

Looking Back

by
John Pearn

2018 - 2019

The China Clay District

The last area of Cornwall
to be re-organised to secondary education

St.Dennis CP School

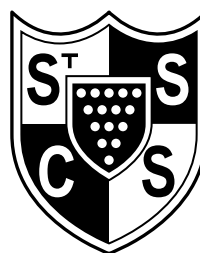
1951 to 1962



and

St.Stephen in Brannel Secondary School

September 1962 to December 1964



A period of 13 years

Article prepared exclusively for the
St.Dennis Village Website

By
Studio9KC

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Acknowledgements

My career and life has been shaped by the actions of many I have admired. One of the greatest influences has been from people, staff and pupils from St.Dennis School over a period from 1953.

The reason for writing “Looking back” is the fact that I met a girl from Trelavour Road in 1953 and in 1958 married Margaret Tucker, daughter of Arnold and Ivy Tucker, at Carne Hill Methodist Church. Margaret and I have had over 60 years together. She has supported me in my career from 1953 in National Service, College at St.Lukes (Exeter), been my school secretary, an ancillary classroom assistant at St.Merryn C.P. School, and school secretary at Burraton C.P. Junior and Infant School, Saltash. This covered a period of over 25 years.

Margaret attended St.Dennis Infant School under Mrs.Curtis (headteacher) and St.Dennis All Age School from 7 to 15 years. She benefited from the headship of Mr. Pellymounter and the teachers, namely Mr.Jacobs, Mrs.Best, Miss Williams and Miss Kent (deputy head). She captained the netball team, athletics team and was head girl in her final year.

Her memories helped me in the latter years to write about our early married life, when we lived in Indian Queens and taught in St.Dennis and the clay district. She added much to my knowledge of the St.Dennis School staff!

Mr.Pellymounter as headteacher gave me the opportunity to do a “home teaching practice” at St.Dennis School in the spring term of 1956. This was compulsory for students at St.Lukes. He placed me with Miss Williams in a class of 10 to 11 year age group. He was a headteacher who assisted in the training of his pupils, young teachers, for life after school. Summer trips were organised for his pupils to have a wider view of the surrounding area. He retired in the summer of 1956.

Mr.Lewis was appointed to follow Mr.Pellymounter and I found him to be most helpful as a probationer. His approach to discipline with the children was tempered with care. As a Welshman he was a sports enthusiast, while he gave those of us teaching the senior pupils a chance to specialise in preparation for the coming secondary reorganisation. A Parent Teacher Association was formed and extra funds raised.

Miss Kent as deputy head had a vast knowledge of St.Dennis families. She gave the girls a love for arts and crafts, folk dancing and girl’s netball, while looking after their welfare. A worldwide interest led to her being selected for a Commonwealth Exchange to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 1959 to 60. She changed positions with Mr.Kelsey and he took her senior class. Miss Kent encouraged me to follow her example in 1985.

By this time she had retired and came out to visit us in Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia and I spent two full terms teaching in Glanford Elementary school.

St.Dennis C.P. School Outing



(L-R) - Pauline Lake, Miss Kent, Mary Nance, Mr.Pellymounter (headteacher)

My love for sport was fostered by Mr.Jacobs. He trained the school's under 11's, under 13's and under 15's soccer teams as well as the athletics team. Time was spent after school in the school playground. His knowledge of marking football pitches and circular tracks was invaluable in later years. Competitions at county level were entered and so the pupils would know that life after school would be competitive! In those days the groundsman did not mark school pitches but did cut the grass with gang mowers.

Miss Williams supervised my teaching practice in 1956, showing me many aids which could assist me in the teaching of basic subjects such as English, Mathematics and Environmental Studies. She could name all the local wildflowers, while junior girls were taught to sew, which would stand them in good stead in future years. Her love of music led to the formation of a junior choir which enjoyed singing some Gilbert and Sullivan music. So, I received a good introduction to school music as we shared the playing for school assemblies.

