

Article in the Bardfield Times, December 2021

Little Bardfield School

The building that stands beside the Almshouses in Little Bardfield was once the village school, now converted to a house. The school was endowed by the Church of England and this extract from the Trust Deed gives insight into the curriculum and the requirements of the School Mistress in the C18th. We would be surprised today to find the virtues of sobriety and discretion listed in the job description for a teacher!

In the Trust of 1724: "Three vicars are to pay the sum of £18 of lawful money of Great Britain unto some sober, discreet woman ... to teach freely and constantly such children either boys or girls of Poor Persons belonging to the Parish of Little Bardfield. Not exceeding 18 at one time, to read English, and the girls to sew plain work, and knit, and to instruct all the children in the Catechism of the Church of England. The sum of £4 to a School Mistress, to be tax free."

Little Bardfield School struck by Lightning

An interesting little story recorded by the late Rev Norman Clift:

In a letter to Mrs Mears, the rector's wife, in 1926, "To the nearest date of remembrance of my mother, the thunderstorm that hit Little Bardfield School was 27th April 1881 in the morning whilst the lessons were in progress. The screams of the children were heard 2 miles away. The bell fell from the building to the ground and bricks fell in all directions. Fortunately, everyone escaped, but some had a few cuts by falling glass. Not one pane of glass was left in the two cottages near the school ... A service of thanksgiving was held in the church. The church itself was struck the very same year! My mother being only 10 years old when this happened."

Editor: I wonder if any of our readers has ever heard anything about this cataclysmic event?

