

The History of Clifton Primary School

This page was developed with the help and support of Val Hart and Chris Sutton of the Balsall Heath Local History Society.

Introduction

Clifton Primary School has a long and rich history. We are very lucky that we still have access to many artefacts and primary sources of evidence that have helped us piece this together and that have given us an insight into school life in the past.



Clifton Road School c.1900

Early Days.

Clifton Road School opened in 1878 with three separate departments; Girls, Boys and the Infants. It was a 'Board School', set up by the Kings Norton School Board. We know a lot about these early days as we still have the school 'Log Books' from the Girls and Infants schools; the Log Book was a 'diary' kept by the Head teacher. They include an early Inspection report written in 1879, very similar to our OFSTED inspections today!

Inspectors Report 1879 (Girls' School Log Book).

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H. M. Inspector's Report

20 October 1879.

*King's Norton Clifton Road Board School
Girls' School. "The Girls' Department is taught
with much care. The answering of many of the
Scholars shows the traces of previous neglect and
bad teaching, which cannot speedily be obliterated,
but there is also much gratifying evidence
of progress, auguring well for the future.
Sewing is very fairly done, though it is a
new Subject to many of the Children. The
neatness and respectful bearing of the girls
do their Teachers credit. More attention
must be paid to the instruction of Pupil
Teachers and Candidates in Geography and
Mapdrawing."*

9 Months Grant.

<i>On Average Attendance</i>	<i>£ 32: 12: 6</i>
<i>In Standards</i>	<i>26: 15: 6</i>
<i>In Classes</i>	<i>21: 15: 0</i>
	<i>81 - 3 0</i>

(over)

Clerk to the Board.

'The Girls' Department is taught with much care. The answering of many scholars shows the traces of previous neglect and bad teaching which cannot speedily be obliterated, but there is also much gratifying evidence of progress auguring well for the future. Sewing is very fairly done, though it is a new subject to many of the children. The neatness and respectful bearing of the girls do their teachers credit. More attention must be paid to the instruction of pupil teachers and their candidates in Geography and Mapdrawing.'

The Infant school was large and at the time of the 1881 Inspection, there were 444 children in the school. This would have created very large classes for the six staff, three of whom were pupil-teachers. One outstanding feature of the Girls school around this time was its high moral tone and good behaviour of the pupils; in 1884 the Inspectors praised 'the respectful and refined demeanour of the girls and their perfect discipline'. The curriculum included 'moral lessons' which covered the themes of 'Honour', 'Love of Home', 'Peace', 'Government of Temper', 'Forgiveness and Forbearance' and 'Punctuality'. Discipline was strict and it was forbidden to talk to the boys at all. The Boys school also achieved good standards and had specialist woodwork and metalwork departments.



**Clifton
Road Boys
School
(Group 4)
1922.**



**1900
Science
Equipment
being taken
around the
schools.**

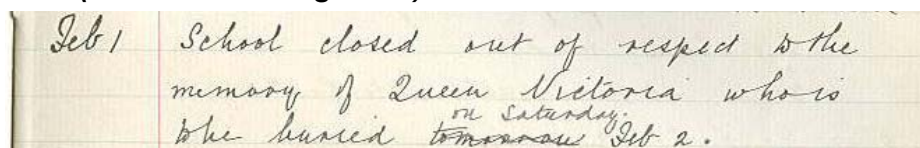


**Girls School
Netball Team**

Extracts from the Log Books.

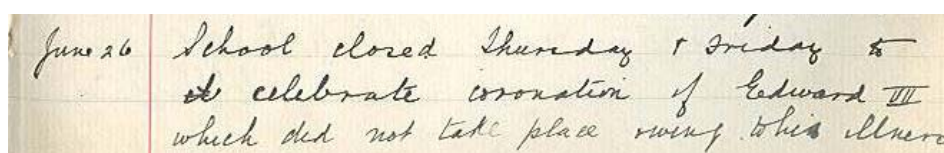
The Log Books are excellent sources for finding out about the past. We found out lots of information about important events in history and how they affected life at Clifton School.

Death of Queen Victoria 1901 (Girls' School Log Book).



