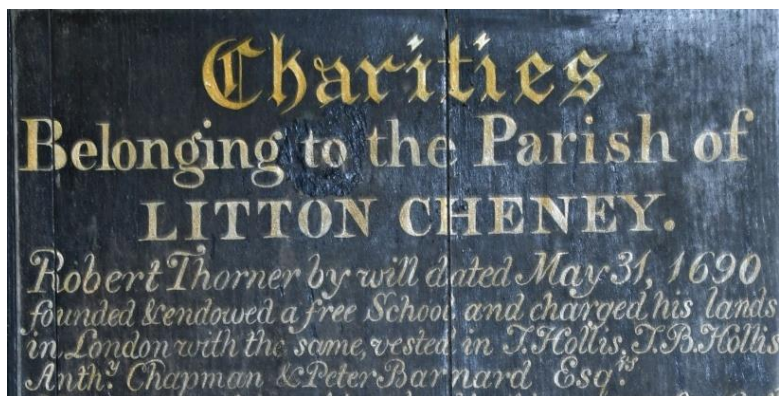


## Revolution or Evolution

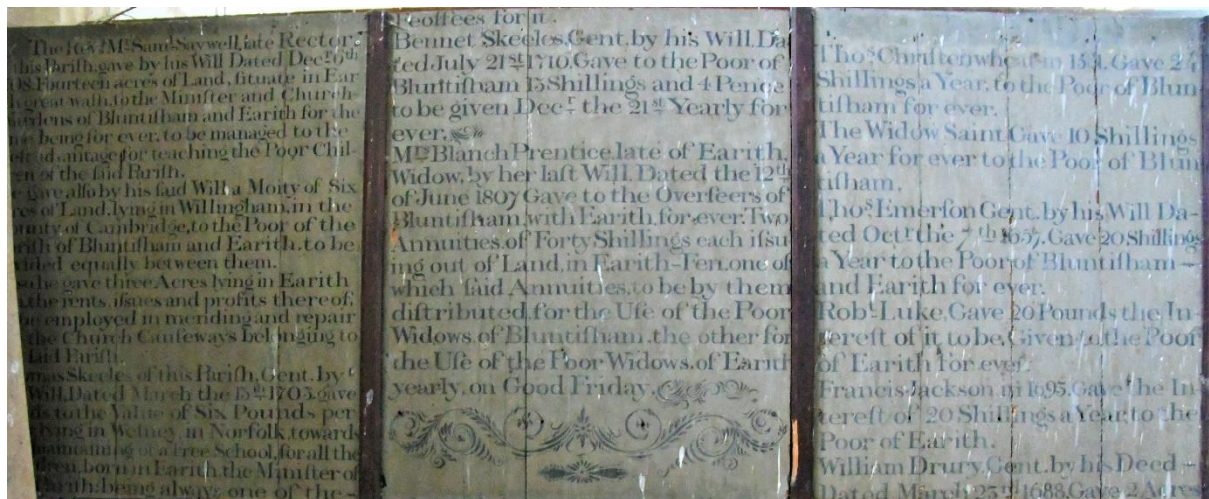
### The arrival of Universal Education in Bluntisham-cum-Earith

There has always been education. Mankind evolved because each generation learned basic skills from their forebears, enhanced them (hopefully) and in turn taught them to the next generation. But knowledge was power. There was a time when skills such as reading and writing were in the hands of the few. Educating the masses might, after all, lead to revolution, but the enlightened realised universal education wasn't necessarily a road to sedition and rebellion, but could be cause for good. Unsurprisingly, the beginning of universal education in many communities can be found in the last wills and testaments of the wealthier members of the community who, on their death bed, sought to distribute some goodwill for the wider good of society while, perhaps, securing their place in the afterlife.



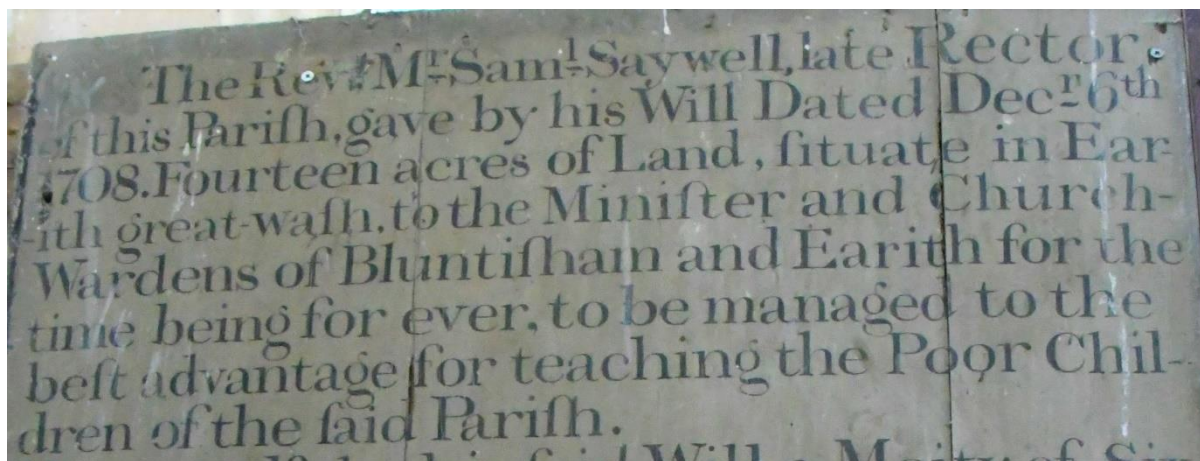
Examples of education related charitable giving can be found on plaques in churches such as the example in St Mary's Church, Litton Cheney, in Dorset. Robert Thorner's 1690 endowment contained all that was necessary to enable universal education to gain a foothold within the community:

An endowment of capital, land or property to provide an income stream, an instruction stating that the income was to be spent on a free school and a list of people (the trustees) to administer the endowment. Bluntisham-cum-Earith Parish Church of St Marys contains similar plaques that record charitable giving.



*Three of the four plaques in St Mary's church that record charitable gifts*

The first named on the plaque was the Reverend Mr Samuel Saywell, a former Rector, who gave 14 acres of land "**forever to be managed to the best advantage for teaching the poor children of the parish**".



However, the first educational charity in Bluntisham-cum-Earith wasn't the Reverend Saywell's, it was Thomas Skeeles of Earith whose charity was created on his death in 1703.

### THOMAS SKEELES (? - 1703)

Thomas owned an extensive acreage spread over a wide area. In his will, proven on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1703 (*Appendix 1*) he left a messuage (*a dwelling house with outbuildings*) with appurtenances (*accompanying furniture and tools etc.*) in Willingham, an acre of freehold meadow in Earith, his late father's appurtenances and land, also in Earith, and several other areas of land, though without maps it is not possible to accurately identify where they were located. After making provision for his family, Thomas gifted 62 acres of land in Welney Wash to his charitable endowment and appointed the Bluntisham-cum-Earith church Rector, at the time the Reverend Samuel Saywell, and six others to be the trustees to manage it. Since he was endowing the children of Earith with his beneficence, it's a fair conclusion that Thomas was a successful Earith-born farmer who lived locally [*There are records of several Thomas Skeeles living in Earith going back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.*]

Samuel Saywell was aided in the trusteeship by William Seeley the elder, Bennet Skeeles, John Cranwell the elder, Thomas Skeeles of Bluntisham, John Ayre and John Brown. Thomas's will instructed that, whenever the number of trustees, whether because of death or moving away from the parish, was reduced to being the rector plus two others, they were to appoint four more village-based trustees to restore the number to seven in total. At all times the incumbent Rector was one of the trustees and, if there was any male of the name Skeeles still resident in the parish, they were to be appointed as a trustee.

Thomas instructed the trustees to use the rental income from the land "***for maintaining a free school in the town of Earith for the teaching of all the aforesaid town-born children for ever***". In 1703 Bluntisham and Earith were two villages in the unified Ecclesiastical and civil parish of Bluntisham-cum-Earith and would remain that way until 1948 when they became separate civil parishes within the one ecclesiastical parish. While claiming he was weak of body Thomas declared he was sound of mind, so we must presume he read his will before he signed it and was satisfied it reflected his wish that the beneficiaries were only to be Earith born children, rather than Bluntisham-cum-Earith children.

The first evidence that a school had been set up doesn't appear until after the Reverend Saywell's death in 1708. Was the delay, assuming there was one, due to lack of funds or something else? Were the Reverend Saywell and fellow trustees, Bennett Skeeles of Earith

and Thomas Skeeles of Bluntisham, possibly Thomas's kinsmen, embarrassed to preside over the creation of a school that served only a portion of the ecclesiastical parish flock? Equally it may be something as simple as inadequate funds or it took time to find a suitable teacher and premises in which to hold the school. Either way it was the Reverend Saywell who provided a solution, but one which would only become effective on his death.

### THE SAYWELLS:

There is a reason I chose the plaque in a Dorset church to open this article. The Reverend Samuel Saywell was from Dorset. He was born in 1652 in the parish of Pentridge, one of five children born to Gabriel Saywell clerk and Vicar of Pentridge. Samuel's siblings were his elder brother William, two younger brothers, John and James, and a sister, Sarah, who married Andrew Miers and had a son Andrew.



*St Bartholomews Church, Pentridge, Dorset, where Gabriel Saywell was Vicar*

The Saywell family clearly had wealth as both William and Samuel were educated at Cranbourne in Dorset, as probably were John and James. Their father had entered Emmanuel College in Cambridge in 1629 and the boys followed their father to Cambridge. William, Samuel and James read Divinity at St John's and John attended Jesus College. All four entered the church. Education of this standard wasn't something a poor family could aspire to and being in receipt of it may have been the motivation for William and Samuel to use some of their wealth to help the poor receive an education.

### WILLIAM SAYWELL (1643 - 1701)

After a few months at Cranbourne school William was admitted a sizar to St. John's in 1659. Sizar means you had a subsidised university admission where your fees were reduced in return for you carrying out menial college related tasks. In short, you worked in return for your education. It would have helped with getting your children educated. William graduated in 1663 and on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1666 he was elected a fellow of his college. In 1669 he was incorporated M.A. at Oxford. In November 1672 he was appointed chancellor of the diocese of Chichester and in March 1679 was installed a prebendary of Ely. In December 1679 he was

elected Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, a position he held until his death. In January 1681 he was collated to the archdeaconry of Ely. He was also Rector of Willingham, Cambridgeshire. On 7<sup>th</sup> July 1688 he married Elizabeth Lloyd, a spinster of St Edmund the King. They had no children. He died in London on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1701 and was buried in Jesus College Chapel on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1701. William possessed some taste and skill as a writer of Latin verse; but his reputation is mainly that of a staunch theologian of what was afterwards known as the evangelical school, equally opposed to presbyterianism and to popery.

William's last will and testament initially bequeathed his estate to his loving brother Samuel, his heirs and assigns, forever (*Appendix 2*). The estate consisted of all his freehold and copyhold lands, ornaments, hereditaments and appurtenances, in Willingham, Over and Haddenham in the County of Cambridge or elsewhere in the same County. There were also lands tenements and hereditaments in the County of Kent and any other leasehold lands and tenements whatsoever and where so ever in the Kingdom of England. For a man of the cloth he had acquired a lot of land.

William then had second thoughts about leaving everything to Samuel. In a codicil to his will he left sums of money to his wife and other relatives, made bequests to St Johns and Jesus Colleges, instructed that rent from lands to the value of £10 per annum be placed in trust for the benefit of the schoolmaster of Willingham and any future masters so that the children of that parish could be educated and taught their prayers. In addition, the poor of Ely and Willingham received £10 and those of All Saints in Cambridgeshire and Pentridge in Dorset, the Saywell brothers' birthplace, received £5. Samuel inherited the land and as executor had to arrange for the rents from the land to pay the bequests.

### SAMUEL SAYWELL (1652 - 1709)

Samuel was fourteen when he left Cranbourne and went to Cambridge where he matriculated in Batchelor of Arts 1667, B.A 1669-1670, M.A. 1673, Batchelor of Divinity 1680, and made a Fellow of St Johns 1671 – 1685. He was ordained as a priest at Ely 18<sup>th</sup> September 1675 and became Vicar of Hauxton and Newton, Cambridgeshire, was appointed Vicar of Willingham in 1676 and Rector of Bluntisham and Earith in 1679. He never married and died in Bluntisham in 1709.

