



The Village Hall was once an elementary school.

The main lay-out of the building is nearly the same as it was when the school was erected in 1876. It was a mixed school for 90 children. The hall was partitioned to make two classrooms, infants and juniors. The heating system was different from the

electric wall heaters which are there now. In the infant's class there was a tortoise stove and in the junior class a coal fire. Another memorable feature seemed to have been the colour scheme. Everything, including the walls, was a vivid green.

Something else which looked green and tempting was the apple orchard next to the school. The boys got through the hedge once too often because one day they were caught trespassing with apples. As punishment they had to take the apples back to the owner and apologise. Afterwards, the boys wondered whether the owner had eaten the other half of the apples because they had learnt the saying 'waste not, want not.'

The range of subjects was limited. The main subjects taught were described as the 'Three Rs' – Reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. Religious Instruction was also considered important because it was a Church of England School so the rector, from the church opposite, would take daily assembly and scripture lessons. Gardening was another subject which was taught. As the pupils were country people who liked an outdoor life, this was a favourite subject.

School dinners were not available then so naturally the pupils had to take packed lunches from home. Something which we would consider very unhygienic now was that the head boy had to fetch water to the school from the nearby ditch.

Like any school the number of pupils fluctuated slightly over the years but the number at the school decreased dramatically between 1937 and 1945. In 1937 there were 104 pupils but by 1945 there were only 11 pupils and one teacher.

The few unusual events that did happen at school were very well remembered, especially when something as big as an aeroplane was involved. A German World War II plane suddenly came into view and fired bullets at the school. The children were all outside at the time and luckily the bullets only made dents in the wall and not in the children. The pupils had been astounded and stood there with open mouths because the plane was no sooner seen than gone.

The school was closed and the children were sent to Debenham School. The building, however, was not demolished because the village hall, which was next to the school, was moved to Great Finborough by the Eastern Electricity Company for use as a sports pavilion so the school building was made into the Village Hall. A few alterations were made. The playground boundary wall and the outside toilets were knocked down and an extension built for new toilets and a kitchen. Roof repairs were also necessary and thankfully the colour scheme was also changed.

*Researched by a Bedingfield pupil at Debenham High School in the 1980's.*