

# **DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP**

**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 22**



**Autumn 2004**



# DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

## NEWSLETTER NUMBER 22: AUTUMN 2004

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## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Since Newsletter No 21 came out, in the summer of 2003, we have had an AGM, at Winkleigh, in 2003, and a Summer Conference, at Lamerton near Tavistock, in 2004. A full report on the latter will be carried over to Newsletter No 23, in 2005. Here, there is only space to say that it was a most successful day, held in beautiful sunny weather, and to express our gratitude and appreciation to our four excellent morning speakers, Stuart Blaylock, John Goodridge, Colin Buck and Martin Watts and to the owners, custodians and tenants of the buildings we were privileged to see, in the afternoon.

### Annual General Meeting 2003

The 2003 AGM was held, on 25<sup>th</sup> October, in the village hall at Winkleigh – a building itself of interest, in being inserted into the side of a (probably medieval) motte, and made of stone from Lord Portsmouth's largely demolished C19 mansion, Eggesford House, of which we were to see more in the afternoon.

Janet Daynes kindly mounted the Winkleigh archaeological group's exhibition, on its excavations of the WW2 buildings of Winkleigh airfield. I mounted a small display of photographs, maps, and a family tree, associated with Winkleigh's other 'castle' and the builder of the C18 brick-built house and 'banqueting house', Winkleigh Court.

Thirty five members attended the meeting and a few more came to the afternoon visits. The Committee remained unchanged, except for Su Scotting, who retired by rotation and decided not to stand for re-election. The Committee was then reduced to twelve. I repeated the reminder of my decision, announced when I accepted re-election in 2001, that I should be retiring as Secretary & Treasurer/Membership Secretary at the 2004 AGM. By that time, I should have been Treasurer for eleven years, Acting Secretary for two & a half years and Secretary for six years. I took over shortly after the 'Gentry Houses of the South Hams' conference, and for the next two years on a temporary basis, while we looked for someone with more experience and a higher public profile. This rare creature never materialised, alas. By the end of this eight & a half years I have, at least, acquired the experience and I shall do my best to pass on all its useful parts to our Secretary elect, Peter Child, who starts with the higher public profile I have always lacked. His generous agreement to accept this office gives me very great pleasure and

considerable relief. Dawn Honeysett, another valuable committee member and an experienced businesswoman, has equally kindly agreed to undertake the job of Treasurer & Membership Secretary – both coming forward since the AGM - and so I now know that DBG's future will be in very good hands.

The core subject of DBG's role in the C21 came up again, at Winkleigh. My own view was, that although we do far less casework than formerly – partly due to fewer cases being brought forward, but mostly because there are hardly any members willing to give the time to them – we have maintained, and sometimes expanded, our fulfilment of DBG's primary aim, *'To promote the study, wider understanding & appreciation of the historic buildings of Devon'*, in the depth and breadth of our Conference, AGM and Newsletter topics; and we are also proactive in support of conservation projects. I believe it to be true that the more in-depth knowledge we can, individually and corporately develop, the better and more authoritatively can we speak, in defence of our precious and often fragile heritage of historic buildings. And, while it must also be true that we have no hope of saving all of them, the more insight we can bring to the recording of them while they are still there, the better. Enormous strides have been taken, in the past thirty years or so, but there is still plenty of room for improving our understanding of the complex, evolved pasts of our buildings, and developing the growing expertise of our members.

The members explored the network of little streets of Winkleigh and visited the parish church of All Saints, largely and decoratively restored in the 1870s by Gould & Son, of Barnstaple. After lunch, we walked to the other end of the village, where Mr & Mrs Kimber kindly welcomed us to their motte and the delightful little two storey C18 brick folly built on the top of it. Today, it is seen in isolation but it was built as part of the landscaped garden of Winkleigh Court, now separated from it by the main road, which was cut through the garden in WW2, to provide bypass access to Winkleigh airfield. Thomas Lethbridge built both the house – brick and with attractive chimney clusters with blind arcading, the whole very similar to the now-demolished Combe Park, Broadwoodwidge – and the 'banqueting house' folly, probably c1740. The house is in different ownership and now a nursing home but Mr & Mrs Kimber hope to be able to restore the folly and build themselves a bungalow (on the site of a former

NAAFI canteen) below it and, hopefully, open it to the public. It is an enchanting little building, set in a large level area, on top of the motte, and is reached by a now wooded path, which winds up round the outside. The motte, itself, may have been a true early medieval castle or a fortified manor house of the Keynes family of the manor of Winkleigh Keynes, who owned it until the mid C16. The extensive, presumed secondary, levelling of the top has probably permanently removed most of the evidence.

From 'Court Castle', members returned to their cars and set off for Eggesford House, where its owner, the architect Edward Howell, is currently restoring the ruins of the main block of Lord Portsmouth's mansion. The guided tour lasted for well over an hour and members were able to see a fascinating exhibition of photographs of the house, with all its magnificent fixtures and fittings (several of which now adorn much humbler houses in the broad locality), taken prior to the sale, as well as being shown the exciting contemporary solutions to its re-building. In all cases, Edward Howell has chosen modern materials for the structure, although all fittings, such as door and stair cases, he has had made from oak grown on the estate. Where details of the original remain, such as on the south and east fronts, the new windows, in massive steel, very skilfully echo the proportions of the nineteenth century 'gothic'. Where nothing remains, as on the truncated west side, the solution is entirely modern. The general effect, seen from across the park, is now much as it once was. The crenellated granite parapet, much of which was lying about the site, was replaced by a huge crane, with the occasional missing bits replicated in concrete. The whole extremely tall house was floorless, when the Howells bought it (it had been sold for demolition, in the first place) and one of the first tasks was the lifting in of enormous steel joists. These floors have subsequently been provided with heating and faced with polished stone. To date, the re-creation has taken some ten years and will probably take a few more to complete. Meanwhile, Mr & Mrs Howell divide their time between London and an un-ruined ancillary block at Eggesford House. The members evidently appreciated their courage, almost as much as their imaginative architectural skills.

Those with the stamina, afterwards visited the delightful, tiny Eggesford church, across the valley and adjacent to the site of the original Eggesford House, which houses some

elaborate heraldic monuments to members of the original families, and is kept open by the efforts of a local trust – to which all Ed Howell's guided tours are dedicated. And finally, some took a welcome tea, in the café at the garden centre, in Lord Portsmouth's former walled kitchen gardens.

#### Newsletter No 22

In this issue, we depart from our normal policy of offering several short articles, on a broad mix of subjects, and present a monograph. Richard Parker, together with Stuart Blaylock, who took most of the photographs especially, have created what we believe to be the first ever history and gazetteer of Exeter schools, up to WW2. Richard Parker has devoted a great deal of research to this unique study of a whole class of architecture which, although generating much civic pride in its original creation, seems latterly to have been progressively under-valued. With so many excellent Exeter school buildings under current or potential threat of demolition, we feel this is a timely contribution.

#### Ann Adams

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Since the last Newsletter we have welcomed:

Mrs Sue Spurr, of West Quince, Rose Ash, SOUTH MOLTON EX36 4PW

Nigel Browne and Edmund Browne, of 16 Exeter Hill, CULLOMPTON EX15 1DJ

#### **Changes of address**

John Allan to 22 Rivermead Road, EXETER EX2 4RL

Ray Clarke (formerly of Bideford, then Okehampton) to Lake Farm, Hatherleigh, OKEHAMPTON EX20 3LH

# SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN EXETER 1800-1939

R.W. Parker

Illustrated by S.R. Blaylock

## INTRODUCTION

Many English towns and cities preserve a wide range of historic educational buildings, from the occasional survivors of 16th- or 17th-century charity schools to the modern primary and secondary schools of outlying housing estates. In terms of their contribution to the townscape, these buildings are perhaps comparable in importance with churches. School buildings are often the most architecturally ambitious structures in their locality and many have served for generations as a focus for the community. Their buildings and grounds have provided facilities for use both during and after school hours, for meetings, sporting events, evening classes and occasionally as polling stations. Historic school buildings are also an important physical record of the progress of educational provision. Whether the school was founded by an individual, a church or other charitable organisation, or as the result of local or national government policy, these buildings are tangible evidence of the past life of the community and of its commitment to mass education as a means of development and improvement.

This study examines the historic school buildings of Exeter, many of which were constructed in the early or mid 19th century, at a time when private individuals or organisations such as parishes or non-conformist congregations took the initiative in making basic levels of education available to the masses. In due course the provision of good educational facilities in appropriately designed buildings became a matter of civic pride. Ancient charities were reorganised and new institutions were founded with the aim of providing a complete system of education from the infants' schools to the universities. The buildings provided are often highly attractive structures, reflecting both the architectural tastes of the time and the changing aims and requirements of the institutions they housed. They also represent a corpus of high-status public buildings many of which were designed by notable local architects.

These buildings are an important historic resource, which is constantly under threat. Many school buildings of the greatest interest have already been destroyed. In Exeter the principal loss is undoubtedly St John's Hospital, a 12th-century Augustinian Priory which for centuries housed the ancient Free Grammar School and Blue Boys'

School. This complex was partially demolished and rebuilt in the late 19th century and finally destroyed in the Blitz of 1942. More recent losses have included the impressive buildings of the Devon and Exeter Central Schools in Rack Street, demolished in the 1970s, and, in the 1990s, the Flemish Renaissance style buildings of Paradise Place Board School.

Many other buildings have suffered from unsympathetic alterations such as the replacement of windows with inappropriately designed double glazing, suspended ceilings, extension in unsympathetic new materials and partial demolition. These alterations can dilute and erode the existing buildings to the point where the quality of the original design becomes obscured and a school in which it was formerly possible to take pride comes to resemble an unseemly cluster of huts (see Fig 31). Such additions are usually of poor quality and represent a bad investment, resulting in a poor environment in which to work and learn and requiring regular repair or replacement to prevent decay.

In these situations it is often difficult to see the opportunities presented by the original buildings which, in all but a few cases, are built to a standard of design and construction rare in modern buildings and with a visual appeal which is unique and irreplaceable. The extent to which such buildings are undervalued, despite their obvious quality, may be shown by the great majority which are not listed and by the common, but spurious, prejudice that 21st-century buildings are necessary for 21st-century educational use.

The threat to our remaining school buildings has recently greatly intensified. Many schools are currently identified for redevelopment as government and private money is made available to reorganise education. Existing schools are to be amalgamated and some schools are to be entirely rebuilt. Some will continue to occupy their existing sites; others are to be rebuilt on entirely new sites. This situation presents great opportunities for exciting new educational buildings but is also a serious threat to historic school buildings, since this money is only to be made available for new structures, and not for the refurbishment of existing

buildings, however structurally sound or architecturally important.

The reorganisation of both the primary and secondary schools has resulted in proposals to demolish some of our most interesting buildings, the most notable of which is perhaps Edward Ashworth's St Sidwell's Parish Schools in York Road (see Fig. 7). The 1870s buildings of St Michael's School at Heavitree are also identified for demolition and rebuilding. Other buildings face an uncertain future as separate schools are amalgamated and relocated to new sites. This has already resulted in the redundancy of two historic schools in Topsham. Among the secondary schools currently threatened with demolition (and unfortunately outside the scope of this article) are some of our best post-war school buildings, including those of Priory School, St Luke's School (formerly Vincent Thompson) and St Peter's School (formerly Hele's School)<sup>1</sup>. The current development proposals for the Hele Road campus of Exeter College are to result in the loss of both C. E. Ware's early 20th-century buildings for Hele's School and John Bennett's extension of 1931. Relocation of college departments from outlying sites to the main campus may well in future threaten both the Episcopal School buildings on Mount Dinham and those of the former Bishop Blackall School on Pennsylvania Road.

It is inevitable that changes and alterations will need to be made in those buildings which remain in use for education, or which are vacated and adapted to new uses such as housing. This study aims to show that there is no reason why such changes should inevitably result in the destruction or loss of the special qualities of historic school buildings. Many of the buildings described below are multi-phase structures which have been added to by accretion as and when required. It is noticeable among the examples given below that, with few exceptions, the designers of additional buildings and extensions respected the existing structures to the extent that the enlarged building has the appearance of an homogenous structure (see Fig 12). These examples provide lessons in the way in which the unique qualities of an historic school building might not only be preserved during future alterations, but perhaps even recovered and enhanced.

Although it is important that schools should have up-to-date facilities it is surely wasteful to destroy well-designed and attractive historic structures which have something to teach us about the way

our society has developed. It is to be hoped that in the forthcoming reorganisation of schools in Exeter the importance of the remaining historic schools will be recognised and that those buildings which cannot be enhanced and improved, by additions which build on the qualities of the existing structures, will be found new uses which will preserve their special character for the future. Several of the buildings described below are no longer in use for education, but have found uses as community centres or housing. These buildings continue to contribute to the visual richness of the city in their variety of building materials and in their often flamboyant architecture (see cover). An awareness of the history of the community in which we live and of the values and interests of that community is an important part of our education and fosters a sense of belonging. Many citizens have either studied or taught within these buildings and feel a direct, emotional connection with them. The demolition or loss of such buildings in significant numbers would be an act of vandalism which we would undoubtedly come to regret.

