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Charles Manning Jaggard

Headmaster from 1916 to 1932

The logbooks, which exist from 1916 when Charles Manning Jaggard was appointed Master, give many insights into the life of the boys at Woodside and later at Otford.

2 May 1916: Charles Manning Jaggard commenced duty as master of this school. There were 31 boys present and I found all in excellent order. The Revd Father visited, also the Mother Superior. In the afternoon the former gave a holiday to enable the Master to assist in the unpacking of furniture at his home.

'Jaggy, as we boys called him (behind his back of course!) was a strict disciplinarian who taught us in all subjects, including music (he was an accomplished pianist), except French, which was taught by Sister Grace, one of the three nuns in residence in Otford Court in my time, with the Linguaphone Method on gramophone records and text books, a very trendy resource in those days!

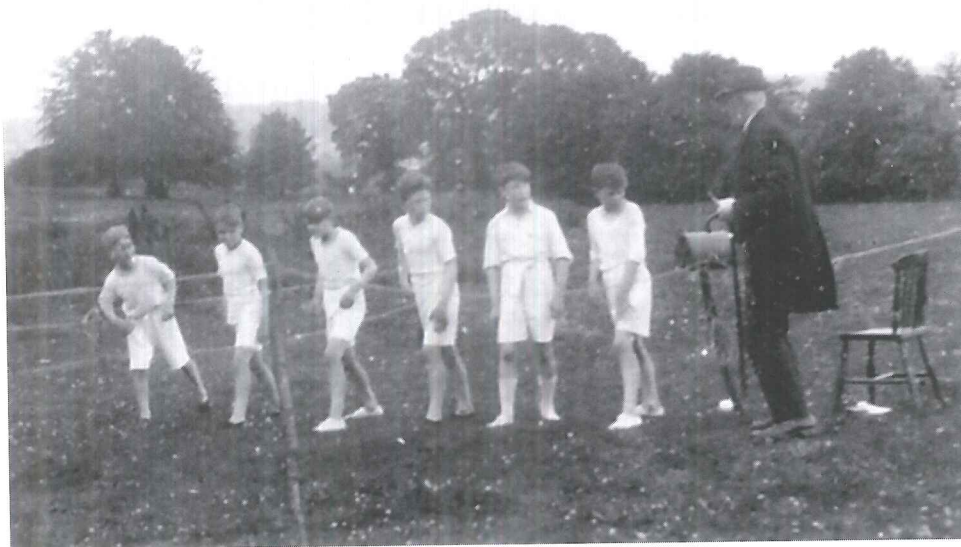
Jaggy, in spite of advancing age, was really quite a tough old bird! Living in Kemsing with his wife, he travelled daily by service bus from his council house to the school, getting off at the roadside school entrance on the Pilgrims' Way and walking the half mile or so uphill to the school - no mean effort in the winter with inches of snow on the ground. In such inclement weather he always wore leather leggings as a protection, and once in the porch under cover in the main entrance seated himself in an old wicker chair, puffed contentedly at his pipe, and perused 'The Sporting Chronicle' until it was time to start lessons at 9am. Once in the single classroom (there were only some 30 - 35 boys in residence) he reigned - not exactly in terror, but certainly authoritatively and purposefully! The said cane was used where necessary, mainly on the upturned hand or hands of the delinquent.



St Michael's School, Otford

Sports Day, usually at the end of Summer Term, was arranged and supervised by Mr Jaggard, who for the occasion and for some unknown reason presided either at the start or the finishing posts in a frocked coat and striped trousers but wearing his usual trilby hat!

We only went home once a year, for the summer holidays, remaining at the



school for Christmas and Easter with only short breaks from lessons during these festivals. I don't think half-term holidays and such like were invented in those days - they were certainly never observed, nor the iniquitous so-called Baker Days so prevalent now. One could say with confidence therefore that Mr Jaggard earned his salary for the enormous amount of time spent in the classroom teaching us.

Jaggy's wife also took an important part in the life of the school on the occasions she acted as Matron while the real one was absent or indisposed (the Jaggards had no children of their own). A buxom lady and equally authoritative and purposeful as her husband (the Lord must have paired them!) she supervised our non-scholastic activities in a somewhat fierce and bossy manner, and to tell the truth we were always glad when the real Matron returned to duty; though (bless her!) Mrs Jaggard must have been sorely tried by us at times. When on duty she always wore a white veil like the real Matron, no doubt to impress on us her 'acting Matron' status!

