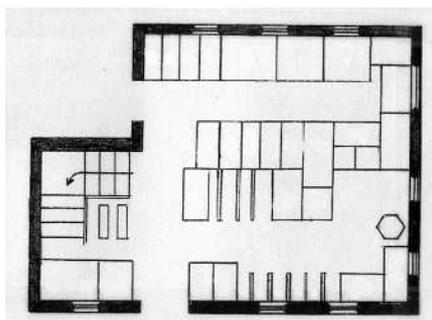


THE HISTORY OF FULFORD'S PAROCHIAL AND NATIONAL SCHOOLS

This document is based on '*The History of Fulford School - 1649 to 1928*' by Margaret Breeze with further research having been undertaken by Roger Keight who produced the document.

'Beresford's Historical Notes' states that "*the chapel is said to have been in existence before 1552 and was dedicated to St. Nicholas, the school being held in the north aisle until a school was built in 1785*".



The Chapel showing Mr. Shalcross' north aisle where school classes were held
(This plan was drawn by the author and is based on one held by Staffordshire Record Office)

The money for building the north aisle of the Chapel was given by a Mr. Shalcross, a local squire, in 1649, and he also endowed it with land at Spot Grange for it's use as a schoolroom for the poor children of the parish.



William Walsh's 1814 painting of Fulford Chapel, held by St. Nicholas Church
(Photograph by the author, courtesy of the Vicar and Wardens of St. Nicholas Church)

One of the Chapel's Curates, George Hitchcock B.A. of St. Johns College, Cambridge, was recorded as being headmaster of Chapel School between 1686 and 1692, and John Peploe, a later Curate, was recorded as being headmaster between 1711 and 1714. On 23rd July 1735 George Hiatt of Knenhall left money in his Will for the payment of £12. 10s. per year to a schoolmaster to teach fifteen free scholars in the north aisle of St. Nicholas. He also left £100 for the poor of the Fulford Chapelry which comprised Fulford, Saverley Green, Cross Gate, Clate Gate, Long Hedge Nook, Rough Close, Knenhall and Perrbank. The Trustees of the Will were Thomas Lovatt, Richard Hand, Sampson Cotton and William Nicholls. In 1772 Thomas Shalcross and Mirabel Bennett jointly established a Charity to help support the school, and this was followed by other Charities which were established by Thomas

Porter, John Batkin, Charles Arblaster, a Mr.Foden, and by the owner of somewhere called Hey Meadow. Thomas Porter left

“To the minister for a sermon on St. Thomas Day 10s.

To the school, for learning 3 children to read, £1. 10s.

To each of them a new coat yearly, £1

To be reserved, £2 every year to put one out to apprentice every third year”.

Together the Charities of Thomas Shalcross and Thomas Porter enabled £3. 10s. per annum to be paid for a schoolmistress to teach a further eleven free scholars.

Chapel School was abandoned in 1785 when the village school opened. One winter of ministry in the ancient Chapel, which also housed the Sunday School, in 1821 was enough to convince Rev. John Dunderdale that a new church must be built, but that the most desperate need was for a new school, and so in 1822 he wrote to Dr. S.T. Walmesley, secretary to the ‘National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principle of the Established Church’ which had been founded in 1811 severely criticising the building for having little light and no heating. He asked for £150 to be made available to build a new school, but only £125 was granted. However the new National School, which consisted of just one schoolroom with a fireplace at both ends, stood opposite Olde House on the edge of the village green was finished by May 1823 and when it opened it brought the Endowed and Sunday Schools together under one roof. There is also a record telling that there was teaching for four pupils in a house at Townend where Barnfield now stands, and that the non-conformists were making exertions in opening their own school, the Calvinists having begun a school in their own meeting house in 1822, possibly in the now Calvinist Chapel that is now a private dwelling place next to the old Vicarage.



The new National School on the village green
(Photograph courtesy of the Potteries Museums)

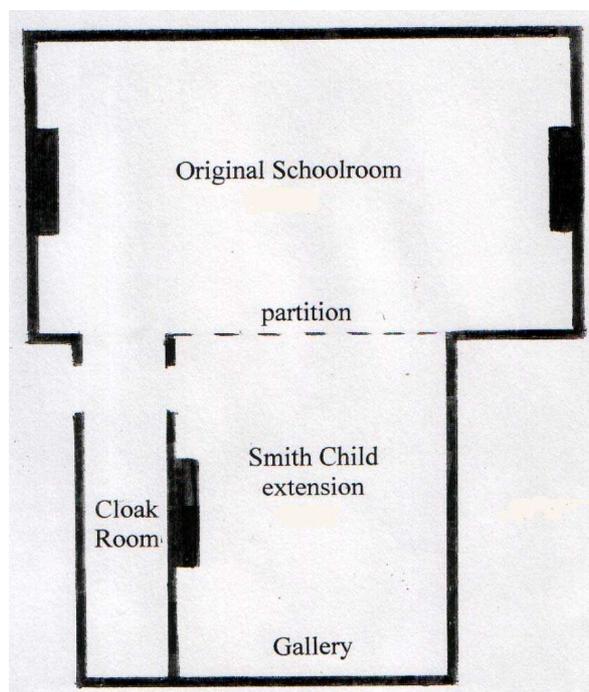
We don't know who the headmaster was when the National School was opened. We do know that Mr. Thomas Heath was Master-in-charge of the school in 1818, and that he was followed by Mr. John Dunn in 1834. John Dunn himself was followed a short while later by both Mary Mayer and William Hall. They would probably have been assisted by monitors who were chosen from the oldest school children and who had to learn a lesson and then teach it to the younger children. On the roof was a bell turret and a bell monitor had to ring the bell before the start of morning school and again in the afternoon to summon the children to school. Lateness was often punished and children were often out of breath when they reached the classroom.

