

CHAPTER NINE

EARLY SLOUGH SCHOOLS

Nothing is known of schools in the parish of Upton-cum-Chalvey until the 19th century. Various private schools are mentioned in the 1830's — Mrs. Penley's at Upton, (1) and Mr. Wade's in the High Street (2) — and presumably there were Dame Schools where a few pence secured a grounding in 'The Three R's', but the majority of the earlier schools were denominational, the 'National' Schools being promoted by the Church of England, and 'British' schools by the Nonconformists. (3)

CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

The Church of England schools were originally held in a building at Arbour Vale. Infant schools were first opened in England in 1815, but it is not known when they were opened here. All that is known at present is that Infant Schools were built at Chalvey and Slough, with the boys and girls remaining in Arbour Vale.

The Report of the Commissioners on popular education, in the second half of the 19th century, and an increased interest in education, co-incided with the rapid increase of population in Slough. The Arbour Vale building was sold, and other school rooms were built successively at Slough and Chalvey, most of which were still in use until a few years ago, although many new schools were built after the enlargement of the town's boundaries.

These early school buildings, although they had not got the amenities considered necessary in modern schools, were substantially built, and are remembered nostalgically by many who received their education there. It is interesting to compare the cost of building them, with the cost of schools today.

The Slough Girls' Schoolroom, which was originally an Infant's School, was built at a cost of £509. 3s. 3d., including £100 for the site, and was opened on 9 November, 1864. An additional classroom and cloakroom were added in 1885, at a cost of £226.

The Slough Boys' Schoolroom and Master's House, which cost £1,136. 19s. 10d., was opened on 5 April, 1869.

The Slough Infants' Room, which cost £331, was opened in January, 1869; and a new Infants' Room, which cost £341. 14s. 2d. was opened in July, 1878. (4)

St. Paul's Schoolroom was built in 1885, and new Sunday School buildings were opened in 1933.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

When Baylis House was opened as a Roman Catholic School and Centre in 1830, it was not within the Slough boundaries, but the school had a close association with Slough from the first, as the only centre of worship and instruction for Slough Roman Catholics, and for the last seven years of the school's existence, it was brought within the town through the extension of the Urban District boundary in 1900.

After the Reformation, the Roman Catholics suffered many disabilities, including dire penalties for giving instruction in the Roman Catholic religion, until the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, yet the school which came to Baylis House began its existence at Richmond, Surrey, six years before the passing of the Act, through the enterprise of William Henry Butt (born 1787) and his brother, James Palmer Butt (1789-1873). Their success led to a need for larger premises, and the removal of the school to Baylis House in 1830, together with the Preparatory School kept in early days at Spring Terrace, Richmond, by the Misses Adams, sisters of Mrs. James Butt, and afterwards known as the 'Little School' of Baylis House.

William Henry Butt withdrew in 1835 to Norwood, Surrey, but James Palmer Butt remained at Baylis House as Principal, and after some years, was assisted by his sons, James William Butt (1821-1861) and William Henry Butt (1829-1909). The latter succeeded his father as Principal. He and his wife Mary (1841-1906) had a son and four daughters, Mary, Agnes, Gertrude and Cecilia. (5)

The history of Baylis House School has been told by Canon Edwin Burton in *Baylis House, Salt Hill, Slough: Catholic School and Catholic Centre, 1830-1907*, (6) in which he says: 'Baylis House was always much more than a school, it was a centre from which, for many long years, flowed charity and help for the spiritual and corporal needs of the scattered flock of Christ which in that neighbourhood held to the ancient faith'.

Miss Cecilia Magdalen Butt, the last local survivor of the Butt family, gave interesting details of the school when interviewed in August, 1957, by Mr. D. Rowe, of Urwick Orr and Partners, Ltd., (7). She was then about 80 years of age. Her father and uncles ran the Senior School, and her mother and sisters the Junior School. There were 80 in the house, of whom 60 were pupils, and it was 'like a village, with its own brewery, bakery, wash-house, dairy, scalding-house for pans, apple-house, and potato house'. They farmed 99 acres, including pastures.

The boys had their own pack of beagles, like the Eton College boys, and 'had beer with their dinner'. The Eton boys used to come over to Baylis House to watch cricket there on Sundays, as cricket was not allowed at Eton on a Sunday.

