

Roath Park Primary School

Centenary

1895 - 1995



Souvenir Booklet

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Foreword

Welcome to our Centenary celebrations.

I hope that this brochure will stimulate an interest in our celebrations and will revive happy memories for past pupils and staff.

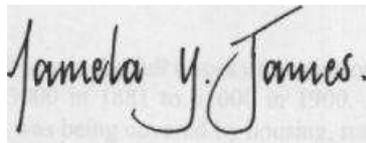
During the last 100 years Roath Park Primary School has seen many changes both in school, in school life and environment. It has survived two World Wars with very little damage and the amazing community and pupil spirit which existed then, still exists with the present staff and pupils in everything which they undertake.

We warmly welcome you all to join us and meet old friends and colleagues, chat with present pupils and see them at work.

Many past pupils have become successful and famous as I am sure will many of our present pupils. I wish them all success, fulfilment and happiness.

I am privileged to be Headteacher in this our Centenary year and thank all fellow colleagues and parents who have laboured to make this event a success. We owe a great deal to former colleagues and children who have become part of the history of the school.

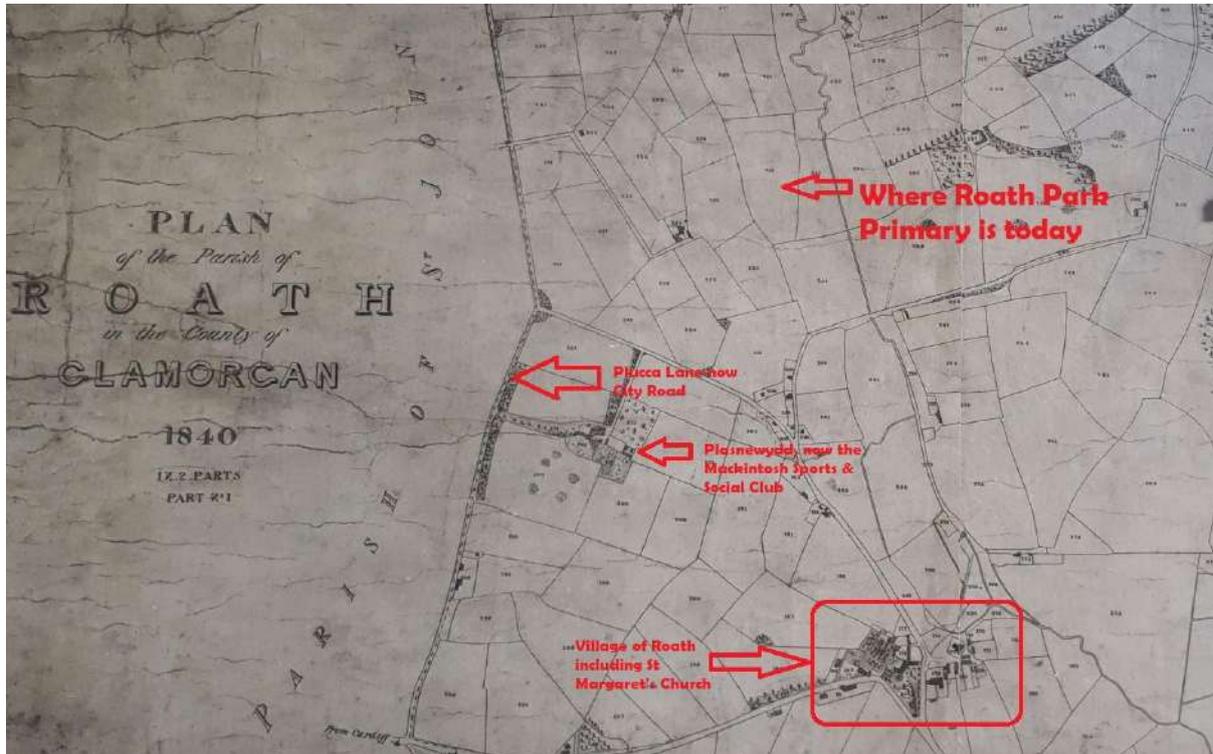
I trust that this will be a week to remember. May the next 100 years be as memorable as the last 100 years.



Pamela Y. James.

Background History

The area now known as Roath is shown on the 1840 Tithe Map as a predominantly agricultural and rural area. The only recognisable features are Castle Road (now City Road), Crwys Road and Merthyr Road (now Albany Road) which cross over otherwise unspoilt farmland. The odd farmhouse or cottage further completes the rural scene.



However, as the 19th century progressed, the Roath Park area underwent a complete transformation. The expansion of Cardiff as a major seaport in the late 19th century led to an influx of people seeking employment in the town. This created a demand for housing, amenities and schooling that was nowhere more apparent than in the developing suburbs of Roath, Cathays and Canton. The building of houses in Roath only really began in the 1880s. These properties were purchased mainly by artisans who wished to move from the poorer, older parts of Cardiff.

