Although written in 1961, Albert Goodwin's autobiography has a typically Victorian flavour. He was born in 1890 at Caverswell, Stoke, in the Potteries, where his father worked on sanitary ware. The memoir is unusual in giving so much space to his parents' and grandparents' lives, from which it appears that social conditions in the Potteries had not greatly advanced since those of the early nineteenth century described by Charles Shaw in 'When I Was A Child' (1903). Goodwin had no great love for his parents ('the most obnoxious people I had ever seen') but appreciated that they were responding to the harshness of the times. His memoir is valuable for its portrayal of working conditions and for Goodwin's account of his parents' marriage and his own birth, presumably second-hand.

The memoir was kindly brought to my notice by F.L. Harris, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Exeter.
FOREWORD

If, in reading this book, you are expecting to get some idea of how good it was to be alive, if jinking in pleasant places and on a story of "love" and happy ever after, please put down the book for this is just a record of the life over 40 years of a very ordinary mortal.

Many times has he appeared in a Barstool, been handed a Bible to hold in his Right Hand on a cord in his Left from which he had to repeat "I swear I will tell the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth" and this I propose to do in all that follows. In many instances, I could not name, but as they have descendants still living, I do not care to cause them pain by taking away their many kind thoughts of their ancestors. I may offend a little, but at times and I hope my readers will forgive me as my sole object is to place before them what happened to many ordinary mortals in the "good old days."

Alfred Goodwin
At the age of 71 memories of our early days seem to become more vivid and the ability to recall the years that have passed can be done with a certain amount of ease, and it seems to me that though my life has been tough with some smooth patches, on the whole, I have been allowed to live in years of great change, both good and bad.

I was born in the Parish of Canaunwell which is on the edge of the outskirts of the City of Stoke on. At The time of my birth in 1890 the two Towns of the Potteries were such a separate entity, and Canaunwell Parish, of the beat in which I arrived in this world, was administered from Longton by the Town Council. The other Town of the Line Towns were North to South Hanley, Burslem, Hanley Stoke, and Fenton.

I was the 2nd child of my working class parents, Benjamin & Caroline Johnson (nee Bartle). My 1st Child a boy had died at the age of 4 months.

Looking back it would not be true to record that I realized my parents were two of the first people who walked the earth. On the contrary I was of the firm opinion that they were the
(3)

several obvious people I had ever seen, and it seemed any kind of treatment from them was to expect the moon to fall out of the sky. But, I have since realized and come to understand the fact that they try to fit me, be it able to live in a world that was harsh, hard to the children of the gentry. Gladly.

My father was the eldest legitimate son of his family, he being born at 95 minutes before his brother and therefore a twin. His brothers and sisters were jointly numerous as families were at that period being Lewis, John, Polly, Sarah Ann, David, Frederick and Hannah Wilson, born out of wedlock, and thus my father. Of all other children had died, my paternal grandmother was a confirmed Buckingham and the family home in a terrace of Upper Hill St. I sington was a

resilly situated place, built on a hill, with 2. Water kept up 10 levens, two stories to the same, and many little backyards as there were only the passage of the rear of the premises to provide entrances. The conditions pertaining can be quickly imagined. There were also 2 or middens to 1 house each. These houses have now been demolished. Within 60 square yards there were 6 houses of 2 off-licence. As I will see.
(4)

many to understand what my Grandmother had
enjoyed for 6 weeks in her favorite occupation. Incidentally, these 6 weeks would have
lasted from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. during which time I would have been in bed. When we
returned home, my Grandmother asked, "What did you do in London?"

I told her that we visited many places and she
would want to visit any of them if I could. She
said, "How do we get there?"

I told her I would ask my father. He would take me to see his mother who was in her
Deathbed. I did not realize this, but was told later.

I objected to going because I was afraid of her and she did not seem nice. Mother
said she was of this in later years. My paternal
Grandmother had died before I was born from
Diphtheria, or the Chickenpox, said. And what
of my maternal Grandparents? I never knew
whether of them. My Mother was the only
child of her father's second marriage, he
having three children by his 1st wife, many
sitting in love. She was 6 years old at the
cage of 28 and caring for 1 of her two
sons had to treat to her eyes earning
as a "Debating "Miss". It was said that
she owed her advancement to a good fortune
because she had a great friend in the
"Debating Manager" that there was no doubt
that if people put the word to her, she
would do a wonderful Job for which her children's
(5)

 smoker in after life more than repaid us for any sacrifice she had made.

