



## Local History Collection

### 06 - Braywood School

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Braywood School was built in 1857 and funded by Elizabeth Van de Weyer, the wife of the Belgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, who lived with her husband at nearby New Lodge.

The school was built for 140 pupils aged 5-14 years old. William Henry Malcolm was the Master and Mrs Elizabeth Malcolm was Mistress. There were only 2 classrooms (with a curtain to divide them) where the current Year 3 and 4 classes are now. In the corner of the current year 4 classroom; just under the spiral staircase, was a door to the Master's house. This house is now a private residence and its driveway is next to Braywood School.

The local working community was made up mainly of farmers, farm bailiffs, jobbing gardeners, beer retailers (5 pubs in Fifield/Oakley Green at this time), blacksmith, wheelwright and cattle dealers.

By the 1940's Braywood School had 4 teachers. Mrs. Rendall who taught the 1st class in the current Year 1 classroom, Mrs. Darvill who taught the 2nd class in the current Year 4 classroom and the curtain divided this room where Mrs. Snow taught the 3rd class and Mr. Snow (Headmaster) taught the 4th class in the current Year 3 classroom. There was only an open fireplace which heated the whole school.

The classrooms had wooden desks with lids and ink wells. There were class monitors for ink, milk, stamps and cigarettes! Pupils would walk each lunchtime to the village hall in Fifield to get their lunch. The playground was at the front of the school, which is now used for staff parking.

School trips included visits to White Ladyes Poultry Farm on the Fifield Road or a visit to the Smithy opposite the school where pupils were allowed to pump the bellows.



***Comments from past Braywood pupils:***

**David Embery** remembers being a cigarette monitor for Mrs. Darvill, he had to walk across the road 3 times a week to the Prince of Wales pub (now a private house called Finnegan's) to collect her cigarettes. David remembers receiving a packet of candy cigarettes each month he was a monitor.

The pupil who got Mrs. Snow's cigarettes one month wasn't so lucky. He was a Barnados boy at New Lodge, which was a Barnados home for a few years from 1942. At the end of the month Mrs. Snow found her bill much higher than expected as the pupil had got himself a packet of cigarettes each visit!

**Frank Turner** commented that the stamp monitor would cycle from the school to the Post Office on the Oakley Green Road (which was next to the Red Lion Pub) to collect the school stamps. This was not a dangerous trip as there were only 3 buses and 2 cars an hour in those days! Punishments for naughty children included digging in Mr. Snow's

garden. He remembers walking up Sparboro to play football with the Barnados boys at New Lodge. He clearly remembers how Mr. Snow was interested in sport as he played cricket for Braywood C.C. and encouraged pupils to participate in cricket and the running team. In fact the running team qualified for the 200 metres for the county sports at Bisham Abbey in the 1950's.

**Dianne Walton** wrote that she remembers walking to school each morning with the bell ringing to tell everyone that school was starting. They would meet in the front playground by the door in groups according to classroom and teachers. The toilets were wooden seats outside in the block behind the school, next to where the coke was stored for the fire to keep the school warm. Every child was given a small bottle of milk each day that was delivered to school. During the nice weather they would practise country dancing in the front playground and dressed up in costumes with big hats and then sit under the 3 big oak trees where they did crafts. On every May day they would dance around the maypole plaiting the ribbons.

**Sue Wharton (Bowditch)** wrote that teaching was very strict, and you had to stand in the corner facing away from the class if you were naughty. School was open in all weathers and if the road outside the school was flooded you had to take off your shoes and socks and wade through the flood. In the Summer they were treated to the outdoor swimming baths in Maidenhead by coach, and in Spring and Autumn there were walks across the fields to the woods on the hill. If the headmaster ,Mr. Snow, passed you in his car you would have to stand still and salute him.

The current headmistress at Braywood School, Susan Calvert, is also inviting pupils to write about life as a more recently Braywood pupil and I hope to include some of their stories in the next magazine. If you have any additional memories of Braywood School not mentioned here please do get in touch so I can include them in my notes and future talks at the school.