In Exeter the problem is compounded by the lack of an up-to-date list of buildings of historic and architectural importance. The current list reflects the prejudices of the time of its compilation and there are reasons to think that, had Exeter been the subject of systematic re-listing (rather than sporadic amendments), more of the structures described below might have been protected. It is surely inconsistent that a modest structure such as St Nicholas' Roman Catholic School in The Mint should enjoy Grade II listing, whereas landmark buildings of high architectural quality, such as those of Cowick Street Schools, St Sidwell's Schools or the Maynard School, are not listed. It is understood that a national review is taking place in response to the current threat to educational buildings, and that new guidelines are expected soon.

The philosophy of total replacement of our existing school buildings seems at present entrenched in local and national government policy and the loss of some of these buildings is perhaps inevitable. There is surely a need for spot-listing to protect the more exceptional buildings, and in every case the reuse or sympathetic extension of the older buildings should at least be considered as an alternative to wholesale replacement. In cases where demolition is 'unavoidable', some form of recording by measured drawings and photography should surely be a condition of planning consent for demolition, particularly if original drawings do not survive.

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<sup>1</sup> Several of these buildings are illustrated in the excellent Civic Society booklet "Discovering Exeter 11: 20th-century Architecture" by Eduardo Hoyos-Saavedra, 2001.



## EDUCATION IN EXETER, AN OUTLINE

In the following section a brief summary of the history of education in Exeter from the middle ages to the 1930s is given. After this the gazetteer illustrates and describes the surviving historic school buildings within the city and surroundings dating from around 1800 until the Second World War. The buildings and their major additions and extensions are listed by date in order to show how the architecture of school buildings was influenced by changing policy and taste, resulting in varied styles and types of building throughout the period. Where possible individual architects have been identified. Regrettably this study could not be extended to include post-war schools, many of which, though buildings of high quality, are also currently threatened with destruction.

### THE ANCIENT ENDOWED SCHOOLS

The history of educational provision in Exeter prior to the Reformation is obscure. The cathedral is known to have maintained schools, including a Song School since at least 1175 (Orme 1976, 45) and a Grammar School from the 1220s (*ibid.*, 47). Schools were also maintained on the premises of other religious institutions such as St John's Hospital; however these suffered disruption, if not total extinction, at the Reformation in the 16th century (White 1850, 96). Most of the ancient charity schools of the city have their origins in the late 16th and 17th century when they were founded as a result of benefactions of money, buildings or land bequeathed by wealthy local men and women. These endowments were administered by the City Chamber, the Dean and Chapter, the city parishes or other charitable trusts. Many ancient educational trusts have since been absorbed by others and few Exeter schools can demonstrate complete continuity with their first foundation. A brief outline of some of the educational institutions in existence prior to the reforms of the 19th century is given below. Private schools, academies and tutors, though an important part of the educational provision in the city, are omitted.

#### *The High School (?13th century)*

By the 1220s the Dean and Chapter of the cathedral were operating a Grammar School in the city, possibly from a site in Smythen Street (Orme 1976, 46). In around 1344 this school was provided with premises in Christchurch Lane (an alley off the High Street) by the then Dean, Richard Brayleigh (*ibid.*, 47). Although there were attempts in the 16th century to establish this school as a Free Grammar School, these attempts came to nothing. The High School flourished during the 16th and early 17th century, but finally ceased operation in c. 1750 (Bush 1962, 385, 363). The buildings of this school may have originated as a small chapel and, as with most early schools, consisted of a

single large hall or school room. They were finally demolished in the late 19th century, and their elaborate 16th-17th-century doors are preserved in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

#### *St John's Hospital: the Free Grammar School (1633)*

During the late 16th and early 17th century the lack of a grammar school under the direct control of the city was sorely felt by the civil authorities, while the establishment of a second grammar school in the city was strongly resisted by the patrons of the High School (Bush 1962, 364-5). Finally, as a result of the benefactions of local dignitaries such as, Joan and Francis Crossing, Alderman Thomas Walker and others, the City Chamber acquired the former lands and buildings of St John's Hospital and sufficient endowments to proceed with the foundation of the *Free Grammar School* in 1633. Although described as a free school, the income from the endowments was insufficient and the staff had to augment their income by charging fees for tuition (*ibid.*, 372). This school was the nucleus of the present 'Exeter School'.

#### *St John's Hospital: the Blue Boys' School (1636)*

Shortly afterwards a *Free English School* was founded, also at the hospital, to provide elementary education for the sons of the poor and with the secondary intention of preparing them for the Grammar School. This school, known as the *Blue Boys' School*, was generously endowed and supported by lands in many Devon parishes allowing some of its pupils to be educated free of charge (*ibid.*, 373). The foundation of both schools in the old buildings of St John's Hospital was sanctioned by letters patent of Charles 1st in 1637 (Sadler 1905). This foundation was to be tremendously influential in the history of education in Exeter. The Blue Boys' School was finally closed in the 1930s, but St John's Hospital Educational Foundation survives to this day.

#### *The Blue Maids' or Hele's Hospital (1656-8)*

Sir John Maynard had been the executor of the will of Elize Hele, who had left money in 1632 for 'public purposes' (Bradbeer 1974, 210). Maynard founded the *Blue Maids' Hospital* to provide education, food and clothing for as many as forty Blue Maids (Jenkins 1806, 393); however this number never seems to have been achieved (White 1850, 99). Until the middle of the 19th century the school shared an ancient courtyard house in Mary Arches Street with *St Mary Arches' Parish schools*. By 1859 the income of the charity had become inadequate to maintain the school, and it was discontinued, the remaining funds being transferred to St John's Hospital. The school was re-founded in the 1870s and is now known as the *Maynard School*.

### ***Episcopal Charity Schools (1709)***

The *Episcopal Charity Schools* were established in 1709 at the instigation of Bishop Offspring Blackall, who was instrumental in founding four charity schools. These were later reduced to two, a boys' school and a girls' school (Bradbeer 1974, 268). The schools were supported by voluntary subscriptions, and by collections made at the cathedral and city churches. Two phases of its buildings still survive, dating from 1818 and 1862, which differ markedly in architectural character (see below). Expansion of the charity in the 19th century led to the foundation of a further school, the *Exeter Episcopal Middle School for Girls*, later Bishop Blackall School, which was amalgamated with *Hele's School* to form the present St Peter's School in the 1980s. The Episcopal schools were finally discontinued in 1972.

### ***Parish Schools and other charity schools***

*St Sidwell's School* was founded in 1665 by Canon John Bury at the instigation of the Dean and Chapter. Still in existence today, this is probably the oldest parish school in the city (Harvey 2003, 1), though the former Infants' School in Heavitree is alleged to have been founded in 1517 (Croump, 1933-40, 45). *St Mary Arches' Parish Schools*, or *Wotton's Schools* were founded in 1689 and augmented by *Dr Glass' Charity*, actually a separate school, in 1784. Charity schools in the parishes of St Edmund, St Olave, (which had two schools) and St Mary Steps are mentioned in the returns to a questionnaire sent by the bishop to all the clergy in the diocese in 1744, as is a Dissenters School in St Mary Steps parish (Hoskins 1963, 87). From 1784 the dissenters maintained the *Protestant Dissenters' Schools*, founded in Paris Street by Micajah Towgood (Bovett, 1989, 122). By the time of the 1818 Parliamentary returns there was an endowed school and a 'paying school' in St Thomas parish, in addition to a grammar school 'kept by the parson'. There was also a school in Allhallows parish, a school maintained by the Tuckers' Guild and a large number of Sunday schools, in addition to schools run by the British Society and National Society, which will be described below (Sellman 1984, 38).

## **THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Despite the range of historic charity schools available in the early part of the 19th century, educational opportunities for children from the middle and lower classes were often limited. Many of the historic schools were under-endowed, badly run or simply too expensive to serve the needs of a rapidly increasing population. The ancient charity schools had usually been intended to provide free education, but in many cases the master or mistress of the school was permitted to augment his or her

(often meagre) income by taking private pupils, and in many ancient schools these paying pupils had come to dominate. In many cases funds were used for purposes other than subsidising the education of poor children. For example, the Blue Maids' Hospital was described in 1818 as having only 2 pupils, though there had formerly been ten. The number of pupils had been reduced, due to the cost of repairs to the premises (Sellman 1984, 38).

In the early 19th century the drive towards reform of political and charitable institutions would inevitably have led to changes to the existing educational charities; however there was little desire on the part of local and national government to provide wider provision of education, perhaps because of a prejudice that it was both unnecessary, and perhaps even dangerous, to educate the poor (Newton 1968, 71). The drive to make basic levels of education available to the masses in fact came from the churches, whose desire for wider literacy was driven by the hope that the poor would read the bible, learn their Catechism and understand the principles of their religion. In the early years of the 19th century two societies springing from distinct sectarian backgrounds were founded, which had an enormous influence on the provision of elementary education across the nation.

### ***British schools***

The *British and Foreign School Society* was founded as the 'Society for the Promotion of the Lancastrian System for the Education of the Poor' in 1808. This society aimed to popularise the teaching of Joseph Lancaster, who had founded a school in Borough road, Southwark in 1798 ([www.bfss.org.uk](http://www.bfss.org.uk)). The society was non-conformist or evangelical in character, and aimed to educate poor children on a non-sectarian and inter-denominational basis. In addition to basic education they carried out teacher training and operated a monitorial system using pupil teachers. The society changed its name to the British and Foreign School Society in 1814 and is still in existence today.

### ***National schools***

The *National Society (Church of England) for Promoting Christian Education* was founded in 1811 with the aim of founding a church school in every parish in England and Wales. The society operated by offering grants to potential founders of schools and had a high church character. Schools were run according to the 'Madras system' devised by the Revd. Andrew Bell, a former army chaplain in Madras. Poor children were to be educated to a level sufficient to allow them to 'read the Bible and understand the doctrines of our Holy Religion' ([www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk)). Once a pupil was admitted attendance was compulsory and required payment

of a fee. National schools were involved in teacher training and operated a monitorial system. Most existing Church of England schools in England either originated as or were later transformed into National schools. The National Society remains in existence today.

### EXETER SCHOOLS IN THE EARLY 19TH-CENTURY

Central School in London had been founded in 1811 as the first National school. The first school to be founded in Exeter according to the principles of the National Society was the *Devon and Exeter Central Schools*, which began in the same year and is thus one of the earliest foundations of the National Society. Although its historic buildings do not survive, this school was the nucleus of many Exeter schools and commissioned several important purpose-built school buildings. The school initially operated from Sun Street (a side street off South Street), but by November 1814 new buildings had been erected by an unknown architect on a site in Magdalen Street at a cost of £1500 (SDSC 1968, 4). The school was a rectangular building with a classical stucco frontage three bays wide, which was illustrated by G. Townsend in the late 19th century (WSL MD P&D 4982). The arrangement of the interior is unknown, but probably included large classrooms on both the upper and lower storeys. These large classrooms are typical of early 19th-century school buildings and were designed in response to the shortage of trained teachers and the use of the monitorial system; they allowed a single master or mistress to supervise the activities of a number of pupil teachers at the same time.

The Central Schools were still in their premises in Magdalen Street in 1850 (White 1850, 101), but shortly afterwards the school moved to magnificent new premises in Rack Street and the earlier premises were demolished. The new buildings were designed by G. Cummings in the Tudor Gothic style (Gray 2000, 110) and dated from 1858. They were constructed of red brick with Bath stone dressings and sparing decoration of black Staffordshire bricks. The boys and girls were educated separately in large classrooms on the ground and first floors, and there were separate play areas and houses for both the master and mistress. Although these buildings remained in use until after the war they were unfortunately demolished in 1978. Central School survives in modern buildings in St. Leonard's parish.

In 1835 the *Exeter National Schools* were founded in the former British school premises in Bartholomew Street. These schools were the nucleus of three schools in St David's Parish, for

boys girls and infants (SDSC 1968, 4), and also provided a temporary home for the St Mary Arches' Parish Schools. By 1850 National schools had been founded in St James' and St Sidwell's parishes 'and some other of the city parishes' (White 1850, 102). Many schools were founded or refounded as National schools during the 1850s and 60s, largely as a result of the enthusiasm and drive of local benefactors such as William Gibbs and John Dinham or high-church clergymen such as the Revd John Medley in St Thomas and the Revd John Lincoln Galton in St Sidwell's parish.