Douglas Keddie 1923/31

...and here's 'Jaggy's' view of Douglas Keddie as recorded in the register in 1931: 'An excellent boy. Began with us to learn figures and letters. Left fit for matriculation.' A rare tribute to a pupil.

Charles Manning Jaggard

Teaching and Academic Work

A visitor to Woodside in 1924 seems to have been impressed with Charles Jaggard's teaching methods:

Perhaps the most interesting part of the Home is the schoolroom, where all the boys receive a sound education at the hands of an elderly master [Jaggard], who is evidently a personality. Such a school raises many considerable points in the mind of a visitor. It recalls the best type of old-fashioned seminary, where the child received guidance in the search for knowledge and in the free development of character, instead of having knowledge thrust upon him and his character forced as nearly as possible into an accepted mould, which is the apparent aim of many modern schools.



Jaggard (on the right) with Father Tooth and some boys.
Douglas Keddie is pictured second from the right, lying on the ground.

But a pupil of Jaggard's has a different point of view. Gerry Winter [1924/30] recalls:

'Education was a very hit and miss affair. Mr Jaggard being our only teacher did his best with coping with Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Latin and Art. When he wasn't too busy going from one classroom to the other (there were only two classrooms) he would be down at the kitchen and would come back with a handful of cold boiled potatoes with skins on, or a sausage roll or two or anything else that was going. He would then sit at his desk with penknife out, oblivious to all else.'

When I left Otford I had to start my education all over again from scratch. Some boys got the benefit of his wisdom but I wasn't one of them. My interests lay in planning the next cricket match or the next model aeroplane to build, exploring the woods (out of bounds) and similar non-academic pursuits. Mr Jaggard had the foresight to see I was a non-starter from self-preference and thereby treated me accordingly.

He was a very fit man – he had to be when he would walk from his home at Kemsing to the school and back everyday, rain or shine. When the snows came he also came, much to our disappointment and expectations that he wouldn't.'

Philip Morgan [1929/30] was more impressed with Jaggard's teaching skills:

I have to say the teaching must have been very good because when I left I went for a year (before going to school in England) to the old Grammar School in Carmarthen where I was streets ahead of my class, particularly, I remember, in Latin. It didn't last of course.

Jaggard was a fearsome Dickensian character, smelling always, it seems now, of whisky, tobacco and leather – the latter, though this may be fantasy, from his highly polished leggings. He wielded a mighty cane as befitted a Cambridge Blue who had bowled out the great WG Grace: but that might be a myth too.'

Mr Jaggard had a few staff problems...

10 January 1923: This morning at 11am I had occasion to point out to Sister Dominica her boys did not know their tables. To my absolute astonishment she replied "Take them over yourself" and walked out of school. Comment unnecessary.

11 October 1923: Miss Searle commenced duty as an Assistant Mistress. She was not satisfied with her surroundings and did not return in the afternoon.

...but some notable teaching successes:

16 March 1928: Today Maurice Lewis left. He came to us in October of last year - a rough uncouth and backward boy. For the first two or three weeks I could do nothing with him & had to be rather severe. After a little time I thought I would try another method. I walked and talked with him. He gradually thawed and for the past weeks he has been everything one could wish for in conduct and attention to his studies. I am very sorry he has left.

Charles Manning Jaggard

4 May 1928: 3 times a week we have French lessons by a novel method. It is called Linguaphone French Course. The exercises are read through some three or four times by a gramophone - the voice evidently that of a Frenchman. By this plan the boys are able to hear the true pronunciation. They repeat the exercises as nearly as they can. Some of them are acquiring the accents quite well.

However, the overwhelming tone of Jaggard's log entries is one of despair and feelings of inadequacy. They make it clear that he found it very difficult to teach such a mixed group of children in terms of age and ability:

14 September 1917: We have three little boys who scarcely know their alphabet. All I can do with them is to spare one boy each session to look after them.

3 May 1918: There are now some seven or eight small boys here who know next to nothing and require individual attention, which of course I cannot give them.

6 June 1919: At the present time we have a preponderance of small boys that require a lot of attention. I have used one of the upper boys (Leslie Lorton) rather frequently as a monitor. Still having so many small boys is detrimental to the progress of the upper school as I am not able to give them so much attention as I should wish.

