

Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, Volume 14

Little Sodbury: Social History

Education

In 1818 there was a day school in the parish, with a man and his wife paid one guinea a month by the incumbent to teach the children of the poor.¹ This had lapsed, however, by 1833, when it was reported that there was no school in the parish.² A 'school room' is referred to in May 1858, when it was licensed for divine service during the rebuilding of the church.³ Vestry meetings were held in this room until April 1859 and this was also the location presumably of the Sunday school mentioned in 1863.⁴ The Sunday school may have become the parochial school, with a mistress, referred to in 1868.⁵

In 1870 the school room was described as 'much dilapidated' in an application to build a mixed school for 45 children and accommodation for a mistress.⁶ £594 was raised locally, mostly by voluntary contributions, towards the buildings costs of £861, to which the Diocesan Association and the Committee of Council on Education contributed a further £25 and £125 respectively.⁷ The school was erected on land on the southern perimeter of the churchyard, the site having been donated by W.H.H. Hartley, lord of the manor.⁸ The single classroom, of three bays, has a reticulated three-light north window in 14th-century style, with solid chimney-stack to west and two-storey attached schoolhouse to south, and is built of squared limestone with mullioned windows and ashlar quoining. The architects were R.S. Pope & Son of Bristol.⁹

The National school opened in March 1877 under a temporary teacher, who was replaced in the following November by a certified mistress.¹⁰ In addition to the three Rs, needlework and singing were taught.¹¹ The expected number of pupils never materialised, however, in part because some local children continued to attend the neighbouring schools.¹² In 1879 the school had 24 pupils on roll, and in 1897 the average attendance was 23.¹³ Following an inspector's report in April 1901 that criticised the school's management, the school was closed on 24 May 1901; the average attendance at the time was 22.¹⁴ The building was being used as a Sunday school by 1903, and in 1914 it was reported that local children attended the schools in Horton and Old Sodbury.¹⁵

¹ *Educ. of Poor Digest* (1819), i. 311.

² *Educ. Enq. Abstract*, 326.

³ GA, P 301/VE2/1.

⁴ GA, P 301/VE2/1; *Post Office Dir. Glos.* (1863 edn), 340.

⁵ *Slater's Dir. Glos. et al* (1868 edn), 250.

⁶ TNA, ED 103/112/40, 759-60.

⁷ TNA, ED 103/112/40, 775.

⁸ GA, D 2186/115; TNA, ED 103/112/40, 761.

⁹ GA, D 2186/115. The building survived in 2016 as a private house.

¹⁰ TNA, ED 103/112/40, 774; GA P 301/SC1/1, 1.

¹¹ GA, P 301/SC1/1, 22.

¹² TNA, ED 103/112/40, 774; GA P 301/SC1/1, 7.

¹³ GA, P 301/SC1/1, 20; *Kelly's Dir. Glos.* (1897 edn), 291.

¹⁴ GA, P 301/SC1/1, 339, 341; GA, P 301/SC1/2.

¹⁵ OS Maps 6", Glos. LXIX.SE (1903 edn); *Kelly's Dir. Glos.* (1914 edn), 306.