In keeping with their ecclesiastical connections and with the writings of *The Ecclesiologist*, the majority of the National schools founded in Exeter during the 1840s and 50s were Gothic or Elizabethan in style and quite different in appearance from the earlier, classically inspired building type exemplified by the early 19th-century buildings of the Central Schools and the Episcopal Charity Schools. A typical National school might consist of separate boys' and girls' schoolrooms, sometimes combined beneath a single, high roof with a prominent bell turret, and generally only a single storey high. Separate classrooms were sometimes provided for teaching smaller classes or infants, and there was usually a master's house, cloakrooms and lavatories under separate roofs. These elements were combined to form highly picturesque compositions, with respect to *The Ecclesiologist's* dictum that the school should be 'the prettiest building in the village next to the church' (Dixon and Muthesius 1978, 236). A similar picturesque style was chosen for the buildings of the new *Hele's School* in Exeter, founded in 1839-40 with funds from a long-forgotten educational charity, recovered during the charity reforms of the 1830s.

The first *British Schools* in Exeter were founded in 1811-12 and occupied purpose-built accommodation in Bartholomew Street. The school was described as a 'Lancasterian School' in 1821 (Bovett 1989, 119) but later failed, due to a lack of pupils. A second British school was founded in 1845 at an unknown location in Coombe Street, but this was later united with the Protestant Dissenting Schools in Paris Street (Bovett 1989, 105). The rubble stone warehouse with Gothic details, in present-day Lower Coombe Street, immediately above the underpass beneath Western Way, may well be the former British school building. The apparent failure of the British Society to establish schools in Exeter, by comparison with the National Society, may be only relative, given the numerical superiority of the Anglicans; however it may also have been due to the success of other sectarian schools, such as the *Wesleyan Schools* in The Mint, the *St Sidwell's* or *Grosvenor Place Independent*

*School*, off the Blackboy Road, and the *Bedford Chapel School*, founded in 1835, which provided alternative opportunities for education of a non-conformist or evangelical character (*ibid.*, 109).

The architectural treatment of the nonconformist schools appears to have been quite distinct from that of the National schools, though sometimes also utilising the Gothic style. The earlier building type of superimposed classrooms housed in a tall, rectangular block was perpetuated at both the Mint Wesleyan Schools of 1846, and in the Wesleyan Schools in King Street of 1862. Both buildings employ Italian rather than English Gothic detail, the latter having a fine façade to King Street, in a style derived from the Italian Romanesque.

#### *Diocesan Boards of Education and St Luke's College*

In 1838 a committee set up by the National Society suggested that the dioceses of the Church of England might be used as bases for establishing a national scheme for teacher training. Soon after this, Diocesan Boards of Education were founded across the country. In Exeter the new Diocesan Board of Education founded the *Diocesan School for the Training of National Schoolmasters*, in a house in the Cathedral Close in 1839-40. This institution, the first of its kind in the country, later became St Luke's College. By the 1850s forty students were in residence and in 1854 the college was relocated to new Gothic buildings in Heavitree Road designed by John Hayward (Falla, 1983, 13-15). From 1856 the college operated a practising school, initially in the former parochial schools in Heavitree, but later in purpose-built buildings on the college campus. Student teachers from the college also practiced in other local schools in Exeter. The practising school changed its name to St Luke's College School in 1935 and later to the Vincent Thompson School, and survives today as St Luke's High School. St Luke's College remains in use for teacher training as part of Exeter University.

#### *Ragged schools*

Attendance at the schools described above normally required the payment of a fee, which may have prevented many of the poorest children from attending. Free education for the poorest children in the city was provided from the early to mid 19th century by a number of 'ragged schools', supported by subscriptions and donations. 'Ragged schools' were first begun by a Portsmouth shoemaker called John Pounds, who in 1818 began teaching without fees. His idea was developed during the 1840s, particularly in urban centres in Scotland, through the efforts of the Rev. Thomas Guthrie. In 1844 Lord Shaftesbury formed the Ragged School Union

and by 1870 as many as 350 'ragged schools' had been established in Britain ([www.maybole.org](http://www.maybole.org)).

In Exeter the *Rack Street Ragged Schools* were established in 1846, and provided with new buildings in Ewings Lane in 1869. *St James' Ragged Schools* were established in premises in Blackboy Road in July 1856. Both schools were discontinued after the 1870 education act when they were absorbed into the new system of Board schools (Bovett 1989, 124). No buildings certainly associated with a ragged school now survive in Exeter.

#### **THE 1870 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT**

By the late 19th century mass education had become a serious political issue, and in August 1870 the Government passed '*An Act to provide for Elementary Education in England and Wales*'. The act provided for the erection of a vast number of new elementary schools across the nation and for the establishment of local school boards to administer them. Elections for the Exeter board were held in 1871, and were marked by sectarian controversy (Newton 1968, 221-226). By 1875 the Exeter board had established six new schools in Exeter, in impressive new buildings. These schools included *Exe Island School* (1873), in buildings by John Johnson, now demolished (Croump 1933-40, 183), *Newtown Schools* (1873-4, see below), *St James Board School* (1873-4, demolished), *Paradise Place Board School* (1874, demolished), *St Mary Arches Board School* (1875, demolished) and *Holloway Street Schools* (1875, see below). The St Thomas school board founded a new girls' Board school in Union Street in 1872-3 (see below) and another in Okehampton Road in the 1890s (demolished). Many former National schools, such as that at Exwick, became Board schools, or were administered by the school board as Voluntary schools, allowing them to retain their links with the Church of England, which had founded them originally. In some parishes small denominational schools, such as the *Hooper Street Schools* (1884), continued to be founded long after the establishment of the Board schools.

All of the new Board schools of the 1870s in Exeter were Gothic in style and similar in character to the earlier National schools. Some architects, however, were beginning to feel that an architectural style with such strong ecclesiastical associations was inappropriate for state-provided educational buildings. In 1874 the London architect E. R. Robson published a book entitled '*School Architecture*', in which he outlined the case for the use of the 'Queen Anne style' (in fact more closely resembling that of the Flemish Renaissance), as opposed to Gothic, for modern Board schools

(Dixon and Muthesius, 1978, 239). Robson's book appears to have influenced later school buildings in Exeter, particularly through the work of James Jerman, architect to the Exeter school board during the 1890s. The character of school buildings changed completely at this time, with densely planned buildings several storeys high, decorated with ornate, shaped gables and classically-inspired details. The 'Queen Anne' and Edwardian Baroque styles were eventually to dominate educational architecture in the city during the early 20th century.

#### ***Reorganisation of the endowed schools***

The historic endowed schools in Exeter were also reorganised in the 1870s, with the aim of providing a complete system of education in the city, comprising elementary, second-class and first-class schools. This involved the re-establishment of the Blue Boys' School at St John's Hospital, as a public elementary school, the reorganisation of Hele's School and the Episcopal Schools, to provide 'intermediate' schools (including a new school for girls, later Bishop Blackall School), the re-foundation of the ancient Grammar School, and the revival of the Blue Maids' School (the present Maynard School) to provide an equivalent high school for girls (Newton 1968, 231). The provision of new buildings for these institutions brought the work of architects of the calibre of William Butterfield to Exeter and resulted in some of the most attractive public buildings in the suburbs of the city. The 1870s also saw the tentative beginnings of an university at Exeter, through the efforts of Miss Jessie Montgomery and the work of the University Extension Movement. The 'Exeter Technical and University Extension College' finally came into being at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum buildings in 1894 (*ibid.*, 233). New buildings by Tait and Harvey were provided in 1911, but fall outside the scope of this study.

### **THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Local Education Authorities were established in 1902 as a result of the Education Act of that year, which abolished the school boards and made Local Authorities responsible for providing and administering education. Thereafter, the City Council became responsible for the former Board schools, for the Voluntary schools and also for the Grammar and Girls' High School, which have since become independent. An investigation into the condition of secondary and higher education in Exeter was undertaken by Professor Sadler in 1905, and many improvements, including large new buildings, were subsequently provided.

The new structures erected by the Local Education Authorities generally took the form of extensions to

the existing school buildings. Some, however, were of a startlingly different character from their predecessors. The *St Thomas Boys School* (later John Stocker School) was a large, two-storey brick building with a central hall running the full height of the building and surrounded by classrooms. Regrettably, it does not survive. Some of the smaller Urban District Councils, such as Heavitree (which existed only from 1896-1913 before being absorbed into Exeter), did not have Education Committees, and the new *Heavitree Council Schools* (1907) in Ladysmith Road were built, at the expense of the Devon County Education Committee, in an attractive Arts-and-Crafts version of 'Queen Anne'. At the *St James' Council Schools* in St James Road (1907) the Baroque style may have been deliberately chosen to contrast with the adjacent Gothic church, itself now destroyed. At Hele's School the new buildings of 1908 were curiously neutral in style, yet wholly overwhelmed the earlier buildings behind.

Although some of these Edwardian school buildings might perhaps be regarded as insensitive to their context, they nevertheless have an attractive architectural treatment and a confidence that reflects the pride with which the local authorities and, no doubt, the public, viewed their achievements in educational provision. Later in the 20th century, a less assertive style was developed by successive architects to the Local Education Authorities. These buildings are typified by low-rise structures arranged in long ranges around one or more courtyards or gardens. As at *Montgomery School* and *Bradley Rowe School*, there is usually a prominent assembly hall and attractive, vaguely 'Art Deco', decoration to the porches and the parapets of the main buildings. Many of these unassuming buildings have been badly damaged by inappropriate replacement glazing, and several are currently threatened with demolition.

Unfortunately, space does not allow this study to consider the large numbers of educational buildings erected in Exeter following the Second World War. It must therefore suffice to say that the architectural quality of the new buildings provided by the City Architects for Priory High School (designed in 1948), Vincent Thompson School (1948) and the replacement buildings for Hele's School, (1959) is extremely high (Hoyos-Saavedra 2001, 13, 14), and puts to shame the later, usually prefabricated, buildings which were added to these schools during the 1960s and 70s. Such accretions were erected rapidly, to meet a short-term need, and have not endured well. It is a tragedy that the decay and necessary replacement of these temporary buildings should also result in the loss of the better-designed and constructed buildings alongside them.



Fig. 1: Detail of one of the teachers' houses at the former Episcopal Charity Schools, Upper Paul Street



## GAZETTEER OF SURVIVING BUILDINGS

### BRITISH SCHOOLS, Bartholomew Street West.

Architect unknown; c 1812 (Fig. 2)

This four-storey stone-built structure is possibly the earliest surviving purpose-built educational building in the city. Constructed as a British School in 1811-12, the school was described as a 'Lancasterian School' in 1821 (Bovett 1989, 119). The school later failed, due to a lack of pupils, and the vacant building was acquired by the National Society. From 1835 the building was utilised as the premises of the Exeter National Schools and by St Mary Arches' Parish Schools. The premises were drawn by George Townsend in October 1868 (WSL MPR P&D 07611)

The building consists of a single rectangular block constructed of local volcanic trap and rising three storeys high under a hipped slate roof. The façade is crowned by a parapet and is well preserved except for the ground floor, where a warehouse doorway has been made, replacing an arched doorway shown in Townsend's drawing. The north-eastern elevation has tiers of 'gothick' windows with two-centred arched heads and no tracery. The main elevation to Bartholomew Street has more accurate 'Tudor' detail, including a four-centred arched doorway and mullioned windows with limestone dressings, the second floor windows having high transoms. It is possible that these windows are later insertions, undertaken to 'improve' the character of the building. It is uncertain how the building functioned; it may have consisted of a large schoolroom on each floor. The building ceased to function as a school in 1868 and was subsequently advertised as to let for use as a warehouse. It is not listed and has recently been converted to housing.

### EPISCOPAL CHARITY SCHOOLS, Upper Paul Street

Architect unknown; c 1817-18 (Fig. 1)

Listed Grade II

The buildings at Nos 79-81 Queen Street incorporate the considerable remains of the early 19th-century building of the Episcopal Charity Schools. Prior to the construction of these buildings in Upper Paul Street the boys were accommodated in Waterbeer Street and the girls in Mary Arches Street (Bovett 1989, 110). The schools were supported by voluntary subscriptions, and by collections made at the cathedral and city churches. At the opening of the new buildings in 1818 the Madras system (above) was adopted and by 1850 the buildings were already accommodating 130 girls and 180 boys (White 1850, 100).

The present buildings were constructed in 1817 to the designs of an unknown architect, at a cost of £1600 (*ibid.*). A foundation stone, laid on 21st August 1817, was recorded by Croump at 'Cobham' on Stoke Hill. A free-standing statue of a pupil, similar to that of the 'Blue Boy' in Princesshay, was also recorded 'at Cobham' and attributed to this school (Croump 1933-40, 130).

