

Victorian School Teacher's life

What are school log books?

After the 1870 Education Act all schools paid for by taxes were visited by inspectors. On their visits, the inspectors would read the school diary or log book to find out what had been happening.

The book had to be 'stoutly bound' (strong) and have at least 500 pages. The head teacher had to write in it at least once a week, noting down information about daily school life, attendance, illness and any important events.

The extracts below are taken from the Log Book of Algarkirk Church School 1905/1906

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| 1 | 30 June 1905 | Average attendance of pupils for week 32.6. Forty four pupils on books. 74% average. School closed for three weeks from 3rd to 24th July for "Early Potato Picking" |
| 2 | 24 July 1905 | During the school holidays, the school room was cleaned, the walls painted and the floor and desks washed. School re-opened. Attendance very thin 27. Composition lesson subject "The Potato". Arithmetic very fair in Class 1; only fair in Class 2 & 3. |
| 3 | 11 August 1905 | Some children absent through sickness; others due to work. Average attendance for week 31, percentage 73% |
| 4 | 15 August 1905 | Attendance better but bigger boys still working. Composition lesson subject "Types of Wheat". Admitted Ernest Moulds, a boy from Sutterton, who says he is in the 5th standard.. |
| 5 | 24 August 1905 | History lesson "Sir Francis Drake". Geography lesson "Germany". Composition lesson "Gold" Attendance 36 pupils; average 82%. Highest since the holidays. |
| 6 | 28 August 1905 | Wet weather prevented some children attending school today. Careless writing found in Class 1 in both composition and English lessons. |

- 7 31 August 1905
- 8 Richard Chapman returned to school after 7 weeks illness. Lessons today History "The First Colonies". Mental Arithmetic " Money and the coins used". Attendance 36. Percentage 82%
- 9 04 September 1905
- Object lesson "Spectacles & glasses"; class 2 & 3 had geography lesson on "the south coast of england".. notice given out that school closed 11th september to 9th october.
- 10 09 October 1905
- school re-opened. Number present 24. received notice from medical officer of health that there is an infectious disease in the house of Robert Kitchen and that four of his children are excluded from school. Only seven children in Class 1, the rest either sick or working in the fields.
- 11 19 October 1905
- attendance officer made his regular visit to school. Attendance lower; another family reported sickness but not confirmed yet by medical officer. Received today quantity of chlorine of lime for the outoffices. history lesson "sir walter rayleigh"; map drawing lesson went well, but drilling in hall due to bad weather.
- 12 23 October 1905
- boy returned to school. Been absent 104 times since june 20th. Reason work. Nine children absent due to sickness. Geography lesson "wind and steam in holland".
- 13 30 October 1905
- plans to alter boys outoffices to provide more privacy as recommended by HM.School Ins. Lesson today "mustard". Mustard being grown around area.
- 14 31 October 1905
- mrs simpson sent word today that all family down with fever and doctor attended. Drilling again taking place in hall due to bad weather.

- 15 02 November 1905 map drawing lesson done badly and inaccurately in some cases. History lesson "colonization of virginia". attendance officer made visit to school and warned two or three of the irregular attendees. Two pupils on Holland prize list for 94% attendance.
- 16 03 November 1905 wrote to medical officer of health for instructions for fever cases at school. Attendance 31.3 for week; 71%. Object lesson in class "the meaning of elastic". Chairman of school managers called today.
- 17 08 November 1905 physical exercises in playground - good attention to order. Map drawing improving slowly. Singing much better. Cautioned richard chapman and ernest moulds, big boys, about their bad behaviour in school.
- 18 10 November 1905 attendance officer made visit to school. received note from medical officer that the family of robert kitchen may return to school 20 november.
- 19 16 November 1905 history lesson "captain smith in virginia"; mental arithmetic standard moderate; recitation not satisfactory
- 20 17 November 1905 thin attendance chiefly due to sickness. Received notice for medical officer of health to exclude children from eliza simpson's house due to infectious diseases
- 21 06 December 1905 mr william wells, head teacher, unable to attend school today due to chill as a result of cold classroom. School was in the charge of mrs emily wells.
- 22 13 December 1905 there is no thermometer belonging to the school. brought in my own and tested temperature. Never rose above 41degrees.
- 23 16 December 1905 attendance for week 34.7 average; 78%;; 44 on register. Informed hm. School ins that school would be closed from 22 december until 1st january 1906. Received notice for medical officer of health that children of eliza simpson's house free to return to school.