By 1880, Cardiff was in the full throes of expansion. The population of Roath alone increased from 23000 in 1881 to 61000 in 1900. It was a time when the hitherto unspoilt farmland was being covered by housing, roads and other amenities.

The first houses to be built in the area were to the north of Albany Road as far up as Moy Road. This stage commenced in 1884. The development was piecemeal and local builders sought permission to build sections up to a maximum of 6 houses at a time. This probably accounts for the slight differences in design and use of materials.

The second stage of development commenced in 1886 and included the street leading off City Road. It was at this time that Albany Road School was built, the only permanent building on the south side of that street at the time.

The final stage began in the 1890s when the upper parts of the streets leading off Albany Road and associated roads were completed. It was at this stage that Roath Park School (1894), together with the Albany Public House (1895), Methodist Church, Wellfield Road (1898) and Gospel Hall, Mackintosh Place (1898) were built. Pen-y-Wain Road and other roads leading to what is now parklands were not even started until 1900. In total some 3000 houses were built in the area between 1884 and 1900.

The need for a school arose from the development of the area and its associated expansion of population. However, the school was built as a direct result of the 1870 Education Act. This was an important and far reaching piece of legislation that heralded rapid changes in education in the last few decades of the 19th century.

Prior to 1870, education throughout the country was in the hands of voluntary bodies. But by 1870, there were insufficient places to cope with the increased numbers of children and many children did not receive any education. It was important that extra schools be built but it was generally agreed that voluntary bodies would be incapable of doing this. Consequently, an act of parliament was passed in 1870. The whole country was divided into districts. In each district, the number of children had to be counted and, if there were more children than school places, the local people had to elect a School Board which was empowered to build new schools using ratepayers' money.



The Opening of the School

Cardiff School Board was formed in 1875 and began to build new schools where needed. Albany Road and Crwys Road schools could no longer cope with the demand for places, so a decision was made to build a school in the vicinity of the new Roath Park. Negotiations for the purchase of land from the Bute family began in 1872. A final agreement was reached concerning an acre of land opposite Roath Park which was bought for the sum of £2500. In addition, £200 was paid to the Bute family to provide drainage and sewers together with a temporary roadway leading to the school site. This was a condition of the regulations laid down at the time with the proviso that the Bute family were not responsible for the upkeep of the roadway. Various designs were submitted to the school board. One of the more ambitious schemes involved extending the school playgrounds further up what is now Pen-y-Wain Road thus making Donald Street a cul-de-sac. However, due to petitioning by both the builders and the new residents of Donald Street, the scheme was shelved.

The architect whose plans were finally accepted was Mr.E.W.M.Corbett and his plans were based on previous board schools already built, notably Moorland Road, Radnor Road and Saltmead School. As the architect himself pointed out:

"I was able to plan a school similar in every essential point to those most recently approved for the district and found most convenient by your teachers."

Tenders for the work went out on June 5th 1893 and Mr. Harry Gibbons, contractor and merchant of the Steam Joinery Works, 185 Richmond Road, won the contract. Work proceeded rapidly without stoppages.

Although no children were admitted until January 16th 1895, the schools of Roath Park were formerly opened on Wednesday January 9th. The opening of the school was undoubtedly a very important chapter in the development of the new Roath housing estate. The opening ceremony created a great deal of local and media interest as can be seen from the first day's entry in the boy's school log book. This records the presence of, **'a large number of parents resident in the neighbourhood, and also a number of those interested in the educational welfare of the town.'**

On January 10th 1895, the South Wales Daily News wrote:

“ The opening was an interesting event in the educational history of Cardiff.....quite a crowd of visitors attended the ceremony and the universal verdict was that the new schools were the handsomest, brightest and best of all the schools now 15 in number which had been created and under the control of the Board.”

Alderman David Jones (Chairman of the Lights and Buildings Committee) went further by saying ,
“The new schools were as charming and bright as any young heart could desire.”

The school was officially opened by Mr Lewis Williams JP Chairman of Cardiff School Board. Mr Williams unlocked the entrance door with, in the words of the Western Mail, **‘a gold key chastely and ingeniously designed and bearing a suitable inscription supplied by Mr Spiridion, jeweller of Duke Street Cardiff.’**

After the inspection of the schools had taken place the invited guests proceeded to the upstairs corridor where they heard a series of speeches and presumably indulged in some light refreshment.



The Buildings

In common with many other large board schools built in Cardiff at the time, the buildings were originally designed to house 3 separate schools. The two storey building comprised a boys school on the top floor and a girls school on the ground floor. The infants were housed in a single storey building.