The original schoolroom is now wholly concealed by later buildings and has been severely altered, but survives almost complete. This building consisted of a large rectangular block two storeys high, under a shallow-pitched slate roof supported by king-post trusses. The building contained large schoolrooms on each floor, one for girls and one for boys. The building was set back from the street frontage behind a small forecourt, now infilled by a later Victorian Gothic building. The original frontage has been destroyed, but the remains of a plaster quoin, with incised panelled decoration, survives on the north-east elevation of the building, and is visible from a narrow court off Upper Paul Street. The frontage was no doubt of three bays under a flat parapet, as at the 1813 Central Schools in Magdalen Street (described above).

The frontage was flanked by two small houses for the master and the mistress of the schools. One of these is almost completely preserved, even retaining a section of the railings and gates which formerly defined the forecourt. This small and extremely attractive two-storey building is constructed of the local blood-red brick, with white-painted plat bands and a pediment to the gable. It was entered through a doorway which still survives opening off the forecourt; regrettably the original ground-floor window in the street frontage has recently been cut down to form a new doorway to replace this.

A corresponding house formerly existed on the opposite side of the forecourt, but this was destroyed during the creation of Queen Street in the 1830s. It was replaced by a large, three storey brick house with elegant curved corners and plaster quoins. The stucco treatment of the ground floor is a later alteration: originally the brickwork continued to ground level. The size and grandeur of the replacement dwelling may suggest that this was the master's house and the smaller house intended for the mistress. The buildings were sold for use as commercial premises, following the removal of the Episcopal Schools to Mount Dinham in 1862.





Fig. 2: The former British Schools in Bartholomew Street West.



Fig. 3: The former St James' National Schools, St James' Road.



Fig. 4: The former Wesleyan Schools, The Mint. The original buildings of 1846 are shown on the left. Part of the 1886 extension by James Crocker can be seen on the right.



Figure 5: The former Countess Weir National Schools, School Road, Countess Wear.

### **ST JAMES' NATIONAL SCHOOLS, St James' Road**

**Architect unknown, c. 1845 (Fig. 3)**

These schools are now set back from the road in a large car park, but were formerly hidden behind St James' Church, which occupied much of the area and was destroyed in the blitz of 1942. Bovett considered that they may have been erected in c. 1845 as National schools, and this is confirmed by Pollard who describes them as Voluntary schools constructed from 'traprock from Pocombe with freestone dressings, small playground and master's residence, adapted Gothic' (Pollard 1894, 61). Bovett suggests that the original building developed in two phases, consisting of a boys' and a girls' schoolroom, to which a classroom and a porch were added in the late 19th century (Bovett 1989, 127). Unfortunately it has been impossible to discover the name of the architect. The buildings occupy three sides of a former courtyard to the rear of the demolished church. They are low, single-storey buildings constructed from the local volcanic stone. The architecture is very attractive, simplified perpendicular Gothic, with four-centred heads to the doorways and the window lights and steeply pitched and slated roofs with exposed trusses within, supported on decorated corbels. The windows are large and mullioned, with very tall, narrow lights. The location of the master's residence is uncertain; it may have been absorbed as a classroom at a later date.

Undated and unsigned plans for alterations in the boys' schoolroom and for the provision of new privies survive at the Devon Record Office (DRO 1473/EB3/53). These show that the boys' and the girls' schoolrooms were arranged at right angles to each other and separated by a moveable partition, allowing the clergy of St James' Church to lead prayers for both schools at the same time from the angle of the building. In addition to this partition, individual classes were divided by curtains and there were raked seats at one end of the building, described as a 'gallery'.

The school had outgrown this accommodation by the 1870s, and the infants department was moved to a new Board school on an adjacent site, opened on 13th April 1874 (Bovett 1989, 127). This was later rebuilt for girls and infants by James Jerman and survives to this day (see below). The old National School buildings remained in use until 1954 when the schools were moved to new premises in Beacon Heath (*ibid.*, 413). The buildings are not listed and now serve as a community centre.

### **WESLEYAN DAY SCHOOLS, THE MINT**

**Architect unknown, 1846 (Fig. 4)**

The Wesleyan Schools in The Mint were attached to the Mint Methodist Church and were established in 1846. The buildings are striking in that they are not Gothic, but classical, in a style described in Pollard's guide as 'adapted Italian' (Pollard 1894, 61). The school occupied a large three-storey block to the south west of the church, facing The Mint. The elevation to the street is of brick with three tall, semi-circular headed windows on each floor. There is a stone plat band and a hipped slate roof. The central doorway on the ground floor is now blocked. The buildings were constructed at a cost of £1200 and could accommodate 100 pupils (White 1850, 102).

Plans and elevations of great charm survive for the original buildings (DRO 1473c/EB3/52) showing a three-storey building, containing a boys' schoolroom on the top floor, a girls' schoolroom on the first floor and a passage, other rooms and privies on the ground floor. The roof was a truncated queen-post roof. The plans also show the layout of the furniture, which varies for each classroom. The girls sat on benches down the centre of the room, facing their teacher, who sat with her back to the window. The boys' benches were arranged along one side of the room, facing a wall. The elevations show texts and maps of England and Wales and Europe and Asia hanging on the walls. Plans for late 19th-century alterations also survive, showing the substitution of raked seating, described as galleries, for the original benches.

The school was extended along The Mint in 1886 (see below). The buildings are not listed and remain in use as community facilities by the Mint Methodist Church.

### **COUNTESS WEIR NATIONAL SCHOOLS, School Road, Countess Wear.**

**Architect unknown, c. 1848**

**Listed Grade II (Fig. 5)**

Countess Wear was formerly in Topsham parish, and remained so until 1940. During the early 19th century, with the establishment of St Luke's Church, the hamlet began to develop the character of a small village, and this small schoolroom was provided in 1848 as a Mixed Public Elementary School (Kelly's Directory, 1914, 167). A teachers' house was added in 1853 and in 1854 the school was established as a National school. In 1902 a further classroom was added to the southeast (Bovett 1989, 105). Plans for the building survive (DRO 1473c/EB2/40), but these are unfortunately unsigned and undated and it has not been possible to identify the architect. The architectural treatment is extremely simple with dressed rubble walls in white limestone and slate roofs. The teachers'

house lies to the north of the main schoolroom, expressed by small windows and a pair of gabled dormer windows in the roof. The main schoolroom is an austere building, projecting forwards from the other buildings, with large windows fitted with timber mullions, projecting eaves and a slate roof. The playground retains its gate piers and iron railings. The 1902 schoolroom is designed in a similar style to the main buildings and appears to retain its original windows. The school was closed in 1954 and its buildings were sold and converted into housing (Bovett 1989, 105) without destroying its visual appeal.

**HELE'S SCHOOL, Hele Road (Exeter College)**  
**John Hayward, 1849-50. Extensions by Edward Ashworth & E.H. Harbottle (Fig. 6)**

Elize Hele (1560-1635) had bequeathed money for 'public purposes' in 1632, but his trustees died without fully achieving his wishes and the will remained in chancery. The failure to carry out the conditions of Hele's will was discovered in 1837 and new trustees were duly appointed (Bradbeer, 1974, 210). In 1839-40 Queen Victoria ordered the disposal of the funds in educational charities. This included '£1500 to be paid to Sir John Duckworth and others to build a school in Exeter, with £300 per annum for maintenance'. Soon afterwards a site in St David's Parish was acquired from the city council and building commenced in 1849 (*ibid.*, 212).

An account of the opening of the new buildings is given in the *Western Times* for 15th January 1850. Unusually the architect is not mentioned by name. The buildings cost £1000, and are described as in 'Old English style', in grey Chudleigh limestone with Bath stone dressings to windows and copings. There was a principal classroom 45 feet long and 20 feet wide, with classrooms at either end, set back from the main range of buildings. The large classroom was lit by mullioned and transomed windows and by a tall octagonal cupola. At the northeast end, over the main door, was a bell cote in which the bell from the former Magdalen Hospital Chapel was hung (Harding 1851, 268). This range also contained a further small classroom on the first floor. East of this was a master's house with a gabled elevation of three bays, which was later extended with a wider, gabled addition. Adjoining the south-western classroom was a covered playground, with an open front supported by Gothic arches. Sanitary facilities were provided in the area behind the main classroom and were described as 'excellent' in 1905 (Sadler 1905, 15).

Despite considerable later alteration these buildings survive complete, though masked by Edwardian school buildings added in 1908 (discussed below).

The buildings were complete as at present by 1876, but there is an interesting variety of detail, suggesting that they were not constructed as a single phase. The architects involved are given by Pollard as above (Pollard 1894, 63). The original buildings have mildly 'Tudor' detailing such as mullioned windows with square heads, some of which retain cast iron casements with elongated hexagonal panes. The chimneys consist of clusters of shafts with picturesque battlemented tops. The central and northern classrooms have high, arch-braced roofs springing from decorative corbels that remain visible today. These buildings may perhaps be attributed to John Hayward. The south-western classroom has more developed Gothic detailing, including windows with plate tracery in the gables, and highly unusual windows in a projecting block adjoining the door. This may perhaps be the work of Ashworth. The covered playground and the master's house seem different again and may perhaps be attributed to Harbottle. All these buildings were in place by 1876. Many of the windows have regrettably been spoiled by inappropriately-designed modern double-glazing and dormer windows in the roof of the covered playground. The buildings are not listed; they are now occupied by Exeter College, which is currently planning a major redevelopment of the site.

**ST SIDWELL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
COMBINED SCHOOLS, York Road**  
**Edward Ashworth, 1853-4. Extended by James Jerman, 1895 (Fig.7)**

This school is a survival of the ancient parish schools, founded by Canon John Bury in 1665 to provide free education in St Sidwell's parish (above). The schools may originally have occupied a small building in St Sidwell's churchyard (Harvey 2003, 2), but were later removed to the corner of Well Street and York Road, possibly at the instigation of the incumbent, the Revd John Lincoln Galton (*ibid.*, 5). Surviving plans among those for the new buildings (DRO 1473/EB3/54) show that the original site chosen for the new buildings was on the opposite side of York Road, possibly on land granted to the parish for a free school in 1665 (Harvey 2003, 2).

The buildings were designed by Edward Ashworth in 1853 and completed in 1854. The surviving plans and sections show two long, oblong classrooms for girls and boys, separated by a gabled master's house with dormer windows breaking into the roof. The treatment of the roofs of the two schoolrooms is particularly interesting; the girls' schoolroom is shown with unusual scissor trusses, with curved feet resting on ornamental corbels. The boys' school has a more conventional



Fig. 6: The Victorian buildings of Hele's School, photographed from the tower of St David's Church in 1901.



Fig. 7: St Sidwell's Schools (Edward Ashworth 1853-4). The original buildings on the left; the extension of 1895 on the right.



Figure 8: The entrance façade of the former St Nicholas Roman Catholic Schools.

arch-braced roof resting on wall plates, without corbels.

The buildings survive at the centre of the present complex, the boys' schoolroom distinguished by a tall bellcote. The buildings are constructed of brick, with stone dressings in an austere Tudor style, under steeply-pitched slate roofs. The windows are mullioned and transomed with square-headed lights and doorways are four centred. There were originally separate playgrounds for boys and girls and lavatories at the northeastern edge of the site, which still survive. In 1870 Edward Ashworth added an Infants' School at the rear of the site. Plans for this building, signed and dated by Ashworth, survive with the earlier plans for the main building. The Infants' School is shown with a roof of the same type as the earlier girls' schoolroom. Unfortunately this building was destroyed in the blitz of 1942 and rebuilt in an entirely different style.

Later in the 19th century, the buildings were extended by the addition of a new range to the girls' schoolroom, and a new classroom between the two ranges, creating a quadrangular building. Galleries were added in the roof space (Harvey 2003, 12) and another extension to the southeast of the boys' schoolroom gave the building its present form. All these extensions respected the style and materials of the original building, so that the school presented an attractive and homogenous appearance (*ibid.*, 14). A foundation stone recording the extension of the building by James Jerman in 1895 was recorded by Croump and it is not unlikely that Jerman was responsible for all the late 19th-century additions to the building (Croump 1933-40, 5). The ruined infants' school was replaced with a tactful new building, creating new classrooms and a hall, in the 1950s. More recently, the quality of the additions has left much to be desired and a number of unsightly additions obscure the elevations. In the 1970s the master's house was obscured by extensions, its gables were removed and many of the windows were mutilated.

The school buildings are not listed and remain in use as a Church of England Combined School. The school has formed the setting of a successful novel by one of its teachers<sup>2</sup> and its pupils have successfully campaigned for the restoration of the bell, in the bellcote over the former boys' schoolroom. Despite this pride in their historic school, the existing buildings are currently threatened with demolition, as part of the current proposals for the reorganisation of primary education in Exeter.

<sup>2</sup> *'The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler'* by Gene Kemp. Carnegie Medal Winner 1977

### **ST NICHOLAS' ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, The Mint.**

**Architect unknown, 1854**

**Listed Grade II (Fig. 8)**

The foundation stone of this modest building, immediately adjoining the Mint Wesleyan Schools, was laid on 19th June 1854 and the school opened in January 1855. This school is likely to have been established either by the antiquarian clergyman, the Revd George Oliver, or his successor, the Revd J. Eccles.