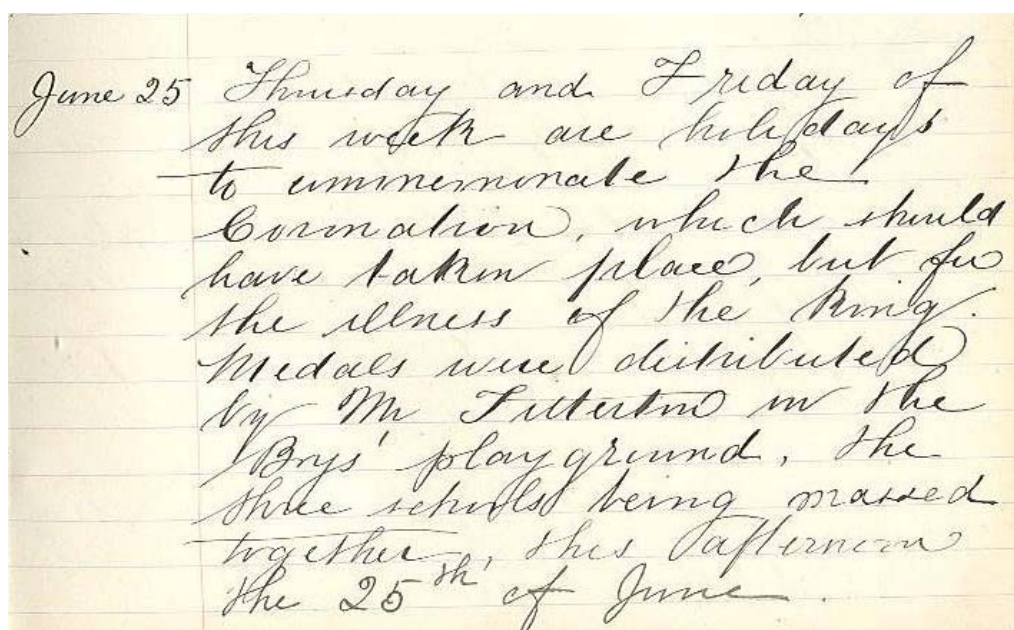
Feb 1 School closed out of respect to the memory of Queen Victoria who is to be buried on Saturday Feb 2.

Coronation of Edward VII 1902 (Girl's School Log Book).



June 26 School closed Thursday and Friday to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII (which did not take place owing to his illness.)

1902 (Infant School Log Book).



June 25 Thursday and Friday of this week are holidays to commemorate the Coronation, which should have taken place but for the illness of the King. Medals were distributed by ... in the Boys' playground...

**Coronation of King George V
1911 (Girl's School Log Book).**

21. 6. 11 The medals given by the Lord Mayor to commemorate the coronation of King George V were, this morning, presented to the scholars by Mr. Geo. Shipway. The school is closed from noon today until the morning of Monday, June 26th for festivities in connection with the coronation. The girls in Sides 1 and 2 who are considered too young to share in the celebration at Cannon Hill Park are having a tea and entertain at school this afternoon.

21st June 1911 The medals given by the Lord Mayor to commemorate the coronation of King George V were, this morning, presented to the scholars... The school is closed from noon today until the morning of Monday 26th for festivities in connection with the coronation...

**During the First World War
Dec 1st 1916 (Girls' School Log Book).**

Constant absences from school by children whose fathers have returned from the front are pulling down the attendance.

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1918 (Girls' School Log Book).

1918
Sept 6th Attendance very poor. The two wet days this week worked havoc with the average but there is a tendency for parents to keep children away from school the whole ten days the father is at home from the front. These constant long absences from school are bad for the children and pull down the average attendance.

Sept 6th Attendance very poor ...there is a tendency to keep children away from school the whole ten days the father is at home from the front. These constant long absences from school are bad for the children...

1918 (Girls' School Log Book).

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1918. through bad cold.
Nov 11th School closed this afternoon to reopen
Wednesday a.m. on account of signing
15th of Armistice

Nov 11th School closed this afternoon to reopen Wednesday a.m. on account of signing of armistice.