The Butt family also ran an import-export business, and from this built up foreign connections. Many pupils came from France, Spain, Brazil and Trinidad, including several generations of the Domecc family of Jerez, Spain. The school excelled at book-keeping and languages, Spanish and French being spoken as much as English. (8)

Among others who received their schooling at Baylis House were (Sir) Seymour Hicks, the popular actor-manager, George Edwards, the theatre manager and his son Darcy; (9) Sir Henry Bedingfield of Oxburgh and Leslie Ward (the famous cartoonist, 'Spy'). (10) Six former Baylis House boys represented foreign countries at the coronation of George V. (11)

By far the greater number of Baylis House students who achieved distinction in after years became Roman Catholic priests, including several of the Butt family. John Butt, who was a Chaplain in the Crimean War, became fourth Bishop of Southwark, and his nephew, Joseph Butt (born 1869) became Vice-Rector of Beda College in Rome, and later Auxiliary to Cardinal Bourne at Westminster. When Cardinal Bourne died in 1935, Joseph Butt administered the diocese until the appointment of Archbishop Hinsley. In 1936, on Joseph Butt's Silver Jubilee as a bishop, Pope Pius XI created him an Assistant at the Pontifical Throne. Bishop Butt resigned his bishopric the following year, owing to ill-health, and in 1938 was created an Archbishop (See of Nicopsi). He died in the early 1940's. (12)

Among many other pupils who achieved distinction in the Roman Catholic Church were Bishop Keatinge, C.M.G., afterwards Archbishop of Liverpool; John Crook, (13) President of St. Edmund's College, Ware, Hertfordshire, from 1887-1892, and Canon Edwin Burton, who was President of St. Edmund's from 1916-1918, (14) but the most celebrated was Rafael Merry del Val (1865-1930), Cardinal Secretary of State to Pope Pius X. He was ordained priest in 1888; Secretary to the Papal Commission on Anglican Orders in 1896; and went as Apostolic delegate to Canada in 1897. He was Consistorial Secretary in 1903; Pontifical Secretary of State 1903-14; Cardinal priest of the titular church of Santa Prassede in 1903; Archpriest of St. Peter's in 1914; and Secretary of the Holy Office from 1914 until his death in Rome. (15)

In spite of this distinguished record of students, Baylis House declined. (16) William Henry Butt became bankrupt, and gave up the school in 1907, when he was 78 years of age. He died two years later. (17) His eldest daughter, Miss Mary Butt, who was Lady Principal of the Preparatory School, carried on at Milford House, Windsor Road, (18) where many foreign pupils still came. (19) She was awarded the Medal Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice by Pope Pius XI – probably on the recommendation of Cardinal Merry del Val. She retired in 1930, when the school celebrated its centenary, and lived to be over 90 years of age. (20)

Father Clemente, who had been appointed Chaplain at Baylis House in 1882, and had established the Roman Catholic Chapel in Herschel Street in 1885, was instrumental in having a school built next to the chapel, and fronting on Victoria Street, in 1886, with a large donation from the Dowager Duchess of Buccleuch, of Ditton Park, who had been converted to Roman Catholicism. (21) The school opened with 25 children. A new schoolroom was added in 1889. It was re-built and re-opened in 1894 to take 140 children, and final extensions were completed in 1949. The St. Ethelbert's Junior School moved from Victoria Street to modern buildings in Wexham Road in 1967, and the St. Ethelbert's Infants' School moved to another new building there in 1972. (22)

St. Bernard's Convent School was opened in 1897 (see p. 94).

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Secondary School was opened in Shaggy Calf Lane in 1958. (23)

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH SCHOOL

In 1854, the Congregational School at Chalvey was removed to Slough, where the schoolroom of the new church was used as a day school, and the Chalvey British School removed there in the following year.

According to the financial records of this school, the teacher's salary, apart from scholars' pence, was £15 a year in 1863. In 1870, the Head Teacher's salary was £21 a year, and the children's pence amounted to £31. 11s. 0d. The first Government grant, of £4. 5s. 0d., was made in 1871, and the master's salary was increased to £70 inclusive. Penny readings accounted for £16 of the receipts of the school in that year. The Church Schoolroom was continuously in use until 1871, when it was objected to by H.M. Inspectors of Schools. The foundation of a new building for the Slough and Chalvey British Schools was laid in 1873 in Herschel Street, on the site now occupied by St. Mary's Church Institute. Government grants and teachers' salaries increased in successive years, until the records ceased in 1894. (24)

ALDIN HOUSE

Aldin House was originally built for the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, a member of the great banking family, who was at one time a close friend of Queen Victoria. The Baroness, however, never lived there, and various stories have been told to account for this. A generally accepted version is that Queen Victoria so strongly disapproved of her marriage that the Baroness came to the conclusion it would not be agreeable to live so close to Windsor Castle.