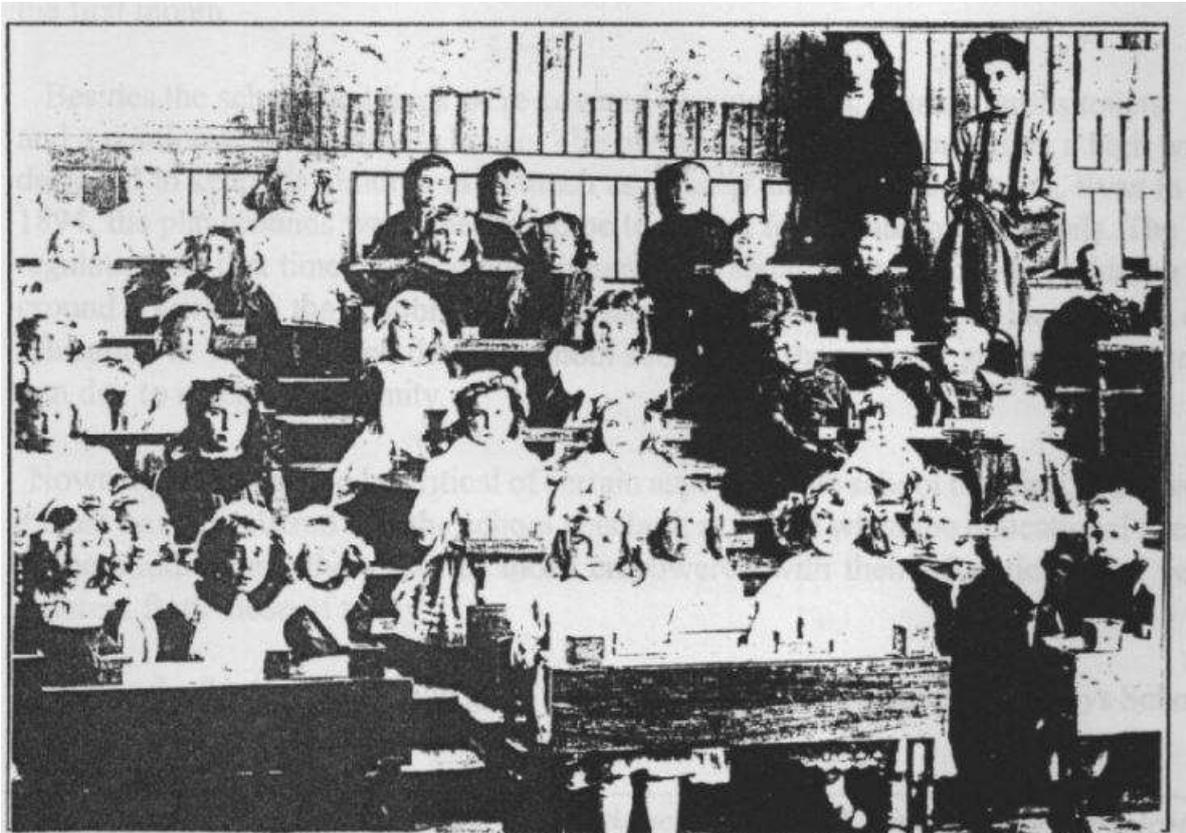
The design of the buildings typifies that of many schools built at the end of the last century. They were constructed mainly from rubble masonry faced with brickwork with terracotta and red Carlisle stone dressings. The school was designed to accommodate 1256 children; 380 girls, 380 boys and 496 infants. It cost approximately £16000 to build which included:

	£	s	d
Cost of Site.	2754,	0,	0
Cost of Building.	11804,	12,	8
Cost of Furniture & Fittings.	645,	7,	4
Architects Commission.	650,	0,	0
Expenses of Clerk of Works.	130,	0,	0
Expenses, metalling, roads, pavements in accordance with Sanitary Authority.	300,	0,	0
Cost of Caretaker's House.	637,	0,	0

In place of the traditional single room school, Roath Park comprised separate but interlinked classrooms with wide corridors. This design was very much in vogue in the 1890s as a replacement for the school room design of the 1870s and 1880s. The corridor design typified in Roath Park was later replaced by the central hall design seen in buildings of the early 1900s e.g., Gladstone and Allensbank schools. The one disadvantage of the corridor design was that teaching areas were reduced and the benefit of a large schoolroom for assembling all the children together was lost.

Large windows provided the school with plenty of light and ventilation. The windows were above eye level to ensure that the children were not distracted from their studies. The rooms were heated by large open fires whilst the corridors were warmed by powerful stoves. Additional light was provided by ceiling mounted gas lights. There were 50 such lights in each school and 3 in the caretaker's house.

In the early days of the school, entries in the log books testified to problems with heating the buildings. Severe weather combined with a coal strike resulted in problems which interfered with school work. On numerous occasions, children were sent home and one member of staff was sent home ill due to the cold and draughts in the corridor. The rooms were arranged with the teacher occupying a central position facing the class who were in turn positioned in rows facing the teacher. In some of the classrooms, there were staged galleries so that the children could see the teacher more easily and vice versa. A few of the classrooms were partitioned so that a senior teacher could supervise two classes at one time.



A Typical Staged Gallery

Furniture was simple but adequate for the needs of the day. The following estimate for furniture and fittings gives an insight into school life in 1894.