1978 Junior School

Sept 4 School opens 08.55 for
Autumn term
Staff + classes
Mr K. Tatton [Acting Head]
4T Miss Tonry 4P Miss Barnwell
4H Mr Hemsted (2) 3Je Mr Jeeves (2)
3Jo Mrs Jones [Acting Deputy]
3C Miss Cookley (2) 2UM Mrs Miller (2)
2CM Mrs Millin (2) 2Vm Mrs Malins (2)
1T Mrs Tinsley (3) 1B Miss Beckett
1H Mrs Harris (3)
Miss Paddock (2)
Mr Dard (3) p.m. H/s Liaison Teacher
Mr Donaghue 6/10 T.E.S.L.
Mrs Morgan, Miss Everett, Mrs Gooder: N.N.E
Mrs Luxton school secretary

We found this very exciting entry in the log book in 1978. It is the year that Mr Tatton became the 'acting' Head teacher (he recently retired after 29 years of being our Head teacher) and it is the year that a young Miss Barnwell started! (Now Mrs Brown, our Deputy Head!).

Extracts from the Punishment Books

Teachers in the nineteenth century were very strict. No talking was allowed in class and children were often punished for being late for school. Children who were naughty were 'caned' by the teachers on their hands and their names were written in punishment books. Here are some extracts from the Girls' School.

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL BOARD			PUNISHMENT
Date.	Name.	Offence.	Amount of Punishment.
Dec. 7 th 1908	Certitude Slooper	Eating in lesson time	2 stripes on hand
" "	Edith Hadley	"	"
Jan: 22 nd 1909	Elie Sharp	Disobedience	1 stripe
Jan 22 nd 1909	Kate Clarke	Involence	2 stripes, 1 on each hand
" 22 nd 1909	" "	Further involence after warning	1 " on the hand
" 22 nd 1909	orris Kenney	Idleness	1 stripe on each hand
" 22 nd 1909	Joyce Alice	" after repeated warnings	1 " " "
" 22 nd 1909	Jessie Barnsby	Idleness after being warned	1 stripe on each hand
" 22 nd 1909	E. Skelcher	Idleness	1 stripe on hand.
Feb: 9 th 1909	Blara Strong.	Talking in lesson time	1 stripe on hand.
" 16 th	Dorothy Fox	Disobedience coupled with rudeness.	2 strokes on each hand
" 16 th 1909	Kate Taylor	Flagrant Disobedience	2 strokes on each hand
" 16 th 1909	Ellen Skelcher	" "	3 strokes - on one hand
A. 1. 22. 3. 9.	Jessie Barnsby	Repeated Idleness	
7. 10. 09	Harriet Shaw	cheating	2 strokes. 1 on each hand
"	Mabel Davis	"	2 " "
"	Annie Smith	"	2 " "
8. x. 09	Elmie Smith	Disobedience	2 " "

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL BOARD			PUNISHMENT
Date.	Name.	Offence.	Amount of Punishment.
6. 2. "	Gladys Hodges.	Disobedience	Two strokes on hand
2. 7. 11.	Lillian Jones.	Curfewing.	Three strokes on hand.
18. 9. 14.	Lillian Johnson	Rudeness,	
15. 2. 28	Ruby Butler	Writing rude remarks and telling a lie about J	Two strokes on hand
12. 5. 30.	Joan Broadshaw	Going to shop at Playtime	Two strokes on hands
"	Mary Edwards	"	"
"	Gladys Collins	"	One stroke on hand
"	Lillian Bryant	"	One stroke on hand
11. 11. 31	Edward Wright	Shining in room in absence of Teacher	4 strokes on hand
28. 1. 32	Wm. Cook	Interfering with Sch. Clock	4 strokes on hand
19. 4. 32	Leslie Preston	telling lies to H. T.	3 " " "
21. 6. 32	Ernest Bryden	Playing behind J's back.	2 " " "
30. 6. 32	Robert Barnett.	Striking a girl	3 strokes
7. 9. 32	Harold Shakespeare	Repeated inattention	2 strokes " "
10. x. 32	James Cooper	Talking and deceitfulness	2 strokes " "
21. x. 32	Norman Hall	Cutting desk	2 stroke.
21. x. 32	Harold Shakespeare	" "	2 stroke

Example of a School Report.

It is very interesting to read this report from December 1916. We teach many of the subjects today. This pupil was the 'Top Girl'.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE.
CLIFTON ROAD GIRLS' COUNCIL SCHOOL.

