

The present school dates back to 1863 but before it was built there were several schools in St Tudy. One school, held in the upper room of the Clink, was mainly for boys as girls' education wasn't considered important in those days. It charged boys 1d a week but the better off could send their offspring to a private school run by a curate in Chapel Cottage. He charged 2d a week.

Girls could go to the Dame School at the Old Slates in Higher Town where they learnt the things girls needed to know to run a home like needlework and cooking. The Dame was not a trained teacher but was allowed to teach up to twelve girls at a time. Each pupil paid 1d a week and the Dame's salary was subsidised by the Parish which carried out surprise inspections, rather like Ofsted today. Often there were more than a dozen pupils and on one occasion, as the inspector approached, the extra children were banished upstairs to hide under the Dame's bed. One child unfortunately sneezed and the extra children were discovered! History does not record the penalty for exceeding the regulation class size!

Class sizes were considerably bigger when the new National School opened on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1863 with places for 80 children in its single room. The first headteacher, Georgina Varrall, enrolled 22 boys and 15 girls – two more than expected as several families had objected to Rule Five requiring all children to attend Sunday School.

A number of cottages were demolished to make way for the school building erected on land granted a 99-year lease by Samuel Trehawk-Kekewick to the Rector and Church Wardens. The cost of demolition of the cottages and construction, furnishing and advertising the new school totalled £337.16s.0½d. This was raised by public subscription amounting to £176 18s 4½d with the £160 deficit provided by the Rector.

The annual rent was £1 but by 1889 this had increased to £10 per annum. A condition on the lease stated the building had to be used as a "school for the education of children and adults of the working classes". Scholars still paid 1d a week – when they attended – and paid for all the books and stationery they used. Attendance was irregular so in 1868 incentives were offered to parents who had to pay 2d a week per child but got a penny discount if their child attended for three weeks at a time.

Heated by open fires and a central tortoise stove, the classroom was cold in winter – so much so parents were asked to ensure their children were punctual to avoid the chilling draughts created by frequent opening and closing of the school door. In summer, the room was cooled by opening a door onto a little fenced garden. One pupil, Charles Nicholls, recalled an exasperated schoolmaster boxing another boy's ears so hard the boy toppled backwards off his bench seat, through the door, down the steps and into the garden.

In 1889 £220 was spent on a much needed extension to provide a classroom for the infants. The 17 feet square, Magor Memorial Room opened in 1889 and 6 years later the porch was built to protect the main entrance. In 1904 the garden door disappeared as a third room, measuring 24ft x 14ft, was added with sliding doors to connect it to the original classroom. Apart from the arrival of electric lighting in 1934, the building remains virtually unchanged until 1962 when the school finally got flush toilets to replace the old earth closets.

With no playground, the children's "drill" or physical training classes took place outside but the increasing danger of passing cars on the road alarmed the Highways Department which, in 1968, declared it could no longer provide insurance cover. It took ceaseless campaigning by the headmistress, Mavis Butters, the Governors and the MP before a £400 grant paid for the asphaltting of part of the often wet playing field opposite – that was more than the cost of building the school over a century earlier. Until that was finished in 1971, children were confined indoors for all their school-time recreation.

As a Church School the children attended a great many weekday services and were also expected to go to Sunday School. Perhaps this was considered too much and by 1879 only the older children were expected to attend Saints Day services. The annual visit by the Diocesan Inspector continued to test children's knowledge of Bible Stories and the Prayer Book.

In the early days there was only one Mistress although the Rector, his wife and sometimes the curate taught some subjects, often maths or history as well as religious instruction. The

first pupils were not dunces by any means. The school log book for the opening day in 1863 notes some of the girls were previously taught needlework by the Rector's wife. Next day there is a little consternation as the log book records: "have much trouble to teach the children the use of a doormat. Find the children have a habit of whispering... the school where the majority were instructed, the master being deaf!"

One of the first inspection reports praised this "purely country school held in a cheerful little building". It continued "The children are in good order and have made good progress in reading and writing as well as in needlework". Unfortunately arithmetic was not so good as "attainments were very small".

A later Diocesan report commented: " here is a very good example of what can be done in a village school with a wide age range. It is particularly pleasing to visit with its spirit of friendliness and the sense of good work being done."

By 1869 the suitability of boys over 10 being taught by a Mistress is questioned. The school grant is reduced as there are bad results. Attendance is very erratic with only 38 out of 78 children in school. Despite that poor report, women continued to run St Tudy School and it was not until October 1900 that the first Headmaster, Charles Jaggard, was appointed.

Poor attendance wasn't necessarily truancy – although that did happen. Many years later one pupil not knowing she was destined to become a teacher at the school, followed the hunt to Wetherham Woods and, when she finally returned to class, received one stroke on the hand for missing school. Headteacher, Leonard Garland, had taken the children outside to see the hunt meet but Doris Armstrong and some of her friends were so fascinated they followed the hounds instead of returning to school with their classmates. Ouch!

Boys' attendance was often hindered by the need to help in the fields, stone picking or potato picking were common excuses but the log book also records many instances of illness. In October 1884 one of the scholars, Bertha Knight, tragically died of scarlet fever and the school was closed for one month by medical order.

The Christmas holidays in 1885 were extended by a month due to another outbreak of scarlet fever and whooping cough raged throughout 1886. The number on roll gradually increased from 73 in 1890 to 100 in 1897 and the catalogue of school closures continued:

February 1890 School closed – sickness,

September 1893 school closed for a month by order of Dr Mudge scarlet fever and diphtheria spreading.

In February 1895 school is closed again but this time the cause is bad weather.

1902 is a particularly bad year, school is closed from 30<sup>th</sup> May until 14<sup>th</sup> July due to whooping cough of which one child died. Two months later an outbreak of measles caused the doors to be closed until 5<sup>th</sup> November.