In 1872 Lady Child paid for Chapel School to be enlarged to provide space for 81 pupils rather than the 54 pupils accommodated by the original design. The infants were housed in the new extension and the other children in the original part of the building. The number of children on the roll quickly rose to 118 but was soon reduced to 99 as the names of non-attendees were removed. All of the children, ranging in age from under 5 to over 10, were taught in one room.

Miss Emma Thomas took over as Mistress-in-charge of the School in 1874 when the school started to keep it's log book, and even though she had two young monitors to assists her by overseeing

groups of children, Emily Annie Jenkinson and Thomasina Fenton, it appears that she had many problems which affected the teaching of the children. One problem was that children often stayed away from school because of sickness, chicken pox and ringworm often being the cause. The weather was also a hazard, with heavy rain keeping distant scholars at home and snow sometimes blocking the lanes. On 14th April 1876 for example it was recorded in the school log book that there was “*No school in consequence of a heavy fall of snow. No children attended*”. Then at certain seasons children were kept at home to help their parents on the farm for haymaking and the corn harvest. In 1874 Mr. Yarde, Her Majesty’s Inspector who lived in Rugeley, had written that “*The children in the first standard know next to nothing*”, though some allowance seems to have been made by the comment that “*Miss Thomas had so little efficient aid*”, even though she now had a pupil teacher to assist her, an 11 year old young lady named Annie Armishaw whose father was a gamekeeper in the village. In June 1874 Emma was still complaining that “*parents were careless about sending their children to school*”, but even then it was October 1877 before an attendance officer called. This visit did mean that at last some of Emma Thomas’s problems were beginning to be recognised, one of them being the fact that “*one fifth of the school being infants is one cause of inefficiency*”. The vicar, Rev. George Coppin, also visited the school regularly to check the register and take prayers and scripture. However Miss Thomas eventually left the school and she was replaced by a Miss Friendship. Her stay at the school was a short one however and by 1879 she also left the school and was replaced by Sarah Windsor.

Sarah Windsor was 24. She had been born in Donnington in Shropshire but had moved to Fulford with her father after her mother had died. Sarah, supported by pupil teacher Annie Armishaw who was now 16, apparently began to get some improvements as it was soon reported that the infants were “*very fairly taught*”. However teaching still wasn’t easy as both before and after the summer holiday that year “*many of the children absented themselves for the purpose of gathering bilberries*”. It appears that things did continue to improve after that as in 1882 49 children were examined with 7 of those in standard II passing in all subjects, and in his report for that year Mr. Yarde reported that he was pleased with the progress made. By now Annie Armishaw had passed her examinations and progressed to teaching standard III and so she left the school in October and was replaced by a new pupil teacher, 15 year old Mary Porter from Tittensor, who lodged with Sarah and her father. A year later Mary Porter had to leave when her mother died.



Plan of the National School showing the Smith Child extension .
(This plan was drawn by the author and is based on one held by Staffordshire Record Office)

The main lessons taught during this time were reading, writing, and arithmetic, which were generally mastered by a process of formal drills, and for which the older children were annually tested by Her Majesty’s Inspector. Scripture, singing, grammar, spelling, and geography were also being taught, with the girls also being taught needlework. By 1880 the average attendance at the school had fallen to between 40 and 50 pupils, but by 1904 this number had risen to 78. Sadly Sarah Windsor left

Fulford in September 1882 having done well for the school and she was replaced by Mrs. Fanny Hill.who stayed at the school for fourteen years.

Epidemics of whooping cough, chincough, chicken pox, mumps and fever were still prevalent and made teaching difficult. In 1883 measles closed the school for three weeks and on three occasions Mrs. Hill wrote in the log book "*one of the scholars removed by death*". Illness wasn't the only problem though. Almost every winter there was a spell of arctic weather with snow making the roads impassable for days, such that in 1890, and again in 1892 "*the children from the windmill three miles distant were most irregular in their attendance, especially during the winter*". Then in the summer children stayed away for haymaking, blackberrying, and for the wakes and for the Hilderstone Club day. In 1889 two children were summoned for irregular attendance, James Beard being fined one shilling, and Elizabeth Kent was summoned in 1892.