 Information gleaned from my mother and other sources re East Yale points to the fact that my maternal grandfather must have been a somewhat remarkable man. He was a "Traveller" (Patten) whose

 reverent from all others and accord Christ

 Service. To alleviate the breathing trouble he grew a beard, as it was accepted at

 First Time that this was a way of gaining

 the oldest and about 10 to make it easier

to draw Breath. Whether this is so I

 have no means of knowing. He had been

 a good scholar at school and although

 he had left at the age of nine, had got

 hold of all sorts of literature. He was a

 great reader. Mother told me of his

 Sunday afternoons spent on the step on

 his backyard reading where a lot of

 his fellows who could neither read nor

 write would sit around and listen to

 my grandfather reading The Sunday Read.

 (It was called Patten News I believe)

 and explaining it them what was meant

 in his opinion. She was always a great

 "Hepzibah Poet", and at times would round

 the collection plates at the Primitive Methodist

 Chapel in the town vicinity. How he

 dedicated Chapel he wrote a few verses and

 of that and mother often told me "how

 friend she felt walking along with hi
to Chapel on Sunday morning. Her words to me were: "Albert, I thought how fortunate
the other girls must be if they had such
a Grand Papa." She died at the age
of 63 from Diabetes. So his wife
had died 4 years earlier and my Mother went
to live with her brother and Spinster
sister at the age of 96. Also when
they were married.

My Father left school at the
age of 11 and became apprenticed as
a mouldsman (model maker's assistant) at Cokaynes
Pottery Factory. He was wages for 33 s. 6d.
was 2'6" per week and if he carried out
his duties satisfactorily, say perfectly, he
got £2" for himself. Any mistake was
sufficient to lose the £2" in part or full.
when he was 18 he was "sent down as an
Apprentice Potter" and served seven years
at this Trade. Immediately he became 21
and "out of his time" he was dismissed
as he would have had to be placed
Journeyman Rate. At that period this
was common practice. It is only over
recent years that it has been abolished.
Through Trade Union activity, this was in
1884. and after 2 weeks at this
dismissal he got a job at his trade
at another factory, which is why he was
asked to Take over the management if the
May Coat and on the strength of this
he married. But at the end of 6 months
the employment asked my father to cut the prices of all goods. If he refused to do so, he was asked to resign but would not do so and therefore his employer gave him a fortnight's salary in lieu of notice. As a married man whose wife was pregnant with his first child one can readily appreciate how much courage he had to have to take such a stand. The sanitary-improvements had been progressive over the years and with the advent of heavy clay soil that brought into the district from Scotland there was a "boom" in these types of sanitary appliances. The rapid expansion necessitated the recruitment of more workers and my father was fortunate to obtain a job in this comparatively new side of the pottery industry. Despite the heavy nature of the work my father stuck to it and was eventually recognized as a good man at his job. One can understand that this was a tremendous change for him. To tackle the making of these heavy vases (at that time) crude articles after years of handling the most delicate china was indeed a very radical change. He was given a job in the cartoon dept. and from accounts given to me in later
Lipscomb have been breeding for many years, and craftsmen, those informal laws are not valid, made as others do, because they have made them unnecessary. Only one type of lips was made, and it became necessary to model something fresh. A few years ago I saw a range of these old lips on stand at the Cadet's Bay Blackpool Fly Station.

