

Round and About in the parish - Twyford School

A little while ago Priscilla Brown put me in touch with Roger Neal whose ancestors had lived at The Hawthorns, Beaconsfield Road, and whose aunt, Madeline Neal, had been a teacher at Twyford School. She is the teacher to the far top left (a small lady) in the photo, which was taken around 1912.



This photo is of two of the pupils, Lilla May with her brother George Pratt. They lived with their parents at Broadhurst Manor, who were tenant farmers.

At around the time of the 1st World War the family had to leave, and they moved to Groombridge in a pony and trap - the youngest baby was placed into a linen basket for the journey. Lilla was able to read and write and throughout her life she had beautiful copperplate writing.

Sport was quite important at the school and the earliest trace I have is from 1844 when a team of boys from Twyford School played West Hoathly boys at Ashdown Forest Cricket ground, courtesy of Mr J Chatterton. In about 1912 there was also a football team and the boy 2nd from the left in the photo is one of Roger Neal's uncles.



Bill Marten (formerly at the cycle shop in Chelwood Gate) attended Twyford School and his son, Mervyn, has let me have two photos, one showing his father, and the other his mother who also went to Twyford School.

Here is Mr Bird, with Mervyn's mother to his immediate right. One of the girls is

holding a netball and another has a silver cup, presumably they have just won a prize.

The next photo is of Mervyn's father who is the 2nd boy in from the bottom row. Mr Bird is also in this picture.

These photos threw me a bit as Mr Bird was Headmaster of Danehill Primary School, and not Twyford, and I wondered why he would be photographed with pupils from Twyford School. John Older, who has been doing some research on local schools, has told me Mr Bird was also involved with Twyford School, particularly helping around the time of its closure.



Although the school did close down, it was used again during the Second World War for evacuee children from London. Geoff Sleeman in his book, 'Too Many Goodbyes', describes his evacuation to Birch Grove and his time at Twyford School, which did not appear to be very happy.

There are various photos available showing the School, but this one from about 1912 is unusual as this side of the school is not often photographed.

My thanks to Priscilla Brown, Roger Neal, Mervyn Marten, Karen Pelling, and Geoff Sleeman.

Jill Rolfe