Mrs.Hill had very little assistance at first. In 1883 monitor Louise Price was dismissed for her "*inability as a teacher*". She was replaced by Elizabeth Winfield and Annie Whiston, but both girls were reprovved for poor work and Annie left soon afterwards. Elizabeth stayed on and progressed from teaching for one hour each day to having charge of the infants for a week at a time, taking charge of the school while Mrs.Hill was absent. She was joined by Martha Sargeant in 1885, but she too left in about 1893 and was replaced, first by Miss Abberley, and then by Miss Kinsey. The number of children on the roll was increasing now and the average weekly attendance was over 80. In 1893 it was reported that the school was becoming crowded, the ventilation was poor, and repairs to the building were necessary, and these were carried out in 1894. At the beginning of the 1884 summer holiday both Mrs.Hill and Miss Kinsey left the school and were replaced by headmistress Miss S.A.Taplin and her assistant Miss.J.Clements.

Miss Taplin was determined to run the school in her own way and soon crossed Mr.Coppin because she adapted the old timetable rather than make a new one. Then in the autumn the children began preparing for an "*entertainment*" without Mr.Coppin's consent. The concert took place in December and was "*a great success*". When the school reopened after Christmas Mr.Coppin dismissed Miss Clements and soon after a new assistant, Miss Cooper arrived. That same month the children were given a tea-party "*with the proceeds their entertainment*", much to Mr.Coppin's annoyance because, according to him, "*£3.15s.0d. was taken for the concert.....showed no accounts of the expenditure*". In February attendance was low with many of the children having severe colds. Mr.Coppin blamed this on Miss Taplin who "*would persist in spite of remonstrations in having the school window open in the coldest weather*". That same week Mr. Coppin was told that Miss Taplin and Miss Cooper had visited the Dissenting Chapel at Cross Gate and so asked Miss Taplin to resign. The story turned out to be false, but as a result of it Miss Taplin then handed in three months notice. The situation between Miss Taplin and Mr. Coppin went from bad to worse. In March Miss Taplin complained that the children were cold as there was no coal, and Mr.Coppin only response was "*six tons burned in 136 days*". Following this Mr. Coppin stayed away from the school as much as possible, and so Miss Cooper took scripture lesson. "*By whose authority*" asked Mr. Coppin afterwards, adding "*another irregularity, another violation of the timetable*". On May 21st 1896 Mr. Coppin dismissed Miss Taplin "*as incorrigible*". Despite all of the problems, the annual inspection Mr.Yarde found that the children had been efficiently taught and had made credible progrees through the year.

Miss Taplin was replaced as head teacher by Miss Bobby who immediately devised a new timetable, finding the old one "*at times unworkable*". Some of the children gave her trouble and J.Harrison was reprimanded by the Attendance Officer and G. Guidford was "*expelled for grievous acts of insubordination*". Both teachers left Fulford in December and were followed by Miss Estelle Haynes and her sister Miss F. Haynes. Lessons included handiwork, in which the children took great pleasure, ball making, crayon drawing, cube building, string winding, and knitting. Miss Haynes prepared with great care but she was concerned at the low attainments of the children. "*Although apparently bright and intelligent, and as a rule very attentive, they do not seem able to take in the points of a lesson. The children however are most willing*". Later she was amazed when a donkey in the neighbourhood was unanimously declared by the children to be a "*nanny goat*". That year some of the children sent exhibits to Trentham Industrial Exhibition, and were then given a holiday to visit, and early in September a school bell was provided "*and used to great advantage during the week*".

The Attendance Officer brought forms in which were to be filled in by the parents of absentees, and all complied except one. Miss Haynes wrote in the log book "*Mrs.Harrison came to school and used vile language; told me to get them filled myself*". One of Mrs.Harrison's truant sons, Fred, was in trouble soon afterwards, being sentenced to six strokes of the birch for stealing by Stone Magistrates. At the annual inspection both teachers were congratulated for improved work and good examination results but they left Fulford in November 1897 as their temporary engagement terminated. They were replaced by two more sisters, Misses Beatrice and Florence Pratt. Things started to go well

at the school. To mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in June 1897 a feast was held in the school which unfortunately wasn't thoroughly cleaned afterwards. The children had to work on slates that week because the desks were greasy. Much needed equipment such as desks for the infants room, blackboard compasses, wall maps and musical bells were received. A grant of £13.9s.6d was given by the Education Department "to be expended for effecting repairs" and in 1900 the infant's gallery was renewed, and the following year a broken floor was replaced by a new one following receipt of a grant for £12. Average attendance varied between 60 and 80, and there were still seasonal absences for snow, hay making, and fruit gathering. A succession of epidemics affected the village in 1900 and continued into 1901 when "*Martha, Mary, and Salisbury Eaton were absent for 25 weeks owing to measles and scarlet fever*".