The house was standing empty when the Rev. John William Hawtrey, who had been an Assistant Master at Eton since 1842, decided to open his own school. St. Michael's School was opened in Aldin House on 22 September, 1869, and continued there for 14 years. At that time, the old Dolphin Inn was still standing beside the main road, but, after some alterations by the Rev. John Hawtrey, the inn ended its existence in the same year as the school opened.

The full story of St. Michael's School (25) is told by the Rev. John Hawtrey's son, (Sir) Charles Hawtrey, the popular actor-manager in his reminiscences *The Truth At Last*. (26) He says: 'Aldin House was, I think, the most comfortable house I was ever in, and quite the ugliest'.

Soon after the school was opened, the Tetsworth water, which flowed through the grounds, was widened out to make an open air bathing pool, and Pearce, who had been an Eton waterman, came to teach the boys swimming. He used to take care of the boys' watches, wearing a dozen or so whilst they were bathing. One day, one of the boys got into difficulties, and the Rev. John Hawtrey jumped into the pool and waded with him to land. Just as he did so, Pearce, loaded with watches, took a majestic 'header' into the water, and swam to the other bank !

Sir Paul Waterhouse, at one time President of the Institute of British Architects, went to school at St. Michael's, and it was his father – also in his time President of the Institute – who made plans for beautifying and enlarging the then extremely ugly chapel of Aldin House. The dedication service was taken by Bishop Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford.

Among pupils who passed from the St. Michael's Cricket Eleven to the Eton Eleven, were Lord Hawke and Percy de Paravinci. Other pupils who attained fame were 'Badger' Slade and George Warrrender, both of whom attained the highest rank in the Navy; and three who were afterwards owners of Derby winners: George Alexander Baird, better known as Mr. Abington, whose horse, Merry Hampton, won in 1887; Sir James Miller, whose horse Sainfoin won in 1890; and Rock Sand in 1903; and Major Eustace Loder, whose horse Spearmint won in 1906.

Another pupil, Bill Browning (later Lord Lurgan) was the son of the Lord Lurgan whose horse, Master McGrath, was the first to win the Waterloo Cup more than once – having carried it off in 1869, 1870 and 1872. The horse was brought to Windsor in March, 1871, to be shown to Queen Victoria, and was brought over to Aldin House afterwards to be shown to Billy's school friends.

George Bancroft, the son of Squire Bancroft, went to the school in the autumn of 1878, and it was through the encouragement of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft (later Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft) that Charles Hawtrey took up acting as a career, and made his first appearance on the stage in September, 1881. St. Michael's School removed to Westgate-on-Sea in 1883.

Mr. Gallop, who died in 1936 at the age of 89, had been in charge of the building of Aldin House, the bricks for which came from the brickfield of Charles Holden, which was on the site now occupied by the Diamond Estate. Mr. Gallop acted as caretaker and night nurse during the time St. Michael's School was at Aldin House, and on one occasion when a severe epidemic of measles had broken out, the two Loder brothers were among the patients. When Mr. Gallop went to the engine house to tend the fire, he heard a shout, and saw one of the brothers, who had been given a dose of belladonna, falling out of the window. He was able to catch him and break his fall, and was subsequently given a handsome present by the boy's parents. A year or two before Mr. Gallop's death, when he was on holiday at Westgate, Mrs. Hawtrey sent for him, to show him the grandson of the boy whose life he had saved.

Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister, and afterwards Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, also received his early education at St. Michael's School. When he paid a visit to Slough in 1937, he told Cecil Warner, then Station Master, that he had very happy recollections of his school days at Aldin House, but remembered being extremely gleeful when the great snowstorm of 1882 delayed the return of all the boys after the Christmas holidays, owing to the suspension of all local train services. (27)

After St. Michael's School had moved to Westgate, Mr. Gallop took charge of the building for the Agents, and shortly afterwards it was taken for twelve months by the Rev. Studholme Brownrigg, Superintendent of the Welsh Charity School for boys and girls at Ashford, Middlesex, during alterations to the Ashford buildings, when the school was converted to a Foundation School exclusively for girls of Welsh parentage. (28)

The Superintendent of St. George's School at Southwark also took Aldin House during reconstruction of his school buildings, after which Aldin House was put up for sale by auction. It was bought by the Jesuit Fathers as a College, and Mr. Gallop was employed by them as an engineer for the eight years of their stay. They gave up their tenancy on their return to France in the 1890's.