Items	£	s	d	Items	£	s	d
448 dual desks				6 pupil-teacher desks	21	0	0
100 dual fronts*				2 staged galleries	110	13	4
100 dual backs*	432	4	2	1 dresser	3	10	0
3 tables	33	0	0	TOTAL	645	7	4

* Iron framed with a hinged wooden bench seat fixed either to the back or the front, with a work top.

In addition to this estimate, an extra 180 wooden desks, 18 teachers' desks and 3 strong cupboards to hold the dumbbells were ordered locally from Gibbons within the first month.

Besides the school buildings were covered playing sheds, outside pupils toilets and a comfortable caretaker's house. The playground was surrounded by a high wall designed to keep the children in as much as to keep unwanted people out. Even in 1894, the playgrounds were deemed to be too small for the number of pupils. The regulations at that time required a minimum of 30 square feet per child in addition to ground covered by the school building. This was waived because the Department of Education in Whitehall felt that the school should use the park for games and recreation due to its close proximity.

Nowadays, it is easy to be critical of certain aspects of the school building. However, it must be remembered that the school was built at a time when the educational needs of the children and the views of those empowered with their education were very different from those of today.

Perhaps the final words should go to Mr. James Gray Headteacher of the Boys School who wrote in his logbook on the very first day,

"Parents and others expressed their great satisfaction with and admiration for the splendid buildings and the magnificent way in which the school had been fitted up for the purposes of education."

The Boys School

At the time of the opening of the Roath Park Schools Mr James Gray was the headmaster of the boys school. He commenced his duties on the very first morning and remained in post until his death in 1911 from pneumonia. Mr Gray was 37 years old and an experienced teacher having previously worked in other schools in the Cardiff area.

Mr Gray saw his school grow in number from 106 pupils on the first day to over 500 in 1898. He seemed to take a great interest in school life and devoted much of his time and energy to the school. Nothing is known of his private life or indeed where he lived^(a). He appeared to enjoy reasonable health and was seldom absent from school. Mr Gray recorded carefully in the log book the events of the first years of the school and his entries show a great pride in the school's development. The school records do show that Mr Gray liaised with the other schools on site even though he seldom paid them a visit. It is also evident that Mr Gray took his work seriously.



The Bell Tower. It must have summoned many a boy to class.

(a) Research in 2022 by Ted Richards of Roath Local History Society unveiled the following about James Gray:- He was born in Forgue, Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1858. He was married to Jemima Gray, also from Scotland. In 1891 they lived in Keppoch Street before moving to Claude Road where they were living in 1901 and 1911. They had five children together, the two eldest daughters were also school teachers. The 1911 census indicates that James could speak Welsh as well as English. Before taking up the post of headmaster at Roath Park School in 1894 he was Assistant Master and First Science Master at Cardiff Higher Grade School (i.e. Cardiff High). He was described as a sound mathematician and devoted a lot of time to University College classes every winter. Rugby was one of his absorbing hobbies and Cardiff Rugby Schoolboy Sports are said to owe him a great deal for his enthusiastic assistance. Press reports and his gravestone Cathays Cemetery described him as James Gray BA. This may indicate an Oxford or Cambridge education as they award a BA in Maths and Science as opposed to a BSc.

However, the first HMI report in 1895 did point out that, “ The school will go on well if the headteacher can give rather more personal supervision and not attempt too much.”

The first few weeks were rather hectic. Mr Gray’s first entry in the log book on January 16th states, “ after the public opening the process of enrolment has been going on till today when regular work has been commenced and registers marked.” On the first morning of work, all his staff were present. The staff of the new school were either drawn from other schools in the area or came straight from college. The school records show that it took a while for the teachers to settle to their work. Standards were not uniform throughout the school and, as the headteacher wrote a few weeks after its opening, “ There is considerable difference in their powers of discipline, teaching manner and style.”

The staff on the first day consisted of:-

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. James Gray | Headteacher. |
| 2. Lyster Harper | Certified Class Teacher. |
| 3. Walter C. Jolliffe | Certified Class Teacher. |
| 4. Joseph Griffiths | Certified Class Teacher on probation. |
| 5. George A. Bevan | Certified Class Teacher on probation. |
| 6. Morgan R. Thomas | Certified Class Teacher on probation. |

Shortly after its opening, Cecil Bailey and Albert Evan Phillips joined the staff as Monitor and Pupil Teacher respectively. In 1895, the staffing structure of the school reflected the education system at the time. Lyster Harper was a Certified Assistant Master. He started on the very first day and remained there for many years. He was 26 years of age. Mr Harper often deputised for the Headmaster, received guests and accompanied children on visits outside school. As evidence of his position, he was given the responsibility for teaching standard VII, the oldest children in the school. One of his less enviable tasks was to administer corporal punishment, a job reserved only for certified teachers.