My father was approached and asked if he thought he could model a new type of lips which would be an improvement on the old lips. The great complaint against this old lip was that it held a lot of dirt and dust owing to the flamboyant style in which it had been modelled. He was given carte blanche for time and everything he needed. My mother then talked about this particular period and it seemed that in his attempts to make a success of the enterprise everything had to be reorganized to help. Lipscomb, drawings, must have been scattered all over the box and nothing had to be touched or moved. What was done in the evening at home had to be done in slay at the records the next day. My father carried this top, but as he also had to model a Melba's a joint to fit with it, this became a rather expectant time for my mother. Eventually everything was
done and the result submitted to the
papers that he. The congratulated Father
on the job and Production was
ordered. He knew unchanged. well
my Father wages were raised by
a reeding a day. He had now graduated
to the well paid class from 20
per week to $30 per week. "My Father
was in the money," but this had just
been accomplished without some friction.
Not at home as one would expect but
in the office. A certain Foreman who's
Brother was the Manager of the Factory,
told exception to my Father sitting
down at times while he was on
the modelling I when he checked away him
for doing it my Father had to tell him
that he "should not claim when he felt
like it". The foreman took umbrage at this
& proceeded to threaten. Father of one
year & said the foreman who had faced
him "as to blame", reported the attitude of the
Foreman and asked for instruction. He
was immediately told the matter would be
straightened out & went back to his seat
Two days later the foreman told my
Father that he would remember him
such a fine person! But I shall show
that it took 12 years for the Foreman
to get away his own check, long after
my Father had died and no abilities he
did it so, and I saw the target.
I suppose that one of my fathers was a member of the highly paid working class. He was a man of another sort, with ambition and a fairly regular income. It is essential for me to point out that the necessity for more improved sanitary appliances in every home, and the family realization that it was important, there should be a new kind of the standard in matters of hygiene meant that those workers who were fortunate enough to be working on this side of the Industry were fully employed. Yet if you had been lucky, you'd get in on the ground floor at the time you could now own enough to make you feel you could 'lash out' and a bit improve your home or even, if you were of a very saving nature, have a holiday for some seaside resort. Of course, one had to find something to do in one's spare time, because the hours at the factory were only 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with 2 1/2 for breakfast, 1 for dinner and 1 1/2 for lunch. So we lived 1 1/2 miles from the factory. The round-trip, say not catching a train at 6:23 am and one back at 6:37, those being between Kingston and St. John, with a mile walk at each end. The fare was 1/- for a weekly ticket good at 1 a.m. mile, after 2 miles you were glad
to walk as the roads were not too well
careened. My father, thinking it had some
place to look on a Part Time Work Permits.
Book with the Royal Oak Society (which
later was merged with the Liverpool
Liberal Adderley Society) and
he was also a Collector of Descriptive
for a local Doctor he now had many
Eoming in from Dr. Arnold, he was
also the one who was the Brilliant Sunday
afternoon at the Congregational Church in
Carlisle and also visited
for the whole Stafford Provident Society
(then in existence and colloquially called
the Old Church Club) for whom he visited
claims to seek benefit at night after
the hour (4pm) when they had to be at
home or if caught out present. Their
benefit was stopped. My father really
enjoyed this because he could, while
collecting his various cases on Saturday afternoons
well there the sick person heard and around
them that he helped to ease them. Then he
called at 7:30 and as time in a certain date,
the fee for visiting was 6" per visit. He had
to go up to two miles miles for some of them
I walked all the way, which did I get
all the information from you may well
ask and my reply will be that my father
was father. Loved to impress me with what
they had had to do for me especially
if I had worn my shoes back out with
various forms of playing such as
marking an empty tin along the streets
of playing marbles on my hands and
knees. Both my parents were good
at remembering Walter being particularly
good in a helpful manner, as showing
how clever he had been and what
brains could do for people.

Mother's Aunt had a Bookmark-making
machine; this gave her a very high
status as a bookmaker. But when
Mother offered to find any assistance, she
thought she could her Aunt would lie
continually telling her "Is it must be
a child! as long as you can't get what
pleasure you can out of life for you
may have some hard times to face."
A woman of thought! Mother's Aunt
when she was twelve and got a
situation as servant with some people
named Bridewell who kept a shop
on the corner of Lord St. on St. End Yole.
Mother, who died at the age of 73 always
expressed the opinion that the good
food she received while in service had
fitted her to withstand the storms and
In my youth, my parents were members of a Chapel and we always attended. The services were held in various locations, including hospitals where the sick were visiting. The chapel was known for its high standards of behavior, and we were expected to dress appropriately. The services were well-organized, and the music was of a high quality.

The congregation was diverse, and the services were held in different languages, including English. The preaching was often challenging, and the sermons were delivered with great skill. The messages were given with passion and conviction, and the congregation responded with enthusiasm.

The chapel was also active in charitable works, and we were encouraged to participate in various activities, such as feeding the poor and providing support to those in need. The chapel was a focal point of the community, and we were proud to be a part of it.