On his death Samuel bequeathed his copyhold meadow and marsh ground lying in the limits and bounds of Willingham and Over, his rented lands in Willingham (about fifty four acres) his venturers land in Maney (containing two hundred acres) and in Streatham (one hundred and seventy two acres), and a further six acres in Earith, to his sister Sarah Mieres and, after her decease, to his nephew, Andrew Mieres (*Appendix 3*). Twenty-five acres were given to his servant John Mathews for his lifetime, after which this land was to be equally divided between the poor people of Willingham and Bluntisham-cum-Earith. A further three acres in Earith, but accessed off Holme Fen Drove, Colne, were to go to his sister and, after her death, the rents were to be used to repair the church causeway belonging to the parish (*The Saywell Causeway Charity*) A further fourteen acres of land in Earith, located on the Ouse washes, were also to go to Sarah and then, on her death, to the Rector and churchwardens of Bluntisham-cum-Earith to be managed to the best advantage to teaching the poor of the parish (*The Saywell Education Charity*). Neither the Skeeles, nor Saywell wills had accompanying maps so the locations of many of the areas referred to are unknown. But it is thanks to the Saywell brothers from Dorset, perhaps as a thanks for the benefit that education

had brought them, that by 1709 the Skeeles and Saywell bequests brought education for all into the parish. The Saywell birth parish of Pentridge had to wait until 1870 to get a school.



*Samuel Saywell's charitable education endowment  
School Wash Field, Earith  
(Photo Courtesy of the Rector - Sheila Anthony)*

### THE SKEELES AND SAYWELL CHARITIES 1703 - 1837:



*St Mary's Church home to the  
first village school*

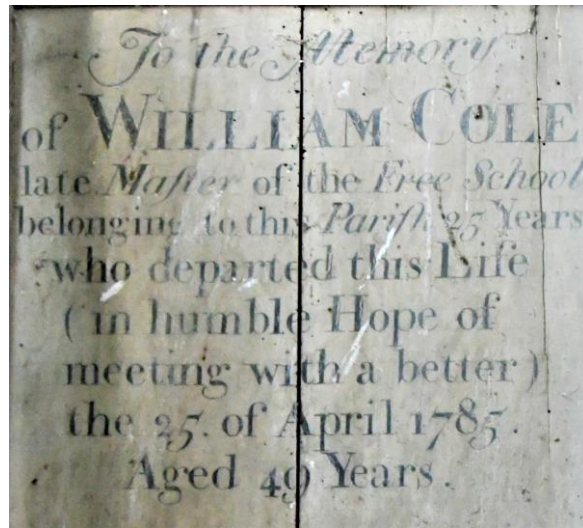
The Skeeles charity came into effect on Thomas's death in 1703. The Saywell charity began with Samuel's death in 1709, but the income didn't flow from it until his sister Sarah's death in 1720. Possibly bolstered by the knowledge that the Saywell money was to be used for all the children of the parish, not just Earith born children, the new Rector, Reverend Robert Cannon, a trustee on both charities, may have been the driving force behind the charities pooling their resources to create a school to serve the whole community. The problem of where to house the school was solved by using St Mary's church, the link which tied the two villages into the one Ecclesiastical parish. The first school began life in the space under the church tower where the poor of the parish learnt reading, writing and arithmetic.

In his book, *'The History of Bluntisham-cum-Earith'*, C F Tebbutt stated that Earith Feoffees' accounts for 1712 recorded a Mr Hume, who lived in Earith, was a headmaster. He may have been the school's first headmaster. As well as Mr Hume, Tebbutt suggests other

early school masters were Mr Carrington and then William Cole who died in 1785. Cole's position as headmaster is commemorated by a plaque in St Mary's church.



*Under the church tower.  
A tight space to hold a school*



*William Cole  
Master of the free school for 25 years*

Three Rectors, the Reverends Cannon, Knight and Butts, came and went and under their guardianship, the charities' affairs ran smoothly. In 1768 they were succeeded by the Reverend John Jacob Oakes. We will never know whether Oakes was fully briefed on his duties as a charity trustee but, by 1778, ten years after Oakes's appointment, the original Skeeles trustees appointed by Thomas, with the exception of the rector, were either dead or had moved away. More significantly they had universally failed in their duty to appoint replacement trustees. It seems the school was being run under the sole management of the schoolmaster. Was everything running so smoothly that Rector Oakes felt little need to be involved in the mundane day to day matters of the school and ignored the fact that there were no Skeeles trustees, apart from himself, left to administer the charity? The headmaster was left to get on with it. However matters came to a head in 1788 when the headmaster resigned and there arose the need to appoint a replacement. Rector Oakes took it upon himself to appoint six additional Skeeles trustees. The trusteeship of the Saywell charity was never in question. Its trustees were automatically the incumbent Rector and two churchwardens, so there was no equivalent problem with the Saywell trust. In 1789, a meeting of the Skeeles and Saywell trustees selected William Gregory as headmaster and agreed that:

1. Children of parents legally settled in the parish be taught reading writing and arithmetic
2. The rector, churchwardens and trustees could examine the children to agree who was qualified to attend the free school and give them an order of admittance on the payment of one shilling (*which rather seemed against the spirit of the charities*). This is the equivalent of just under £7 today and would probably have been just less than a day's wages for an agricultural labourer.

3. Children to find own books, paper, pens and ink. The headmaster could teach other children if he so wished and his salary was to be the profits from the Welney Wash and School Wash lands.
4. The schoolmaster to teach the catechism according to the Church of England
5. The schoolmaster to indemnify the parish from any charge that may be incurred by the master and his family
6. Three months' notice to leave the school could be given by each side

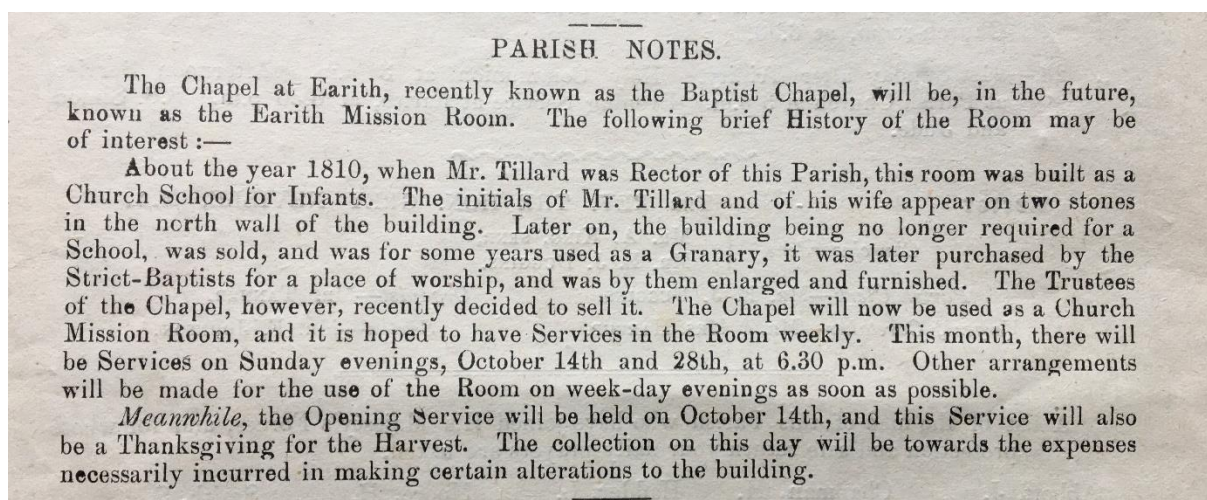
By 1811 the Skeeles trustees were again reduced to three and the survivors appointed four more. The trustees of Skeeles were now the Reverend Richard Tillard (who had succeeded Reverend Oakes) Richard Skeeles, John Brown, John Brown jnr, A Brown snr, Thomas Leigh and H Kent.



*St Mary's church hall*

Within a year of these new trustee appointments some Earith children were, for unspecified reasons, excluded from the school and complaints were received that the Skeeles Trust was being mal-administered. Part of the problem was the size of the schoolroom in the church. The area under the tower was only 18 feet by 12 feet

and incapable of holding more than fifty scholars, whereas the number of children aged 4 – 14 within the parish was 171 (84 boys, 87 girls). It has been suggested that the school may have moved from the church tower into the hall at the rear of the church. Without knowing the build date for this hall this suggestion can't be verified, though if the hall did serve as a school, space for teaching would still have been tight. There was also an intriguing note published as Parish Notes in the October 1917 edition of the church's Bluntisham-with-Earith parish magazine. The item referred to the history of the Chapel at Earith, recently known as the Baptist Chapel:



*1917: The parish note referring to the Reverend Tillard building a Church School for infants in Earith*

Was it this "new school", allegedly built circa 1810, that was the cause of the complaint about some Earith children being excluded? Perhaps the exclusion related to children whose

parents wanted a less religious based education? The parish magazine article is the only reference to this seemingly short lived schoolroom project whose only possible location has



*The Old Chapel, Chapel Lane, Earith*

to be the site occupied by the former Wesleyan Chapel located on Chapel Lane, Earith. The plaque at the front of the building gives a construction date of 1828. A search of papers held by the current owner, Mr Storr, failed to shed any further clarity on the history of the land prior to the 1828 development but the build date of the current building backs up the declared short life of the Tillard classroom cum granary. Among the papers was a document confirming the Chapel only achieved its current size when it was further extended in 1928. If the Tillard classroom wasn't demolished to make way for the original 1828 chapel build, then any of the original classroom that may have formed part of the 1828 build would have become

hidden by the later extension.

Either way, an argument arose around the fact that, in his will, Thomas Skeeles had specified his endowment was to maintain a '*free school*' in the town of Earith. The Tillard '*church school*' wasn't a free school and the school under the church tower wasn't actually in Earith, but in Bluntisham. Bluntisham-cum-Earith may have been one Ecclesiastical parish but it was clearly two separate village communities. Today, St Mary's church is fully located within the parish of Bluntisham but in the early 1800s the boundary between the two communities was thought to pass through the church. The "classroom" under the tower was on the Bluntisham side of that divide.

By the time this schism between the communities arose, the income from the joint charities had risen to £70 a year, sufficient to support two schoolmasters. Thus was born the idea of separate village schools and in 1812, the trustees gave Gregory notice to quit, but that didn't suit William Gregory who knew he couldn't be headmaster of both schools. He also knew that to be headmaster of a smaller unit would mean a reduction in income. By dint of having been allowed a more or less free hand he had an unassailable grip on the school's administration. He refused to go and the status quo prevailed. In 1813 the Court of Chancery was petitioned, but it ruled that the trustees appointed by Reverend Oakes and those appointed by Reverend Tillard, were illegal and Gregory could stay.

The trustee illegality argument arose because Thomas Skeeles hadn't vested the power of trustee appointment in the Rector but in the collective group of trustees and the original trustees, including the Rectors, had either died or moved away without appointing replacements. Gregory argued that while the Reverend Oakes had the right to be a trustee, he hadn't had the power to appoint the others and the same applied to the Reverend Tillard. The net effect was stalemate. Tillard and his appointed group of trustees sought to break the deadlock by demanding that John Wellden, tenant of the Welney wash land, refrain from paying his rent to Gregory and remit it to them. Gregory countered the move and obtained an order from the Chancery that the rent should still be paid to him as had been the practice

for the previous twenty-six years. With the application to split the school denied, Gregory was left in charge of the school within the church and was also given sole charge of the Skeeles legacy. What financial support the Saywell trustees, still in full charge of the Saywell trust, gave to Gregory is unknown. In the interest of the village children, they presumably continued to contribute financially to his "school".

**Extracts from the Wills of *Samuel Saywell*, and *Thomas Skeeles*, recorded in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury --- London.**

**Samuel Saywell, Rector of Bluntisham, by his last Will and Testament dated in December 1708, and proved the 4th of August 1709.**

"Item I give and devise unto my said Sister Meires all those twelve Acres of Pasture in Earith great Wash late Mr. Drury's for and during her natural Life and also two Acres next to the said twelve Acres late purchased of Mr. Sams for and during her natural Life and after her decease to the Minister and Churchwardens of Bluntisham and Earith for the time being for ever to be managed to the best advantage for teaching THE POOR CHILDREN of the said Parish."