Main Entrance St.Dennis C.P. School - 1957



The nearest playground is the boys and the farthest playground is the girls

St.Dennis C.P. School Staff - 1957

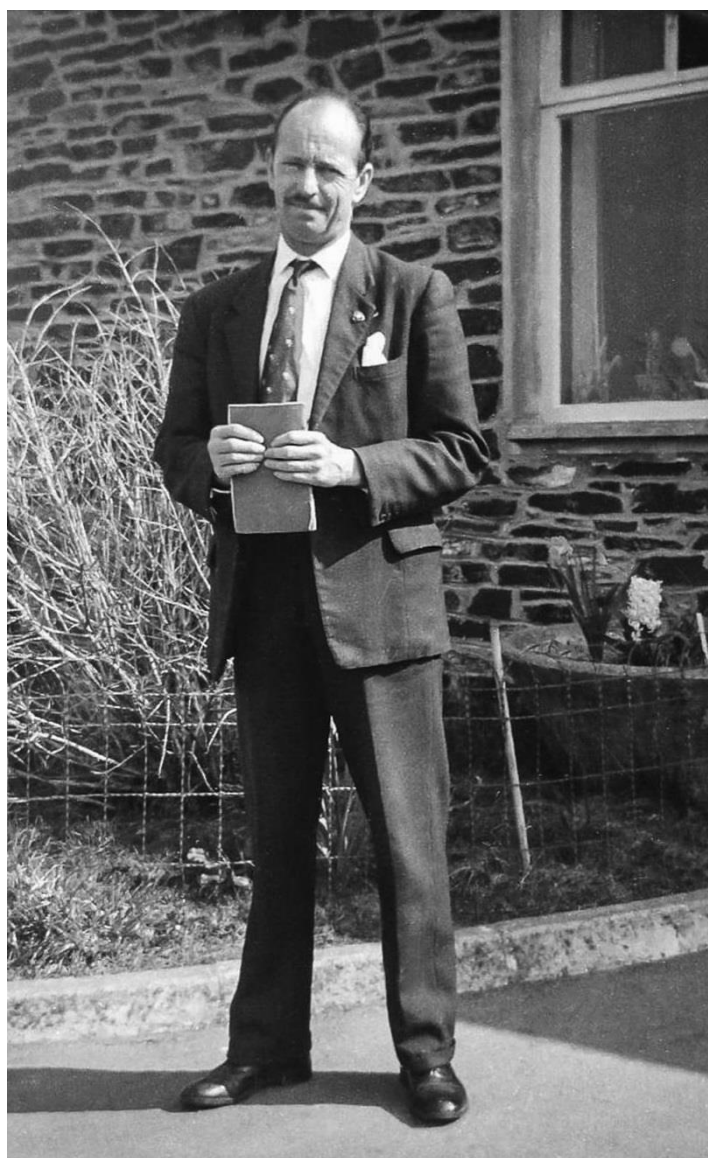


Back Row (L-R) - Mr.Pearn, Mr.Guest, Mr.Rouncefield, Mr.Jacobs

Front Row (L-R) - Miss Paynter, Miss Kent, Mr.Lewis (headteacher), Mrs.Best, Miss Williams

Another St.Dennis teacher, Mr.J.Solomon, the son of Mrs.Solomon, music teacher and conductor of St.Dennis All-Stars Children's Choir, was headteacher of Trevisker C.P. School (RAF St.Eval) where I was appointed deputy headteacher in 1964. Here I was able to develop my own sporting activities, while primary school music was expanded. All staff were supported in achieving academic excellence and to seek promotion. The use of parents was outstanding in his school. All the teachers mentioned have played a part in the structure of my career.

Mr.Jack Solomon



Headteacher of Trevisker C.P. Junior and Infant School
(St.Eval)

I was deputy headteacher under him from January 1965 until November 1967

Finally, I met by chance Mr.Trevor Rabey at Carne Hill Methodist Church during its demolition. I discovered that we knew one another through St.Dennis School and St.Stephen's Secondary School, myself as a young teacher and Trevor as a pupil whom I taught. Modern technology has helped us to communicate ideas, photographs and documents from the past, aided by my son-in-law, Mr.Ray Waters, who has expertise in the use of this technology. I trust the document Trevor will produce may interest many people who know St.Dennis well and also new residents of this china clay area.