14 October 1921: I find the spelling & writing of the new boys very poor - in fact the crass ignorance of the majority of new entries is simply incredulous especially when the boys tell you they have been to certain schools.

6 October 1925: A fair amount of work has been got thro:- the very young boys are a source of great trouble and they are very slow in making a start. This week another little boy of 6 who knows absolutely nothing has been admitted. This policy must prove very detrimental to the place as a school. The upper boys very much resent the coming of these tiny boys.

24 September 1926: 25 boys have been present during the week. Of these 3 know absolutely nothing & can make neither a letter or figure. They are too young & most certainly should not have been admitted to a school of this class. At present I can do nothing for them.

9 May 1930: I have been specially working with the junior boys. Those who have been here some time are quite satisfactory, but the new arrivals are so totally ignorant that they are a complete drag and hindrance to the work of the classroom as a whole.

In 1932, with 16 years' service as Warden of St Michael's, Mr Charles Manning Jaggard retired. He died in 1940.

27 January 1940: I regret to record that Mr C. M. Jaggard has died. He was schoolmaster here for 16 years, resigning in May 1932. He will be remembered by many old boys for his long service devoted to them. All I have ever met spoke of him with great affection. He is the last but one of the old regime - Sister Christine alone remaining. His work in forming the school deserves grateful thanks from all of us. May he rest in peace. [Written by Mr Cork, Headmaster in 1940]

Charles Manning Jaggard

Extracts from Charles Jaggard's last logbook entries in 1932

11 January: School reopened after the Xmas vacation. Three new boys have been admitted which makes 34 on Register. Of these the doctor has ordered 16 to bed owing to an epidemic of severe colds - leaving 18 present at school this morning. A new teacher (Miss Bentley) has taken charge of the smaller classroom.

15 January: Numbers are gradually going up so that there were 32 present today. The average for the week is 24. Hope to have things normal next week.

29 January: One of the hospital patients came home on Monday & we have one (Ernest Dipple) still there. Av. for week 32.5. The cough epidemic has now almost disappeared and all the boys are able to attend school.

2 February: School did not begin till 9.40. A Service (Purification) being held in the Chapel.

12 February: This week the two upper divisions have done some good work in mensuration - chiefly "triangles". There has been no absentees, 35 on Reg. Av. 35.

19 February: 15 boys were found "out of bounds" after being several times warned. These boys were punished by having to attend a morning session of school on Saturday.

4 March: Work proceeding smoothly and satisfactorily. Two boys have left but three new boys have been admitted. No. on Reg. 34. This Thursday we won an important football match. I had promised boys a half holiday if they were successful. This the Revd Father has sanctioned for them to have next week. We have an evening service during Lent on Thursdays. Prep. excused that evening.

11 March: On Thursday our football team went to Seal. I gave the whole school half holiday to celebrate a very successful season.

18 March: Boys of both divisions have this week devoted extra time to mensuration". A good week's work has been got thro'.

April: Broke up this morn for the transferred Easter Holiday. Yesterday we had our X Country run for a Silver Cup presented by T. Wellbeloved, Esq., the Revd Father also kindly added 10/- in money. Result 1. F. Corp (Cup & 5/-), 2. R. Fitzgerald 3/-, and 3. P. Jones 2/-.

19 April: I, (C. Manning Jaggard) resigned Mastership of this School.

Charles M Jaggard 1916/32

1916 – Charles Manning Jaggard commences at St Michael's as Master on the retirement of Frederick Wareham. He starts writing a daily logbook.

1918 – The pandemic of Spanish 'Flu hits St Michael's but miraculously passes through within 2 weeks.

1918 – 5 boys are entered for the Cambridge University Local Examinations. All pass and a day's holiday is given to the whole school.

1919 – 4 boys enter the Cambridge University Local Examinations and once again, all pass. An afternoon's holiday is given.

1920 – 6 boys enter the Cambridge University Local Examinations but this time 2 fail. No further students are entered.

1925 – St Michael's School is moved to Otford Court.

1926 – Jaggard introduces a system of prefects: 3 boys to take turns, one day each.

1926 – The Reverend Mother, Sister Agnes dies.

1930 – St Michael's welcomes over 1000 visitors for the Annual Corpus Christi event.

1931 – The Founder of St Michael's, Father Arthur Tooth dies.

1932 – Charles Jaggard retires from St Michael's.