In contrast to some of the ambitious school buildings provided by and for the Nonconformists and the established churches, this building resembles a traditional village schoolroom in that it consisted of a single room only. The building is in red brick over a stone plinth and with stone dressings, providing mildly Gothic detail to the street frontage, including a three light window with intersecting tracery, a quatrefoil window and a gable cross, recently removed. The elevation to the school playground, in front of the 18th-century Roman Catholic Chapel of St Nicholas, had tall, rectangular windows without any architectural pretensions.

The school expanded into the former chapel in the late 19th century and became a voluntary Roman Catholic school in 1902. In 1958 it was moved temporarily to the former Holloway Street Board Schools (ECSG 1964, 68) and now occupies modern premises off Topsham Road. The old schoolroom was subsequently utilised by the Exeter College School of Printing. It has now been converted into housing.

### **EXWICK SCHOOL, Exwick Road**

**A. Weslake, 1859-60 (Fig. 9)**

The schools at Exwick were established in the late 1850s, at the instigation of the Revd John Medley, the incumbent of St. Thomas' Church and a founder member of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society. The site, close to Medley's new church of St Andrew, was given by the Buller family in 1859. The school opened in 1861 and was described in *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* for July 18th, 1862, as 'a group of buildings which would reflect credit on any parish' (Bovett 1989, 114).

Plans were submitted for approval in 1859 and survive at the Devon Record Office (DRO 1473c/EB3/58). These are signed by 'John Moore' and 'A. Weslake, Architect' and dated 20th June 1859. The plans show a large schoolroom with two porches on its west elevation, which may suggest that the schoolroom was designed to accommodate



Fig. 10: The 1860s buildings of the former Episcopal Charity Schools (G.W. Cumming 1861-2), as altered in 1936-8 by the addition of an extra storey.



Fig. 9: The former Exwick National Schools (A. Weslake 1859-60), with the additional classroom of 1875 shown on the right.



both girls and boys. A teacher's house stood to the northeast and there were washrooms and lavatories across a small yard to the east. The detailed sections and elevations of the buildings show that the roofs have high collars with king posts and were hidden by ceilings with canted sides. There are also details of the windows and of the benches. The school survives largely as built, constructed of local volcanic stone, except for the porches, which are of brick. The building is in Tudor Gothic style with mullioned and transomed windows with limestone dressings. The roof has decorative ventilators and a small bellcote on the northern gable.

After the establishment of a local school board in 1871, the school was reopened as a Board school in January 1872 (Bovett, 1989, 114). The building was enlarged in 1875 by the addition of a further classroom at the south end of the building. This is set back from the main schoolroom and has similar architectural detail, but with prominent gables decorated with trefoil windows. The building is not listed; it ceased to function as a school in the 1970s and is currently in community use.

**EPISCOPAL CHARITY SCHOOLS, Mount Dinham. G.W. Cumming, 1861-2**  
Listed Grade II (Fig. 10)

The old buildings of the Episcopal Charity Schools, though only 40 years old, had already become too small by the middle of the 19th century. In 1860, a new site on Mount Dinham was conveyed to the trustees of the Episcopal Charity Schools by John Dinham, and new school buildings were erected. The new site was in an enviable location, away from the congestion of the city and in an area currently being developed for charitable purposes by John Dinham and others. The site was acquired in 1860, building commenced in 1861 and the schools were opened on the 21st January 1862. A reporter from *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* noted that 'the whole of the work reflects great credit on the designer' (WEPG 24.01.1862).

The architect was G. W. Cumming, who had completed the new buildings for the Devon and Exeter Central schools in Preston Street (demolished) only a few years before. The new site allowed a generous layout, of two enormous single-storey classrooms extending on either side of a central gabled building, containing a committee room and storerooms. On either side of the school buildings are two houses: a large one for the master and a smaller house for the mistress. There were two large playgrounds at the rear, one of which was covered. Originally the schoolrooms were entered through small porches, and the classrooms consisted of open halls 23 feet high,

fitted out with parallel desks and forms and divided into separate classes by crimson curtains. The whole complex cost £3500 (*ibid.*).

The buildings are in the Tudor Gothic style, brick-built with Bath stone dressings and black ornamental bricks used sparingly for decoration. The central part of the main elevation remains unaltered, with a central bay window and a shaped gable with a weather vane bearing the date. The main elevations of the schoolrooms have been altered; formerly each schoolroom had a central porch, crowned with a high window and a gable, and there were rows of tall windows in all the other bays lighting the schoolrooms. These have now been replaced with two storeys of windows, the upper ones mullioned and pushing upwards into the roof in a multitude of small gables. This alteration was made when a first floor was inserted throughout the buildings in August 1936-38 (Bovett 1989, 112). Although clearly very intrusive, the alterations are remarkably sympathetic to the character of the buildings and to the site as a whole. It is likely that these alterations were carried out by the City Architect of the time, possibly John Bennett.

The buildings are currently used by Exeter College and may be at risk from redevelopment, should the college relocate.

**COWICK STREET FIRST SCHOOL**  
(Formerly St Thomas National Schools)  
A. Westlake, 1861 (Figs. 11 & 12)

The St Thomas National Schools were in operation by 1838, initially from buildings close to St Thomas' Church in Cowick Street. The present site further to the west had been acquired in 1847 (Bovett 1989, 189) and the existing buildings were constructed in 1861-2.

The new buildings were opened by the Revd John Medley (by this time the Bishop of Fredricton in Canada) on July the 15th 1862. They were 'In the Tudor Gothic style after the plans of Mr Westlake' (*sic*), having 'a substantial and yet ornamental appearance, detached playgrounds and every accommodation', including 'three large schoolrooms properly lighted and furnished' and 'a pretty house for the master and mistress'. The style of the buildings was described as 'an adaptation of the Elizabethan which would be likely to go down to posterity as a worthy imitation of the magnificent works erected by our forefathers'. (WEPG, 18.7.1862). The buildings are reported to have cost £1200 at the time of their erection (WMN, 17.1.1982).



Fig. 11: The schools in Cowick Street (A. Weslake 1861), showing the master's house in the foreground.



Fig. 12: Cowick Street First School, formerly St Thomas National Schools (A. Weslake 1861), showing the original school building on the left and centre, and the additional classroom of 1881 on the right.





Fig. 13: The former Wesleyan Schools of 1862, in King Street.



Fig. 14: St David's School, now disfigured by inappropriate modern alterations.

Plans and sections of the buildings survive, signed by Weslake but not dated (DRO 1473c/EB3/55). These show a 'T'-shaped building, with accommodation for both girls and boys in the main vessel of the building, and a schoolroom for infants to the south, in the cross bar of the 'T'. The master's house stands at the northern end of the building, offset to the east. The interiors are shown with high roofs with canted ceilings similar to those intended for Exwick. The building survives largely as built and with few unsympathetic accretions. It is constructed of red brick with Bath stone dressings under steeply-pitched slate roofs. Windows are large, rectangular and both mullioned and transomed, with square-headed lights. A bellcote adorns the northern gable and the master's house is now balanced on the west by a later schoolroom in a sympathetic style, giving the frontage to Cowick Street a flavour of an Elizabethan 'E'-plan mansion. The yards to the rear of the school were formerly equipped with covered play sheds and other outbuildings, including outdoor lavatories.

The school remained a National school until the establishment of the St Thomas school board in 1871, after which the school was transferred to the care of the board and renamed 'St Thomas Boy's School'. New accommodation for girls and infants was provided in Union Street (see below). The additional classroom to the west was added in 1881 (DRO 62/9/2/Box 1158). In 1900 the St Thomas School Board began the construction of a new boys' school at the bottom of Dunsford Hill, later known as 'John Stocker School', and the old buildings lay empty until 1911, when they reopened as a girls' and infants' school (WMN, 17.1.1982). The buildings are not listed and remain in use as an infants' school. Their future is uncertain, as the school is shortly to be united with John Stocker School to form 'Bowhill Combined School'.

#### **WESLEYAN SCHOOLS, King Street** **Architect unknown, 1862 (Fig. 13)**

This large block of buildings bears the inscription 'Wesleyan Schools 1862' on a plat-band across its façade. A further inscription records that the foundation stone was 'laid on June 2nd 1862 by Wm Brock Esq.' Little is known of the school except that it was a branch school of the Mint Wesleyan Schools, and that it may previously have operated in the 'Ten Cells', a row of medieval almshouses in Preston Street, before the present buildings were provided in 1862 (Le Messurier 1962, 25). It is uncertain when the school was discontinued. The building has a gabled frontage of red brick facing towards King Street, decorated in the Italian Romanesque style, a rare occurrence of

this style in the West Quarter. The façade is decorated with groups of two and three round-headed lancets framed by raised surrounds of yellow brick, and with a round window or ventilator in the apex of the gable. A wide, segmental arch formed the main entrance. The façade of the first floor remains unaltered, but that of the ground floor has been partially painted and one of the sets of windows adjoining the main door has been destroyed to create a warehouse doorway. Fortunately the heads of the windows remain above the modern lintel and the façade could easily be restored. The side and rear elevations are unadorned. The layout and state of preservation of the interior is unknown.

This building is currently in use as a warehouse or workshops. It is not listed but is now one of the only structures of any architectural distinction to survive in the surrounding area. The building may well be at risk from redevelopment, especially if a comprehensive redevelopment of the site is proposed.

#### **ST DAVID'S SCHOOL, Dinham Road** **(formerly Exeter National Schools)** **M. Rhode Hawkins, 1868 (Fig. 14)**

St David's School developed from the Exeter National Schools, which were based from 1835 in the former British school premises in Bartholomew Street (see above). Although St Mary Arches' Parish Schools, which also shared these buildings, were removed to new premises in the 1850s, the school continued to grow and the girls and infants departments were moved to new buildings in Exe Street during the 1860s. The girls' school was provided with a fine Polychromatic Gothic building by Hayward & sons in 1866 (Pollard 1894, 61), which although closed in 1925, due to structural concerns (Bovett 1989 125), was not, in fact, demolished until the 1980s.

The catalyst for the removal of the school seems to have been the development of the educational and charitable 'village' on Mount Dinham during the 1860s. A new site for a boys' school in St David's parish was purchased from the trustees of the Institution for the Blind by William Gibbs of Tynesfield in 1864 but the buildings were not occupied until 1868. Gibbs spent £1100 on the erection of the new building 'for the education of children or adults belonging to the Church of England and belonging to the labouring or manufacturing classes in St David's Parish'. On 20th July 1868 the boys of the Exeter National School assembled in the girls' schoolroom in Exe Street and marched to the new building. The school was thereafter known as the St David's National Boys' School (SDSC 1968, 6).

The architect of the new building was Major Rhode Hawkins (Pollard 1894, 61), who was architect to the Committee for the Council of Education and currently employed by Gibbs on St Michael's Church immediately next door (Meller 1989, 97). The school is an extremely simple building, by comparison with the adjoining church in a very austere Gothic style. The school is set back to the rear of a square playground, forming an 'L' shaped range constructed of blue-grey Westleigh stone under a steeply-pitched slate roof. At the north-eastern end are two circular chimney shafts, one serving the projecting wing. The gable of this wing is lit by a tall window of plate tracery consisting of a group of three lancets rising into the gable and demonstrating that the building was designed with high, open roofs. There is no turret for a bell. The interior contained two classrooms, one of which presumably occupied the projecting wing.

The building was modernised in 1938 by the addition of dormer windows to improve the lighting. An extra classroom and head-teacher's study was created at the south end, involving the rebuilding of the end gable. A verandah was also added to the south side, which has recently been removed (SDSC, 1968, 9). Although these alterations changed the appearance and fenestration of the building, they did not significantly alter its original form. The building is not listed and its front elevation has since been obscured by modern accretions, including a projection at the south-western end in reconstituted stone and a rendered central section with a flat roof, replacing the former verandah. A temporary classroom obscures the northeastern gable, masking the bottom of the lancets. These all but completely disguise the quality of the original building.

**St MICHAEL'S SCHOOL, South Lawn Terrace, Heavitree.  
George Packham 1870-1 (Fig. 15)**

An infants' school had existed in Heavitree from at least 1517, standing on the north side of Fore Street (Croump 1933-40, 45). By 1835 a school was extant 'on the site of the old vicarage' and adjoining an additional burial ground (Bovett 1989, 115). This appears to have accommodated both sexes and had presumably become overcrowded due to the growth of the school.