Looking back at St. Dennis C.P. School 1957 to 1962

Introduction

I was appointed as an assistant teacher in the summer term 1957 and remained at the school until July 1962 under the headship of Mr.R.Lewis. The governors during this time comprised of people from the villages of St.Dennis, Whitemoor, Nanpean, Foxhole, Trethosa, and also St Stephen. This was changed by the government in the 1970's when each school had to have its own governors.

St.Dennis had two schools. The Church of England School was for infants (5 to 7 year olds) and situated at the junction of Fore Street and Trelavour Road. St.Dennis C.P. School catered for the 7 to 15 year olds near Carne Hill chapel. This was known as an All Age School as there was no secondary school in the china clay area at the time.

My Teaching Experience at St. Dennis C.P. School Spring Term 1956

I did a home teaching practice in the school when Mr.Pellymounter was headteacher. At the time I was a student from St.Lukes College in Exeter. I worked with Miss Williams, who taught the top junior class of 10 to 11 year olds. This stood me in good stead for the interview in the summer of 1957. Mr.Pellymounter had retired and was followed by Mr.Lewis.

There was an accommodation problem at the school in 1957. The school roll exceeded the classroom spaces. Fortunately the Carne Hill Methodist Church came to the rescue and allowed the first year junior class of 7 to 8 year olds to use the vestry as a classroom. This was used during 1956 to 1958. The teacher looking after the class was Miss B.Paynter. Children came back to the main school for dinner time.

The First Class I Taught at St.Dennis C.P. School July 1957

My career started with a group of 15 boys in the main corridor of the school. The boys were aged between 13 and 15 years. There were five class doors opening onto this area. Toilets for the boys and girls were situated across the yard so any child wishing to go during lesson time passed through the front or back of my class. Perhaps less than an ideal situation for the class.

Mr.Lewis, backed by the governors, complained continually about the overcrowding to the Cornwall education authority. In the summer of 1957 a large number left the school and so the children fitted into the six classrooms in the main school and the vestry at Carne Hill Methodist Church. My class was 11 to 12 years and Miss Kent had the 13 to 15 year olds whilst Mr.Kingdom taught through 12 to 13 year olds.

The First Class I Taught at St.Dennis C.P. School July 1957



Back Row (L-R) - Frank Goudge, Ronald Jones, Lonnie Osborne, Mr.Pearn, Roger Paull, Walter Orchard, Dereck Bunt, Colin Prout

Front Row (L-R) - Laurence Tucker, Barry Andrew , Peter Bray, Douglas Roberts, Keith Tippet, Henry Webber

**St.Dennis C.P. School
Mr.Guest's Class - 1957**



Back Row (L-R) - Molly Kelly, Dawn Commons, Marion Key, Doreen Blewett

Third Row (L-R) - Edwin Beare, Peter Johnson, John Jenkin, Kenneth Martin, Davis Snell, Graham Kent, Adrian Pope

Second Row (L-R) - Diane Kellow, Brenda Davies, Elaine McNerlin, Betty Pascoe, Gillian Browning, Marion Chapman, Mary Trudgian, Mr. Ernest Guest, Elaine Solomon, ? Sims?, Margaret Juleff, Cherie Gregor, Barbara Harvey, Gwendoline Kellow, Margaret Smith

Front Row (L-R) - Terry Tabb, Francis Gingell, Graham Perryman, Derek Hambly, Derwin Hawke, Harvey Hawken, Leslie Best, Wilfred Hick, Arthur Trenerry, Sandy Metherell

Sport

Netball, Hockey, Football, Athletics, Cricket

The school enjoyed a sports programme due to the enthusiasm of Mr.G.Jacobs and Miss I.Kent. County competitions were entered in football, while netball was played against local schools. The school had its own sports day in the summer term and took part in the inter school sports held at Victoria bottoms, Nanpean. The playing field by the school provided opportunities for training and Mr.Jacob's knowledge of the layouts of football and athletics allowed the school to practice relay racing on the circular track with takeover boxes and enjoy running in lanes. Miss Kent trained the netball teams. A jumping pit was constructed. Such facilities were due to the enthusiasm of staff before there was any county provision.