The chapel was run by a board of elders, who were elected by the congregation. The elders were responsible for the management of the chapel and were expected to lead by example. They were respected and trusted by the members, and their decisions were generally well-received.

The chapel was also known for its strict discipline, and we were expected to follow the rules and guidelines set by the elders. The discipline was important, as it helped to maintain order and respect within the congregation.

In conclusion, the chapel was a significant part of my life, and I am grateful for the opportunities it provided me. It was a place of learning, growth, and community, and I will always remember the lessons and values I learned there.
to be given then the in the fall of
the Special services went the name
Caroline Hartley's. Auntie was
very fond of telling how she finally
Captured my father. He was walking
but with another young lady Carolina
fairly steadily but she had the
misfortune to catch a cold and father
I suppose, comming to keep him hand
by, took my mother home from Best
Practice. On the following Sunday the
Charlotte having recovered went to see my
Mother with the great aim of moving
me to negoicate a marriage, would
suggest but Caroline postponed the
idea. That she had any designs on
this poor specimen of humanity,
concluding with the words 'I don't
want your fanny if you won't have
him as a first husband'.

months later
Mother and Father were married and
went to live with Mother Aunt. In
this consumption the Bridgewood family
were unconscious connives. On Sunday
when they went to the Congregational Church
my Mother went with them at night.
She returned to her job afterwards but
so the Bridgewoods were "big brig"
people at the Congregational Church.
They had a clurica
with other high life curious things
such as finance, amount of collection fund
& sermon etc. and so this gave my Mother
(15)

'Tather a Chance to have a few words
When my father was sure that he
was going to marry my mother he at once
deemed it necessary to organise his life to that end.
He bought a new suit & kept it at
another Aunt's so that he could go
down early on Sunday & change from
his working clothes to his Chapel
looking a little respectable & creditible to the woman who was to be his wife.
He had previously done the same thing
by going to a Wales friend's house and
changing there for which he had to walk
a distance of 16 miles. The reason for
this was that if he took anything
home on which a few Shillings could
be obtained his brother would have
complained. Thus was the ticket & had
a most glorious story of drinking. It had
happened so many times before and
as there were 5 pubs shops within
easy reach of Upper Allot the one can
imagine how easy it was for his father
to get the needed money. The impression
made by my father's family of "he got
what I stand up in" was simply the
truth and nothing but.'
outside. There was no rehearsal so
it's the pattern in some cases today.
To purchase a ring, pray, the fees,
father have his feet kissed, Bedale
the reason for this will appear) was
a big claim on the Exchequer and
as this was in a poor estate not a
lot was left on which the Exchequer had
to live the next week. Of course my
father might have had more had he refused
to listen to the arguments of his younger
brothers and sisters whom he had kept
as decently as he possibly could. First,
giving him little chance to speak. He was
still a China Prince — had just moved up
of this time into the moneyed (country soon)
place. That was later, as recorded, mother
had been fitted out by her aunt so that she
was in the place. The guests were expected
as none had been invited, he had been,
the Bridesmaids because as they were to
be married at Kershawhill Church they
had to walk 3 miles each way. Yes
walk! Sunday morning 7.30 saw the
start as they had to be at the
Church for 9 a.m. When they got to
the Church witnesses had to be found
and my father prevailed upon the largest
& he was it. Mother went round the village
sang a viree in the other village. "If she
could come along when she had washed her
face & combed her hair", eventually the
Eight months after the death of my Bro.

Peach, I was born on April 19, 1840 at 2:30 a.m.

and Jim, what I learned later, weighed 7lbs.

Arrangements made before birth were very

involved as at this period medicines for the

poorer classes were conspicuous by their

absence. There was where the woman from

the deep inside door was the person of

importance.

She had attended my mother over her first

child and had been "spoken to" by my

father as to my entry. She had notified

the Doctor of the approximate time of my

arrival so that should he be needed he

could be there as soon as possible, to

embrace every circumstance warranting the

same.