On 8th June 1900 the children were given a holiday to celebrate Lord Robert's entry into Pretoria. In January 1901 Mrs. Child from Stallington Hall gave the children a party when her son, Sir Hill Child, returned from the South African War, and a procession of children went to the Hall to welcome him home. His younger brother Roylance Child died the following September and the choir boys attended his funeral. In April 1902 a feast was held in the school to celebrate Miss Child's marriage. On 24th May 1902, Queen Victoria's birthday, Empire Day was inaugurated, and it was celebrated through the nation's schools who were given guidance on what the days proceedings should be. It was suggested that "*the day should start with the hoisting of the Union Jack followed by the singing of the National Anthem. Then through the morning the children should then be given lessons about the history and growth of the British Empire and the history of the Union Jack. The children should then be encouraged to write a letter to the children in one of the colonies telling them of life at their school and in their village. The afternoon should be dedicated to games and school would close with a final singing of the National Anthem*". In August 1902 the children were given a party and 2 days holiday were given to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward VII.

In 1902 the Diocesan Inspector, Rev. H.R. Colcham, visited Fulford for the annual scripture examination and wrote "*Teachers and scholars are deserving of much praise and encouragement*". However Miss Beatrice Pratt ended her appointment in May 1903 when she left to get married and her sister took charge until the new head teacher, Henry Wheeler, arrived with his wife who came to teach as a supernumary. They lived in School Cottage, a tied farm labourer's cottage which belonged to Fulford Hall.

By now the school buildings were beginning to deteriorate and inspectors noticed the damp walls and the need for cupboards and fireguards. Buckets were used as toilets and were emptied daily by Mr. Saxon, the caretaker. Mr. Donnelly, the Attendance Officer, visited the school to weigh and measure the children, who were then examined by Mr. Fernie, the Medical Officer, who recommended treatment for those who needed it. The log book tells us that "*Martha Heath attended hospital for throat at the request of the County Council*" and that "*three children have received doctor's certificates to stay away during the winter months*".

The school was closed in September 1908 when Mrs. Wheeler became seriously ill. She died one week later and Mr. Wheeler's sister, Miss. L. Wheeler acted as temporary assistant. She worked "*diligently*" with the infants, despite frequent absences through illness, but eventually resigned in September 1910 and was replaced by Miss S.J. Farnell.

The Government inspection in 1909 was very critical "*At one time the Head was endeavouring to carry out three separate lessons with various parts of the school. There is too much attempt at class teaching under these impossible conditions, and it would be better to train the older children to be more self-reliant*". However it was not all bad news as the inspector added "*All exercises are carefully marked, and there is evidence of much time spent out of school hours in the careful noting of all errors and making corrections*". The report of 1911 was very unsatisfactory and there was a suggestion that the grant may be reduced. Mr. Wheeler's appointment ended in December that year. He is remembered as a gentle and kindly man.

Miss Linda Booth became headmistress, with Miss Farnell staying on as her assistant. March 1912 was extremely cold and for a week there was no coal so that the children had to exercise to keep warm until Mr. Critchlow, a school manager, sent buckets of coal so that the fires could be lit. In the autumn the children planted bulbs in the school gardens and had hyacinths in glasses in school. The Diocesan inspector wrote that "*The written as well as the oral work was beyond praise*". However Miss Booth resigned in March 1913 and Miss E. Gunn took charge. She had a new approach to lessons which made them very enjoyable and the attendance suddenly improved. Much practical work was done out of doors and there were competitions for gathering flowers, and for the best bouquet. On one nature walk the children collected seed cases, finding 24 different kinds. Instead of drill Miss Gunn took jumping with the girls and cricket with the boys, and when the annual inspection took place in September Miss Gunn was given great praise. At Christmas the school managers gave the children a

party, followed by games, singing, and dancing, and in January the children were taken to Hanley to see the cinomatograph picture "*Sixth Year A Queen*". In June 1914 Miss Gunn left Fulford and she was replaced by Miss Melissa Boon. A long summer holiday was planned that year so that long awaited major alterations to the building could be carried out , but they were cancelled on the outbreak of war. Miss Boon left Fulford in April 1915.

Miss Beatrice Pratt, a previous headmistress, had left the school in 1903 to get married and had moved away from the area. She now returned to become headmistress again, this time as Mrs. Beatrice Jenkinson. Miss. Farnell continued to teach the infants, travelling by train from Hanley to Blythe Bridge and then cycling to Fulford. She had become very popular with the children, who made a ceremony of seeing her away on her evening journey, first helping her to clip up her long skirts to clear the pedals, then giving her bicycle a push to start it going down Baulk Lane.

Changes came gradually during the war. Six weeks summer holiday was given in 1916 and absentees were excused in term time because help was needed in the harvest fields, and the Attendance Officer allowed children who wished to do farm work to leave school at 12 years of age. In Septemeber 1917 an extra weeks holiday was given for potato and fruit picking, and in October the children were out for several days gathering horse chestnuts. A gardening instructor helped the boys to start a school garden where they planted potatoes, beans and shallots, Blackberry picking, once the cause of much complaint from the teachers, became part of the war effort. Fulford children were supplied with Ministry of Food packets and picked 184lbs. of blackberries in one week and sent them to Wilk's Jam Manufacturers.

