

Memories of Carlbeck School

by Doris Dent, 2007

During the post-war years, when I attended Carlbeck School, there were fewer than 20 pupils.

There was one school taxi, which transported the children from outlying farms who lived more than two miles away from the school; the rest of us walked or cycled.

We started the day off with a hymn and prayers, then Scripture, arithmetic and history or geography until dinnertime.

There were no school dinners provided, so we took our own sandwiches etc. and ate them around the stove in winter, or out in the playground in summer when it was fine. Then we played rounders.

In the afternoons we had poetry, singing lessons, nature study, art, reading and spellings. I liked the afternoon when we did handicrafts - the girls doing needlework, while the boys made baskets of cane and raffia. There was a loom, and the older pupils could make a woollen scarf.

We learned to write, at first with chalk on a slate then with a wooden pen which had a metal nib which, if you pressed on too hard the nib might cross, making writing difficult. There were white porcelain inkwells in the wooden desks and one of the big boys had the job of mixing the ink powder with water in an enamel jug, then going round the classroom filling up the inkwells. It was a messy job, but we all had a sheet of blotting paper to mop up any spills.

The school attendance officer used to come about once a month and scrutinise the register, but there was very little absenteeism. The nurse came and inspected our hair and fingernails etc. The school dentist used to come about once a year to inspect our teeth, and did extractions with gas in the school (there was not much schoolwork done that day!).

During the 1947 storm, the school was closed for about six weeks because the roads were completely blocked with snow.

Library books were delivered to the school in a wooden box, and on a Friday we could choose books for ourselves, and for our parents or other family members if we wished, then take them back the following Friday.

At Christmas we always had a school party, then in the evening the schoolchildren put on a Christmas concert which most of the dales folk attended. This was one of the highlights of the school year.

Doris Dent, May 2007