A couple of years later there is good news – a half day holiday is declared as the reward for good attendance. Hurray! Attendance was so good in 1908 St Tudy was the top school in the district and was given a special treat of a trip to Pentire near Polzeath. There were other days off for trips to the seaside, chapel anniversaries, Band of Hope teas, harvest festivals and Royal Weddings. Even better was the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary which prompted a week long holiday. But impromptu holidays too often meant catching up on lessons with extra school on Saturday mornings.

Children used chalk to write on Delabole slate for their lessons until 1890 when Standard 3 worked their arithmetic on paper for the first time, the log noting "some did very well". A month later this privilege was repeated but it took another six years before Copybooks were introduced for teaching "upright writing". This was not so successful as "handwriting at present is unsettled". It is another 10 years before the "use of books and paper is recommended to be used by the older children instead of slates".

The compulsory weekly fees and stationery charges ended in September 1891 when the Government fee grant was awarded – although St Tudy parents were reminded that while the legal obligation to pay had ended they still had a moral duty to support the school!

One brave teacher organised the school's first official outing in 1893, loading 70 children on to farm waggons for the ten mile drive to Trebarwith where the children spent the day on the beach.

That same year, Charles Nicholls started school at the tender age of three. One of a family of 11 he recalled: "We had to sit still but I think we enjoyed ourselves. I didn't learn very much until I was ten and went into the Headmaster's class. Besides attending day school there was also night school for anyone who was interested". That's if they had time, by the age of 12 some boys and girls were already employed on the farms before and after school.

Ten years later Elizabeth Ann Nottle entered a class of 50 children and found discipline very strict. "We broke the rules if we spoke to anyone in class, when listening to a story we had to sit with our hands behind our backs, the seats were backless and we weren't allowed to rest our arms unless we were writing.

"The worst thing about the school was the terrible smell from the bucket lavatories, especially in the summer as we used to have to play in the small yard beside them".

Behaviour appears to have been good with few entries for caning in The Punishment Book between 1905 and 1939. It is known that Leonard Garland disliked corporal punishment and rarely found it necessary. Although young Cyril Worth, who was to die on the battlefield less than five years later, did feel the sting of the cane for "throwing books".

The school staff was limited to one headmistress and two assistants with the occasional help of monitors - older pupils who helped younger children with their lessons. Children started school at the age of 3 or 4 and stayed there until 12 or in later years 15. The curriculum became more varied after Leonard Garland was appointed in 1905. He trained the children to read music and each year they entered the county music festival usually winning a challenge shield or banner. For the first time the children could learn outdoors going round the village for geography or nature study from 1908. The next year football matches with St Mabyn were introduced. Sadly that year three children were forced to leave the school when they were removed to Bodmin Workhouse.

During World War 1 boys and girls grew fruit and vegetables in seven plots in Mr Garland's garden. Working on the allotment was credited with time off lessons. They collected eggs for the wounded soldiers and the girls knitted socks, scarves and pullovers. They also collected money for the relief of starving Belgian children. In 1916 Mr Garland joined the DCLI and a succession of relief teachers, including his wife Hilda, took over until he returned to his desk in January 1919. Peace brought the children a welcome week's holiday and soon after a new lesson in dairy work and poultry-keeping. Meanwhile the health scares continued throughout Leonard Garland's 31-year tenure. School was sometimes closed for weeks on end due to chicken pox, spanish influenza, mumps, scarlet fever and diphtheria.

Until 1921, the schoolroom was the central meeting place of the village and the children had great fun getting the room ready for Harvest teas, Lenten lectures, Missionary speeches and Clothing Club distributions. There were also the Clergy meetings, Parish Council meetings and occasional special celebrations such as the Rector's wedding in 1900. This ended in 1921 when the Memorial Hut opened but the school rallied to the cause after that hall

burnt down in 1943, once more becoming the meeting point of the village until the present Village Hall was built.

Schooldays continued in the interwar years much as they had before. The outbreak of the Second World War caused some excitement when a man arrived to distribute gas masks, then some refugees arrived from Plymouth but quickly returned home. It was in June 1940 that life at school changed dramatically. For more than a month St Tudy's children shared their desks with 62 refugees from Chiswick and Brentford. The evacuees included six Belgian children and three teachers. The school organised two sessions with local children taught in the morning and the evacuees in the afternoon. An evacuee school was set up as soon as possible in the Hut where children sat at long trestle tables instead of desks. Some of the new arrivals stayed in school and rapidly became friends with their village hosts, becoming "Us" instead of "Them". More evacuees arrived in November 1940 and May 1941 increasing school numbers to 73, (43 local children and 30 evacuees). The Evacuee school lost everything when the Hut burnt down in August 1943 so all the children moved into the school building. By now numbers had increased to 93 with the addition of 26 evacuees from Surrey. That was not to last long and a year later, the school roll dropped to 44 when Victory in Europe saw the visitors returning to their own homes, many with great regret. It was to drop to 23 before the number on the school roll rallied.

Life returned to normal after the war and most children in the village continued to receive their infant, junior and senior schooling in St Tudy's little school. Each year the 11+ tests gave some the chance to go to school in Bodmin – if their parents could afford it, if not they stayed where they were until able to leave at 15. Then in 1956, the new secondary school opened in Wadebridge and all the senior children had to transfer to the big school, leaving a mere 27 children on St Tudy's school register.

Since then the school has gone from strength to strength. The most recent Ofsted report (in 2012) concludes "This is a good school" while acknowledging that the building is far from perfect and "constrains" learning. Still based in the original Victorian building, the school became part of the Saint's Way Church of England Academy in 2012 and the campaign for funds to build a new school fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century continues.