**E.ARITH SCHOOL, (only).**

**Thomas Skeeles, gentleman, by his last Will and Testament dated in March 1703, and proved the 26th of April 1703.**

"I give and devise unto Samuel Saywell Clerk and Rector of the Parish William Seely the Elder Bennett Skeeles John Cranwell the Elder Thomas Skeeles of Bluntisham John Ayer and John Brown the Elder all those Pieces or Parcels of old Freehold of fenny or marsh ground late Parletts lying in the limits and bounds of Welney in the County of Norfolk containing by Estimation Forty Acres more or less And also all those pieces of Adventure Land containing by Estimation two and twenty Acres more or less lying and being in the bounds of Welney aforesaid with their and every their Appurtenances now in the tenure and occupation of Robert Hill or his Assigns for them the said seven Trustees and their Assigns and Successors for ever to be chosen from time to time by the surviving Trustees for and towards the maintaining of A FREE SCHOOL to be kept IN THE TOWN OF EARITH aforesaid for the teaching and learning of all the aforesaid TOWN BORN CHILDREN for ever And further my mind and Will is that when the number of Trustees are reduced by death or removal out of the Parish to three that then those remaining Trustees shall be empowered by those presents to chuse and constitute four more Trustees to make up the number seven whereof the Rector of the Parish for the time being to be one and one of the name of Skeeles if there be any Male of that name in the Parish to be another of the four and the Schoolmaster to be chosen by the said Trustees or the major part of them And also when any notorious misbehaviour or neglect of him the said Schoolmaster the said Trustees shall have full power to remove and utterly deprive him the said Schoolmaster of this my gift before mentioned."

Printed by Peter Chesman Croft, of Ives, twenty-fourth of first month, 1828, for John Brown, of Earith; in order that all those whom it may concern may have an opportunity of observing whether the Trustees of the two Foundations are discharging their important duties; and also in taking care that the two bequests when the Trusts are renewed, be properly secured and recorded, and the Funds duly applied agreeable to the Wills of the liberal Donors, who it appears were anxiously concerned for the welfare and Education of the succeeding generations of the Poor.

**N. B. These Papers should be preserved in Families.**

*John Brown's 1828 pamphlet*

Received, November 6<sup>th</sup> 1838, of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Richard Tillard, Treasurer of the School Fund, The Sum of Five Pounds, being the 10<sup>th</sup> Yearly Annuity out of the Rent of the School Wash, due Michaelmas old Style; witness my Hand, William Gregory

£ 5. 0. 0.

Evidence of this troubled period exists in the form of a pamphlet printed and promoted by John Brown, one of the Reverend Tillard's appointed trustees. He issued a leaflet summarising the donor's intentions for their charities and called a village meeting to protest about the school's administration but the earlier court ruling tied his hands. Nothing could be done until Gregory retired as headmaster. All Brown could do was to extol the recipients of his pamphlet to keep them "preserved in families" presumably so that they could, at a later date, hold the trustees to account.

In 1836, and far advanced in years (he had been the teacher in the school for 47 years), Gregory expressed his wish to retire. Many of the village residents had been taught by him and attitudes had mellowed. When he stated that, if the charity paid him a pension, he would go, his pension was agreed to and he left.

*Receipt for William Gregory's pension payment, paid twice a year from the Saywell wash rents*

The Saywell trustees approached the Chancery to get confirmation of this arrangement and to request the Chancellor assist in appointing the Skeeles trustees. The Court declared itself possessor of the Skeeles estate and immediately appointed the Reverend Tillard and his six nominated trustees and gave them approval to create a school for Earith.

## THE SCHOOL SPLITS INTO EARITH AND BLUNTISHAM

The 1836 petition that followed Gregory's retirement split the education of the children of the ecclesiastical parish into its two components Earith and Bluntisham, though the villages would have to wait until 1948 before they became civil parishes in their own right.

Earith may have gained the right to have a school but there wasn't a building in which to hold it. Presumably, in the short term, Earith people had to swallow their pride and continue to send their children to the church for their education but the newly appointed Skeeles' trustees were determined to change that.

Tebbut stated that the Skeeles trustees worked tirelessly both to raise funds and find a location in Earith for the new school. Fortunately for them, the Poor Laws had recently been repealed and the redundant Earith work house on Bunkers Hill, on the left hand side of Colne Road, was for sale. The site, just up from George's Corner, was purchased and, with the old building demolished, the trustees built a school to be run on the '**System of Instruction of the British and Foreign School**'.



*The British School Earith  
(July 1946)*

The previous arrangement shared with Bluntisham hadn't been a Church school but was church orientated, with its emphasis on the catechism. For their new school, to be placed under the care of John Brown as its first schoolmaster, the Skeeles trustees wanted something more inclusive. When it opened in 1839, they adopted the British Schools curriculum which dated back to 1798 when Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, had become concerned that, as the cost of education lay mainly in the salaries of teachers, the poorer classes were denied the opportunity of education. To resolve this, he devised a method of teaching by which one schoolmaster was responsible for 300 or more boys, all accommodated in one large schoolroom. The basic teaching of the younger children was undertaken by older ones, called monitors, who taught the younger children in small groups on either side of the schoolroom. Then in 1808 Joseph Fox, William Allen and Samuel Whitbread, supported by several evangelical and non-conformist Christians, formed the *Society for Promoting the Lancastrian System for the Education of the Poor*. In 1814 it was re-named **The British and Foreign School Society for the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of Every Religious Persuasion**. In that form it supported a number of non-sectarian schools run on the Lancastrian principles and the connection with the Society was shown by calling them British Schools. For many years the established Church of England generally tried to frustrate this effort to create more secular education and, in 1811, established *The Anglican National*

*Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales.*


One wonders quite what the Reverend Tillard thought of it all but he was outnumbered 6:1 by the Skeeles Trustees, so probably had little say over the matter. Earith had built its own school which, until taken over by the local educational authority, was financially supported by the Skeeles charity. Bluntisham, supported financially by the Saywell Charity, could do as it wished.

There were no barriers, well not physical ones, as to which school the village parents chose for their children. Earith parents wanting a church based education could send their children to Bluntisham, Bluntisham parents who wanted a more secular education could send their children to Earith. However, the citizens of Earith had dug deep into their pockets to build their school where the poor received free education and those who could afford it paid a penny a day. Irrespective of status, Bluntisham children paid two-pence a day if they wished to attend Earith's school.

By direction of Old British School Trustees

**EARITH**  
Huntingdonshire.

**FREEHOLD PREMISES**  
Previously the Village School



**For Sale By Public Auction**  
**at the Village Hall, Earith**  
**on Monday, 19th April, 1971 at 7 p.m.**

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The British School served Earith until it closed in 1968. As a temporary stop gap until their own Local Authority primary school opened in 1975 Earith pupils attended the newly-opened Bluntisham St Helen's school.

In the early 1900s the Skeeles trustees decided to dispose of the endowed land at Welney but Thomas Skeeles' will didn't allow for such an event and the trustees had to apply to the Charity Commission to have a new deed drafted. The revised '*Skeeles Education Foundation*' came into effect in 1910 and the land at Welney Wash was disposed of in 1919. The money raised from the sale was invested to double the trust's income.

Following its closure in 1968, the old school was, in its turn, sold in 1971. A

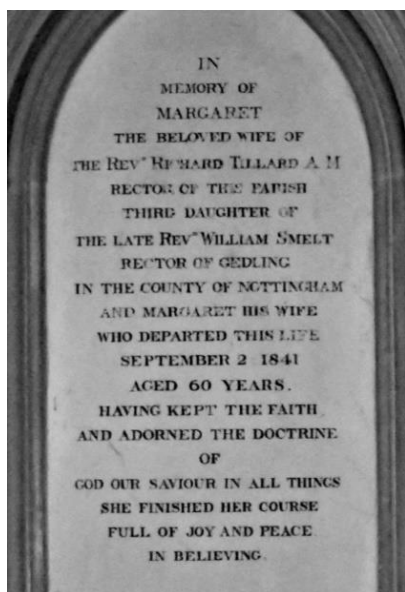
new petition was put to the Charity Commission and, in 1980, a new charity, '*The Skeeles Education Charity*' (<https://skeeles.yolasite.com/>) came into effect. The income from the combined money raised from the Welney land and British School sale is now used to offer grants to Earith educational establishments and Earith children who have been resident in the village for at least two years and who are going on to higher education.

### **BLUNTISHAM SCHOOLING 1837 - 1967**

It is 1837 and Earith had gone its own way. Bluntisham needed to make a decision. St Mary's Church may have served as a school classroom since the early 1700s but, even with the

reduction in pupil numbers, it was still an unsatisfactory location for a school. Once more it was the incumbent Rector, Richard Tillard, who stepped into the breach.

### RICHARD TILLARD (1765 - 1850)



Richard's parents were the Reverend Richard Tillard, vicar of Wirksworth in Derby, and Sarah Yoward of York. He was baptised in York, educated at Coxwold in Yorkshire and, in 1784, went to St Johns College, Cambridge. In 1791, he was given the living at Madingley before taking up the post of Rector at Bluntisham in 1796, a post he held until 1841. In 1810, he married Margaret Smelt, daughter of the Reverend William Smelt, Rector at Gedling in Nottinghamshire, and Lady Margaret Stanhope, sister to the Earl of Chesterfield. They had six children: Margaret, Philip, Rev. James Arthur, Richard Henry, Harriett Jesse and William Obins.

Whether due to the poor health of his wife, or for other reasons, in 1841 Reverend Tillard resigned the living at Bluntisham-cum-Earh and moved to Hartford, Huntingdon, where, a short while after their move, Margaret died. She is remembered by a plaque in St Mary's church. Following her death, Reverend Tillard moved to 41 Wellington Square, Hastings, where he died in 1850. The move was presumably influenced by his son, Philip, who was living there. Philip eventually returned to Huntingdon where, by 1861, he lived in Stewkley Hall. His son, Philip Edward Tillard, grandson of Reverend Tillard, eventually became a Mayor of Godmanchester.



*The rectory from the St Ives to Ely road*



*Reverend Samuel Knight  
Courtesy Christopher Vane Percy, Island  
Hall, Godmanchester*

Bluntisham's rectors lived in the rectory, now called Bluntisham House, on Rectory Road. It is thought that the current building was rebuilt by Samuel Knight (*Rector from 1714 – 1746*) as a replacement for an older parsonage. Like earlier rectors such as the Reverends Saywell and Knight the Reverend Tillard was also a wealthy man who had married well. In the early 1800s he initiated extensive renovation and maintenance on the building. Alterations carried out by him are thought, among other things, to have included extending the dining room and setting out grounds. In 1814 this description was given of the garden "*The principal éclat of this*

*happy spot, is derived from its lawns and garden, the excellence of which few on so small a scale ever equalled, numerous illusions, labyrinths, mazes unvisited by the sun, paths winding into bowers and cool grottos stored with monetary scraps, conspire to please and surprise"* (Ref Huntingdon Bedford & Peterborough Gazette 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 1814). In 1841 a terrible hurricane swept across the area. Unlike many barns and windmill which were demolished, the hundred year old rectory withstood the storm but was significantly damaged with the loss of tiles balustrades and statues.

Reverend Richard Tillard was well thought of and, on his departure, his grateful Bluntisham parishioners presented him with a silver claret jug. Given that Reverend Tillard's parting gift to the village was to plan, arrange, and finance, the building of a school to continue the work of his predecessor, Reverend Samuel Saywell, the gratefulness of his parishioners was the least he could expect. In his last will and testament the Reverend passed his parishioners gift to his son Philip.

### **BUILDING BLUNTISHAM'S FIRST SCHOOL**

Not everyone wanted their children educated under the 'modern' non-sectarian principles of the British and Foreign school adopted by Earith, and probably none more so than the Skeeles de facto trustee, Richard Tillard. The adoption by Earith of British School values, rather than Church of England School values, may well have been the motivation behind his decision to finance Bluntisham's school, a school which he specified should educate the pupils ***'In the principles and according to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Established Church of England'***.

David Godfrey, a local landowner, supplied a plot of land from the extensive grounds that surrounded his family home of Stapenhill, a house that is still located on the High Street adjacent to the school. The Reverend, meanwhile, created an indenture (Appendix 4)) which stated *"the said Richard Tillard has lately caused a building to be erected on the aforesaid piece or parcel of ground"*. No longer resident in the parish when his school opened, Reverend Tillard had probably moved to Hastings by then, the indenture entrusted the responsibility for running it to his replacement, the Reverend Edward Baines, two churchwardens and two overseers of the poor. The latter were appropriate trustees since the indenture specified the school should *'further the intention'* of the Reverend Samuel Saywell, namely, the education of the poor children of the parish of Bluntisham-cum-Earith. From this it is presumed the Reverend provided the finance and organised the design and construction. Built in 1842 the school opened in 1843.

The words, *'education of the poor children of the parish'*, would eventually come back to haunt future trustees responsible for the school after it closed in 1967. In the modern world there are no poor as defined by the expression when Samuel Saywell wrote his will and Richard Tillard prepared his indenture.

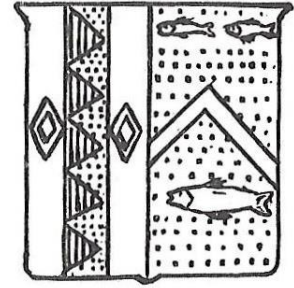
The Tillard role in building the school is acknowledged by the copy of their coat of arms placed above the mantelpiece of the main room in the school. Though now covered by many years of overpainting, the basic outline is still apparent. The left hand side depicts the Reverend's Tillard family roots, the right the Smelts, his wife's family.