Post-war winters brought difficulties. 1919 was very cold, with a fuel shortage, and later school closed because of the severe influenza epidemic. There was another closure in 1921 when there was no coal, and in October the infant's class ended at 2-30pm to enable Miss Farnell to travel home, train services being limited owing to the rail strike. Miss Farnell left Fulford just before Mrs. Jenkinson gave up the headship in December 1922. She did however agree to stay on to assist Miss Melissa Boon who became headmistress for the second time.



Children from the National School on the village green in about 1916. – photograph from Kath Tooth of Fulford

Miss Boon had a succession of young uncertified assistants during the next few years, Miss Warren in 1922, Miss M. Davies from 1922 to 1925, and Miss. A.M. Cradwell, a Manchester girl, from 1925. There were now over 70 scholars and the school had become rather overcrowded. There were several serious epidemics during Miss Boon's time at Fulford, and in 1926 there were some cases of diphtheria. Miss Boon herself was ill with mumps in November that year. Her biggest worry however was the state of the building. It was very delapidated, and being used for various village functions as well as school, it got damaged from time to time. Windows were cracked, sometimes by youths playing football on the village green, the roof leaked, and the drain by the back door was a cause for much concern.



Some of the pupils outside the National School. Bill Jenkinson is on the extreme left-hand side.
(Photograph courtesy of the Potteries Museums)

In May 1922 an architect examined the premises “*with a view to renovation*”, but that is the reference to possible renovation in the school log book. However in 1923 it was recorded by Miss Boon that Fulford “*was now a council school*”, though they were still in the same building as in 1924 Miss Boon reported “*One side of the mantlepiece has fallen out and the fireplace is in bad condition*”. Eventually builders came and patched up the leaking roof, but by then work had at last started on the building of a new school on the high ground at the corner of Fulford Road and Baulk Lane.



Puils of Fulford School dancing on the village green - (photograph from Kath Tooth of Fulford)

The National School eventually closed and in 1928 and on Monday 25th June that same year the pupils all moved into the new County School. Some of the children carried chairs and some carried books, and even more books were taken in wheelbarrows pushed by the boys. The old school building was kept in use as Fulford Church Institute and was used by organisations such as the Parish Council, the Women's Institute which was formed in 1929, and the Church Youth Club which was formed in 1948. The Church Institute continued to be used for a number of years before eventually being abandoned and becoming totally derelict. In a letter to the National Society in August 1958, the Clerk

to Stone Rural District Council suggested that “*the school building should be demolished, and the land thrown into the village green*”. This was accepted and was done in 1959.



This photograph is thought to have been taken in the early years of the new County School. Sadly none of the pupil's names are known. – (photograph courtesy of Linda Hargeaves of Fulford)

Among the past masters and mistresses of Fulford's National and County Schools were:-

George Hitchcock (Curate)	1686 to 1692
John Peploe (Curate)	1711 to 1714
Thomas Heath	1818
John Dunn	1834
Mary Ann Cordon	1834
Mary Myer (widow)	1851
William Hall	1851
Annie Simpson	1863 to 1864
Annie Johnson	1872 to 1874
Emma (Annie) Thomas	1874 to 1877
Miss M.A.Friendship	1878 to 1879
Miss Sarah Windsor	1879 to 1882
'Fanny' Hill (Mrs.)	1882 to 1895
S.A.Taplin (Miss)	1895 to 1896
E.Bobby (Miss)	1896
Estelle E.Haynes (Miss)	1897
Beatrice Pratt (Miss)	1897 to 1903 (<i>became Mrs. Jenkinson</i>)
Henry William Wheeler	1903 to 1911
Linda Booth (Miss)	1911 to 1913
E.E.Gunn (Miss)	1913 to 1914
Mellisa Boon (Miss)	1914 to 1915
Beatrice Jenkinson (Mrs.)	1915 to 1922 (<i>was Miss Pratt</i>)
Mellisa Boon (Miss)	1922 to 1928
Miss G.M. Owen	1928 to 1938
Miss Phillips	1938 to 1944
J.O.Kirkland	1952 to 1973
Yvonne Morrison	1973/74
Mr. Hagyard	1979
Mrs. James nee Blood	19??
Alan Drake	1996 to 2000
Patricia M.Redfern (Mrs.)	2001 to 2005
Janice Tarr (Mrs.)	2005 to present