Albert Evan Phillips was a 20 year old pupil teacher who joined the staff early in 1896. Pupil teachers were apprentice teachers who were required to undergo a set period of teaching before being given recognition as assistant teachers. Much of his work would be similar to that of a monitor but at times he would be required to supervise other children and to teach them. In addition, he had his own lessons to learn and examinations to pass in order to become an assistant teacher. School log book entries indicate that the work of a pupil teacher was very hard. Frequent references are made to absences due to illness. Many monitors and pupil teachers did not succeed in becoming teachers and there was a large turnover in junior staff in the school.

Cecil Bailey was a monitor in the early days. He was barely out of school himself. His duties included helping the classteacher to give out the slates, pencils, papers etc, and the carrying out of other menial tasks. His pay was very poor.

The Boys School was adequately staffed for its time and well resourced. There were 6 classrooms and each class was designed to hold in excess of 50 children.



The Girls School

The girls school was situated on the ground floor of what is now the junior building. At the time of the opening, Miss Jesse Nelly Butcher was the Headmistress. She remained in post until August 1906 when she retired and was succeeded by Miss G.Blight. In her first entry in the log book, Miss Butcher states that, on the first day, 87 girls were admitted to the school. This had risen to 109 by the end of the first week. Average attendance for the first 11 months was 188 girls. The staff on the first day consisted of:-

1. Jesse Nelly Butcher	Headmistress
2. Gwendoline Lewis	Certified Teacher
3. Mary Jane Jones	Certified Teacher
4. Cecilia Morgan	Certified Teacher
5. Bridget Annie Sear	Certified Teacher
6. Edith Morris	Ex-pupil Teacher
7. Mary Lewis	Ex-pupil Teacher
8. Minnie Taylor	1st year pupil Teacher

Unlike the boys school, there did not seem to be a senior teacher who deputised for the headmistress. However, in the early days, Miss Gwendoline Lewis, referred to in the log book as the head's assistant, was left in charge. However, the log book shows that she was frequently absent from school and consequently Miss Mary Jones was often in charge.

Unfortunately, very few personal details are shown in the school log book, so very little is known of the lives of the members of staff. What is known is that there were 2 ex-pupil teachers on probation, a 1st year pupil teacher and the monitor.



Victorian Dress

The Infants School

The third building on the site was the Infants School. At the time of the opening, Miss Kate Thomas was headmistress and she remained in post until August 1900 when she retired and was succeeded by Miss E.H.Robinson. Miss Thomas was an experienced teacher with many years of teaching in other schools. Miss Thomas in her first entry in the log book writes that, on the first day, 36 children were admitted. This rose to an average of 148 in the first 11 months which was a disappointing attendance given the capacity of the school. The infant log book gives us detailed accounts of the early days of the school. Although it did not reach its full potential in terms of numbers under Miss Thomas, the school was never the less well staffed and well resourced.

There is reference in the first year to a piano being supplied by the staff. How this came about sadly is not mentioned. The staff on the first day comprised the following:-

1.Miss Kate Thomas	Headmistress
2.Miss Ida Lewis	Certified Classteacher
3.Miss Ellenora Williams	Certified Classteacher
4.Miss Mary Williams	Certified Classteacher
5.Miss Annie Jones*	Certified Classteacher
6.Miss Amy Kelly	Ex-pupil teacher on probation
7.Miss Mary Jupp	Ex-pupil teacher on probation
8. Miss Martha Francis	Ex-pupil teacher on probation.
9.Miss Hannah M James	2nd year pupil teacher
10. Miss Edith Garner	Monitress

*(Miss Annie Jones transferred to South Church Street School on January 28th.)

Frequent entries in the log book show that Miss Ida Lewis usually deputised for the headmistress. On a few occasions, the job was given to Ellenora Williams presumably to give her more experience. She also taught the eldest children, which was usually the prerogative of the senior teacher.



It is evident from the log book entries that Miss Thomas was a hard working but caring woman who ruled the school with a rod of iron. She set high standards and expected much from her staff. One interesting insight into her personality are the constant battles she had with the caretaker, a person who is not mentioned by either of the other two headteachers. Some of the confrontations are worth reporting in full:-

Feb 8 1885 "This morning a paper was missing from my room which I found on inquiry had been taken away by the caretaker: as two pieces had been taken from the storeroom on the 21st Jan I sent for him and asked for an explanation but on being spoken to he became so insolent I had to order him to leave the room."

"On entering school this morning at 8.45 I found the caretaker had left the school door open and in the corridor were over a dozen boys making a disturbance with no one in charge. Since a pocket book containing money had been missing from my private room I had given orders that the doors were to be locked at the children's entrance until the teacher in charge came and opened them."