*Tillard Coat of Arms*

*Left: The over painted arms within the school]*

*Right: Details of the arms (source Tebbutt)*

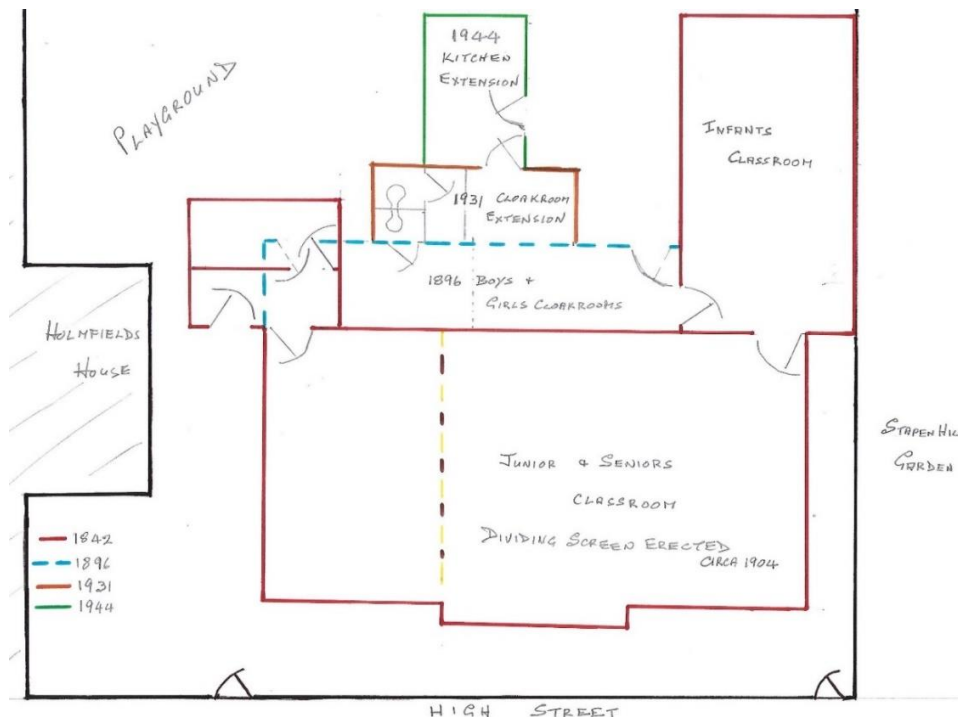


## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL BUILDING

The old school is a feature of the village's High Street, not because it has an imposing entrance but because the large central window and two side windows on the wall facing the street give it a symmetry that endears it to the passer-by. In an era when the only form of internal lighting was daylight, candles or oil lamps, a generous amount of window space was essential to illuminate the classroom.

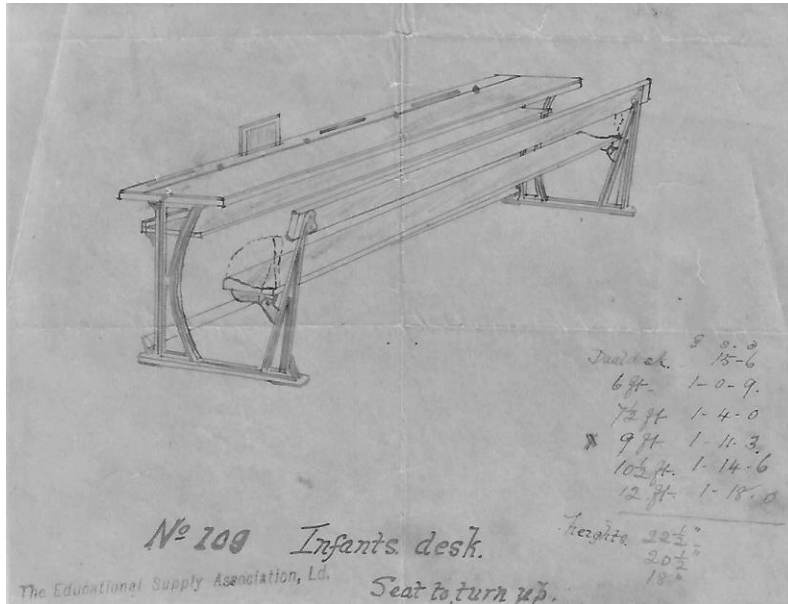


*The Reverend Tillard's Day School  
Bluntisham (May 2021)*



*Bluntisham school – the changing floor plan 1842 to 1944*

The red outline on the floorplan demarcates the shape of the building built in 1842, which had an entrance hall at the rear left hand corner of the building with a small lobby room off it, presumably somewhere for the teachers and/or children to hang up coats. There was direct access from the hall into the larger classroom which was 40 feet x 20 feet. Set at right angles on the opposite corner at the back of the building was a smaller classroom, 20 feet X 13 feet, which had its own external door leading onto the playground, but there was also an internal door connecting it to the larger room. From outset, the smaller room was for infants while junior and senior pupils shared the larger room.

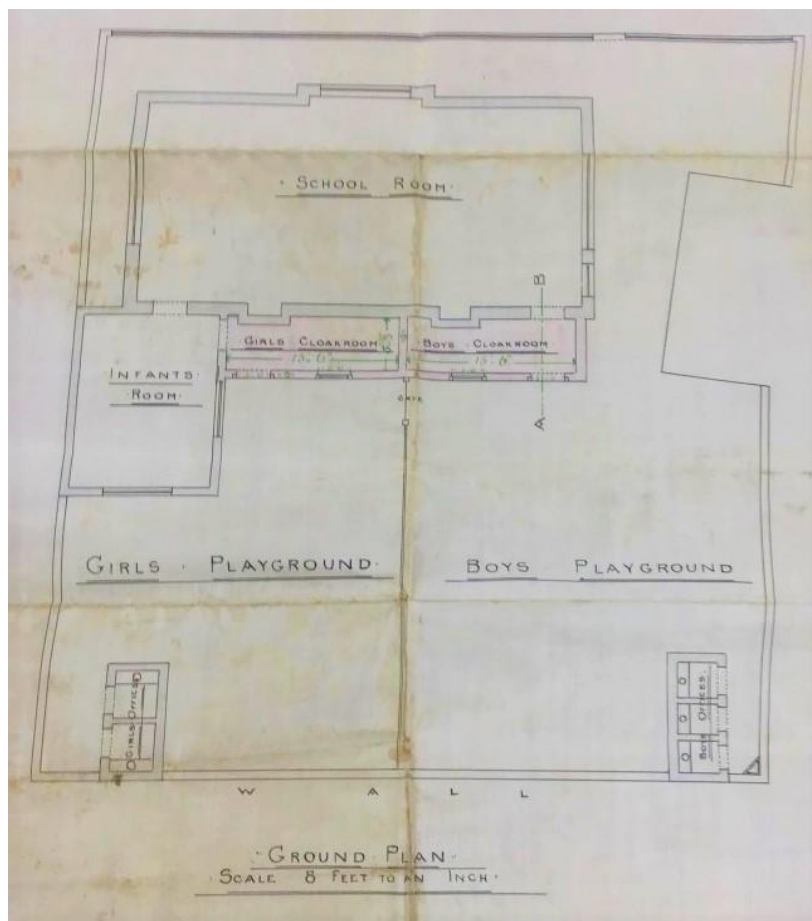


*Infant's desk installed after the galleries were removed*

The only hint as to the internal fittings the rooms may have had comes from a 20<sup>th</sup> century reference to galleries being removed from the classrooms. This suggests the seating in the rooms may initially have been tiered so that pupils sat in successively higher rows facing the teacher. In 1904 the galleries were replaced by more conventional school benches.

The building remained unchanged until 1894 when a proposal (given the education board's stamp of approval on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1896) was made to demolish the 1842 entrance lobby and replace it with separate boys and girls cloakrooms across the back of the building (blue dashed line on the floor plan). The alteration widened the access to the playground behind the school and also meant both classrooms were now accessed by internal doors. The cloakroom lobby had two external doors, presumably allocated as entrances for girls and boys.





*1896 plans for altering the school*

The 1896 plan for these changes showed two delicately named buildings at the rear of the playground, namely the Girls Office (2 cubicles) and Boys Office (3 cubicles). Presumably erected in 1842, when the original building went up, these were the only toilets. If that wasn't the case and their construction was only proposed in 1896, one wonders what on earth happened in the intervening years. The plan also showed the playground was divided with a wooden fence into a boys and girls side. Whether this was a division from the outset or was part of the 1896 alteration is unclear.

In 1904 it was proposed that the large classroom be split in two with a dividing pair of curtains suspended from a rail (yellow and black dashed line on the floorplan). Whether at that time, or at a later date, the division was eventually made more permanent with half glazed timber doors suspended from a track. The doors could be folded back concertina style which provided the flexibility to have one large room or two. Some of these doors were still in place in 2021. The remainder had rather unceremoniously been left to quietly rot away in the playground.

A collection of attendance registers covering the period 1867-1899 was discovered in the loft of the school. For further information about these registers read *"The Good the Bad and the Absolutely Abysmal"* by Elaine Gebbie on the Bluntisham Heritage website (<https://www.bhpc.org.uk/school-pre-1900/>). Although school attendance became compulsory in 1870, attendance was very variable and seems to have varied between 30 and 60 pupils, with higher attendances in the winter months when there was less demand for the children to be kept off school to assist with farm work. One of the characteristics of a rural school like Bluntisham

was that summer holidays weren't fixed but varied in date depending on when harvest was expected.



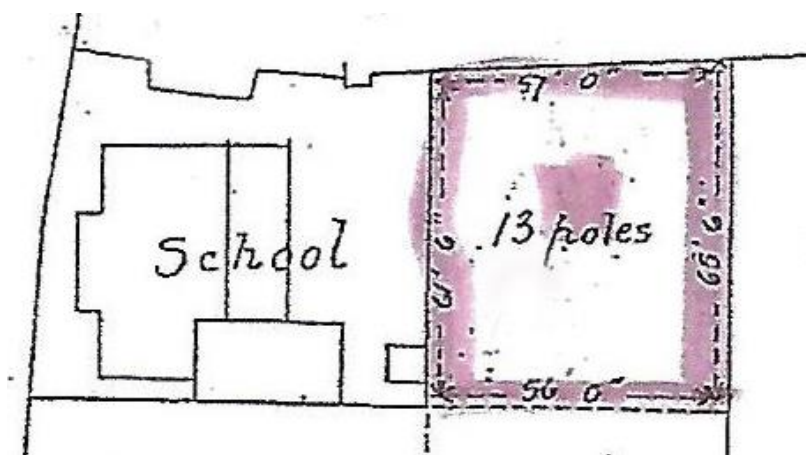
*Above: Dividing the larger room into two classrooms.  
Dividing doors can be seen folded back against the right  
hand wall (Excuse the BACStage paraphernalia)*



*Right: remaining dividing doors rotting in the playground*

### EXTENDING THE PLAYGROUND, CLOAKROOMS

The original playground area was small for a school attended by up to 60 or so pupils. Not surprisingly, there were complaints from the Chapel when children were caught playing in the Chapel graveyard opposite the school. In 1930 additional Stapenhill land was acquired from the Godfrey family, who had provided the original land from their garden in 1842.



Following the acquisition the original "girls and boys offices" (the toilet blocks) had to be relocated with a new girls' toilet block on the Stapenhill side of the playground and a boys' block on the Holmfields side.

The playground extension also provided room to extend the boys and girls cloakroom space (brown line on the floorplan). On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1931, the headmaster recorded in his school log book that, before building the cloakroom extension, the chimney at the back of the school was pulled down and rebuilt. In his report dated October 1931, the school inspector mentioned the improvements, namely the cloakroom extension, the concreting over of the new playground, which he stated was now an adequate size, the provision of new lamps

(presumably oil lamps), which he reported had been installed in 1929, and the provision of a new clock and a new sewing machine.

In the school log the cloakroom extensions were referred to as porches. I don't think that meant they were open to the playground, more a reflection that it was a flat roof addition protruding out from the sloping tiled roof of the 1896 extension.

The extended cloakrooms were presumably the preserve of the senior pupils, for at a meeting of the school managers on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1943, it was proposed that a 6 feet x 3 feet 9 inches washhouse, for use by the infants, be constructed out of wood and corrugated iron. Whether it was ever built is unknown.