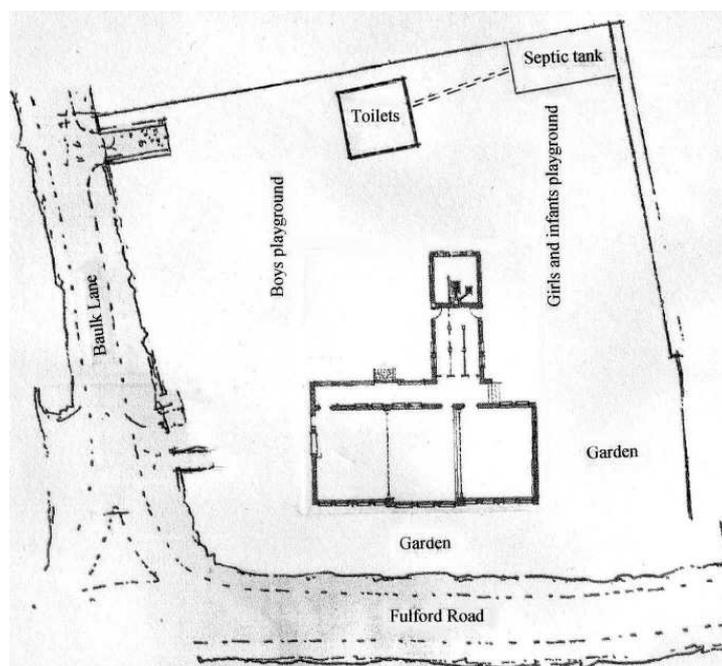
Among the past pupil monitors/pupil teachers of Fulford National School were:-

Emily Annie Jenkinson	1874 to 1876
Thomasina Fenton	1874 to 1879
Annie Armishaw	1876 to 1882
Mary Porter	1882

Louise Price	1882 to 1883
Elizabeth Winfield	1883
Annie Whiston	1883 to 188
Martha Sargeant	1885 to 1890
Miss Abberley	1890 to 1893
S.A.Kinsey (Miss)	1893 to 1894
J.Clements (Miss)	1894 to 1896
Miss Cooper	1895 to 1896
F.Haynes (Miss)	1897
Florence Pratt	1898 to 1903
Mrs. Wheeler	1903 to 1908
L.Wheeler (Miss)	1908 to 1910
L.J.Hodgson	1910
S.J.Farnell (Miss)	1910 to 1922
Miss Warren	1922
M.Davis (Miss)	1922 to 1925
A.M.Gradwell (Miss)	1925 to 1928

When the County School opened on 28th June 1928 it had 78 pupils on the register though there was actually accommodation for 130. Of the 78 pupils on the register, 76 turned up for school on the first day. In July Sir Child Hill presented the school with the heads of two animals that he had shot in the Jura Mountains, and they remained at the school until 1957. There was no water supply to the school and so the caretaker was paid one shilling per school day for carting one churn of pure drinking water from the village well to the school. All washing was done with rainwater that was stored in tanks. By September of that year the school was well established and was officially recognised as a public elementary school. Captain Steventon was the Inquiry Officer at this time.

The School itself consisted of one dedicated classroom for the infants and a larger room with a removable partition in the middle that could be drawn across to make the one large room into two smaller rooms as and when required. There was also a wing that housed the cloaks and the boiler room. The children's play area was divided into Boys on the west side and Girls on the east, and there was a children's toilet at the far side of the play area that had a septic tank nearby that was emptied regularly by the night soilman. Just outside the cloaks wing there was a large rainwater tank, and at some time an artesian well was sunk by the side of the rainwater tank.



A plan of the new school, the gardens, the playgrounds, and the outside toilets pre-1957
(Produced by the author based on plans held by Fulford School)

Discipline in the school was still very important as can be seen from the school log book where the Inspector wrote "*Visited this school. Discipline and tone is excellent*". However snow was

still proving to be a problem, with the attendance being reduced to as few as 25 or 26 on occasions, and epidemics of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever also affected the attendance each year. Another thing that the pupils had to endure each year was the visit by the 'nit nurse', and again this is recorded in the school log book "*Nurse called this morning to examine heads*". The dentist was another dreaded visitor, and he was recorded as having spent the whole day at the school pulling teeth on occasions.

On 22nd June 1930 there was a lot of excitement in the school when an R100 Airship passed overhead. The puils were all allowed to go outside and watch it.



An R100 airship in flight, just like the one that passed over the school.

On 16th November 1931 there was even more excitement, in both the school and the village. A light aircraft was flying over the village on a day when there was some fog about and it was seen to be in difficulties of some kind. It eventually came down in the cricket field at the rear of the new County School. News quickly spread round the village that the Prince of Wales, later to become King Edward VIII, had arrived in the village. One of the tales that spread round the village was that the Prince had gone to the 'Shoulder of Mutton' but that he had found that it was closed. However he had supposedly insisted on being served with a whisky and soda but had been refused as he was a stranger. In actual fact it was the Prince's plane, but the Prince wasn't in it as it was on its way back to pick him up at Meir Aerodrome after his visit to the Potteries. This meant that only the Prince's pilot, a Captain Fielding, was on board the plane when it got into difficulties. Having suffered some damage on landing Captain Fielding had then had to walk all of the way to Tom Byatt's at Meir where the nearest telephone was to summon help. A policeman kept guard of the plane that night. The following day Mr. Fielding came to collect the plane to fly it back to London, and as he took off her performed a few aerobatics specially for the children, who cheered like mad.



