman, Miss Dawson Treasurer and Miss Winkworth Secretary.

Sept 10th 1917 - Attendance is improving. Several children admitted from London district, owing to the air raids.

Jan 22nd 1918 - Provision has been made by the Education Committee to supply the children with dinners at a cost of twopence per head. Thirty children took advantage of these dinners.

Feb 7th 1918 - School was closed this afternoon and not opened until Wednesday afternoon February 13th so that the teachers might help with the Rationing Scheme.

Mar 12th 1918 - Their Majesties the King and Queen paid a visit to Reading and the children from Standard II were taken to see them.

Aug 27th 1918 - By means of a Sale of Work and Display of Dances in the school £13.1s.0d. was realised and sent to St. Dunstons in aid of our Blinded soldiers.

Jul 24th 1919 - To celebrate 'Peace' a tea was given and sports arranged. These took place in Mrs Coopers meadow, Caversham Hill.