Aldin House was eventually bought by the Bernadines in 1897, and given its present name of St. Bernard's. A boarding school was run in connection with the Convent, and in 1904 the first local children were taken, lessons being given in a room in the Tower. St. Joseph's, originally a private house, was taken over in 1906, and opened as a Day School for local children of all denominations. (29) It was amalgamated with St. Bernard's on 1 July, 1945, as a Preparatory School. (30)

HALIDON HOUSE

Halidon House High School for Girls was founded by Miss Goddard in 1865 in Church Street, but is best remembered for its subsequent years under Miss Webb in Mackenzie Street, when it was the leading Girls' School in Slough. It moved to its present home in Fulmer in 1948. (31)

SLOUGH SCHOOLS TODAY

The Education Act of 1870 brought Local Government also into the educational system, and School Boards were set up where an insufficient number of schools was provided by the Churches, but comparatively few School Boards were necessary in South Bucks. The first State School in Slough was originally built by the Stoke Poges School Board, north of the railway, and only came within the Slough boundaries in 1900. In 1902, an Act was passed which made the Buckinghamshire County Council responsible for education, and this school (now the Thomas Gray County Primary School) passed under the control of the County Council. The County Council was also required under the Act to assist in large measure with the financial cost of running the Church Schools.

The 1902 Act also required local education authorities to provide Grammar Schools, but it was not until 1912 that the Slough Secondary School was opened in William Street. It was enlarged in 1914, and was split into the Boys' Grammar School in Lascelles Road in 1936, and the Girls' High School in Twinches Lane in 1940.

Since the 1902 Education Act Buckinghamshire County Council has been responsible for the Education Service in Slough, but the Education Act of 1944 gave Slough Borough Council delegated

powers for education and it has become an Excepted District for education. The names alone of the Slough schools administered by the Council fill two pages of the Official Guide, and the educational buildings are among the most modern in the country.

They offer a wide range of facilities, from Nursery Schools to the Slough College of Technology, a Teachers Centre and four Evening Institutes. There are 16 reception units for children from abroad who do not speak English. Facilities for children requiring special education are also outstanding, with the Park School for educationally sub-normal children, the Evelyn Fox School for severely sub-normal children, Birchfield School for spastics and special arrangements for other children who are physically or mentally handicapped. In 1972, the former William Penn Infant School was re-opened and named the Northbrook Centre. It houses the Remedial Service, a Diagnostic Unit, an Adjustment Unit for secondary school pupils, and a Home/School Counsellor for the Manor Park area.

The number of private schools in the town decreased as the number of schools under the Education Officer increased. (32)

THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS' SCHOOL

The best known private school in Slough today is the Licensed Victuallers' School, which took over the abandoned British Orphan Asylum buildings in 1920. The school was founded in 1802 by the Society of Licensed Victuallers, and houses were bought for the school in Kennington Lane in 1837, from whence it removed to Slough.

The old British Orphan Asylum buildings were demolished and a new school built, which was opened in 1938 by the late Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent. Extensions were opened in 1960 by her daughter, Princess Alexandra, and more recent additions by the present Duchess of Kent.

The school is supported and controlled by the Licensed Victuallers' Society, which was founded in a Coffee House in London in 1793, and founded its famous newspaper, *The Morning Advertiser*, the following year. (33)

Show cases in the entrance hall of the school display large model dolls, dressed in the children's costumes of 1837, 1897 (Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee) and to-day.

The school is now largely made up of local fee-paying students, with the decline in the number of orphans, thanks to modern medicine.