In 1870 a school committee was formed, chaired by the rector, with the aim of constructing a new boys' school for the parish. Surviving minutes and correspondence reveal that on 26th September the committee approved drawings by Mr George Packham, who estimated the cost of the new buildings at £650 (DRO 3004 A PEI-93). Packham's drawings survive, and show an

attractive Gothic style building with a symmetrical frontage, striped slate roofs and a prominent bell cote at the centre of the building. The structure accommodated a schoolroom with an attached classroom and washhouses, and was located in open fields some distance from the town (DRO 1473c/EB4/64).

In 1875 the school was enlarged to accommodate a girls' schoolroom and in 1879 a master's house was added to the west of the original buildings (Bovett 1989, 115, 116). These additions respected the original structure, replicating the red brick masonry, the square-headed mullioned windows of dressed stone with orange brick relieving arches and the steeply-pitched slate roofs. Further additions were made in 1936 and the building was subsequently damaged in the Blitz of 1942 (*ibid.*)

Packham's buildings survive, though much mutilated and surrounded by unattractive modern accretions. The patterned slate roofs and the bellcote have been removed, as have the chimneys of the master's house. Some elevations have been painted white, giving the building a piebald look, and it is now difficult to see the resemblance between the present building and the original conception. The buildings are not listed and remain in use as a Church of England School. They are currently identified for demolition and rebuilding.

**ST THOMAS FIRST SCHOOL (St Thomas Girls' & Infants' Board Schools), Union Street.  
R. Medley Fulford 1872-3 (Fig. 16)**

Following the establishment of a school board for St Thomas in 1871, these schools were founded as girls' and infants' schools to replace the former accommodation for girls and infants at the St Thomas National Schools. The latter schools became known as the St Thomas Boys' Schools until the turn of the 20th century. When the Board schools were begun in 1872 they were the first in the parish to be built with public monies. It is instructive to compare the elaborate architecture of these Board schools with the simpler Tudor Gothic of the earlier National schools at Exwick and Cowick Street.

The schools were designed by Robert Medley Fulford and cost £2668. (Bovett 1989, 140). The schools consisted of a girls' schoolroom in an 'L'-shaped block, fronting onto School Road, with extra classrooms at its north end. Beyond this were two houses for the mistresses, and to the rear, in a further 'L'-shaped block facing Union Street, the infants' school. The buildings are in the Gothic style and make full use of structural polychromy. The plinth is of blue-grey Westleigh stone over



Fig. 15: Part of St Michael's Schools in Heavitree (G. Packham 1870-1), showing the master's house of 1879 in the foreground.



Fig. 16: The St Thomas Girls' Board Schools from School Road (R.M. Fulford 1872-3), showing the 1920s extension, on the site of the teachers' houses, at the extreme left. The infants' school, at the rear of the buildings, has been demolished.



Fig. 17: Newtown Girls' Board School (Pearson & Hayward 1873-4), from the lane near St Matthew's Church, showing the additional classroom of 1889 in the foreground.



Fig. 18: The former Holloway Street Board Schools (Pearson Barry Hayward 1875-6), showing the original buildings of 1875 (with bellcote) at centre, and extensions of 1901 (with 'Kingdom Hall' signboard), at centre right.



which the walls are of dark red brick with Ham stone dressings, including elaborate plate tracery in the gable windows. The chimneys are sharply tapering and there was formerly a gabled feature on the east side of the girl's school, rising into a bell-turret. The interiors had high open roofs and simple gothic fireplaces in each classroom. The schools were opened in July 1873, at which event the children were supplied with tea and cake in a field near the school. A reporter from *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* remarked that 'Mr R. M. Fulford is to be congratulated on the neat and pleasant appearance of the building' (TEFP 23.7.1873).

Unfortunately the schools have suffered much damage in the 20th century. The mistresses' houses were removed in the 1920s and replaced with a two-storey brick wing, approached from galleries at the rear. At the same time extra windows were broken through the walls of the girls' schoolroom, to create inappropriately large windows with margin lights. The bellcote has been removed. More recently, in the late 1980s or 1990s, the infants' school has been entirely demolished and modern extensions added to the rear of the girls' school. Further accretions are currently (July 2004) under construction. Fortunately the remaining 19th-century range is sufficiently positive in its architecture to accommodate these additions. The school is not listed. It remains in use and is still one of the most attractive buildings in the locality.

#### **NEWTOWN SCHOOLS, Clifton Road. Pearson and Hayward 1873-4 (Fig. 17)**

Following the establishment of a local school board in 1871, a site for new schools in the Newtown area was purchased in 1873 at a cost of £400 (DWT 18.4.1873). The schools were intended to accommodate over 100 children, specifically girls and infants, and were described as both 'well ventilated' and 'conveniently arranged'. The buildings cost £2370 and were ready for occupation in June 1874 (DWT 12.6.1874). The foundation stone recorded by Croump gives the architects as 'Pearson and Hayward' (Croump 1933-40, 27) whereas the *Devon Weekly Times* gives only 'Mr Hayward, architect'. It is possible that confusion has arisen between John Hayward and Pearson Barry Hayward, his son and partner. The Haywards may have been working in collaboration or, possibly, another Pearson was involved.

The buildings were arranged in two separate blocks, with the infants' school nearer Clifton Road and the girls' school higher up the hill. Both buildings were linked by covered walkways, or pentices, consisting of slate roofs supported on timber posts with shaped brackets, providing cover in the playgrounds during wet weather. The

surviving girls' school is constructed of red brick with steeply-pitched roofs of complex form with truncated gables and hips. The gables are finished with decorative bargeboards, shaped and pierced and featuring decorative balusters. High, Gothic windows consisting of groups of lancets under high relieving arches fill the gables. A later classroom, added to the building in 1889 (Bovett 1989, 120), has groups of tall lancets with simpler triangular heads and hipped dormers breaking the roofline, but has cusped and shaped barge boards. A boys' school was added in 1890, and is discussed below.

The buildings became a Council school in 1903. Unfortunately the infants' school was destroyed in the Blitz of 1942 and has never been rebuilt. The buildings are not listed and remain in operation as a school.

#### **HOLLOWAY STREET BOARD SCHOOLS Pearson Barry Hayward 1875-6 (Fig. 18)**

The Board schools in Holloway Street were first established in the Temperance Hall in Friars Walk (now the Salvation Army Temple), but were transferred to these buildings in July 1876. The school was intended to accommodate 350 Children; 200 infants and 150 'Juveniles', 70 of whom were to be drawn from St Leonard's parish, which had no public elementary school of its own. The school was to house an infants' school, a 'juvenile' school with a cloakroom and lavatories, playgrounds and covered play sheds. The foundation stone was laid on 9th October 1875 (TEFP 13.10.1875).

The building was designed by Pearson Barry Hayward. The site chosen is unusual and dramatic, on an outcrop high above Holloway Street, necessitating an approach by a long ramp extending along the south and east sides of the site. The ramp is entered by a segmental archway, opening upon an open porch built against a battered plinth of blue-grey Westleigh limestone, over which towered the gable end of the main schoolroom, with a high chimney doubling as a bellcote. The buildings are in the Gothic style, constructed of red Staffordshire bricks with Ham Stone dressings. The elevations are enlivened with structural polychromy in the form of alternating brick and stone voussoirs and areas of brick patterning. The original buildings were grouped at right angles to the street, with the playgrounds lying to the east. They consisted of two 'L'-shaped ranges lying along the west side of the site containing open halls and at least two separate classrooms. There does not appear to have been a teacher's residence.

The eastern part of the present façade, with a second gable and similar Gothic detail, is apparently an addition dating from 1901-2 (Bovett

1989, 117). If so this range is remarkable for its exact replication of architectural detail fashionable 25 years previously. This again demonstrates the importance of the architectural effect of the whole building to contemporary architects and their clients.

The buildings became a Council school in the early 20th century, which was finally closed in 1959. They were utilised by the St Nicholas Roman Catholic schools until 1973, and later for community uses. The buildings are not listed, but are well preserved and maintained as the 'Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses'. A recent extension to the west of the original site demonstrates that the architectural style of the buildings is still being respected.

### **ALPHINGTON BOARD SCHOOL**

**J.W. Rowell 1876**

**Listed Grade II (Fig. 20)**

A parochial school at Alphington was founded as early as 1812 and stood within the area of the present churchyard. The intention was, in 1866, that this school should become a National school, but this failed and the school was eventually rebuilt on a new site by the local school board in 1876 (Bovett 1989, 2). The building was designed by J. W. Rowell and is constructed of red brick with stone dressings in a picturesque Gothic style. There appear to be three main classrooms in the main building, each only a single storey high. The windows have groups of narrow lancets and there are tall chimney shafts and a prominent bellcote. At the south end of the building is a two storey master's house with patterned brickwork and a canted bay facing the street, topped with a half-hipped gable reminiscent of some of Butterfield's country vicarages. The building is a fine example of a village Board school. It ceased to be used as a school after 1989 and is now in community use.

### **EXETER SCHOOL, Victoria Park Road**

**William Butterfield 1880**

**Listed Grade II (Fig. 19)**

This independent school is descended from the 17th-century Free Grammar School and occupied the buildings of St John's Hospital from at least the 17th century. Despite some early 19th-century reconstruction of the hospital buildings, by the middle of the 19th century either the buildings or the site were felt to be unsuitable. An appeal for a new site was launched in 1866, and eventually a site was identified in the 'Higher Barnfield', to the east of the present Denmark Road (Bradbeer 1974, 58). Before any building had commenced, a better site was identified in Victoria Park Road and the earlier site was eventually used for the construction

of the Maynard School (see below). In 1876 Royal approval was given to a scheme of the Endowed Schools Commissioners for the management of St John's Hospital and other charities (Sadler 1905). The Grammar School was reorganised with a new governing body and moved to the present site in 1880.

The architect of the new buildings was William Butterfield, who appears to have planned a great quadrangular building, only part of which was ever executed. As it was, the buildings cost £16,750, part of which was raised by the sale of the old buildings in High Street. The buildings are Gothic and constructed of richly-patterned polychromatic brickwork with stone dressings. As completed, the buildings consisted of five classrooms, opening off a corridor in a long range, with a gabled centrepiece. This range culminates at one end in an impressive tower with tuskers in its side wall for an uncompleted 'Great Schoolroom', revealing the ambitious scale of the original conception. The dining hall extends at right angles to the main range and is expressed by large, mullioned windows. There was no assembly hall, perhaps because this was intended to follow in a later phase of works, and the dining hall was used for that purpose. Some of the stained glass from the windows of the old St John's Chapel was relocated in the dining hall window. These incorporate the arms of Plantagenet, the Prince of Wales, the city and the arms of Hele and Crossing. Other artefacts relocated to the new buildings included a statue of a Blue Boy and the old chapel bell, 'Great John'.

After completion, the original buildings were added to by the addition of a new chapel in 1886, also by Butterfield. A gymnasium was added in 1896, new science buildings and a laboratory in 1905 and, in 1933, a new wing was constructed containing a library, four classrooms a dormitory and a sick wing. All these additions were carefully matched in materials with the main building, though rather more timid in their structural polychromy. Later modifications have been markedly less sympathetic and are shamed by the panache of the original buildings. The school remains in use as an independent school.

### **MAYNARD SCHOOL (Exeter High School for Girls)**

**Hayward and Son, 1881-2 (Fig. 21)**

This school developed from the 'Blue Maids' Hospital' which had occupied an ancient house in Mary Arches Street, from the time of its foundation until it was discontinued in 1859. The house is recorded in a drawing by Townsend dated 8th September 1862 (WSL MD P&D 6519). After that time the ancient buildings were disposed of and



Fig. 19: Exeter Boys' Grammar School (William Butterfield 1880), now Exeter School, from the playing fields, showing the scar of the unfinished 'Great Schoolroom', centre.



Fig. 20: The former Alphington Board School (J.W. Rowell 1876), from the junction of the Dawlish and Chudleigh Roads.

demolished; part of the site being used for the construction of the St Mary Arches Board Schools in 1871 (Bovett 1989, 104).

In 1876 the Blue Maids' School was re-founded as the Exeter High School for Girls 'on Sir John Maynard's Foundation' (Bradbeer, 1974, 135). While a site was sought, the school temporarily occupied a large mansion at Larkbeare, in St Leonards' Parish, now the Judges' Lodgings. The present site in Denmark Road had been earmarked for the Boys' Grammar School, but became available when that school was built elsewhere. The buildings were designed by 'Messrs Hayward, Architects' - presumably John Hayward and his son Pearson Barry Hayward (Leduc 1883, 476). In 1881 Henry Phillips, builder, was chosen as the contractor for the erection of the new buildings, at a cost of £6000 (D&EG 31.8.1881). The completion of the buildings was announced at a school prize day in December 1882 (EFP 20.12.1882), and they were opened on 30th January 1883. They had in fact cost £7000 (Bradbeer 1974, 136).