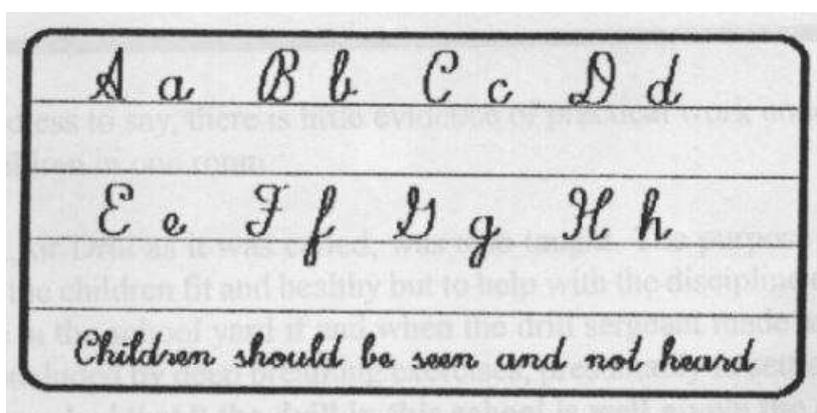
A few months later, the infant school suffered a spate of smashed windows. On the numerous occasions that the caretaker was called, he failed to give an explanation.

The Lessons

It is fair to say that the early days at Roath Park were governed by order, repetition and strict discipline. The curriculum consisted of the 3Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) supplemented by Scripture. The school timetable was not only heavily biased towards these subjects but also had to be adhered to rigidly. Temporary changes to the timetable could and were made by the headteacher but permanent changes had to be referred to the school board.

Great emphasis was placed on Scripture and this occupied the first part of each day. Next in importance came the 3 Rs. Children in the infants started by learning the alphabet before progressing onto two and three letter words. In the boys' and girls' schools, children in each standard were given a reading book for the year. They would keep the book for the whole year and, even if it was too easy or too hard, they still had to keep it. An extract from the log book in 1896 states that, **"the historical reader in standard 3 seems to cause special difficulty."** However, no reference is made to changing the book so the children of standard 3 presumably struggled on.

Great emphasis was also placed on producing copper plate hand-writing. The children spent many hours practising this either onto slates or using nib pens and ink. An HMI visitor in the early days of the school stated that, **"the exercise books, copy books and exam books are neatly worked and carefully corrected."**



Copper Plate

Arithmetic was also important but there was very little opportunity to undertake practical work. Most of the work was learned by rote or recitation. The standard of work was generally very good, although a teacher in the girls school was warned by the HMI in 1895 that, **“the first standard should not use finger counting.”**

In addition to these subjects the schools also taught “class subjects” to their pupils. The government of the day encouraged this and, if taught well, class subjects could earn the school a bigger grant. No school was compelled to teach class subjects but, if it elected so to do, English Grammar was compulsory.

Roath Park was no exception and it taught grammar thereby earning itself a high grant in 1895. All children at the schools learned singing and free hand drawing. Singing was described as praiseworthy by the HMI in 1895 whilst free hand drawing was deemed to be excellent.

Science was not taught as such at Roath Park but it was touched upon in Object lessons. These were not grant awarded subjects. As the name implies, Object Lessons relied upon a visual stimulus about which the children would write, draw or discuss. Subjects referred to in the log books include gases, leaves and birds. Other Object lessons were based on school visits undertaken by the children. Mr Gray described one of his object lessons in his log book entry of 5 April 1895.

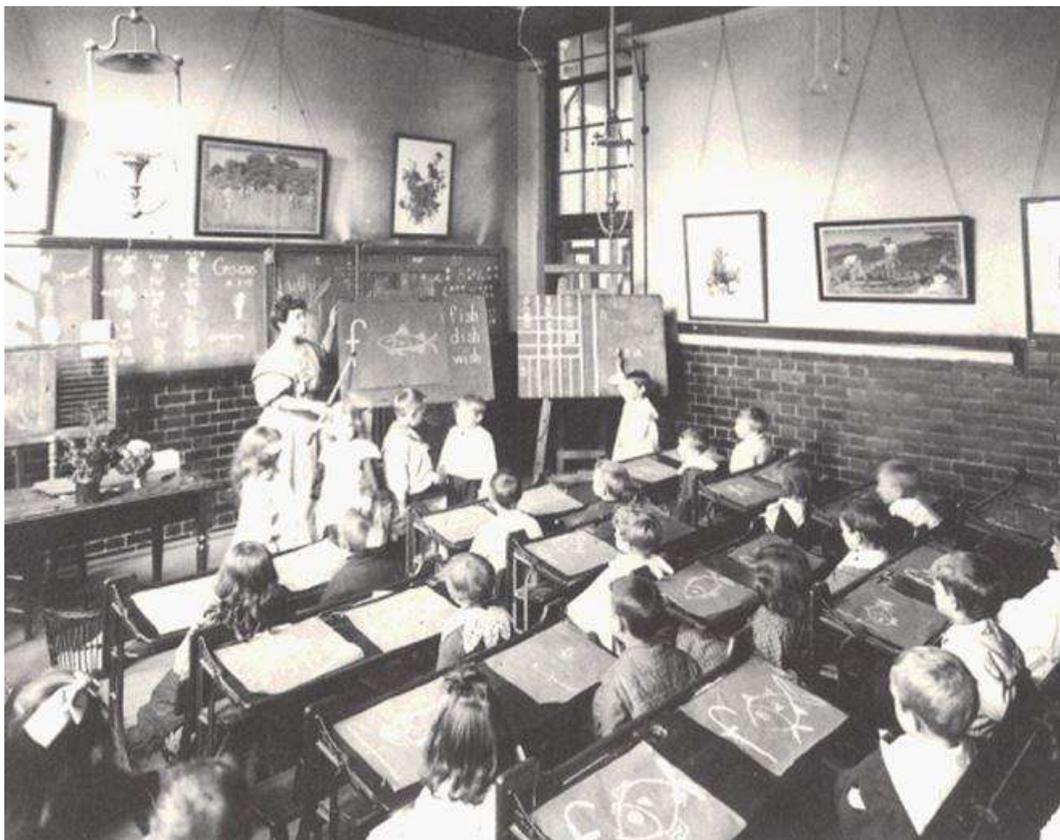
“Some chemical apparatus arrived this morning and I gave an Object lesson on the atmosphere, selecting oxygen as the subject to standard IV - VII boys and standard V - VII girls. Miss Lewis the teacher of the class accompanied them up stairs staying during the lesson. The children seemed delighted with the experiments shown.”

