

Pennies - Blackmore Baptist Church

The History

The canons of Blackmore Priory ran a school in the village before the reformation. There are occasional references in the succeeding centuries, which suggest that some teaching continued.

By the 19th century there seems to have been more than one school in the village. A new school house is mentioned in 1825; this seems to be "the Old Manor House" in Church Street. In 1841 until sometime after 1851 Miss Elizabeth Gray ran a ladies school there. She died in 1855, but in 1859 Miss Sarah Newell ran a day school, possibly at the same address. In 1862 there was also a dame school, mistress Sarah Brewster, and she was still in this role in 1874.

About the time that he had the Baptist Chapel built, Ashley Barrett set up an infants' school there, providing a third village school. This was the school at which George Alexander and his wife taught. In the 1847 tithe award George Alexander lived in Chapel House. In Kelly's for 1845, Mrs Elizabeth Alexander was mistress of an infants' school. But in 1851 Emma Cordwell occupied Chapel House, and was the infant school teacher. In the same year George

Alexander had moved (possibly to Hope Cottage), and his son was working as a blacksmith. In 1859 the mistress of the Baptist School was Martha Nash, and in 1863 Ellen Manser.





The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map shows the Baptist school as a British School. This seems to have been a precursor of the Board schools, set up under the Elementary Education Act 1870 for elementary education free from Anglican doctrine. But by 1878 the only school listed is a mixed Board School, mistress Ada Rachel Taylor. This was the building, now a house, at the junction of the Brentwood Road. The 1882 directory notes that this school was opened in 1878 for 120 children, and the 1898 directory gives the cost of building as £565. There were three staff, Benjamin Thomas Hood, Mrs Hood and Miss MR Walker [infants], and an average attendance of 102 children.

The opening of the Board School made the others redundant. The Baptist school continued as a Sunday school only.

Pennies is available to rent for local community activities - please us the Contact Us form on the church website www.blackmorebaptistchurch.com



OS Map 1881