REPORT for Term ended December 2nd 1916

Class I Number in Class 37 Average Age of Girls in this Class 12 yrs 11 mths
 Name Alice Young Attendances possible 152
 Age 13 yrs 4 mths Attendances made 156
 Position in Class 1st Times absent 0
 Times late 0

SUBJECT	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained	REMARKS:—
READING	5	5	Alice has done very good work and deserves the position she has gained. I am pleased that she is "Top Girl".
RECITATION	5	5	
GRAMMAR	30	27	
HANDWRITING	5	5	
SPELLING	5	4	
COMPOSITION	20	14	
ARITHMETIC	10	8	
MEASUREMENT	5	5	
HISTORY	30	28	
GEOGRAPHY	30	29	
SCIENCE	30	28	
DRAWING	20	20	

Signed: H. Challengeworth Class Mistress.
M. J. Dutton Head Mistress.

(34629)

Special Events - Empire Day 1917

We have lots of evidence of many special events that have taken place over the years. One event that took place in May each year was 'Empire Day'. On this day, the children dressed up from other countries around the world which were part of the British Empire. They often sang songs or performed plays and invited the parents in to watch. They sometimes collected money for a good cause.

1917 (Girls' School Log Book).

H. V. 14 The whole of to-day has been devoted to Empire Day celebration. As an Empire Day offering the girls have given to the Lady Mayoress's Fund fifteen pounds (£15)

The whole of the day has been devoted to the Empire Day celebration. As an Empire Day offering, the girls have given to the "Lady Mayoress's Fund", fifteen pounds £15.00.



Photograph of Empire Day 1917.

City of Birmingham Education Committee.

Clifton Road School.

Girls' Department.

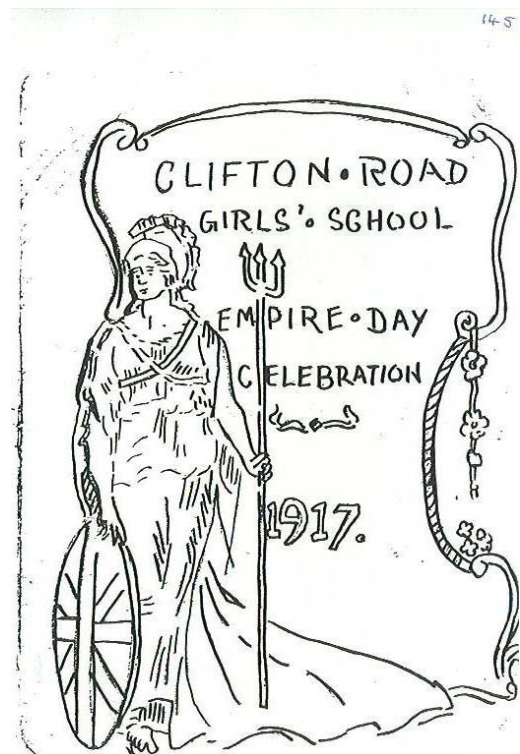
May 23rd 1917

Dear Mrs Young,

I know you will be very pleased to hear that Elsie has collected the most money in her class for our Empire Day collection.

She has done exceedingly well and I should like to thank you for the interest you have taken in the collection.