A Young nurse nearby had also

been asked to be ready at any time to fetch

the Doctor, if needed, because he was a

very runner. Telephones were not so prevalent as

today. If "shouted for," always had to be

used. What qualification had the "nurse"

do, as she was always called, to take charge

of a confinement? None, except that she had

had five children herself, was a "motherly"

person, and had by reason of attending

so many confinements, with various doctors,

gained a reputation for successful

deliveries. She also found any money she

was paid for her services very useful

in bringing up her own growing family.
Her charges were 10/- for the first child and 6/- for any others. But I must tell of the numerous times she did not charge anything or very little because the people were too poor to be able to pay. Often would they pay on the hire purchase system if too much down and much per week. Or was also very often the case that she had to take with her things discarded by other people to those she had to attend because of the parboiled conditions into which the new arrival was to enter. She was continually on the "hag" and was a woman who gave selfless service to humanity.

If there is a judgment day I know where I shall find Nurse Lavis. Her anti-vital attendances were strictly adhered to and from her visits to my home to deliver various brothers & sisters I knew that her feet stood firm and good oil his rubbed in back & feet and to help the prospective mother. Whether it did so or not I have no knowledge but the method was "sound by" of the particular time of which I write. Another ritual was for the pregnant woman to go about her household duties as usual but at every opportunity she must sit down first put her feet up on another chair and so relieve the weight on the abdomen.
A strong wooden box, which had usually contained "Philadelphia Soup" or "Loin of Salmon" had to be secured 't fast on one side so that it could be placed against the bottom beadrail to be a floor-brace for the woman to press her face against at the time of the delivery. The bedsteads made of steel 5 bones garnished in black 3 Gold Paint with feathers Red 3 Pillows, Sheets, Mattresses were more a matter of chance than the rule. These Lewis could adapt himself to any conditions and I must record we had the proper articles to ensure my safe arrival. At Bath I'm holding about 2 feet, 6 inches, was also a most important item at these times as it was the nurse's job to borrow these from people who possessed one to use at a case where it was non-existent. What sort of a uniform did Nurse Lewis wear? To be candid here! But for the auto - martial period she wore a black apron and for the delivery she wore a white one. In later years this was the sign of all and sundry (including nurses) that there would be an increase in the family. Oh! Yes! She carried a little black bag that contained the baby or so we thought. And the preparation for the birth included the getting down of the bed from upstairs and re-erection in the "barbour. Preparation for a fire in the
 Parlour plate must be made & plenty of candles (up to two dozen) must be got in so that there will be all the light necessary. The fire in the kitchen must be watched up for the night so that if the accommodation took place at an awkward time there would be plenty of hot water at a few minutes' notice. This fire was the only means of heating and therefore a big iron kettle if you had one (we had) placed on the hob of the grate ready to keep on the fire at a moment's notice. If you didn't have a kettle, you borrowed one. All these things had to be done in the hope that the delivery would be normal & straightforward because if the doctor had to be called a child would be presented & as it was a matter of a gain, it became a matter of necessity to try and avoid this. My entry was a normal one except that I was at 1st late & cried for 17 hrs non-stop and drove everybody up the wall. My source of sustenance was the natural one of the breast—a method which seems to have dropped out of favour in recent years, if I am to believe several doctors to whom I have listened and also read. Why? I do not know. For an occasion that I have seen this natural feeding being carried out it has presented to me a marvellous picture if
contentment on the face of the two involved, the look of pride on the
father's face as he looks at his infant, the clinging hand of the Child on its
mother's breast and the look of
contentment on the face of the baby
make a picture that for sheer beauty
cannot be surpassed by anything in
this world. As I watched on the
Television Screen the so-called "human order"
usually with black trivia feasting their
babies in a natural manner it recalls to
me the women of my younger days
who were not too embarrassed to give
their offspring along with this natural
sustenance what made the Child feel
that it was wanted. In my opening on
an old booklet, for what it is worth, the
Child realized in some exceptional way
that he or she was part of his or her mother
and that he or she must cling on to that
as something very precious. Today some
mothers can expose their bodies as
much as possible to earn a living
or for notoriety but to be seen
with a Child at the breast even though
as in my own case with the breast directly
covered so that only the nipples showed,
was loathed on with a curse worse, worse and
a Curled lip. And so I arrived back
very likely thought of by my parents
as the Right Wonder and the infant
who was going to raise them. It was her misfortune. But what a shock they must have had. In later years.

It was usual for the mother to remain in bed for 40 days or a fortnight after the birth, and she was very careful not to meet anyone for 3 weeks until she had been "chashked." Even the relatives or any of the callers who had not been invited into the house had to be avoided. This was rigidly carried out and anyone who overstepped the bounds was a subject of scandalous gossip among the neighbours. The baby could be shown and praised (especially when the father was around and there was something to "put the baby's head") but the mother had to remain under the "ban of seclusion. Why? I really don't know.