Needless to say, there is little evidence of practical work undertaken by that number of children in one room.

P.E. or Drill as it was called, was also taught. The purpose of drill was not just to keep the children fit and healthy but to help with the discipline of the school. Drill took place in the school yard if and when the drill sergeant made an appearance. It would be concluded by deep breathing exercises, presumably to settle the children. One visitor remarked that, **“the drill in this school is well above the average.”**

Finally, there were Occupation lessons in the infants and Manual Instruction in the boys' and girls' schools. Examples of occupation lessons included mat weaving, stick laying, embroidery, tablet laying and building with bricks and cubes. The reasons for such lessons were laid out in the contemporary teachers manual. **"Such lessons serve to give young children ideas of form and number as well as to train hand to eye."**

Manual instruction in the boys' and girls' schools included modelling in clay, cartridge and cardboard paper, cutting out paper or other materials, drawing, colouring designs and brush painting. The girls also received cookery and needlework lessons. The cookery lessons taking place at Albany Road School:-



A typical Victorian Lesson

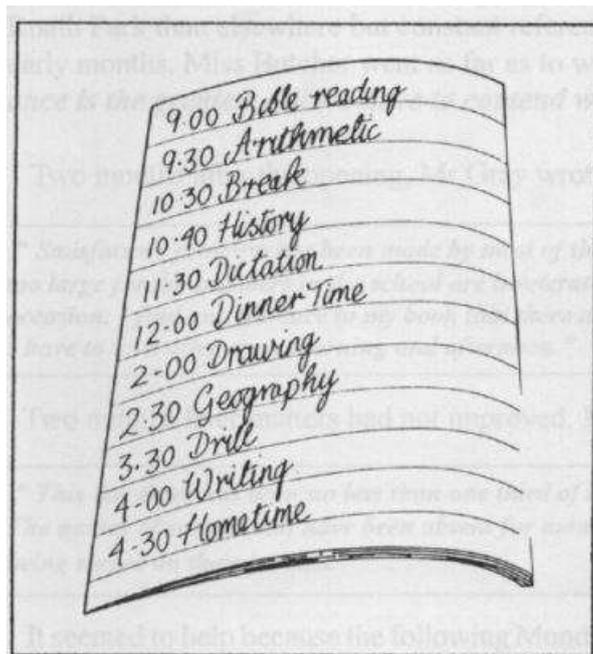
Classes

No school timetables exist from this time but the school log book does give us a insight into how the school was organised. At this time, grants to schools were based on the performance of the pupils in annual examinations. Standards of attainment were laid down and this is the reason why the school was organised into standards.

The lowest of these was standard I and the highest standard VII. Most of the children in standard I who came from the infants would be 7 years old. Provided they were regular attenders and worked hard, they would progress to the next standard at the end of the year. Children in standard VII would be 13 or 14 when they left the school. In 1895, there were 2 boys and 3 girls in standard VII whilst there were 136 boys and 114 girls in standard I. In order to move from one standard to another, the children had to pass examinations conducted by an inspector and the headteacher. If a child failed, which often happened due to poor attendance, he or she could remain in the same standard for an additional year.

In 1895, many of the children in the standards were much older than they should have been. In fact, some of the children in the infant school were nearly teenagers. The HMI report in 1896 pointed out that, "**one sixth of the infants on the books are over 7 years of age. It is desirable therefore that some readjustments be made with the departments for older children.**"

The school log books put this down to the fact that prior to the opening of the school most of the children had never attended an educational establishment.