Yours sincerely,
D. C. Smith



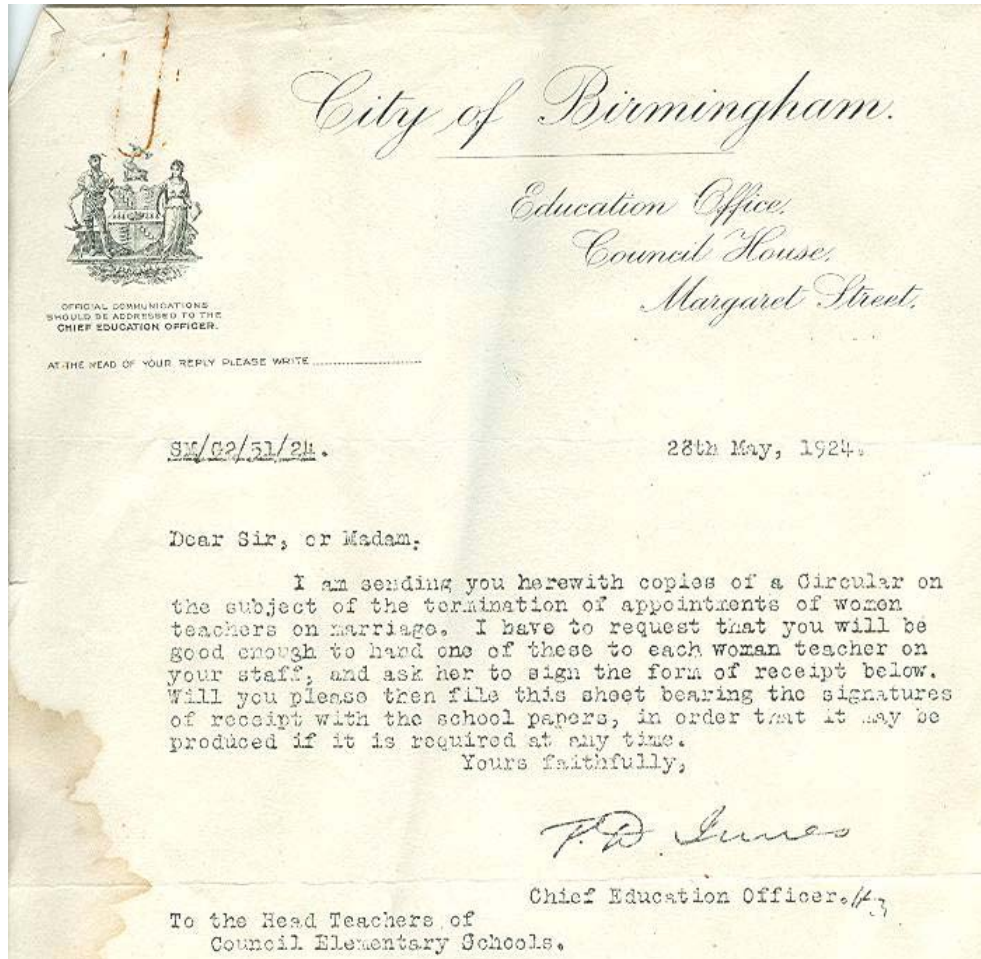
Cover for the programme of events.

Letter to a parent on the collection of money.

Dear Mrs Young, I know you will be very pleased to hear that Elsie has collected the most money in her class for our Empire Day collection. She has done exceedingly well and I should like to thank you for the interest you have shown in the collection.

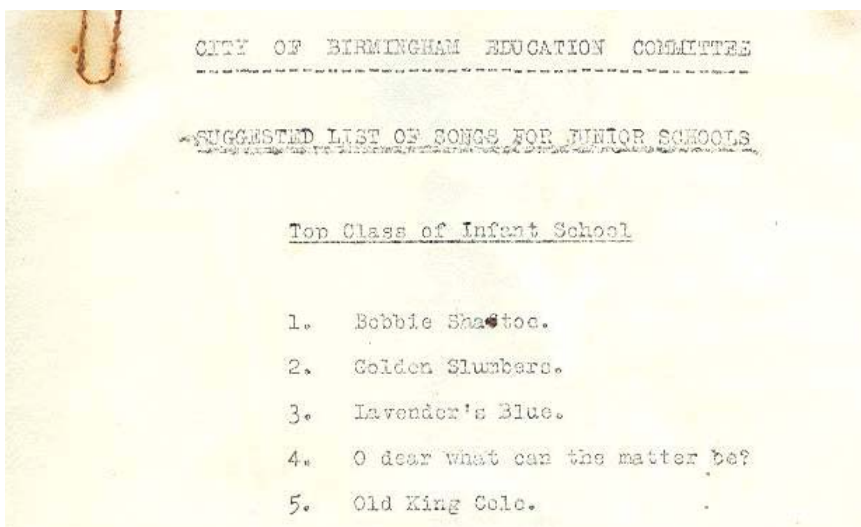
Circular for Women Teachers

We found this letter from 1924 and thought it was very interesting! While we haven't got a copy of the circular that accompanied the letter, it was concerning the 'termination of appointments of women teachers on marriage'. In other word, once a woman teacher was married she was no longer able to keep her job as a teacher.