My mother was always looked after in the best way. She would sit up, bring various little dainties, a lot of which my father had to eat. Whether the neighbours came out of kindness or curiosity, I would not like to say, but it is definitely true it was not the beauty of the child which attracted them. Early Childhood and School-days.

During these I cannot recall much of the first four years of my life except being taken to hear Filio's mango house.
When my mother had any articles to big to be ironed by hand (we hadn't bought a mangle at this period, this was purchased in 1896) this was a treat to be looked forward to as something to enjoy. I do not know if there is one of these implements in any museum but if there is it would well repay the time to go and look at this ponderous instrument. To sit on the box while the mangle was done was an experience that frightened me and felt thrilled me. And if the mantel had to turn the handle he had my deepest sympathy. Sheets, Blankets and similar articles were hung on a line in the back yard until they were semi-dry. These big articles when they came out of the mangle were like sheets of hardboard & when dry it is easy to understand how useful the mangle house was to people who would have had to hang these things outside for a long time to get them decently dry especially in the atmosphere of an industrial district. There the smoke and smoke were tremendously in evidence. If the weather was wet one could keep big articles for weeks taking them out, bringing them in and setting them on the table than they had before they had been washed.
And the charges to her sheet & "Blanket" 
12 Rockover because extra care had to 
be taken not to crush the tassels on 
name. Mrs Price made a living but it 
was hard work for a woman of 50. I 
don't know whether she had a husband as 
I never saw a man in the place. Another 
one told me that when she went to the 
Doric Arcade later in her life she 
always thought of Mrs Price's rough house 
because of the scandal she had to listen to. 

Another thing. I recall being 
taken by my Nanny to see the Steam 
Trams which he was expecting to be 
scrapped for the introduction of Electric 
Buses. I did see the trams despite 
the smoke which surrounded them. 

In the morning of the necessity to strike up at 
the end of the line, the terminus being 
in the market square and the pulling 
part having to be transferred on a tarp 
to the opposite end of the tram for the 
return journey. I cannot recall 
having ridden on these. At the age of 
3½ we removed to the house in which my 
brother Harold was born and brought into 
the world. Nurse Lewis again attended 
y on Dr. hard to be reached. 

Circumstantial reasons were given for the removal but 
as I found out later the rent was less 
formed then because a little lower which
meant a smaller payment, and may have had business involuntarily which caused the change. There was not any such thing as compulsory rent, and the Rates had to be taken to Longton Swan I paid there. The landlord was usually his own collector as Estate Agent as we know them today were little in evidence. The entry of the Estate Agent was detrimental to the interest of the Tenant if previously he (the tenant) could almost compel the landlord by forceful argument — and a threat or two — if you think the agent always had his resources for doing nothing by saying in so many words "I appreciate you want these things, but I think the landlord won't listen to my pleading,"

"Dear! At the age of 10 just my entry into school life was made possible as my father was a friend of the husband of the Headmistress (who must have been the first time I had been used as a pawn in diplomacy). This was the Church of England School. Provided by the Secular Authorities of Conisworth Church which was the Vicarate, At the East Vale Church which was also the School, a Carite, situated there. And he did Labour for if he had to get the people to his Church to sing "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow," he was fleeging a dead horse. How could anyone expect the people to attend
The most likely would be wondering how they were going to exist until the next payday, if someone was working there, and if not working, I can leave that to the imagination. In any case, only a few people could have sung the hymns so very few could read. Here is a rough sketch to make for understanding and can be checked on by anyone interested as it is still in existence.