The main façade is in an ornate Elizabethan style consisting of a long range with a central porch tower and flanking gabled wings. The structure is of brick, with freestone dressings and ranges of tall, mullioned and transomed windows having arched heads to the lights. Although superficially a symmetrical composition, the main façade is full of subtle irregularities. The first-floor windows rise into the roof in the form of 'chickets' or gablets and all the gables are finished with freestone copings and ball finials. At the centre of the building is an elegant cupola with an ogee-domed roof, and the chimneys take the form of clusters of shafts decorated with stone bands. The wings extend some distance to the rear and have further gables over side entrances. The interior has a magnificent imperial stair, similar in layout to that at the R.A.M. Museum. In 1883 an assembly hall was added, extending to the east from the centre of the building, covered by a magnificent hammer-beam roof and lit by a large window featuring stained glass by Frederick Drake of Exeter. A laboratory wing was later added in 1894 (Bradbeer 1974, 136).

The buildings are raised on high ground above Denmark Road, and are thankfully free of unsympathetic alterations, which have been confined to the rear and sides of the building. Although damaged by bombing in the Second World War, the building was sympathetically repaired in the original style. This even included the recreation of the stained glass window by the same firm who had originally manufactured it. This building is not listed. It is a building of great

character and it is a pity that it is almost entirely obscured by trees. It remains in use as an independent school.

### **HOOPERN STREET SCHOOLS, Hoopern Street**

**C. Cole, 1884 (Fig. 22)**

The foundation stone of this long, low building, which breaks the terraced form of Hoopern Street, reads 'This foundation stone of a Church of England School was laid by William Barnes esquire of Great Duryard on the 22nd of July 1884'. The *Western Times* for that day records that the foundation of the school was hailed as 'A very important event in the parish' by the Revd J. Theophilus Toye, Perpetual Curate of St David's Church.

The architect of the buildings was C. Cole (Pollard 1894, 61). The school provided for girls and infants in a long range with a yard to the rear, now occupied by a modern factory. The building has an arched doorway with an impossibly high step at its southern end and a low elevation to the street articulated by pilaster buttresses. There is minimal decoration in coloured and moulded brick. The timber windows are mullioned and transomed and there are large dormers in the roof, with plain tiled flanks evoking the 'Queen Anne' style. At the north end a wide opening, now infilled, led through to the yard behind.

The school was continued after the 1902 Education Act under the Local Education Authority and, although the building was described as 'unfit for use' in 1904, it remained a school until 1933, when the building was sold and the funds used for the restoration of St David's School in Dinham Road (Bovett 1989, 125-6). Although condemned at one time as unfit, Cole's building remains in use a hundred years later, as business premises. The building is not listed.

### **BISHOP BLACKALL SCHOOL (Episcopal Middle School for Girls), Pennsylvania Road** **James Jerman 1884-8 (Fig. 23)**

This school was created in the 1870s, from the Episcopal Charity Schools founded by Bishop Blackall in 1709, to provide further educational opportunities for girls leaving elementary schools such as the Episcopal Charity Schools on Mount Dinham. A management committee for the school was first established in September 1876 with funds from sources including St John's Hospital. By November, suitable premises had been identified in the old Post Office buildings in Queen Street and these had been put into repair by James Jerman. The school opened in the same month. Finding



Fig. 21: The Exeter High School for Girls, now the Maynard School (Hayward & Son 1881-2), in 1903.



Fig. 22: The former Hoopern Street Church of England Schools (C. Cole 1884).



Fig. 23: The former Episcopal Middle Class School for Girls, now the Bishop Blackall Annexe of Exeter College (James Jerman 1884-8), restored after a fire in the 1980s, without its original central gable and cupola.



Fig. 24: Newtown Boys' Board School, seen from the lane near St Matthew's Church.

suitable land for purpose-built buildings was more difficult. The present site in Hillscourt had already been identified and planned by the architect 'Mr Ware' in 1876, but owing to disputes about the ownership and extent of the land, the preparations could not begin until 1883. Jerman's designs were not presented to the committee until 1884 (Bradbeer 1974, 268).

The foundation stone of the new buildings was finally laid by the Bishop of Exeter on 4th October 1888 and is still visible to the right of the main doorway. The buildings were designed by James Jerman, in a rich Flemish Renaissance style, with a frontage articulated by brick pilasters with swagged Ionic capitals framing pairs of tall windows. The main doorway has a freestone surround surmounted by a cartouche and, prior to a fire in the 1980s, the frontage was surmounted by an ornate gable containing a coat of arms under an open pediment. The slate roof is lit by attractive arched dormers and was ventilated by a spiky cupola, which was unfortunately not restored after the fire.

The original building consisted only of this range, and housed six classrooms and a room for the headmistress. The entire first floor frontage was occupied by a magnificent hall, with an open timbered roof with turned pendants, one end of which could be divided off to form a separate classroom. The restored hall is approached by a generous staircase with ornate cast-iron balusters. Encaustic tiled flooring and elaborate woodwork survive throughout the building. A house for the headmistress was constructed at some distance from the main building, and survives as a private house on Thornton Hill.

Sadler described the building in 1905 as 'a handsome modern structure' and remarked that 'the inconvenience of the first-floor hall is mitigated by the breadth and generous gradient of the staircase'; however he also noted that, due to the success of the school, space had become so tight that even though the hall was divided into three classrooms by curtains, classes were still having to be taught in the corridors and in the headmistress' room (Sadler 1905, 19).

The building has since been extended on at least four occasions, always in sympathy with the scale and detail of the original building. The survival of the building after the fire, in which the ceiling of the hall and the roof were entirely destroyed, is remarkable. Although the restoration has robbed the building of some of its emphasis, through the loss of the cupola and gable, the reinstatement of some of the ornate detail, such as the dormer windows, and the recreation of the hall are both unexpected and welcome. The building is not

listed. It is currently occupied by Exeter College and may be at risk from redevelopment, should the college relocate.

#### **WESLEYAN SCHOOLS, THE MINT Extensions by James Crocker 1886-8 (see Fig. 4)**

By the late 19th century, the earlier buildings of the Mint Wesleyan Schools were overcrowded and regarded as unsatisfactory. The girls and infants had to be taught together and the playground accommodation was inadequate. Plans were therefore submitted for the addition of new buildings to the south east of the earlier buildings, alongside The Mint. These were to provide an additional infants' school, extra classrooms and possibly also a hall. The building was designed in 1881 by the architect James Crocker (known locally for his book *Sketches of Old Exeter*), but were not allowed to proceed until 1886. Due to the constricted site, the building has no well-defined entrance façade. The style of the building is utilitarian, with tall rectangular windows and slate roofs, the staircase being expressed externally by irregular fenestration. The bulk of the building is relieved by the use of red and yellow brick, and there is a brown sandstone string course, which rises over the entrance in The Mint into a vaguely Flemish arch. The interiors retain some attractive timber roofs and a handsome staircase.

The school was continued by the Local Education Authority after 1902, as a voluntary school, but the buildings remained inadequate, particularly as regards the provision for play. The girls' and infants' departments were closed in 1908 and the boys' school was finally closed in 1938 (Bovett, 1989 144-5). The buildings are still in use as community facilities, by the Mint Methodist Church.

#### **NEWTOWN BOYS' SCHOOLS, Sandford Street.**

**Extension to the earlier girls' and infants' Board schools. Architect unknown, 1890 (Fig. 24)**

This school was constructed in 1890 as an additional building to the Newtown Board Schools of 1873-4 (above). The architect of the building is not known, but it carefully continues the design form established by Pearson and Hayward sixteen years previously. Pearson Barry Hayward had died in 1888, but his father survived until 1891 and it is conceivable that the building was completed by him.

The building consists of a red brick block, corresponding to the detached blocks of the girls' school and the destroyed infants' school, but higher up the hill and, necessarily, approached from an



Fig. 25: The former headmaster's house of the destroyed St Thomas Council Schools (McKewan and Dunn 1900-2), seen from the junction of Cowick Lane, Buddle Lane and Dunsford Hill.



Fig. 26: The former Rack Street Infants' School (James Jerman 1893), the entrance façade in Preston Street.



adjoining street rather than Clifton Road. It consists of a single range, with three gabled ranges projecting from its east elevation of varying heights and lengths. The building closely replicates the details of the earlier buildings, though without the high arched heads to the windows. The individual lancets and groups of lancets are cut into the wall surface without relieving arches, in the manner of plate tracery. The roofs have half hips and decorative bargeboards, strongly reminiscent of the earlier buildings and forming a very picturesque composition.

The buildings are not listed and are still in use as part of the present Newtown Schools.

#### **RACK STREET INFANTS' SCHOOL, Preston Street**

**James Jerman, 1893 (Fig. 26)**

This small charity school was founded by John Dinham in 1859. The foundation stone records that it was founded 'for the education of the poor children of the city in the principles of the Church of England'. The original buildings were constructed in 1858 (Bovett 1989 123) but were rebuilt in 1893. The architect was James Jerman, who produced an elaborate, though small building in the Flemish Renaissance style, similar to his destroyed building for Paradise Place Board School. The building is of brick with stone dressings and ornaments. It is basically 'H'-shaped, with a high first-floor hall or classroom, distinguished by gables featuring large Palladian windows (recently somewhat crudely recreated) and crowned with bizarre pinnacles, gablets and other ornaments. Simpler and lower wings project from this hall at either end, one of which contains the main entrance. This has elaborate double doors under a pedimented archway, treated with restless ornament resolving into three shafts extending up into a gable and turning into pinnacles. The south elevation of the building was formerly concealed by adjacent buildings and is much plainer.

The school was continued after 1902 as a voluntary Church of England Infants' School, and was closed in 1938 (Bovett 1989, 107, 123). It has since been used by Exeter College and was converted into housing in 2002-3. A successful modern addition to the building is the glazed stairwell on the south side. The building is not listed.

#### **JOHN STOCKER SCHOOL (St Thomas Council Schools), Dunsford Hill**

**E. McKewan and A. J. Dunn, 1900-02 (Fig. 25)**

This school was constructed as a Council School by the St Thomas District Council, to replace Weslake's former National School buildings in

Cowick Street. The school was to occupy a new site, on the site of the former Bowhill House Asylum at the junction of Buddle Lane and Dunsford Hill. Papers dated 1899, now held at the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects, preserve competition details for a boys' school in St Thomas, Exeter. Unfortunately no further information about this competition was available.

The buildings are described in the *Evening Post* for January 9th, 1902. The architects eventually employed on the new schools were A. E. McKewan and A. J. Dunn of Birmingham, and it must be presumed that they won the competition. The building was a large two-storey block, set in a large playground, the walls of which survive. They were erected at a cost of £8060 and accommodated 600 boys in classrooms on two floors, curved around a central, full-height hall. The *Evening Post* concluded that 'No great public school in the land had classrooms which compared with these' (EP, 09.01.1902).

The school was renamed John Stocker Boys School in the early 20th century, in honour of a long serving councillor and member of the Education Committee. Unfortunately the building was severely damaged by fire in 1972 and subsequently demolished. Two covered playground shelters, supported by cast-iron Tuscan columns and with high, hipped roofs, formerly covered with plain tiles, survive within the playgrounds of the present John Stocker School.

A good impression of the quality of the original building may be gained from the headmaster's house, which was detached from the main school buildings and survived the fire. This handsome house is constructed of red brick with partially rendered walls extending from the eaves as far as the sills of the first-floor windows. The house consists of a gabled range at the rear, featuring a bay window with a shaped parapet, opening onto the former playgrounds of the school. The body of the house occupies a square block with a hipped roof, with a central porch tower entered through an arched doorway with fan ornaments and a surround of alternating brick and stone voussoirs. The upper part of the tower has similar quoins and a shaped parapet, behind which protrudes a lead dome surmounted with a tall flagpole. The building is a landmark on the corner of Buddle Lane and Dunsford Hill.

The present John Stocker School is currently identified for redevelopment as the new Bowhill Combined School. The headmaster's house is not listed; however it is now in private hands and will presumably be spared. The future of the playground shelters (also not listed) is uncertain.

**ST JAMES' GIRLS' AND INFANTS' COUNCIL SCHOOLS, St James Road**  
**James Jerman 1906-7 (Fig. 27 & cover)**

By the late 19th century the infants' schools in St James' Road, constructed by the school board in 1873-4, had come under the direct control of the City Council and were known as St James' Council School (Infants). These buildings consisted of a schoolroom and one classroom and were of brick with freestone dressings in the Gothic style (Pollard 1894, 62). Early in the 20th century, it was proposed to re-house the girls' and infants' departments of the St James' Schools together. Plans for the rebuilding of the school to accomplish this had been approved on the 18th January 1906, at an expected cost of £9643 18s 0d (ECC Education Committee, Sites and Buildings Sub Committee, Minutes of 18.1.1906) Despite their relatively recent date, the existing buildings were deemed to be unsatisfactory and unsuitable for alteration by the insertion of an extra storey to accommodate the girls (*ibid.* 20.3.1906). New plans were therefore provided, by the architect to the local Education Authority, James Jerman. The plans were approved by the Education Committee on 25th April, who declared that 'nothing is wasted in unnecessary decoration', and construction must have begun soon afterwards.