*The rear of the school with the new girl's toilet block on the left. Measurements confirm it was built on the new land purchased in 1930. The original playground boundary lay between it and the end of the infants' classroom (photo September 2021).*

### **SCHOOL MEALS and FURTHER EXTENSION WORK**

After elementary education became compulsory in the 1870s hundreds of thousands of poor schoolchildren regularly went to school underfed and were unable to fully benefit from education. In 1906 legislation allowed rate-payer-funded feeding programmes to alleviate the worst distress but only in areas where local authorities chose to adopt the legislation. Many did not. 1940s legislation compelled all local authorities to provide free nutritious meals for all schoolchildren. However, this was soon deemed too costly and the 'provision of a mid-day meal for all children whose parents wanted them to have it' was made on payment of approximately the cost of the food, or free of charge in cases of hardship. Further legislation modified this and the 1944 Education Act required all LEAs to provide a midday meal and also set nutritional guidelines. Further efforts to provide all meals free of charge to the recipient proved too costly and, in 1949, the Labour government allowed LEAs to charge 6d per meal while still providing some meals free to disadvantaged schoolchildren.

School meals were first served at Bluntisham on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1943. About a third of the pupils, 30 in all, stayed for dinner that day. On 30<sup>th</sup> July 1943 an entry in the school log confirmed that, in preparation for the school being used for a fruit picking camp, two gas stoves had been installed in the building. These could have been the stoves used to prepare the first meals. If they weren't one wonders how the meals were prepared. Town gas, supplied from

the St Ives town gas plant, had been installed in the school in 1934. Unless it was used to provide lighting (though there was no evidence for this) it is unclear what benefit the school received from this gas supply until the stoves went in. As the gas pipe entered the school in the infants' room the stoves were installed there. A school inspector, writing on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1948, recommended the gas stove in the infants' room be removed as a child might turn on the tap. Meanwhile, on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1943, the Earl and Countess of Sandwich visited the school during dinner time when the Rector outlined the alterations planned for the kitchen and, on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1943, the headmaster commented on plans to alter the girls' porch (the name used to describe the flat roofed extension to the cloakroom) in connection with the school meals scheme. A month later, on 30<sup>th</sup> August, the school managers approved plans for installing a kitchen under the school meals scheme providing the school meals committee paid the whole amount. In March 1944, it was announced that, except for some small items, the scullery/kitchen was finished. I assume this refers to the pitched roof extension (green outline on the floor plan) built onto the back of the 1931 cloakroom extension. Further discussion about plans to install a kitchen took place on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

All that can be deduced from the previous outline is that cookers were initially installed in the infants' classroom and the kitchen extension was probably used to prepare food, store cooking items, etc. until it was kitted out with full cooking facilities in late 1945/ early 1946, at which point the cookers in the infants' room became redundant, but remained in situ.

Apart from the brief mention of gas stoves installed in 1943, the scullery/kitchen being completed in 1944/45 and concern in 1951 that the person who helped with the meals was leaving (but in the eyes of the education authority the teachers could do the job, so not a problem, except that in the eyes of the teachers it was) the managers' minutes were more concerned with discussions on what colours to paint various areas of the school and the school's longer term future than discussing extensions and school meals. Potential closure was becoming a regular component of the managers' meetings. It is surprising any money was spent on building the kitchen which became redundant in 1965 when Somersham's new school, with a well equipped kitchen opened. From then on meals prepared at Somersham were delivered to Bluntisham.

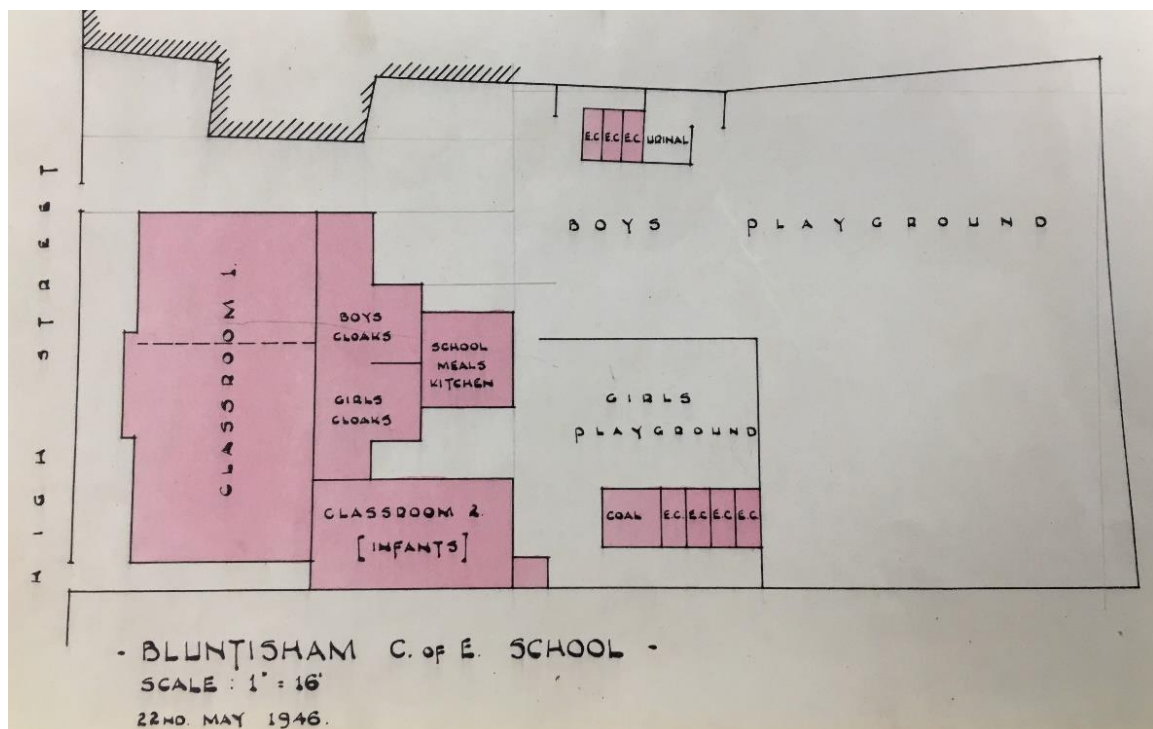


*The cloakroom and kitchen extensions at the rear of the school (September 2021).*

Following the war there was a national survey of schools which included drafting plans of their facilities. Bluntisham's plan, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1946, confirmed the school consisted of two classrooms, two cloakrooms, the school meals kitchen and, outside in the playground, the

separate toilet blocks (three earth closets and an open urinal area for the boys, and four earth closets with a coal shed attached to it, for the girls). A fence separated the girls' playground from the boys' playground area.

A photograph of the front of the school, taken 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1946, showed a blackout cover from the war still in place beside the large window at the gable end of the large classroom. It also shows the bell tower and the roof vents in place and what appears to be a clock located above the central front window of the large classroom.



## SERVICES

In the modern world it is easy to forget that the school was built in 1842 when there was no electricity, gas, piped running water or mains drainage sewers.

Lighting would have been natural daylight, candles or oil lamps. Heating was provided by an open fire in the infants' room and by two cast iron stoves (that were a continuous problem) in the larger room. Rooms were often filled with unbearable fumes, chimneys constantly needed sweeping and lighting fires early enough for the school to be warm when pupils arrived, as well as servicing the stoves to keep them alight over weekends, was an ongoing problem. The stoves were multi-fuel and over the years quotes were received for the supply of coal, coke, anthracite, cobbles, Derbyshire-Brights, a vocabulary of solid fuel types that probably sounds quaint to modern ears. When, in 1950, the stove in the headmaster's room needed replacing it was suggested a tortoise stove be installed. Portway's "tortoise" stoves were so named for their slow burning efficiency which enabled them to extract the maximum amount of heat from the fuel. The stoves came with the motto, 'Slow but Sure Combustion' and the shape of a tortoise cast into their tops. They were used to heat churches and halls as well as homes. A new stove was installed in the infants' room in 1952.



On 19<sup>th</sup> October 1899 the headmaster recorded that, when he arrived to start classes, he had to light the fires in the main classroom. On 4<sup>th</sup> January 1940 they couldn't get the fires to light in the main room and, as the room temperature was 36° Fahrenheit, the seniors decamped into the infants' room. Two days later the fires were still not working. On February 7<sup>th</sup> 1947, the school was closed for two days as there was no coal to light the fires. The smoky fumes problem never seemed to go away and the atmosphere was so bad on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1949 that, on several occasion, the children had to be taken outside to clear their lungs of the sooty smell.

Heating, running water, flushing sanitation and good lighting at the flick of a switch is now taken for granted, but until alternative sources of light arrived the teachers had to rely on natural daylight supplemented with candles or oil lamps, buckets of water from a well for washing and solid fuel fires for heating. The school had been running for seventy-five years before:-



- 1919 - A piped water supply was laid on from a well. It was only a cold water supply but an internal tap had to be an improvement. In 1923 there was a complaint about the state of the pails in the outer office. Presumably these were pails, kept topped up from the well, so that a ready supply of water, no doubt cold water, was available for

hand washing, etc. In 1934 the well required further attention as it often failed when ground water levels were low

- 1934 - Gas was laid onto the school. This was town gas from St Ives which was also used to light Bluntisham's streets. There is no record saying what the school's gas supply was used for. It could have been lighting, but there is no evidence to support this assumption. A gramophone and a wireless also arrived in 1934. The gramophone would have been wind-up and the wireless battery-powered. Electricity wasn't installed for another eleven years.
- 1938 – Following the erection of the water tower on Bluntisham Heath, mains water was installed giving a reliable supply of clean cold water for drinking and hand washing. There was much discussion on where to run the pipes and install washbasins. It wasn't totally problem free. On 7<sup>th</sup> February 1947 the headmaster complained the porches were flooded, presumably from burst pipes which tallies with the earlier comment about the school closing on 7<sup>th</sup> February because of lack of coal to light the fires. On 13<sup>th</sup> September he reported a further incident of water pouring into the kitchen.
- 1944 - The managers discussed installing electricity for lighting and electric heaters, two in the main classroom and one each in the infants' room and the small classroom. The quote to do this was accepted in 1945 and the decision made to have everything installed over the Easter holidays (*March 29<sup>th</sup> – April 9<sup>th</sup> 1945*). Whether it was because the electric heaters were inadequate or too expensive to run but even after their installation solid fuel stoves continued to be used to heat the building. Norman Gill recalled how, to take the chill off the small bottles of school milk, it was always one pupil's duty to line them up near the stoves.
- 1953 - The school inspector's report described the school as consisting of a small 280 sq. ft. room used for infants and a large 800 sq. ft. room divided with a screen into two areas of 500 and 300 sq. ft. for senior and junior classes. There were two small cloakrooms, rather dark, containing two sinks, mains water in a scullery (the kitchen room at the back of the school) and in the cloakrooms. Sanitation was of the dry type so toilets had been brought into the building, possibly only for use by the teachers. Other than meaning non-flushing, it is unclear as to what is understood by dry type toilets.
- 1958 - The school accepted chemical toilets to replace the dry toilets as an alternative to installing a water drainage system which was considered too expensive and unjustifiable for a school that was destined to be closed.
- 1959 - Installed a water-based boiler system to power water radiators for heating
- 1962 – There had been a change of heart about the sanitation as the Inspector's report stated that waterborne sanitation (flushing toilets, possibly connected to the main sewer installed in the village) were now installed. It was reported in 1962 that twenty-five children stayed for lunch which they ate sitting at their desks.
- 1964 The Saywell Trust funded a new hot water heater over the sinks.

## SANITATION

This piece is based on comments taken from the school managers' minute book (1903 – 1965) the headmaster's log book (1920 – 1967) and pupil memories. For a modern generation who have only known internal flushing toilets, it is perhaps the lack of sanitation that is the most

difficult to imagine. At the outset, the only sanitation was supplied by the girls' and boys' "offices" at the back of the playground, presumably used by children and adults alike. There were two cubicles for the girls and three for the boys. The facility was very basic. At the rear of the cubicle was a wooden box topped off with a plank for a seat with an appropriate hole cut into it and a bucket, which could be accessed for emptying, placed under the hole. The buckets were emptied once a week when the sanitation wagon did its rounds of the village. They weren't the most pleasant facility to use. With no running water in the building, hand washing could only have been in buckets of cold water, though where this water came from is unknown. Records indicate a well wasn't installed at the school until 1919 so it may initially have to come from one of the public village pumps.



When the playground was extended in 1930, the original "offices" were removed and a replacement girls' toilet block was built adjacent to the Stapenhill side of the playground. For 'privacy' the doors opened towards the adjoining wall but the facilities were no different to the original 'offices' and the smell was still pretty unpleasant.

A new block including urinals open to the sky was made for the boys on the Holmfield side of the playground. Surprisingly there was only one report of the neighbours complaining about the smell when, in 1934, the ladies of Holmfield, voiced their opinion.