Mr.Lewis was a cricket enthusiast and often came into the boys' playground during the summer term to bowl spinners to the senior boys. Staff and some P.T.A. members would play the senior boys at cricket as an evening activity. One of the most successful years was 1959 to 60 when the under 11's football team won two county competitions. The team under the captain, David Martin, was trained by Mr.Jacobs assisted by Mr.Riley, Mr.Kelsey and myself.

St.Dennis C.P. School Netball Team 1950 - 1951



Back Row (L-R) - Edna Angilley, Avis Knight, Roma Gilbert, Pat Spry, Mavis Davey

Front Row (L-R) - Maureen Yelland, Joyce Luke, Peggy Varcoe, Margaret Tucker (captain),
Rosedew Sweet, Marion Grigg, Delphine Kellow

St.Dennis C.P. School Hockey Team



Back Row (L-R) - Peggy Varcoc, Pat Spry, Roma Juleff, Margaret Tucker, Marlene Strongman, Joyce Luke, Roma Gilbert

Front Row (L-R) - Edna Angilley, Mavis Davey, Marion Grigg, Maureen Yelland

St.Dennis C.P. School Under 11 Trophy Winning Football Team 1959 - 1960



Back Row (L-R) - Mr.Kelsey, Mr.Pearn, Mr.Jacobs, Mr.Riley

Middle Row (L-R) - Nigel Richards, David Spry, Graham Johnson, Trevor Crowle, Nigel Prynne, Trevor Rabey

Front Row (L-R) - Michael Trelease, Leslie McGirl, David Martyn (Captain) Mr.Lewis (headteacher), John Allen, Keith Johnson, Alan Hawken

Kneeling Row (L-R) - John Bicknell, Leslie Martyn

St.Dennis C.P. School Under 13 Football Team 1961 - 1962



Back Row (L-R) - Mr.Jacobs, Nigel Richards, Michael Trelease, Paul Wieczorek, Trevor Rabey, Nigel Prynne, Mr.Pearn

Front Row (L-R) - John Barber, Trevor Crowle, John Allen (Captain), David Spry, Keith Johnson

Seated (L-R) - Graham Johnson, Kenneth Liddicoat

Woodwork and Domestic Science

Senior boys to Foxhole
Senior girls to Nanpean

Senior girls would spend a whole day at cookery. This would mean the girls catching a service bus to Nanpean which had a special room. Miss Coleman was the teacher taking our senior girls.

Senior boys spent the day at the woodwork centre, Foxhole. This was run by Mr.H.Sweet. To fit this arrangement there was some exchange within the St.Dennis school staff. Miss Kent would take senior girls for needlework, while I took senior boys for technical drawing and modern literature.

The school had no gymnasium and so physical education was done in the sloping playgrounds. Miss Kent would take the girls from my class and her girls in the girls' playground, while I took the boys from our classes into the boys' playground. P.E. during the winter was often abandoned because of rain or coldness.

Other Subjects

Mr.Lewis was keen on some specialisation and a sum of money was set aside for simple science equipment such as test tubes, trough, gas jars, beehive shelf, spirit burner and some chemicals. It could be called “slop bucket science”, as obviously we had no laboratory like in Secondary schools.

An epidiascope was purchased through the Parent Teacher Association. This enabled the teacher to use pictures from books and display on the screen for class viewing. An aid which enhanced History and Geography teaching.

In my first teaching post at St.Dennis All Age School I formed a choir with Miss Williams as accompanist. Children here were quite natural singers and we entered the junior choir in the county music festival at Perranporth Memorial Hall. The children sang well but did not win the class, which had been won for several years by Perranporth C.P. School under Mr.Nancarrow.

Miss Williams was keen on Gilbert and Sullivan and so a number of songs were learnt from the shows. In the late 1950's and early 60's there were a few presentations for parents. Recorders were being introduced in schools and I attended a course run by the County Music Advisor in St.Austell, but did not use this until transferring to the Secondary School in St.Stephen in Brannel in 1962.