A - INFANT SCH
B - LIB. SCH
C - CHANCEL
D - TEACHERS ROOM
E - KIDS
F - PARTITION 2 CLASS 1 BOYS WHO SHOWED PROMISE
G - ENTRANCES

H - ALTAR
J - GIRLS CAY
K - BOYS
L - STOVES

DOTTED LINE IN CHANCEL

THIS IS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE
The infant school had 3 classes, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class, from which the child proceeded to the big school as it was termed where classes were called standards. The Headmaster taught the 1st class a young teacher the 2nd and the infant babes class was usually looked after by a pupil teacher so called. The pupil teacher was often a girl. She had reached leaving age and her parents had asked the Headmaster (or them more later) to let her get a little experience on the teaching side as they thought she might like to take up teaching as a vocation. These girls were usually children of little teachers or well-grown children of what have you. They were often the Lord's Anointed and usually they were often pillars in the Church of the Kirk of Scotland. They assured prevented me from mentioning names or perhaps I am afraid of someone's vengeance. All these I blessed being in one room it must be stretched of imagination to picture the chart when new infants were taken in. By the very nature of things these infants who had always had their mothers usually were now out on their own and at every opportunity exercised their lungs in efforts of crying and this made the 1st of teaching the 2nd 3rd 4th class a task for giants. All times nature took its usual course I had to be led to the lavatory where some very nasty operations had to be carried out.
Also it must be appreciated that of their
fashion; Bloomer dresses had not become
fashioned and with the shop dressing the chance of
keeping a mistake very great even down to
hero. I feel that I must take off my
hat to the Headmistress & her two young
teachers for the way they managed to
get any sort of schooling into their
children to prepare them for entry into
the Big School. And I suppose they were not
expected to the main object of the infant school
was to teach the Alphabet, Simple Arithmetic
spelling, small words so that when passed to
standard one it they had some small smattering
of knowledge. No classes were usually less
than six. It was little more if a "hit or miss" as
to whether a child even got hold of these
 elemental factors. The Infant School was
separated from the Big school by a welded
partition (see f). The reason for this being
that as the School was a Church the partition could be removed
to make room for more worshippers on a
particular day such as Easter. Harvest or
Children's Day. How often this was done I
cannot say because I never went at
all. But having given some idea of the
building itself let me look at the facilitas
enjoyed by these Infant. Seated or long
wooden forms which held 6 in comfort more
often 12 had to use them depending on the
Year. The procreation of children had reached
A high level. At each end of the form were iron supports or brackets to which was a back rest & wide a table like front about 12 in wide slightly sloped and at seat about 12 inches wide. The seat was so badly worn in places that it was easy for the child, naturally not always sitting still, to get a splinter in the leg. These forms were often cast off from the Big School where the wood and tear on them had been extremely heavy, owing to the necessity of keeping the children in during playtime in wet weather. I would add that there was not a great need to go into School because the conditions were not too pleasant. The playground was askew and obtained from the gas works or factories. The used coal boilers, and if you were running and slipped, well, it was just to bad and if in slipping you tore your trousers, knickers or shorts, Mummy preferred you not to come, so that when you did fall it was always Tom, Dick, or Harry who had jocked you. I have played football in the School yard during playtime and when we have returned to classroom, the players, with sticks in hand, recap our feet to remove sweat & the class kicked off and looked like crossing "Hum Boys". Hum Rugs were tattered made with Black & White stripes and were a great delicacy to us.
The playground was enclosed by a wire fence about 7 ft high and must not be climbed on or else punishment was the result. Outside the fence on two sides were all kinds of pegs, pegs for the entrance to the yard was on the opposite side to the entrance the 4th side of the oblong were fields which stretched for miles. It was via these fields my parents made their way for their marriage ceremony at Boweswell. But if you went through these fields and stopped off on a very clearly marked path were lecture for you. If you were an adult they would summon you for trespassing and as the losses of these fields were serious farms they could bring a lot of things against you. If you were a juveniles a different technique was applied. He would either catch you himself or send his dog after you and the dog would frighten you so much that you would stand still and be caught easily. Then you would receive a beating and I can still bring this little punishment back. Ooh! If it rained they had me wash on the way to school, the Classroom being totally inadequate at the best of times, was overloaded with books, copies, and papers of these children who happened to possess them. These things were hung on hooks inside where hooks had fallen off so been stowed.