The playground extension had allowed the cloakrooms to be extended and, following the erection the water tower on the Heath in 1938, a reliable source of piped water was available. Sanitation improved when running water was laid onto the cloakrooms. It may only have been a sink and a single tap with

cold water but it was definitely an improvement over the well.



*Facilities may not have been quite as primitive as this privy at Kinver Edge Rock houses, Shropshire, but it illustrates the story.*

In October 1941 it was agreed that, owing to the number of children at the school the sanitary cart's weekly round was insufficient. Mr Johnson was employed to empty the buckets mid-week, I wonder what he did with their contents? I was informed the buckets in the post 1930 boys' toilet block were accessed via openings in the outside wall of the cubicles. There was no sign of equivalent access points in the girls' cubicles so they must have been

accessed from within the cubicles. Even then there were still problems. In 1946 the school closed for two days on account of the disgraceful state of the lavatories. On her return to the school on 3<sup>rd</sup> April the headmistress wrote they were still in a disgraceful state as nothing had been done to them.

At some point, never referred to by either the managers or the headmaster, the boys cloakroom extension was converted to provide two internal toilet cubicles (see earlier floorplan). This may have been in 1952 as that was the year when a cubicle in the girls' toilet block was converted into a shed to store garden tools. Perhaps the converted cubicle had been the teachers' cubicle and they moved indoors to a 'his and hers' facility. In 1953 the school inspector commented that this internal facility was of the dry type of toilet, so still pretty basic. They were converted to chemical toilets in 1958 and then to flushing toilets in 1962.

## EVACUEES

At the outbreak of war the pupils of Tollington Park Boys' Central School, Muswell Hill, London, were evacuated to Bluntisham and the school had to double up. The managers decided the two schools would use the building on alternate days over a five and a half day week, Saturday afternoon being given over to the cleaner to clean the school. However, in his memoirs of the village, Tony Rowell recalled the split as one school in the morning, the other in the afternoon, which sounds a more equitable arrangement and agrees with the entry in the headmasters log which stated that Bluntisham would use the school from 8.45 – 12.45 and London from 1.15 - 5.15. I wonder what sanitary conditions the Muswell children left behind, and what they thought of Bluntisham? However, it wasn't for long. Norman Gill recalled the Muswell Hill boys were eventually schooled in the old Sunday school building by the church and Bluntisham school life returned to normal. Much to their relief, I suspect, the evacuees returned to London on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1943.

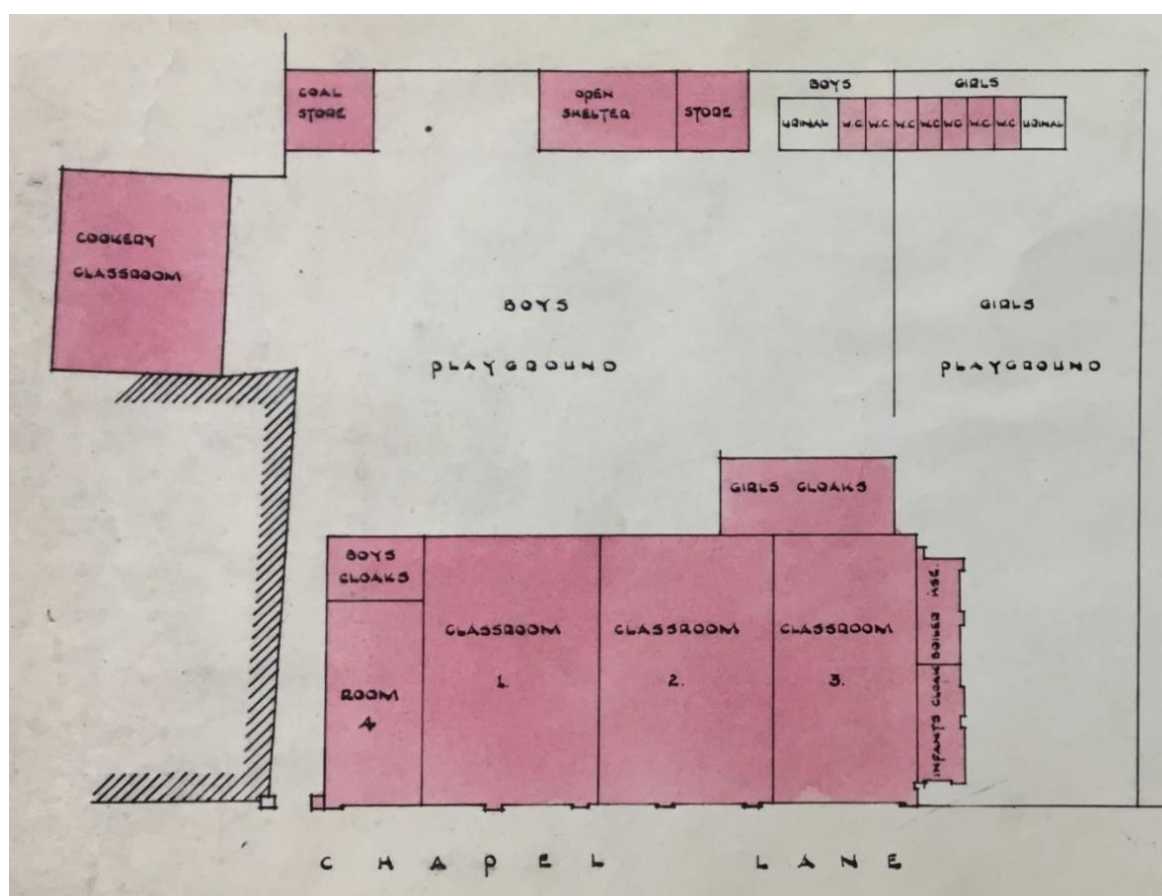
## ADDING EXTRA EDUCATION SPACE

Bluntisham's school was spacious enough to teach sitting-down subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic, but what of PE, woodwork, and domestic skills like cooking and sewing? As compulsory attendance at school became the norm, these subjects entered the curriculum. Various observations are made about village people helping out with woodwork classes but none were really satisfactory. Eventually, Bluntisham boys went to Earith, usually on their bikes, for woodwork classes and girls did the same for cooking and sewing. As indicated on the 1946 map of Earith's British School, they had a specific classroom devoted to cookery. PE was still a problem but there was also another problem on the horizon.

By June 1954 the post-war baby-boomer generation was coming through and Bluntisham's school attendance had risen to 73, would increase to 83 when the autumn intake arrived, and was predicted to be 88 when the 1955 intake started. The school was stretched to capacity with no immediate way of relieving it. The new St Ivo School in St Ives was under construction but, with no date set for when it would take senior pupils from the outlying villages, Bluntisham still had to serve the full pupil age range.

The managers were told it was their problem. To solve it they decided to hire the Baptist Chapel hall conveniently located across the road directly opposite the school. The twenty two shillings and sixpence initially requested as a hire charge was deemed too much. Following some nifty negotiation, the managers got the price down to a more reasonable ten shillings a week and the hall was hired for a year from autumn 1954 to summer 1955. In the meantime, the managers assessed the cost of temporary classrooms, sanitation improvements, and modernising the heating at the school, and how to fund it. How much was it worth spending

on a school that was destined for closure? In the event, nothing of significance was done to the facilities at Bluntisham.



*Earith's British School (1946 school survey)*

At the end of the year's hire, the Chapel complained about drawing pins damaging their wooden screens and the piano being used without permission. With no relief on the horizon from St Ivo School and, after promises of better behaviour, the Chapel's hall was hired for a further two years. The extra space was needed. By July 1956 pupil numbers were 99 made up of infants (22) juniors (two classes 28 & 22) and seniors (27). Three pupils were due to leave but ten new children were expected to enrol. Relief finally came in 1958 when the seniors were able to transfer to St Ives.

Discussions continued over local primary schooling for the area and, in 1961, the managers welcomed the proposal that there would be a new primary school to service Bluntisham and Colne children. The idea of including Earith was eventually rejected in favour of Earith having its own primary school.

Bluntisham school managers held their last minuted meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1966. A year later the Local Education Authority opened St Helen's primary school on Colne Road. The managers left no comment on the transition from the old school to St Helens school. The Reverend Eddy signed off the headmasters log book on 20<sup>th</sup> October and the school was locked for the last time on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1967.

1967 448  
 20 Oct Term Holiday this afternoon. On Monday, 30th October, pupils will assemble at the new Bluntisham County Primary School.  
 The Rector came and closed the school.  
 The School closed at 3.30, after a service conducted by the Rector.  
 23 Oct. At 11.50 a.m. I handed the School Keys to Mr. Watson, employed by the Education Committee.  
 R. Whittaker  
 23rd October, 1967.

The closing entry in the headmaster's Log Book

### HEADMASTERS & HEADMISTRESSES:-

Shortly after Bluntisham's school opened in 1843, 159 scholars – children of school age, so potential pupils at the new village school - were listed in the 1851 census. Not all would go to the school. The better off may have sent their children elsewhere or employed governesses to educate them but such families were few and far between in a community where 'agricultural labourer' was the dominant occupation. In practice, very few of the scholars took up the opportunity on offer. Tebbutt recorded that, in 1854, the average attendance at the school in the winter was just 30 pupils and, in the summer, 20 pupils. Sending children out to earn income for the family was still perceived as more important than sending them to school to learn useful life skills.

Those involved in education within the parish were:

- **1830 Piggot's Directory:** **William Gregory** was still the schoolmaster of the free school at the church.
- **1839 Piggots Directory:** Gregory has retired and is collecting his pension. The directory recorded **John Brown** as the school's master while a Miss Judith Murphy was running an infant's school. Whether this was also in the church or at a separate location is unknown.
- **1847 Huntingdonshire Postal Directory:** Bluntisham's new school has opened. It is called a Foundation school. **John Brown** was still in charge of the boys, **Miss Wills**, the girls.
- **1851 census:** **Rebecca Brown** widow aged 51, schoolmistress – in the *Hunts History Gazeteer and Directory* she was recorded as mistress of the infants and girls school. Henry Baker, aged 26, schoolmaster but which school isn't listed. **Rebekah** (sic) **Tebbutt** aged 23, schoolmistress - in 1850 Rebecca was listed in *Slater's Directory* as keeper of a private school. **Rhoda Webb** aged 18, assistant teacher - in 1855 Rhoda moved to Earith to take charge of the infants and teach the older girls sewing. The fifth teacher resident in Bluntisham was **Mary Wells** (sic) aged 37. She was described as a

teacher at the British School. This was probably Miss Wills referred to in 1847. If she was teaching at the British School then it has to be assumed she has moved to Earith. Schooling was still a bit of a mish-mash and wasn't obligatory.

- **1854:** Tebbutt records that, in 1854, **W Howard** was headmaster at Bluntisham
- **1861 census:** **Mary Ann Butcher** age 19, school mistress. Rebecca Tebbutt age 33, school mistress - *presumably still running her private school* - and Rhoda Webb age 25, school mistress. She lived in Bluntisham but taught at Earith.
- **1869 Huntingdonshire Postal Directory:** Bluntisham's Foundation school heads were **Micaiah Marshall** (boys) **Miss Mason** (girls). **Miss Butcher**, presumably Ann Butcher, mentioned above, has moved to Earith and is mistress of the British School.
- **1871 census:** **Henry L Hunter** age 24, National Schoolmaster; **Mary A Butcher** age 29, school mistress. Also resident in the village were Leah Wheatley age 65, retired school mistress and Sarah Wells 38 formerly schoolmistress. The 1879 postal directory recorded Bluntisham residents **Frederick Goodey** and **Jane Murphy** as the schoolmaster and schoolmistress.
- **1877 Huntingdonshire Postal Directory:** **Frederick Goodey** was master of the Foundations school, **Jane Murphy** was mistress of the infants. **Henry Jackson** and **Theresa Dawson** ran Earith's endowed school.
- **1881 census:** **Frederick Goodey** age 39 schoolmaster had been resident since 1873. Five of his nine children were born in the village. By 1891 he had retired and moved to Littleport.
- **1891 census:** Rebecca Tebbutt age 63 was now a retired school mistress; **Ada Afford** aged 25 governess (school). Did she run her own school rather than teach at Bluntisham's school? **William C W Robinson** aged 48, Elementary Schoolmaster was lodging in the village; **Alice Wendow** age 22 assistant schoolmistress, was a visitor in the village.