- 24 01 January 1905 school reopens 1january 35 attendance. Two simpson boys returned after long period off due to sickness. School temperature less than 43 degrees. Managers meeting in evening, complaints of cold.
- 25 03 January 1906 started teaching fractions. Mapping improving; singing fair.
- 26 04 January 1903 poor attendance due to Sunday School treat at Fosdyke where number of children attend. Received consignment of stationery from Trevor & England, all correct as per invoice.
- 27 08 January 1906 family of john clayton returned to school after being exclude since october 13 due to fever. highest attendance for six months 42 pupils attended
- 28 10 January 1906 reading "wellington and waterloo2 boys interested but did not grasp the meaning of what they read. Drill in playground but children felt the cold. 38.3 attendance; 87%
- 29 05 February 1906 fall of snow in morning. Some smaller children did not attend school. Thermometer registered 40 degrees in school room; very cold. Cautioned boys about snow balling near school; and girls about quarrelling during lunch hour.
- 30 07 February 1906 classroom so cold children can only work for a short time before going close to fire to warm themselves. Temperature 39 degrees. Drill carried out in school hall due to slippery yard surface. Some children now going off ill with influenza
- 31 school report by hm. Ins. Great credit is due to the teacher of this small school for the efficient state he has brought it under difficulties caused by the long distances walked by the
- 32 13 February 1906 children have to stand around fire for lessons. Moderate attendance 34; snow falling but two good fires burning.

- 33 22 February 1906 weather very wet; poor attendance 24 in morning; 26 in afternoon. managers provided more chloride of lime for disinfecting boys out offices and drains. Temperature 39 degrees.
- 34 28 February 1906 received notice that mr h clifton does not want his children to learn the church catechism.
- 35 03 March 1906 snow storm preventing children attending who come along way. 20 pupils only.
- 36 12 March 1906 14 children off sick, some due to epidemic sickness. School work is mainly examining pupils.
- 37 05 April 1906 new school year. Only 30 attended. Managers have agreed holidays 2 days at easter and 1 day at whitsuntide. One family absent due to measles.
- 38 09 April 1906 admitted new pupils; a delicate boy who has not attended school for over a year; a 7 year old girl who has never attended school; 8 year old who has not attended school for 2 years.
- 39 12 April 1906 school closes at 4 oclock for easter holidays. Attendance low as bigger boys already doing fieldwork.
- 40 18 April 1906 school reopened. 29 attendance due to sickness and some boys still doing fieldwork
- 41 25 April 1906 -----
attended today. Attendance is improving 36.4 week average, 82%. With exception of composition, work very well done.
- 42 01 May 1906 received bulk of goods ordered by education committee from trevor & england. Admitted eva allen aged 6 who has never been to school before.
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44	10 May 1906	attendance officer visited today and warned several boys with a bad attendance record.
45	11 May 1906	average attendance 37.1, the highest this year 82%. 42 pupils on register. Good work been carried out by upper class,
46	07 June 1906	mrs wells taken ill just before school and had to have medical attention. Received remainder of goods ordered by education committee from trevor & england. 38.2 average attendance, 90%. Best attendance since start of school year.
47	25 June 1906	visit of school attendance officer. One boy absent and reported as having been truant all week. Admitted girl olive lawton from sutterton school who says she is stream 1. girl now admits she has enrolled without consent of parents. Returned to sutterton.
48	03 July 1906	received medical certificate for lily mann's absence certifying she is suffering from mumps. Harold pickington still playing truant.
49	06 July 1906	attendance down due to potato picking session.
50	30 July 1906	school closes for holidays
51	03 September 1906	school re-opens.
		weather very hot. Some children who walk long distances are looking overcome with the excessive heat.