The other independent schools surviving in Slough are St. Bernard's Preparatory School, already mentioned, and Long Close School, founded in Farnham Royal in 1940, and now in Upton Court Road. (34)

NOTES

1. Miss Mason's Walk Round Slough.
2. *ibid.*
3. The Sunday School Union was formed in 1802; the British and Foreign Schools Society in 1805; and the Church of England National Society for Educating the Poor on Dr. Bell's system in 1811.
4. Phipps, pp. 70-71.
5. Major Michael Lee, who is collecting material for a history of the Roman Catholic School at Baylis House, has generously placed his material at my disposal. He informs me that the Butt brothers were descended from an old Gloucestershire family. They attended the Somers Town School (St. Aloysius Parish) established by the Abbé Carron. They became Roman Catholic converts, and entered Stoneyhurst. Major Lee also informs me that during his school-days in Slough, children going to Baylis House spoke of 'going to Buttsca'.
6. Except where otherwise acknowledged, the details of Baylis House School are from notes I made when writing the original articles on the History of Slough in 1938, through the kindness of Miss Mary Butt, who lent me a copy of Canon Burton's scholarly 19-page pamphlet, published by Luff & Sons in 1923. Every effort was made to trace a copy of the pamphlet, without success. Even St. Edmund's College, Ware, to which Canon Burton left all his papers, was unable to assist, but just as this History went to press, I received a letter from the Rt. Rev. Mgr. C.H. Parsons, Librarian of St. Edmund's, informing me that a copy

- has been found among archives recently transferred to the Westminster Archives, Archbishop's House, Westminster.
7. I am much indebted to Mr. J. Kettlewell, Bursar of the Urwick Management Centre, Baylis House, for permission to study this and other information relating to the history of Baylis House, gathered by their Librarian.
 8. Miss Cecilia Butt, who also said that the Butt family built up a wine and beer business at 72 (now 126) High Street, which was named Baylis & Co., after Baylis House.
 9. The Rev. F.M. Zulueta, article in *The Tablet*, 26 April, 1930.
 10. Major Michael Lee.
 11. Rev. F.M. Zulueta, *op. cit.*
 12. Major Michael Lee, from obituary cards in his possession, and from Joseph Gillow's *Biographical Dictionary of English Catholics*.
 13. Rev. F.M. Zulueta, *op. cit.*
 14. Canon C. Parsons and Father Frith of St. Edmund's College, Ware, Herts.
 15. D.N.B.
 16. Miss Cecilia Butt thought it was due to the opening of Beaumont College, and the increase in the number of day schools, but Major Lee's sister, Miss Margaret Lee, has been told the closure of the school was accelerated owing to the outbreak of an infectious disease.
 17. Miss Cecilia Butt.
 18. Milford House was on the east side of Windsor Road, between Observatory House and the Windsor Road entrance to St. Mary's churchyard.
 19. Personal knowledge. After the school closed, Miss Mary Butt and her sister Gertrude moved to 7, Lansdowne Avenue and set up as private tutors. Their sister Miss Agnes Butt ran a private school for girls and boys at 2, Belgrave Place, Uxbridge Road, for many years.
 20. Major Lee.
 21. I am indebted to Canon Davidson for this information.
 22. Church of Our Lady Immaculate and St. Ethelbert, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir Magazine*, 1910-1960, and Mr. C.S. Smyth, Slough Education Officer.
 23. Information kindly supplied by Father Carey.
 24. *Congregational Centenary Booklet*, 1835-1935.
 25. F.S. de Carteret-Bissom's *Directory*, published 1872, describes St. Michael's as 'A high-class Preparatory School for Eton'.
 26. Charles Hawtrey, *The Truth at Last*, published 1934, from which this account of St. Michael's School is compiled, except where otherwise stated.
 27. The late Cecil Warner informed me of this incident.
 28. The Headmaster of the Welsh Girls' School was unable to verify this information, given to me by Mr. Gallop. Mr. E.D. Jones, former Librarian of the National Library of Wales, informed me that the Library only had the Minutes of the Board of Governors up to 1848, and no reference to Aldin House could be traced in other records in the Library's possession.
 29. Information kindly given to me by the Mother Superior of St. Bernard's.
 30. Information supplied by Sister St. Ambrose.
 31. I am indebted to the Halidon House staff for this information.
 32. I am very much indebted to Mr. C.S. Smyth, Slough Education Officer, for the trouble he took to enable me to write this section on Slough Schools Today. Further details of the development of schools in Slough and the Eton Rural District are contained in the brochure *State Education 1870-1970*, which Mr. Smyth wrote for the Slough and Eton Centenary Programme.
 33. I am indebted to Mr. Clemence, of the Licensed Victuallers' Society, for this information, and to some personal knowledge.
 34. Information from Long Close School.