Changes in the Organisation of the Senior part of the School 1960 to 1961

As a result of the complaints about the accommodation for senior children a decision was made by the authority at county level to transfer children from St.Dennis to Treviglas Secondary in Newquay. The age groups would be 13 to 14 years and 14 to 15 years. The age groups 11 to 12 years and 12 to 13 years would be left at St.Dennis. They were unable to fill Treviglas Secondary. St.Stephen, the last secondary school to be built in the county, was being built. As Newquay had Tretherras Secondary it would have been a better plan to build St.Stephen before Treviglas and complete the reorganisation of the clay district. Were the parents, teachers and managers consulted? Perhaps someone knows the answer.

Such reorganisation in numbers would mean a loss of staff for St.Dennis School. Mr.Kingdom moved to Foxhole school, Mrs.Best retired, while Mr.Rouncefield

moved back to St.Ives. Miss Kent, deputy head took the 12 to 13 year olds, while I took the 11 to 12 year olds. Miss Kent during 1959 to 1960 had exchanged her post with Mr.Kelsey from Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada. This was known as the Commonwealth Exchange Scheme for teachers.

The Final Reorganisation in Secondary Education for the Clay District 1962

In 1961 to 62 St.Stephen in Brannel Secondary school was built and children of the 11 to 15 year age group would transfer to the school in September 1962. Schools involved were St.Dennis, St.Stephen, Foxhole, Nanpean, Whitemoor, Trethosa and Lanjeth. This would mean a reduction in staff of the above schools.

The headteacher of the new school was to be Mr.Wallis, who had been head of Pool Secondary between Redruth and Camborne. The appointed deputy head was Mr.I.Greaves. Posts were offered to teachers likely to lose their positions in the clay district schools.

The following staff were offered positions :-

Miss Kent - senior mistress,
Mr.Guest - Metalwork and general subjects,
Mr.Pearn - Geography and some Music and English (St.Dennis staff).
Mr.Kingdom - History and English,
Mr.Sweet - Woodwork (Foxhole staff)
Mr.Dunn - Music and general subjects (St.Stephen staff)
Mr.Prideaux - slow learners (Whitemoor staff)
Miss Coleman - Domestic Science (Nanpean staff)

After a term's trial the staff of the above schools were offered posts of responsibility for their subjects. Further staff were appointed by the headteacher and governors :-

Mr.Howes - head of Mathematics
Mrs.Pearce - girls Games and PE
Mr.R.King - boys Games and PE
Mr.Horne - head of English
Mr.Mason - English
Mrs.Ridley - Handicrafts,
Mr.Hunkin - Religious Education
Mr.Cousins - Geography

Further appointments followed for Art, Rural Studies and Domestic Science

Governors included representatives from each contributing school and village. The chairperson was Mrs.Clyma of St.Stephen.

Features of St.Stephen in Brannel Secondary School

Compared with our village schools the facilities were a revelation. Specialist rooms such as woodwork, metalwork, art, music (bell shaped), domestic science, laboratories, gymnasium, needlework, slow learner's room, hall, dining area and indoor toilets as well as playgrounds for netball. The sports field was just outside. Such facilities should make learning a pleasure for both children and staff.

A brief description of the geography room illustrates the provision for the subject. Map drawers for large maps, and a hanging globe, a pull down from the ceiling for maps. The room was situated on the northern side giving a panoramic view of the countryside. Visual aids such as a film projector and the slides projector allowed the outside world into the classroom.

The caretaker had a bungalow on the site. He was Mr.B.Strongman (ex army). He was keen to maintain a high standard of cleanliness. White pillars had a 6 inch black area on the base to stop any scuff marks.

At St.Stephen my main subject was Geography. I did some music in the school's new music room which was bell shaped. Mr.Harold Dunn was the music teacher and I supported him and again a choir was formed. Harold played the piano and I conducted.

