



Education in Coulston

1808-1896

In 1808 about 10 very young children were taught by an old woman, who was paid 2*d.* a week for each child. In 1819 there was a day school for 20 girls, but the curate considered that the poor were not desirous of education. A school was built in West Coulston by Simon Watson-Taylor c.1855. There was a master's house attached, and the schoolroom, which was described as large and well-ventilated, could be divided into two. In 1859 50–60 pupils of both sexes were taught by a respectable middle-aged master assisted by a sewing mistress. In 1875 East Coulston and Edington were made a United District and a School Board was formed. In 1893 average attendance was only 27. An endowment of £4. 3*s.* 9*d.* a year was received, but it is not known from whom. By 1896 the school was closed, and the children were sent to the one at Tinhead. In 1963 the schoolroom was used as the village hall, and the remainder was a dwelling house.

The decision to close the school made by the Education Authority met with some resistance and a letter of petition was sent in to the Education Department in attempt to save the school from permanent closure and to save the children a 2 mile walk to the school at Edington.

Unfortunately the Education Board disregarded the pleas of the residents and the school remained closed and the children continued their education at their newly allocated school in Edington.

It would appear that local cut backs to schools and education is not limited to modern day politics and our Victorian ancestors were prepared to petition as we so often do today.

Below is a transcript of the letter of petition.

5 October 1896

Sir

We the inhabitants householders of East and West Coulston, humbly pray your honourable board, to cause an enquiry to be made into the cause of the school here being closed.

We consider it a great hardship to be compelled to send our children past its (the schools) closed doors for practically two miles to the next available school more especially since the school has been closed (some six months since) the number of children available to attend has practically doubled.

SIGNED

J. G. Perrett
William Dunford

William Hughes
Amos Ladd

Sarah Newman
James Newman
Sidney Long
George Burgess
Solomon Wheeler
Elizabeth Champion
Annie Burgess
George Ladd
John Ladd
Nelson Ladd
Robert Harrell
George Pearce
Frank Smart
John Newman
George Brown
Alfred Drew
Morris Wm Brown
Richard Early
Job Early
Albert Pearce
James Wheeler
John Edge
John Cantello
George Wicks

Henry Miles
Edward Earley
Joseph Pike
Elizabeth Orchard
Simon (this name is illegible)
Mary Burgess
Henry Wheeler
Thomas Wheeler
Absalom Lloyd
Arthur George Matthers (Matthews)
Edward Burgess
John Drew
Jacob Pepler
Edward Miles
Ruben Miles
William Champion
James Champion