A typical Victorian Timetable

Numbers

The number of children attending the three schools was liable to fluctuate tremendously. The main reason for this was weather conditions. The condition of the area surrounding the schools did not help. In January 1895, Miss Butcher wrote:-

“ The weather has been very inclement all the week and the snow in places lies very deep. The road leading to the school is in a very bad condition. ”

During the winter months, children were often kept at home because of fear of illness. Miss Butcher wrote:-

“There is no epidemic but slight ailments have sufficed for parents to keep girls at home owing to a scare from newspaper reports about some of the board schools in town.”

Throughout the log books, all three headteachers seem understandably preoccupied with attendance. It is difficult to gauge whether there was a bigger problem at Roath Park than elsewhere but constant references were made to attendance in the early months. Miss Butcher went as far as to write, ***“ The irregularity of attendance is the greatest evil we have to contend with.”***

Two months after the opening, Mr Gray wrote:-

“ Satisfactory progress has been made by most of the pupils but a proportion of them much too large for the numbers in the school are inveterate truants going off on every possible occasion. I find on reference to my book that there are no fewer than 32 names of those who I have to look after every morning and afternoon.”

Two months later matters had not improved. Mr Gray wrote:-

“ This day there has been no less than one third of the total number on books absent all day. The names of several that have been absent for months are still kept on as summonses are being served on their parents.”

It seemed to help because the following Monday saw many children return to school brought by their parents. Nevertheless, truancy was a continual problem and the following year the board decided to award prizes for attendance.

A short time later, attendance cards were introduced which had to be initialled by the teachers each day. Truancy therefore was a major problem in the three schools and continued to be until 1918 when full time education up to 14 years was made compulsory. The school records contain many references to illness and it should be appreciated that not all absentees were truants. The school log books bear witness to this with outbreaks of colds, scarletina, measles, diphtheria and pneumonia all being reported.

Teachers were not immune. At least one member of staff died from diphtheria and Mr Gray himself died from pneumonia. Other reasons for non attendance were reported in the log books. Miss Butcher writes, “ **Attendance much lower than usual. There are two or three picnics taking place today (in the park).**”

She seemed resigned to the situation and powerless to prevent it. On one occasion during the first few months, 232 girls were absent representing a large percentage of the school population.



A View of the School

Holidays

School holidays were not standard as they are today. In 1896, the first full academic year, the children and staff enjoyed the following holidays.

Christmas	2 weeks
Easter	2 weeks
Summer	4 weeks

Although there were no half term holidays, there were plenty of occasional days which were often granted at the discretion of the headteachers. Holidays were given for all sorts of reasons including successful visits from HMIs or attendance officers. Holidays were also granted at times of bad weather. One such occasion occurred early on in the life of the school. As Mr. Gray himself wrote:-

" One of the most tempestuous mornings I have ever encountered in Cardiff. The children came to school in such a condition that it seemed best in the interests of their health to send I them home and close the school for the day."

Special occasions were often rewarded by extra holidays. One such occasion was recorded in the school records:-

"Dismissed at 12 o'clock noon today on account of the May Day Show to which a large number of the pupils were going."

A similar extract states:-

" On Thursday afternoon a great many were absent on account of the Welsh Regiment in the town and today we closed for the afternoon as the regiments march through the principal streets."

On other occasions, the headteachers reluctantly bowed to situations beyond their control. Mr Gray wrote:-

" Aquatic carnival at Roath Park lake and a procession passing just at the time of the usual afternoon opening.....we have decided to close the schools."

Visitors

Visitors to all three schools formed a regular feature of school life. All visits to the school were carefully recorded in the log books.

There were regular visits from local clergy. The children had to be on their best behaviour and were presumably encouraged to wear their best clothes for the occasion. Sometimes clergy came to the school representing the school board. For example, the Rev. G.H Jenner of Wenvoe came to watch the work of the school in general. On other occasions visits were more specific e.g. oral scripture exams.

The managers of the school, who were all male, were frequent visitors and often turned up unexpectedly. The school board was responsible for ensuring that children went to school. They appointed attendance officers whose main duty was to visit parents of children regularly absent from school. Attendance officers frequently visited the schools to inspect class registers. This was done because the school's financial grant was affected by the average attendance. Poor attendance meant less money and stringent precautions were taken to ensure that register totals were not altered.

Each year, a subject examiner visited the schools to carry out tests and the grant received during the following year was dependent on the number who passed. This system, known as payment by results, continued until the turn of the century. One subject examiner, Colonel Glancey, regularly came to examine manual instruction lessons.

The most important visit of the year was the annual HMI inspection. The outcome of the annual inspection also affected the financial allowance made to the school for the following year. A well organised school which satisfied the inspector in terms of its teaching methods, attendance records, curriculum standards and so forth could qualify for a higher allowance. All three schools at the end of the first 11 months were eligible for such a grant. Following the first inspection, the three schools were given a half days holiday to celebrate.

Other visitors who came to the school in the early days included heating engineers and various delivery men bringing equipment to the school. Lecturers from the Cardiff Day Training College were regular visitors who came to supervise college students undertaking practice at the school. Interestingly, parental involvement was minimal and parents are only mentioned in the school log books during the first week of enrolment.