This is the Prince of Wales plane that crashed in the field behind Fulford County School.
Photograph courtesy of Philip Leason of Stone

The pupils were often given an extra holiday for a special occasion, such as the wedding of the Duke of Kent on 29th November 1934, King George V's Jubilee on 6th and 7th May 1935, the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, The Coronation of King George VI on 11th May 1937, and later the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on 2nd June 1953, and the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales on 29th April 1981. No holiday was given for the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of York however, but the whole school were able to watch it on the school's new colour television.

In March 1934 the weather was so bad and the light in the school so dim that school-work had to be abandoned at 1-00pm. and the afternoon was spent dancing and performing mime. As a result of this two lamps were provided in case darkness ever interrupted lesson again. Sometimes there was also a problem with the water supply to the school as the pump supplying the school's water often failed, as was recorded first in the school log book by the headmaster on 23rd September 1937 and which continued to be reported until it was finally removed and replaced by a new one on 5th May 1941. The pump also supplied the water for the heating system and so when the pump failed it meant that the heating system too failed. It was also in 1934 that Fulford Women's Institute presented a piano to the school, and a year or two later they presented a wireless

School hadn't reopened as planned after the summer holidays in 1939. The children were due to return on 4th September, but an extra weeks holiday was given due to the outbreak of the war against Germany. When the children did return to school the following week they were given air raid practice and were told that if ever there was an air raid they were to file out of school and then run down Baulk Lane and hide in the hedges. One month later the first air raid siren was heard and the children were able to put their training into practise, though the all-clear was given half an hour later. On 3rd December that year the Librarian called to inspect the books and had a surprise. Miss Phillips, who be then was headmistress, wrote in her report "*I found the children hiding under their desks – they were on alert!*" As the war dragged on sand bags were put round the school entrance as a protection against bomb blast, and then they were also erected along the outside walls of the cloaks. In 1943 hot meals had been made available at the school for the first time. They cost 5d. each and every child except one who lived close to the school took advantage of them. Then from September 1945 each child was also provided with one-third of a pint of milk each morning, free of charge. Mains water was eventually supplied to the kitchen and cloakroom in 1950.

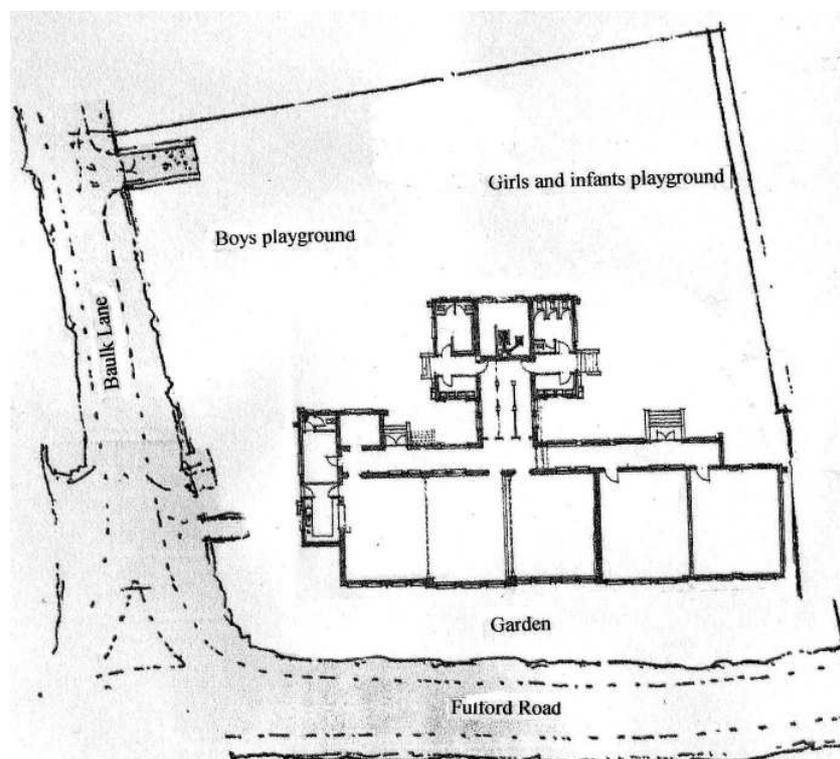
On 5th July 1948 the children of Standard IV class had a competition to see how many wild flowers could be gathered locally in one day. Two girls each brought the same number of flowers, one hundred and twenty-one. The school also had a small garden with an artificial pond, and the children used to collect frog spawn and then let the frogs free by the pond when they were developed enough. Stafford Public Library also visited the school once a month to change the books which they supplied to the school on loan.