In June **1899** Mr Duggins was appointed headmaster. Thereafter there was a reliable record of who was head teacher at Bluntisham. Mr Duggins retired in 1925 and the successive heads of the school were:

- **October 1925 – July 1949:** **Miss Grace A James**, who became Mrs Christmas when she married Thomas S Christmas in January 1928. When the headship fell vacant following her unexpected death in July 1949 the managers decided that due to increasing discipline problems the new head should be a man who should also be able to play the piano. The only female applicant for the vacancy wasn't interviewed and one male applicant withdrew as he couldn't play the piano - *Not sure you would get away with that approach today.*
- **1949:** **Miss Lord** acted as temporary head until Mr Cooper's appointment
- **1949 – 1953:** **Mr David C Cooper** appointed headmaster
- **1953 – 1959:** **Mr Holt** appointed headmaster
- **1959 – 1964:** **Mr Brian L Frost** appointed headmaster. As head of the trustees, the Rector didn't want to appoint Mr Frost as the new headmaster. When he was outvoted by the other trustees he stormed out of the meeting, taking the managers' minutes-book with him. The fit of pique was because Mr Frost hadn't been confirmed into the Church of England, a position that Frost defended in a letter written 11<sup>th</sup> October 1959 when he pointed out that he considered confirmation to be a personal matter, was nothing to do with his work and, as a holder of the Religious teaching certificate issued by the Council of the Church Training College, he felt more than able

to carry out his duties. In 1963, the school inspector commented that Mr Frost “*works cheerfully in difficult conditions*”. On his resignation the pupils and parents presented him with a clock and fountain pen. Rather sadly his last entry in the teacher’s log recorded that the managers had not acknowledged his five years of service to the school.

- **1964 – 1967: Mr Leonard Walker** appointed last schoolmaster of the old School. If he hoped to become head of the new St Helens, he was unlucky. That privilege went to Mr Philip (Pip) Harrison

### WHAT BECAME OF THE CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS?

The villages’ charitable endowments were instrumental in establishing universal education but over time their significance waned. Successive Acts of Parliament, in particular the Education Act of 1902, put local education authorities in control of school finances.

When the British School closed, Earith resolved the problem of a redundant building by selling it. They combined the sale proceeds with the money raised from the earlier sale of the Skeeles Welney Wash land and asked the Charity Commission to approve a new charity, *The Skeeles Education Trust*, which combined their proceeds. This came into effect in 1980 (<https://skeeles.yolasite.com/>). It provides educational grants to applicants under the age of twenty-five who have lived in Earith for two or more years. Bluntisham, however, had a problem.

In his deed covering Bluntisham’s school, Tillard specified that the building could be used for education (*of the poor*) and by the church as a place to hold piety meetings. There was no right to sell the asset. To obtain that right involved asking the Charity Commission to draft a new scheme to govern the charity’s activity, but there was an added problem. Reverter clauses were included in the Tillard deed and the 1930 land purchase contract. If the school ceased to be used for educational or religious purposes, the building and the additional playground land had to be handed back to the heirs of the donors. Selling the site risked triggering the reverter clauses and the largest charitable asset in the village would cease to exist.

However, the Godfrey family were generous benefactors to the village and, having sold Stapenhill, they had no wish to take back a small landlocked area at the rear of the old school. The charity could retain its ownership of the land but what of the school building? When it closed in 1967, the trustees decided the building could still be of benefit. In the spirit of the Tillard deed they rented it to the local playgroup which, for twenty years, introduced large numbers of village toddlers to their first ‘school’ experience. Visit Bluntisham’s heritage website <https://www.bhp-pc.org.uk/playgroup/> to see many playgroup photos taken in the old school’s playground. The building was also used by the Guides. Mrs Rose had initially inquired if it could be used for guides in 1952, though it isn’t known if they met in the school, or had to wait until it closed in 1967.

When Playgroup moved out, other ‘educational’ tenants, such as Scouts, Rainbows and then the amateur theatre group BaCStage, occupied the property. Throughout this time the church retained its right to hold meetings there.

None of these tenancies raised sufficient funds to do more than minimal maintenance on the old school building which became increasingly dilapidated and unfit for use. One problem was the interpretation of the Saywell trust remit. Despite the rental income from the wash

field being used to support the school for 125 years, when the school closed in 1967 the Charity Commission deemed the Trust's income had to be applied to education of the poor and not the maintenance of a redundant building. The Saywell Trust needed modernising but also had a problem to overcome. The trust had been set up to benefit Bluntisham and Earith children, which it did until Earith–cum-Bluntisham schooling split into separate Earith and Bluntisham schools. From 1839 until Bluntisham's old school was replaced by St Helens local authority school, it was accepted by both parishes that the Saywell money would be used to support Bluntisham's school while Skeeles would support Earith's. This informal agreement continued until 2021 when, following a request from the Saywell trustees, Earith Parish Council formally relinquished any interest in the Saywell education trust. With the Saywell and Tillard endowments fully under their control the trustees were finally able to emulate what Earith achieved in 1980 and have applied to the Charity Commission to merge the Tillard and Saywell educational endowments into a new charity, ***The Saywell Tillard Education Trust***. If their application is successful the trustees will have the freedom to manage the charity's assets (a school building and a rented field) in ways that best meet the spirit of the respective Reverends' charitable gifts and provide educational assistance to those that need it within the community.

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**Author:** David Gedye, 16 Colne Road, Bluntisham *February 2022* (I never attended the school, but it has been fascinating researching and writing up its history)

## APPENDICES

? - Indicates words that couldn't be deciphered

### 1) WILL OF THOMAS SKEELES 30<sup>th</sup> March 1703

*In the name of God Amen I Thomas Skeeles in the County of Huntingdon Esquire being very stiff and weak of body but of sound and perfect memory thanks be to God for the same do this thirtieth day of March in the second year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Anne over England and Ireland in this year of our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and three make and ordain this to be my last will and testament in manner and form following and first and primarily I give up my soul and spirit into the hands of Almighty God ?? ?? ?? the true faith of the Church of England and for those worldly goods and estate God hath been pleased in mercy to bestow upon me I give devise and bequeath as followeth I give and devise unto Samuel Saywell clerk and rector of the parish. William Seeley the elder. Bennet Skeeles. John Cranwell the elder. Thomas Skeeles of Bluntisham. John Ayre and John Brown the elder all those pieces or parcells of old ffreehold of ffenny or marsh ground late Parletts lying in the limits and bounds of Welney in the County of Norfolk containing by estimation forty acres more or less and also all those pieces of adventure land containing by estimation two and twenty acres more or less lying and being in the bounds of Welney aforesaid with their and every of their appurtenances now in the tenure and occupation of Robert Hill or his assigns to them the said seven trustees and their assigns and successors for ever to be chosen from time to time by the surviving trustees for and towards maintaining of a free school to be kept in the town of Earith aforesaid for the teaching and learning of all the aforesaid town born children for ever and further my mind and will is that when the number of trustees are reduced by death or removal out of the parish to three that then those three remaining trustees shall be empowered by those presented to chuse and constitute four more trustees to make up the numbers seven whereof the Rector of the parish for the time being to be one and one of the names of Skeeles if there be any male of that name in the parish to another of the four and the schoolmaster to be chosen by the said trustees or the major part of them and also upon any notorious misbehaviour or might of him the said schoolmaster the said trustees shall have full power to remove and thereby deprive him the said schoolmaster of this my gift before mentioned Then I give and devise my fourth part of one mesfuage with the appurtenances in Willingham late purchased of Thomas Lingot and Mary his wife unto George Lark my son-in-law and his heirs for ever but with this provisor that if the said George Lark departs this life before he attains the age of one and twenty years and without infant of his body lawfully begotten then to the use and behoof of William Seely the younger and his heirs for ever then I give and devise one acre of freehold and meadow in Earith meadow abutting upon the Reeved pitts late purchased of Thomas Staburnd to him the said George Lark and his heirs for ever but with this proviso that if the said George Lark departs this life before he attains the age of one and twenty years and without infant of his body and lawfully begotten then to the use and behoof of William Seely the younger and his heirs for ^ ever then I give and devise one mesfuage and lot of ffen ground thereunto belonging with the appurtenances late my ffathers in Earith and also ?? acres of land and meadow late Carters two acres and half Ridleys in Earith and five acres of land and meadow (^ late?? four acres of land (in margin)) of Somersham Manor late Reedhams six acres of ffen land late Staburnd and one acre late Ranleys and before Shins to my grandson William Seely the younger and his heirs for ever then I give and devise unto my sister Margaret ?? all those ffifteen acres of adventure land in South Morland and all that parcel of ffen lands ?? ?? ?? late Charles Lambs and Theodore Ffosters and all that my part of the thirty roods in Southam Morland with this and every their appurtenances to the said Margaret for and during her natural life and after her decease to Thomas Seeley my grandson and his heirs for ever I give to the poor people of this parish twenty shillings to Bluntsham and Earith in a month after my decease All the rest of my goods and those hereditaments and ready money give and bequeath to my son William Seely whom I make my full and sole testator of this my last will and testament paying my debts and ?? and burying my body ??? ??? Whereof I have put to my hand and seal this day and year above written Thomas Skeeles stated, signed, published and ?? to be the last will and testament of the said Thomas Skeeles in the presence of us Thon Carrington Tho Ayrey William Seabourney. PROBATUM: London*

## **2) WILL OF WILLIAM SAYWELL 14<sup>th</sup> November 1700**

**IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN** I William Saywell Doctor of Divinity and Master of Jesus College in the University of Cambridge do make this my last will and testament as followeth ffirst I commit my souls unto Almighty God my Creator hoping for Salvation through the insite and mediation of Jesus Christ my beloved redeemer and my body to be directly buried at the discretion of my executor hereinafter named **Item** I give and bequeath unto my loving brother Samuel Saywell Batchelor of Divinity and to his heirs and assigns forever all and every my ffreehold and copyhold lands ornaments and hereditaments with their and every of their appurts in Willingham Over and Haddenham in the County of Cambridge or elsewhere in the same County and also all my lands tenements and hereditaments in the County of Kent **Item** I give and bequeath unto the said Samuel Saywell his executors administrators and assigns all my leasehold lands and tenements whatsoever and wheresoever in the Kingdom of England **Item** I do make and appoint the said Samuel Saywell my loving brother sole executor of this my last will and testament and after my debts and funeral charges paid I do give and bequeath all that stands residues of my goods chattles rights ?? and personall estate unto the said Samuel Saywell in witness whereof I have set my hand and seal the second day of October in the year of Our Lord one thousand and seven hundred – Will. Saywell signed stated published and attested by the said testor William Saywell to be his last will and testament in the presence of us whose names are hereunto subscribed witnessing the same and subscribing our names as witnessed hereunto in his presence Fran Lloyd, Wite Hussey, Will Baron

**CODICILL** (14<sup>th</sup> November 1700) made by me William Saywell Dr in Divinity Master of Jesus College in Cambridge the fourteenth day of November Anno Dom one thousand seven hundred to be annexed to my last will and testament and to be parcell thereof Imprimis I give to my loving wife during her natural life an annuity or yearly sum of one hundred and fifty pounds to be paid her by my executor yearly and every year during her natural life by half yearly equall payments **Item** I give to my brother John Saywells' two daughters ffive pounds a year paid until they attain their respective ages of one and twenty years if they respectively shall so long live and then to each of them I give and bequeath the sum of three hundred pounds if they respectively shall so long live **Item** I give to my sister Meirs fifty pounds **Item** I give to my nephew Andrew Miers ten pounds per annum during his natural life **Item** I give to my ?? William Lufsty fifty pounds and to my ?? Thomas Lufsty ten pounds **Item** I give to the Church of Ely one hundred pounds (inserted in the margin ^) **Item** I give to Jesus College aforesaid one hundred pounds towards adorning the said college hall to be paid within six direct months after my decease and I give two hundred pounds to be paid within one year after the death of my wife to be applied to ??? for the said college as my executor shall direct or appoint and for default of such direction or appointment the same to be towards the maintenance of the choir or to be added to Doctor Probys Ffoundation towards purchasing the advowson of a living **Item** I give to St Johns College in Cambridge fifty pounds to be paid within one year after the decease of my wife towards the building of a new chapple **Item** My mind and will is that my executor shall settle and assure or realise to be settled and assured upon such custodians and their heirs as he shall think fit a yearly rent or lands to the value of ten pounds per ann in trust for the benefit of the school master of Willingham in the County of Cambridge and his successor schoolmasters there for the time being for ever for ??...ragement to the said schoolmasters to teach the children of the said parish their education and prayers **Item** I give to the poor of Ely ten pounds and to the poor of Willingham aforesaid ten pounds and to the poor of All Saints Parish Cambridge five pounds and to the poor of Pentridge in Dorsetshire where I was born five pounds In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above written ./.. Will Saywell Signed and sealed published and ?? by the said Doctor William Saywell to be a codicil and part of his will in the presence of ./.. Fran Lloyd, Joane Mayer, Will Baron