Songs for Junior Schools

Singing songs has always been an important part of school life. This is a list of suggested songs for Junior School children in 1938. You might recognise some of the songs!



*Bobbie Shaftoe
Golden Slumbers
Lavender's Blue
O Dear What Can the
Matter Be?
Old King Cole.*

All Communications to be addressed to THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER.



P. D. INNES, C.B.E., M.A., D.Sc.
Chief Education Officer.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,
COUNCIL HOUSE, MARGARET ST.,
BIRMINGHAM, 3.



TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 7000

In your reply please quote:

E/4/38

7th January, 1938.

Dear Sir, or Madam,

Songs for Junior Schools

From time to time enquiries are made as to the type of song best suited both as regards range and difficulty to top Infant and Junior children. The accompanying list of songs has been prepared solely as a suggested list, arranged progressively for 6 year old to 11 year old children. It is of course quite possible that some teachers will desire to interchange certain of the songs and therefore it should be pointed out that no attempt has been made in each class to grade the songs in any complete order of degree of difficulty. The list merely sets out the type of song considered suitable for children in Junior schools, and is an attempt to provide a nucleus of songs on which to build up our heritage of National and Folk Songs.

Yours faithfully,

P. D. Innes
Chief Education Officer.

To Head Teachers of Schools containing
Junior and Infant Children.

World War 2

We have found some interesting evidence about Clifton's role in World War 2. The first is a letter to a member of staff that has been called up for military service. It states that the 'Education Committee undertake to re-instate you on their teaching staff, but I am afraid that the exigencies of the service would not permit the Committee to give you a definite assurance that you should return to the position you occupy on the staff of the Clifton Road School'.

F.

27th June 1939.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter received at this office on the 26th instant, and to previous letters regarding your position after being called up for military service, you are no doubt aware that under Section 7 of the Military Training Act 1939, you are entitled to re-instatement in your employment at the termination of training, under conditions not less favourable to you than those which obtain at present. The Education Committee undertake to reinstate you on their teaching staff, but I am afraid that the exigencies of the service would not permit the Committee to give you a definite assurance that you should return to the position you occupy on the staff of the Clifton Road School.

The City Council has not yet reached a decision as to the position of those of its servants who are called up under the Military Training Act, but it is practically certain that the City Council will follow the course adopted by the Government as regards civil servants. In the case of civil servants called for Military Training under the Military Training Act, the period of absence will rank for the purposes of increments and superannuation, but there will be no issue of civil pay in respect of this period.

I may add that the Education Committee would be willing to suspend the arrangement for the repayment of your loan during the period of your military training.


Yours faithfully,

Signed by
Chief Education Officer.

Chief Education Officer.

We also found letters asking teachers to help with the evacuation of children. This is an example of a letter asking for help from the Council and a response sent to the Head teacher of Clifton School at that time.

... addressed to THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER.


CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,
COUNCIL HOUSE, MARGARET ST.,
BIRMINGHAM, 3.

P. D. INNES, C.B.E., M.A., D.Sc.
Chief Education Officer.

In your reply please quote:
E/6

TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 7000.

20th July, 1939.

Dear Sir, or Madam,

Government Evacuation Scheme.

The following teachers serving in Schools in the non evacuable zone have offered their help in the arrangements to be made for the transport of the scholars from your School to the reception area.

Will you please get into touch with them at once.

1 July 1939.

Dear Mr Petherick,

I learned yesterday that I have been attached to your school for the purpose of assisting in the evacuation of the children in the event of a national emergency.