Fulford School in the 1940's - (photograph courtesy of Linda Hargeaves of Fulford)

By 1957 there were over 100 pupils at the school and a double-decker bus was being used to bring them in from the Meir Heath area so an extension was added which consisted of two extra

classrooms, a staff room, a kitchen, and new toilets with hot water being piped to all of the basins. The two original rooms were converted into a hall. In addition to this the corridors were enclosed, the original kitchen was converted into a stockroom, a new staffroom was added, and the outbuildings were demolished. The extension was completed on 30th June 1957. Then a new school opened at Meir Heath and the attendance at Fulford School suddenly dropped to 40. The Education Committee threatened to close the school down but the Fulford parents fought the decision and eventually it was agreed to keep the school open and it has prospered ever since.



A plan of the new school, the gardens, the playgrounds, and the outside toilets post-1957
(Produced by the author based on plans held by Fulford School)

The school still has its moments of excitement. On 10th February 1969 a small leak started in the school roof, but this quickly became a flood, and upon inspection it was found that the pipes in the roof above the hall had burst. The plumber was called and came the same day. However the soaking caused the floors to swell and burst open. On 17th February the pipes burst again and the ceiling fell in.



Mr. Kirkland with some of his pupils in 1959 – (photograph from Linda Hargreaves of Fulford)

Mr. J.O. Kirkland was headmaster between 1st May 1952 and 10th April 1973. He lived in Stone with his wife Ivy Grace and two sons. He was very keen on music. By 1973 the number of pupils had dwindled to just 33.

Mr. Kirkwood was followed in 1978 by Mr. Hagyard. He was apparently noted for the wonderful chalk drawings that he did on the blackboard. Mr. Sanderson was the English teacher at this time and Mrs. Teale was the math's teacher. Music lessons were given by Mrs. Weston and Mr. Monkman.



The frontage of Fulford School in about 1995 – (photograph courtesy of Mrs. Tarr of Fulford School)

In 1998 there were one hundred children up to the age of eleven on the school role and four teachers. The late Margaret Breeze, a former teacher, wrote an interesting book about the school that can be found on the shelves of Hanley Library. From Fulford most children go on to one of a number of secondary schools, but mainly those at Blythe Bridge, Stone, or Cheadle.

At 7-00pm on Thursday 19th June 2003 a special service was held at St. Nicholas Church to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the new school buildings. Mrs. Patricia Redfern was the head teacher and there were 61 pupils on the school register. The other six members of the staff at the time were Mrs. Bickerton, Mrs. Eggington, Mrs. Fone, Mrs. Forster, Mrs. Hubbert and Mrs. Mills. The secretaries were Mrs. Fryer and Mrs. Hudson, and the dinner ladies were Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Orme and Mrs. Thomas.

On Friday 16th April 2010 the children of Fulford School planted a young 'Ulmus Minor' British Elm tree in the school field and so became 1 of only 250 schools throughout the whole country to join in The Conservation Foundation's Great British Elm Experiment. This new national elm planting campaign is using young trees propagated from mature healthy native elms that The Conservation Foundation has discovered still growing in the English countryside. It is part of the 30th anniversary celebrations of Elms Across Europe, the project which led to the setting up of the Foundation by David Shreeve and David Bellamy in 1982.



The young elm tree in the school field, and the plaque commemorating the planting – (photographs by the author)

Earlier, in about 1988, the time of the School's 60th anniversary, the school bell tower was found to be unsafe and so the bell was taken down and kept by Mr. John Bedson, a school Governor. He returned the bell to the school in 2003 so that the school could show it at it's 75th anniversary later that year. Then in July 2005 Mrs. Janice Tarr, who had been deputy head-teacher of a school in Tipton, in the West Midlands, replaced Mrs. Patricia Redfern.



The 80th anniversary cake– (photographs by the author)

On 25th June 2008 the school celebrated it's 80th anniversary. The occasion was celebrated by first holding a service with the children on the Village Green with Rev. Peter Dakin officiating. Then when the service was over two of the children re-enacted the day that the school was opened in 1928 with one of them carrying a chair back to school and one of them pushing a wheelbarrow containing a few books. Then in the afternoon the school held an 'open day' when a brass band played in the playground and much of the school's history and old photographs were on display in the school hall.



Rev. Dakin about to start the service



Walking back from the Green to the School



The brass band playing in the playground



Part of the display in the school hall

(all 4 photographs by the author)

In March 2010 Mrs. Tarr arranged for the bell tower to be repaired by local builder Paul Ford while he was doing some repairs to the roof, and for him to reinstall the bell at the same time. A ceremony was then held at 3-00pm at the school on 11th June 2010 to commemorate the bell's return. The Rev. Peter Dakin, vicar of Fulford, took the service.



The bell turret with the bell installed – *(photographs by the author)*



Fulford School at the time of its 75th anniversary in June 2003 – the bell tower is clearly seen
(photograph by the author)

Researched and produced by Roger Keight of Fulford with the help of Janice Tarr, head-teacher of Fulford School.
Some information has been taken from an old photocopy of Margaret Breeze's book entitled "The History of Fulford School; 1649 to 1928" which Mrs. Redfern kindly loaned to the author, and some information has been taken from the school log book for 1920 to 1950 which was kindly loaned by head teacher Janice Tarr.