And as they were always kept locked up in a closet on each other with no hint to any other, it can be realized that they were much better when we came to put them on again. I am still amazed at the young women who did not contract gout or rheumatism and the cold because part of your everyday life or even if you had been able to dry your outer garments your feet were usually very wet, either by having them rained on or not having the necessary proper footwear. It kept the wet out. The latter affected the majority of the scholars for you will have judged that few of the children were the sons and daughters of wealthy parents. I was one of the lucky ones and had always had good footwear as my father being in the upper class (sic) could afford to buy for me 2 pairs of boots one for school and the other for work. At 1/11 for plain school heavy ones with big necks and 8/11 per pair for boots having slight soles of softer leather. These latter got me in lots of trouble as I will record later. Some of the scholars never minded me with these 2 pairs of boots, but if they could have a pair from some girl of one of the philanthropic upper class of a stage that fitted them (it was lack of availability). They would hawk to me and others from whom they had come, who had worn them, and what wonderful and marvellously made boots they were. And all for nothing.
This did not happen often but sometimes occurred in the second hand shop we would procure a pair of boots that would fit our Jack or Polly even at the price of 6d or even 5d. These would be a good deal but they must only be worn for least of an excitement. Weather things were worn by some of the boys and at 15d per pair were a fair return for the money but you had to keep them tipped and then shoes were 3" per pair for 2 solid hobs and special shoes 2" per dozen. The girls would not have anything to do with clogs at any price preferring to wear boots or elastic sided boots even if they did lie in the last. I have since found out that many female were prepared to suffer the tortures of the damned for the sake of appearance and fashion. Hereabout I feel I must mention that great asset, the Stiletto. The piece of very thin slate was enclosed in a wooden frame and according to size and extra or at cost 1/2 (very small) to 1/3 (very large). If it had lines on one side they cost an extra 1/4 and if the first five letters of the alphabet were grooved in on the top line a farthing. If you got one of the best the overall cost was immense but few if any had those. On purchasing a slate someone usually gave Father bowled holes with a heated paper in the top, and bottom, bars of the frame and from these a piece of string,
a leather lace or even a piece of string. If your mother had broken hers and tied the pieces together through the holes and knotted in such a way that a big loop was formed through which you put one arm of your head and carried the slate on your back. That left your hands free for any other job you wished to do with them and also you never left it behind. To safely against break by theft you put your initials or brand in the side of the wooden frame but even then they went. Pencils for writing on the slate were bought in packets of 6 for 2d and a long box 6 inches by 1 1/2 in deep was covered by various scenes of children or landscapes. Children on a boat, on a gondola with background to match. At the bottom of the picture in every small print was "made in Germany." So sharpen these pencils was a waste of art for should you press too heavily they were easily broken. Then you would find yourself with 6 or 8 small pieces. So find a good step to sharpen them on and having found it you told your schoolmates. Many times have I been annoyed by indignant housewives who, because they had a nice stone step, because the mark for my pencil sharpening as I was chiseling the steps she had only footed. 
earlier in the day. The white step was a must for the homework and great judgment was pronounced on the ability to keep your step up to the first standard of Whiteness. By spotting on the step (there were other ways of eating it which must be located at rubbing the pencil backwards forwards with a turning motion one could get a very fine point but all the gray mark on that step and as my Mother objected to it being done on her, you always knew when she was not very friendly with someone as she often directed me where would be a good place to sharpen my pencil. Slates were not a necessity until you reached Standard one in the Big School and from then onwards by leaving it was your greatest asset. It is better that some lead pencil 4 pen and such work was done but that did not become some of your equipment until Standard 3, 4, 5 if you reached that pinnacle. As I left the School at the age of 10 (I will tell you why later) I had already got into the habit of using pencil, eraser and ink and this stood me in good stead on my joining the Queenbury Higher Elementary or Council School where I did have to have a slate, not pay school fees. Yes! pay school fees! What a game it was. If you did not take your school fees
on Monday morning you were not
home to fetch it and then you had the
opportunity to have fun and games.
Because even if some of us already
had the 1st up to standard 3 and 2nd
up to all standards above we still had to
say we had forgotten it so much as those who were "shy" of the expen-
This practice was a real secret among him
selfish of us as we did not wish anyone to lose
the game away. On return (perhaps an
hour later depending on the occasion,
we could think up eg. brother went out,
mother had ill foot change etc. lots of
either, (we were fertile liars) we were
given a stroke of the cane on each hand
if we had the money, and 3 outs on each
hand if we hadn't the money. So those
who had had it off their parents given it
or hidden it to lose it in on some kind
of enquiry it was placed against them
as owing 5 added to the Debt every time
they did not pay. In later years when the
school was closed some of those who
had paid the school fees regularly
get a refund, for some reason or
other I did not get anything.