It occurs to me that you may wish to see me regarding this matter. I would like to say that I am ready to meet you at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

This is part of the list of local children that agreed to be evacuated.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

LIST OF CHILDREN TO BE EVACUATED

NAME	ADDRESS	School now attending	Date of parents' consent
Barnes Bernard	2/571, Moseley Road 44, Stratford St.	Clifton Road	March 39
Bartlett Alfred	19. " "	" "	"
Hall Geoffrey	93, Oldfield Rd.	" "	"
Denny Raymond	193, Stratford Rd. Oldfield Rd.	" "	"
Summer Jack	8, Oxford Av. Kothven Rd.	" "	"
Taylor Paul	35, White St.	" "	"
White Ronald	20, Stratford Av. Bunswick Rd.	" "	"
Wood Philip	416, Moseley Road	" "	"
Apps Philip R.	60, Blenheim Road	" "	"
Carr Raymond	5/273, Clifton Road	" "	"
Humphreys Leonard	5, Rincorn Road	" "	"
Milson Ronald G.	7, White Street	" "	"
Morris Philip J.	5, S. Pauls Av. S. Pauls Rd.	" "	"
Palmer John Fred.	6, Malvern St.	" "	"
Potter Raymond T.	7, Watford Av. Ladywood	Returned	"
Snipe Royden R.	191, Oldfield Rd	" "	"
Tetsell Raymond	7/45, Leamington Rd.	" "	"
Tompkins Peter	88, Woodfield Rd	" "	"
Atkinson Stanley	3, Chesterton Av. Chesterton Rd	" "	"
Browne J. William	4, Malloek Villas Chesterton Road	" "	"
Cardall Eric	20, Queen Street	" "	"
Chim Bernard	19, Alfred St.	" "	"

* Not to be entered until evacuation takes place.

List of children whose parents do not wish them to be evacuated.

CLIFTON ROAD,
JUNIORS' SCHOOL
BALSALL HEATH.

Name.	Address.	Date on form signed by parent.
Brid Betty	21, S. Pauls Road	March 39
Cooper Barbara	57, Kingswood Road	"
Gooding Gladys	889, Brunswick Road	"
Gooding Patricia	105, " "	"
Green Ida	58, Clifton Road	"
Green Margaret	11, Lins Av: Chesterton Road	"
Hanson Alexandreen	180, Runcorn Road	"
Hanson Kathleen	" " "	"
Morton Joyce	8/45, Edward Road	"
Smith Joyce	20, Runcorn Road	"
Smith Sybil	21, Malvern St	"
Taylor Betty	172, Highgate Road	"
Timms Gladys	10/128, Brunswick Rd	"
Askey Edna	16, Duntersley Rd.	"
Clarke Joyce	139, Brunswick Rd.	"
Hayes Vera	3/21, Bissell St.	"
Jones Frances	3/43, Sherbourne Rd.	"
Leake Doreen	2 Myrtle Av: Runcorn Rd.	"
Vennell Barbara	5 Lime Grove White St.	"
Webster Joan	143, Runcorn Road	"
Wilkes Thelma	17, Brighton Road	"
Williams Florence I.	12, White St.	"
Beck Vera G.	111, Runcorn Road.	"

Here is part of the list of children 'not' wishing to be evacuated.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

C. B. E. C.
 CLIFTON ROAD,
 JUNIORS' SCHOOL
 BALSALL HEATH.

SCHOOL.

DEPARTMENT.

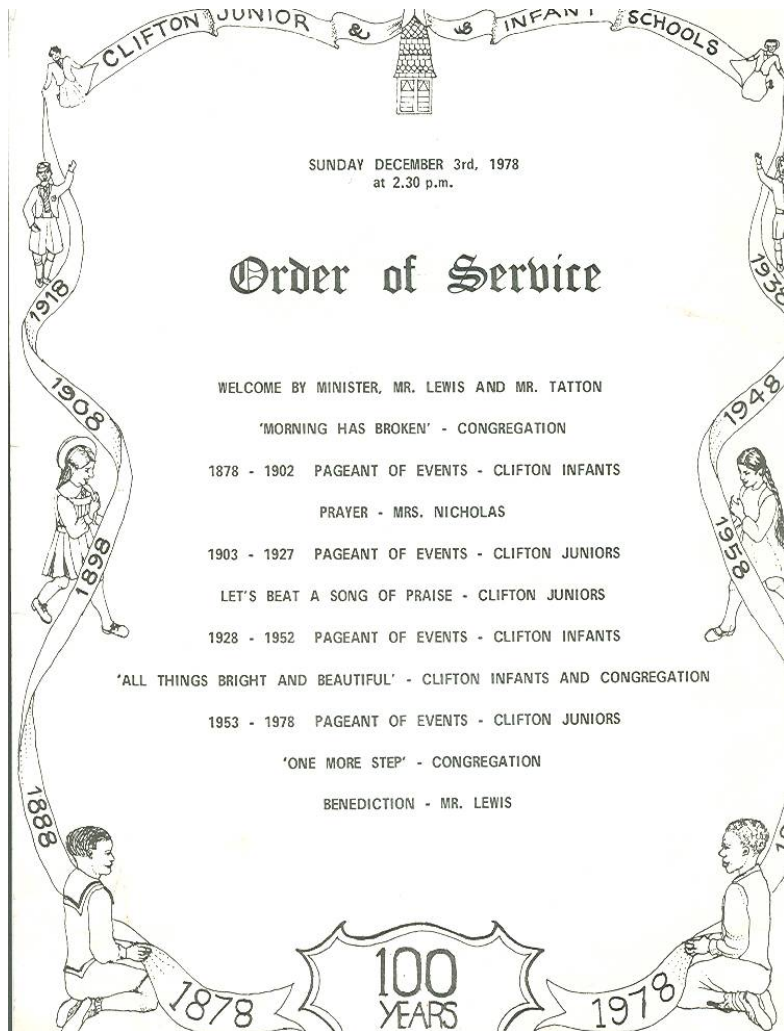
List of Teachers and Helpers who would accompany School Party.