**PROBATUM** (in Latin) London 7<sup>th</sup> July 1701 to Samuel Saywell fratris (brother)

### **3) WILL OF SAMUEL SAYWELL 6<sup>th</sup> December 1708**

*In the name of God Amen I Samuel Saywell of Bluntisham in the County of Huntingdon Batchelor in Divinity and Rector of the said Parish Church of Bluntisham and Earith in the said county being very sick and weare of body but of sound mind and memory thanks be to God for the same doe this sixth day of December in the seventh year of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lady Ann by the Grace of God of our Great Brittain Ffrance and Ireland Queen Defender of the Ffaith and in the Year of Our Lord God One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eight do make and ordain this writing to be my Last Will and Testament in manner and forme following and first I freely and willingly assign and yield up my selfe both soul and body to the mercifull disposall of Almighty God stedfastly believing the True Ffaith of the Church of England And for that Worldly Estate God hath in Mercy Blessed me withall I give devise and bequeath as followeth I give and devise unto my loving Sister Sarah Mieres all my ffreehold copyhold land meadow and marish ground lying and being in the limits and bounds of Willingham also Willingham and Over in the County of Cambridgeshire for and during her natural life And after her decease to Andrew Mieres her son and his heirs for ever subject nevertheless to the payments of the legacies and annuities mentioned and given by the Last Will and Testament of my loving brother William Saywell Doctor in Divinity deceased excepting and reserving out of this bequest all that parcel of marish Ground in Willingham Aforesaid called Queenhams and the drove way from Starkes estate Northward with said parish of land called Queenhams I give and devise three years after the decease of Elizabeth Saywell the widow and relict of my brother William Saywell aforesaid ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ unto the settled society of ministers sons and daughters provided and upon condition that the said society shall pay one fourth part of the rents issues and profits of the said lands for and towards the propagating the Christian ffaith in ffouraine lands and the other quarter part to promote the Christian Knowledge among ourselves **Item** I give and devise the aforesaid Drove way from Starkes estate aforesaid unto the ffive and twenty acres routaineing six acres by the same more or less unto John Matthews my servant for and during his natural life and from and after his decease I give and devise the rent of the said drove way unto the poor people of Willingham and to poor people of the parish of Bluntisham and Earith to be equally divided between them by the Ministers and churchwardens of each parish **item** I give and devise unto my said sister Meirs all my rented lands in Willingham aforesaid containing about ffifty ffour acres be the same more or less with the appurtances for and during her natural life and after her decease to her son Andrew Meirs and his heirs for ever **Item** I give and devise unto my said sister Meirs all of my venters land in Maney in the Isle of Ely and County of Cambridge routaineing two hundred acres be it more or less for and during her natural life and after her decease to Andrew meirs her son and his heirs for ever **Item** I give and devise unto my sister Meirs aforesaid all that my venters land in Streattham in the said Isle of Ely and County of Cambridgeshire I lately purchased of Sir Roger Jenings routaineing one hundred & seventy two acres be it more or less for and during her natural life and after her decease unto Andrew Meirs her son and his heirs for ever **Item** I give and devise unto my sister Meirs aforesaid all those six acres more or less lying and being in Earith fforefenn in Whittfenn corner late Shinns for and during her natural life and after her decease to Andrew Meirs her son and his heirs for ever according to the cuftome of the severall manors they are holden of **Item** I give and devise unto my said sister Meirs all that little ground called the three acres more or less late purchased of Mrs Sams for and during her natural life and after her decease to the minister and churchwardens of the parish of Bluntisham and Earith for the time being for ever the rents issues and profits thereof to be employed in mending and repairing of church caufes belonging to the said parish **Item** I give and devise unto my sister Meirs all those twelve acres of pasture late Mr Irmays for and during her natural life and also two acres next to the said twelve acres late purchased of Mr Sams for and during her natural life and after her decease to the Minister and Churchwardens of Bluntisham and Earith for the time being for ever to be managed to the best advantage to teaching the poor of the said parish all the rest of my goods and chattels credits and ready money unbequeathed I give and bequeath unto my loving sister Sarah Meirs and Andrew Meirs her son whom I make full and soul executors of this my last will under my hand and sealed the day and year first above written – Sam<sup>ll</sup> Saywell – Signed and sealed published and declared by Sam<sup>ll</sup> Saywell the teftator to his last will and testament in the presence of us whose names are hereunto subscribed Wiil Cole; Tho: Carrinton; John White; Rowle Penamn*

**PROBATUM** (*In Latin*) granted London to Sara Meires and Andrw Meires August 1709

#### **4) BLUNTISHAM SCHOOL INDENTURE RICHARD TILLARD 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1842**

**This Indenture** made the twenty second day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty two **Between** The Reverend Richard Tillard clerk late rector of Bluntisham with Earith in the County of Huntingdon but now of Hartford in the said County of the one part and The Reverend Edward Baines clerk rector of Bluntisham with Earith aforesaid David Godfrey of Bluntisham aforesaid farmer and Carter Potto of Earith aforesaid farmer churchwarden of the Parish Church of Bluntisham with Earith aforesaid and Richard Brown and Robert Wheaton overseers of the poor of the said parish of the other part **Whereas** by indenture bearing date on or about the seventeenth day of January one thousand eight hundred and forty two made in pursuance of the Act of Parliament for rendering the Release as effective for the Conveyance of Freehold Estates as a Lease and release by the same parties Between the said David Godfrey of the first part the said Richard Tillard of the second part and Philip Tillard therein described of the third part for the considerations therein mentioned the said David Godfrey did grant release and confirm unto the said Richard Tillard his heirs and assigns **All** that Piece or Parcel of land situate lying and being in Bluntisham aforesaid containing in width fronting the Town Street of Bluntisham aforesaid sixty seven feet or thereabouts and in depth seventy one feet or thereabouts (being part and parcel of a close of Pasture Land there called Blowfields otherwise Buffets Close containing by estimation one acre (more or less) formerly Embrys lying in Bluntisham aforesaid next the street the estate of Mrs Coxe Feary lying on one side thereof and the other premises of the said David Godfrey recently purchased of William Saunders and Elizabeth his wife and Isaac Saunders on the other side thereof the whole of which said Close of Pasture was lately copyhold of the Manor of Somersham with the Soake in the said County and to which the said David Godfrey was admitted Tenant in fee at a court held for the said Manor the twentieth day of April one thousand eight hundred and forty one under a surrender for the said William Saunders and Elizabeth his wife but which said Close of Pasture was by indenture bearing date the twenty fourth day of December one thousand eight hundred and forty one and made between John Guillum Scott esquire Lord of the said Manor of Somersham with the Soake of the one part and the said David Godfrey of the other part and duly enfranchised or made of freehold tenure and which said small piece of land so forming part of the said close by the now reciting indenture of the release conveyed to the said Richard Tillard abuts north and west on the remaining part of the said close called Blowfields or Buffetts Close South on the Premises of the said Mrs Coxe Feary and east on the aforesaid Town Street To hold the said piece or parcel of land thereby granted and released with the appurtenances unto the said Richard Tillard his heirs and assigns To such uses upon such trusts and for such intents and purpose and with under and subject to such powers provisions agreements and declarations as the said Richard Tillard should by any deed or deeds writing or writings with or without power of revocation and new appointment to be by him sealed and delivered in the presence of and attested by two or more credible witnesses from time to time direct limit or appoint and subject to the said power of appointment to the use of the said Richard Tillard and his assigns during his life without impeachment of waste with remainder to the use of the said Philip Tillard and his heirs during the life of the said Richard Tillard in trust for the said Richard Tillard and his assigns with remainder to the use of the said Richard Tillard his heirs and assigns for ever **And Whereas** with a view to further the intention of the late Samuel Saywell clerk deceased formerly rector of Bluntisham aforesaid who by his will devised contain lands in Earith Great Wash within the said parish to the minister and churchwardens of Bluntisham and Earith aforesaid for teaching the poor children of the same Parish, the said Richard Tillard has lately caused a building to be erected on the aforesaid piece or parcel of ground and is desirous of appropriating and conveying the same to be used as a school house for the purpose of educating and instructing the poor children of the said parish of Bluntisham with Earith aforesaid in the principles and according to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Established Church of England and in reading writing and cashing accounts and in other proper and useful learning for the poorer class of people and for the other purpose also hereafter mentioned **Now this Indenture witnesseth** that in pursuance and execution of the desire and intention aforesaid and also in consideration of the Sum of ten shillings of lawful current money of in England to the said Richard Tillard in hand well and truly paid by the said Edward Baines David Godfrey Carter Potto and Richard Brown and Robert Wheaton at or before the sealing and delivery of these presents the receipt thereof is hereby acknowledged The said Richard Tillard doth by those presents (made in pursuance of the said Act of Parliament for rendering a Release as effectual for the conveyance of Freehold estate as a lease and release by the same parties ) direct limit and appoint and also give grant a lien and release unto the said Edward Baines David Godfrey Carter Potto Richard Brown and Robert Wheaton the Rector Churchwardens and Overseers of the poor of Bluntisham and Earith aforesaid and to their successors as Rector Churchwardens and Overseers as aforesaid for the time being for ever **that** the said small piece or parcel of land hereinbefore particularly described or mentioned and so as aforesaid conveyed to the said Richard Tillard and his heirs by the above in part receipt indenture of the seventeenth day of January one thousand eight hundred

and forty two **And** also the said new building or schoolhouse so erected and Built by the said Richard Tillard on part of the said piece of ground is also hereinbefore mentioned together with all and singular the rights members privilege and appurtenances whatsoever to the same belonging or in anywise appertaining and the Reversion and Reversions Remainder and Remainders rents issues and profits thereof and all the estate right title interest use trust inheritance property claim and demand whatsoever of the said Richard Tillard into or upon the hereditaments and premises **To have And To Hold** the said piece or Parcel of Land Building or School House and other the premises hereinbefore appointed granted and released or otherwise assured with the appurtenances unto the said Edward Baines David Godfrey Carter Potto Richard Brown and Robert Wheaton As such Rector Churchwardens and overseers respectively as aforesaid and their successors as Rector Churchwardens and Overseers respectively of Bluntisham with Earith aforesaid for the time being for ever but never the less upon and subject to the trusts and for the ends intent and purpose hereinafter declared or expressed concerning the same (that is to say) In Trust to permit and suffer the said Building or School House and premises to be used or employed under the management and superintendence of the Rector and Churchwardens of the said Parish and parish Church of Bluntisham with Earith aforesaid for the time being as a school house and premises for educating and instituting the poor children of Bluntisham and Earith aforesaid in the religious principles and according to the Doctrines and discipline of the established Church of England and for teaching and instructing the boys who shall attend the said school in reading writing and casting accounts and the girls in reading writing sewing knitting mending and making together with such other useful learning or knowledge as shall be thought expedient and proper for their situations in life And the said Richard Tillard doth hereby authorize and empower the said Rector and Churchwardens for the time being to make from time to time such reasonable bylaws and ordinances as to them shall seem meet for the better management and promotion of the said school and the design and ends thereof **Provided** always nevertheless and these presents are upon this express condition That it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Edward Baines and his successors Rectors of Bluntisham with Earith aforesaid for the time being and his and their Curates at his and their free will and pleasure to use the said School House as a lecture room for any other similar purpose in order to promote the growth of Piety within the said parish at such times in such manner as the said Edward Baines or his successors Rectors aforesaid may from time to time approve of and think proper. **Provided Always** and the said Richard Tillard doth hereby further order and direct that in case any dispute shall arise between the said rector and Churchwardens for the time being as to the conduct and management of the said school or upon any other matter or thing whatsoever connected therewith an appeal shall be made to the ordinary for the time being of the Diocese of Ely within which Diocese the parish of Bluntisham with Earith is situate and that his decision shall be final conclusive and binding upon the said Rector and Churchwardens **Provided Always** and the grant and conveyance hereby made of the said piece of parcel of land and school house erected thereon is upon this express condition that in case the said shall at any time be discontinued or come to an end by any judgement of law decree in equity or legislative enactment or otherwise then and in such case and from henceforth these presents and the grant and assurance hereby made of the aforesaid hereditaments upon the trusts hereinbefore expressed and everything herein contained shall cease determine and be utterly void and of none effects to all intents and purposes whatsoever and the same shall descend or go or belong to and be holden by the trustees thereof for the benefit of such person or persons who for the time being shall be the right heir or right heirs of me the said Richard Tillard anything herein contained to the contrary thereof in anywise notwithstanding **Witness** whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

On the twenty second day of July one thousand eight hundred and forty two this indenture was acknowledged by Richard Tillard one of the parties thereto who prayed that the same might be enrolled before me Benjamin Astabie ? a master extra in Chancery