Main Entrance



Photo courtesy of Trevor Rabey

Rear Entrance with Geography Room Above



Photo courtesy of John Pearn



Photo courtesy of Trevor Rabey

St.Stephen in Brannel Senior Football Team - 1962



Photo courtesy of Alan Craddock

Back Row (L-R) - Frederick Westlake, David Parkyn, Michael Trelease, Alan Craddock,
Paul Wieczorek, Leslie Knight, Michael Kent

Front Row (L-R) - Nigel Richards, Adrian Hancock, John Keast, Alan Martyn, Mr. R. King
Michael Spry, Mervyn Allen, Rodney Brown

Kneeling (L-R) - Nigel Prynne, John Allen

Additional Photographs and Video

More photographs and video of both schools

can be viewed by clicking the link below

Additional Photos and Video

St. Stephen in Brannel Secondary School First Annual Speech Day

The first annual speech day was an important occasion for the school and the choir performed on Thursday November 14th.1963 in the presence of Mr. Watkins, county inspector, governors and parents.

The pieces sung were :-

Yeoman of England - Edward German

Sweet contentment - Handel

Oh Johnny was a Rover - Sea Shanty

Creation's Hymn - Beethoven

On the wings of song - Mendelssohn

Steal Away - Negro Spiritual.

Mr. Watkins addressed the school then presented the prizes.

Valerie Beswetherick, ex St.Dennis pupil, won the first music prize.

Other prize winners from St.Dennis school were :-

Michael Trelease (third year)

Jack Dunn (third year form prizes)

Marion Martyn (second year form prize)

Denis Smith (first year form prize)

Stephen McClure (history)

Adrian Wilson (geography)

Nigel Richards (science)

Margaret Methereil (religious education)

Paul Wieczorek (engineering drawing)

Nigel Prynne (physical education)

Colours

Athletics - P. Wieczorek, M. Trelease

Football - M. Trelease, N. Richards, N. Prynne,

Netball - V. Beswetherick

The next four pages are scanned images of the Speech Day programme.

CORNWALL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ST. STEPHEN COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOL

First
ANNUAL SPEECH DAY

Thursday, November 14th, 1963
at 2 p.m.

Speaker: MR. T. I. J. WATKINS
County Inspector of Schools

Chairman: MRS. E. F. A. CLYMA, B.A., J.P.

Programme

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

CHOIR	Yeomen of England	...	...	...	<i>Ed. German</i>
	Sweet Contentment	...	...	...	<i>Handel</i>
	Oh Johnny was a Rover	...	...	...	<i>Sea Shanty</i>

HEADMASTER'S REPORT

CHOIR	Creation's Hymn	...	...	...	<i>Beethoven</i>
	On Wings of Song	...	...	...	<i>Mendelssohn</i>
	Steal Away	...	...	...	<i>Spiritual</i>

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES AND ADDRESS

BY

MR. T. I. J. WATKINS

Votes of Thanks

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Prize List

FORM PRIZES

Fourth Year

M. Trethewey
B. Welch
E. Hambley
R. Dingle

Third Year

D. Yelland
M. Trelease
M. P. Bray
L. Bonney
J. Dunn
R. Hancock

Second Year

K. Richards
M. Martyn
D. Tucker
K. Perryman
D. Giles
D. Webber
D. Warder

First Year

P. Teague
D. Smith
E. Lawry
C. Westlake
T. Geach
A. Kellow
S. Balsdon

SUBJECT PRIZES

English	M. Richards
Arithmetic	P. Martyn
History	S. McClure
Science	N. Richards
Metalwork	G. Allen

Mathematics	M. Winslade
Geography	A. Wilson
Religious Education	M. Metherell
Woodwork	B. Giles
Engineering Drawing	P. Wiczorek

SUBJECT PRIZES (continued)

Art	C. Rowe	Domestic Science	L. Gay
Needlework	V. Best	Rural Science	D. Doherty
Music	V. Beswetherick	Physical Education	N. Prynne B. Grigg
Progress	A. Manhire C. Hooper	O. Green D. Norrish	C. Crowle D. Gregory

COLOURS

Athletics	Football	Netball
P. Wiczorek	M. Trelease	B. Grigg
M. Trelease	N. Richards	D. Kitts
B. Grigg	G. Stanczak	V. Beswetherick
D. Kitts	N. Prynne	J. Barbary
M. Bull		M. Richards

COUNTY COLOURS

Football	A. Craddock
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Looking Back

by

John Pearn

2018 - 2019