Name	Address	Enter here if the helper is prepared to remain with the children if required.
Mr. R. Grad	(Billesley, J.M) % 55 Rotha St. S-on-A 25 The Hurst, Brookhane, Kgs Hth. H	
Miss J.A. Mabley	(" ") 458. Brooke Lane, Kgs Hth. 14.	
Mr. S.G. Green	(S.M) 12 College Rd. Moseley, Birm	
Miss A. Dodd	[Yarnfield J.M] 39, Dudley Park Rd, Crookes Green	
Mr. N. Barnett	5 Somery Rd, Dudley. 3 Cadbury Rd, Moseley.	
Miss K. O'Connor	Moseley Infants 49, Bagnell Rd., Kings Heath.	
Mr. A. Lindsey	699, Shirley Road Hall Green 28. (Hartfield Crescent S.B.)	
Mr. A. Bot.	254 Alcester Rd. Moseley. 300 1073. Colmore Rd. Lupto.	
Mr. E.R. Thomas	94 Russell R ^a , Hall Green 28.	
E.R. Thomas	61, Farnot Road, Yardley 26.) Hartfield Crescent S.B.	
R.G.F. Martyn	98 Ladbrook Rd, Solihull Hartford Cres: S.B.	
V.H. Collier	36 Welford Road, Shirley. Hartfield Crescent S.B.	
G.H. Goldsmith	159 Durham Road, Sparkhill. Brook's Green.	

Here is the list of 'helpers'.

More Recent History

Until 2005 Clifton schools remained separate Infants and Junior schools. To celebrate the 100 year anniversary the two schools came together for a special celebration



The Infants moved to Brunswick Road in 1979. Roy Hattersley officially opened the site in 1980. In the same year, Prince Charles also visited Balsall Heath.



Roy Hattersley MP opening the new Infant school building in 1980.



Prince Charles also visited Balsall Heath in 1980.

In 2000 the Junior School also moved to a new site on St Paul's Road. Here are some pictures of our Key Stage 2 building being built.





We now call this part of the school the 'Blue Lagoon'!

The old Junior School building remains on Clifton Road and is used by many community groups. One of the rooms has been developed into a Victorian classroom by the Balsall Heath Local History Society. This means that pupils from Clifton Primary and other local schools can get a taste of what school was like in the past.



*The Victorian School Room at the old Clifton Junior School building on Clifton Road.
The old Junior School Building.*



The Victorian School Room in the old Clifton Junior Building.

In September 2005, 127 years after opening, the Junior and Infant Schools finally amalgamated to become Clifton primary School, with Mr Tatton as the Head teacher. He retired in July 2007 after 40 years of teaching at Clifton School. Mrs Mitchell became our current Head teacher in September 2007.

If you would like to find out more about the history of Clifton School or of Balsall Heath, you can contact the Balsall Heath Local History Society on 0121 464 1888. Alternatively their website is balsallheathhistory.co.uk.