The buildings were designed as a two-storey block, presumably with the different departments on separate floors, but the style of the building is Baroque, a complete contrast with the former buildings and with St James' Church immediately next door. This may have been intended to reflect secular patronage. The main façade faced north-west, away from the road, and has unfortunately been concealed by an unattractive modern grandstand. This elevation has an irregular elevation of gabled pavilions, which contain the girls' entrances, through Baroque doorways of great inventiveness, carefully labelled and now all but completely concealed from view. The infants' doorways are much simpler and are recessed between the pavilions. It is uncertain why there are two of each kind of doorway.

The side of the building facing St James' Road is more austere, with narrow windows pushed to the outer edges and centre of the building, emphasised by quoins. The façade is crowned by a curved pediment over the city arms, and by a metal ventilating cupola on the roof. The southeastern side of the building rose hard against St James' Church and is treated with glazed white bricks, to reflect light into the vanished nave. The gables are crowned, appropriately, with shell-headed niches.

The railings and gate piers in front survive from the original Board school buildings, as did a long covered play shed, at the rear of the buildings, which retained a weather vane dated 1873 (Bovett 1989, 128). This building has since been demolished without record.

The St James' Schools were transferred to a new site in 1961 (*ibid.*, 128) and the buildings were used until the 1980s by Bishop Blackall School. In recent years they have suffered at times from an uncertain future, having been acquired by a housing developer, as part of a larger scheme of development encompassing the football ground. The buildings are currently used by the local football club as a social centre.

Since the destruction of St James' Church, this building is the architectural highlight of the area. The contrast with the adjoining National schools building could not show more clearly the improvement in the status of educational buildings since the 1840s. The building is not listed.

**LADYSMITH ROAD SCHOOLS (Heavitree Council Schools), Ladysmith Road.**  
**Percy Morris, 1907 (Fig. 28)**

The foundation of the present Ladysmith Schools came about as a result of a crisis in elementary education in Exeter, early in the 20th century. On June 30th 1904 the Devon County Council Education Committee were asked to consider improving school provision in Heavitree. The existing schools were so full that many children from Heavitree were being admitted to Exeter schools, despite the fact that these were administered by a different Education Authority. (DRO DCC 150/4/1/2. 326). The situation in Exeter had grown so bad that, by 1905, the Education Committee of Exeter City Council had to resolve not to admit any more pupils from Heavitree into local elementary schools (ECC Education Committee Minutes, 28.6.1905).

By September 1904 the County Council's architect was negotiating the purchase of land for the erection of new Council Schools (DRO DCC 150/4/1/2. 654), and by July 1905 a site in Ladysmith Road had been procured, at a cost of 6d per foot (*ibid.*, /3. 434). The DCC Education Committee rejected the idea of a building with a central hall (perhaps with reference to the new buildings of the St Thomas Boys' School) and resolved upon a school with corridors (*ibid.*, 75). Plans for a two-storey building, accommodating boys and girls, with a separate single storey building for infants, at an estimated cost of £9000, were submitted to the Board of Education for approval in November 1906 (*ibid.*, /4. 903, 790). At



Fig. 27: The former St James' Girls' and Infants' Council Schools (James Jerman 1906-7), from St James' Road. The site of the former St James' Church and National Schools is on the right.



Fig. 28: Ladysmith Road Schools (Percy Morris 1907), seen from Pretoria Road.



Fig. 29: The science wing of the former Episcopal Middle Class School for Girls (James Jerman 1908), showing the façade facing Blackall Road.



Fig. 30: The 1908 buildings of the former Hele's School, now Exeter College (C.E. Ware 1908), showing part of John Bennett's extension of 1931, on the left, and the 1960s tower block behind.

the same time an iron fence was commissioned from Garton and King, ironfounders (*ibid.*, 921). The buildings finally opened as Heavitree Council Schools in March 1908 (Bovett 1989 118).

The architect for the Devon County Council Education Committee at the time is identified, in Besley's Exeter Directory for 1908, as Percy Morris. Morris produced a large and impressive structure in a simplified version of the 'Queen Anne' style, but with arts and crafts elements, especially in the unusual rooflines. The building consists of a long two-storey range, facing south over the playgrounds, with tall, multi-paned windows in graduated groups of three or four. Some of the original fenestration survives, though much has been replaced in UPVC. The centre of the elevation is broken by three gables and crowned by a ventilator serving as a cupola. On the north façade two wings break forward at either end and are crowned by hipped roofs. At the centre a taller projection crowned by twin gables rises to three storeys and contains smaller rooms. These gables are cut sharply back to eaves level where they join the main building. Flanking this projection are twin porches bearing the legend 'DCEA 1907' The railings to the whole complex survive, complete with iron overthrows proclaiming 'BOYS', 'GIRLS' AND 'INFANTS'. The infants' school was destroyed by bombing in 1942, but was later partially rebuilt. The complex is not listed; it remains in use as a school and survives remarkably complete, despite the insertion of poorly designed UPVC replacement windows.

**BISHOP BLACKALL SCHOOL, Pennsylvania Road (formerly the Episcopal Middle School for Girls)**

**Extensions by James Jerman, 1908, with further additions of 1912 and 1936 (Fig.29)**

By 1905, the 1880s buildings of the Episcopal Middle School for Girls were so congested that Sadler observed classes being taught in the corridors (Sadler 1905, 19). In a series of improvements, undertaken by the new Education Authority, extra wings were added to the earlier buildings to accommodate science laboratories (1908), art rooms and additional classrooms (1912) and finally a new gymnasium and library wing (1936). The first of these ranges was added at the rear of the main building in 1908, with its own main façade facing Blackall Road. This new wing was designed by James Jerman and is one of the most elaborate Edwardian Baroque compositions in the city.

The façade of the science wing is asymmetrical, with a tall gabled pavilion at one end framed by a pair of massive red brick chimney-stacks. The

chimneys are plain on the ground floor, but at first floor level are decorated with horizontal bands of stone. Above this, the chimney shafts feature projecting courses of moulded brick and are crowned by heavy stone caps with moulded cornices. Between the chimneys are groups of three windows, rectangular on the ground floor and 'Palladian', with a round-headed central arch, on the first floor. This arch is brought forward of the plane of the wall to form an aedicule supported by shaped corbels. Over this is an elaborate coat of arms carved in high relief, surmounted by a bishop's mitre and contained within a steeply-pitched open triangular pediment or gable. The roof has a fine metal ventilator in the form of a cupola.

Adjoining this is a further pavilion divided into three bays by a pair of brick piers. These frame the central windows and bear the initials A. D. flanking the date 1908 at first-floor level. Above the roofline is a pair of console brackets supporting an open segmental pediment, above the central bay, which contains the city arms. This composition reflects the Palladian window of the adjoining pavilion and, although the wing linking with the earlier main building is understated by comparison, it is remarkable that the building does not appear unbalanced. The side elevation of the science wing facing Thornton Hill is also restrained, with deeply recessed windows with a diamond motif in the upper lights, similar to those of the main building.

The art room and additional classrooms of 1912 may be represented by a pavilion-like building with tall chimneys, at the opposite end of the earlier main range, which is unfortunately not easily visible from any of the surrounding streets. Neither the art nor the science wings were affected by the fire in the 1980s and they remain, at least externally, as built. Later additions, including the gymnasium and library (in a large block extending towards Blackall Road) and the 1980s restoration of the main range, following the fire, have generally respected the materials and architectural detail of the older buildings, particularly the diamond motif in the windows. The result is that, although the building incorporates many phases of additions, the whole complex remains highly attractive. The buildings are not listed and are currently in use by Exeter College.

**HELE'S SCHOOL, Hele Road (Exeter College)**  
**Extensions by C. E. Ware, 1908. (Fig. 30)**

By 1905 the original 1840s buildings of Hele's School had become overcrowded and were in need of extension. Sadler's report on the school claims that the main hall was a good room, but too awkwardly shaped, and that there was no laboratory, woodwork room or masters' common

room. He recommended the addition of at least two new classrooms, or one classroom and a laboratory (Sadler 1905, 15). At this time the main hall was in use for teaching three classes, although it was divided only by curtains (Bradbeer 1974, 217). In the early 20th century, the covered playground was enclosed to form extra classrooms, but there was no question that a substantial extension of the accommodation was required (*ibid.*, 219).

On 17th September 1908 the new buildings were begun, to the designs of C. E. Ware. These buildings departed from the style and treatment of the older buildings completely, though these remained in use at the rear. The buildings are of red brick, with Bath stone dressings and horizontal stone bands. The new buildings consist of two gabled ranges, linked by a long range lying directly in front of the original school room, and separated from it only by a narrow corridor. The new buildings did not adopt an historic style, and the traditional layout of single-storeyed classrooms with open roofs was replaced by classroom accommodation on several storeys. A new gymnasium, 'the gift of an old boy', was added in 1909, near the earlier open play shed, and has since been demolished.

Although unsympathetic in their treatment of the earlier buildings, Ware's buildings are attractively detailed, with windows rising above the roofline into chickets surmounted with wavy parapets. There is a clock in one gable and a coat of arms in the other.

The buildings have suffered some alteration, as a result of an extension to the west in 1931 (discussed below), at which time the middle section between the two gabled wings was reconstructed. More recently, the replacement of the original timber windows with UPVC has had a markedly detrimental effect on the appearance of the building. The buildings are not listed; they are currently used by Exeter College, but are earmarked for demolition as part of the redevelopment of the college's main campus.

#### **MONTGOMERY SCHOOL, Manor Road** **John Bennett, 1929-30 (Figs. 31 & 32)**

This school replaced an earlier girls' school in Okehampton Road which had been founded in 1891, enlarged in 1901 and was destroyed by fire in 1917 (Bovett 1989, 141). The school had grown out of the St Thomas National Schools in Cowick Street, and was removed to these buildings, recently vacated by the St Thomas Boys School, shortly after the fire. The foundation stone of the replacement buildings was laid on 28th October

1929 and the school opened on 1st September 1930 (*ibid.*).

The buildings were designed by the City Architect, John Bennett (Croump 1933-40, 216). They are largely of a single storey and are modest in their architecture. The buildings consist of low ranges arranged around a central quadrangle or garden. Each range has a high-pitched, hipped slate roof at the centre and flat roofed extensions at the corners, incorporating porches formed of brick pilasters flanking the doorways, surmounted by Art Deco entablatures and 'pediments' in concrete. The main hall lies on the north side of the quadrangle and has a higher roof and a decorative centrepiece facing Manor Road. The walls are of brick, arranged in a series of piers separating large white-painted metal-framed windows with margin lights. These are of different sizes and arranged in groups of three, setting up subtle rhythms across the façade. The surroundings of the building have been sadly treated, with the two principal elevations from Manor road and Brunswick Street either dominated by car parking or almost totally obscured by a badly sited temporary classroom (see Fig. 31).

#### **HELE'S SCHOOL, Hele Road** **Extensions by John Bennett, 1931 (see Fig. 30)**

The continuing success of Hele's school in the early 20th century resulted in the expansion of the school into a temporary army hut by 1918, only ten years after the completion of Ware's Buildings (Bradbeer 1974 223). Inevitably a third major phase of extension became necessary and was commenced in the 1930s. The extension was designed by the City Architect, John Bennett, and consists of a massive red brick block with concrete dressings and flat roofs extending to the west of Ware's Buildings. The colour of the brickwork and the concrete dressings were intended to match Ware's earlier buildings, and are in fact remarkably sympathetic, although the style is modernistic and entirely different. The main façade has a pair of projecting ranges, linked by a two-storey open loggia, supported by carefully detailed semicircular arches. The west façade has an attractive first-floor oriel window but the façade to the north, facing the earlier covered playground, is very plain. The detailing of the parapets and of the sundial is mildly Art Deco, whereas the porch added to Ware's buildings is classical in inspiration. The buildings were last used by Hele's School in 1959, and are now occupied by Exeter College. The buildings have recently been damaged by inappropriately designed UPVC glazing and are identified for demolition in the College's current redevelopment plans.



Fig. 31: Montgomery School, Manor Road, (John Bennett 1929-30), showing the badly-sited huts and temporary buildings obscuring the main range.



Fig. 32: One of the side elevations of the Montgomery School (John Bennet 1929-30), seen from Brunswick Street.



Fig. 33: View of the entrance gates of Bradley Rowe School (John Bennett 1932), showing the decorative railings and gate piers and an arched gateway beyond.



Fig. 34: View of the Ladysmith Road Senior Schools from Pretoria Road, showing the decorative railings and the main building.



**BRADLEY ROWE SCHOOL, Burnthouse Lane  
John Bennett, 1932. (Fig. 33)**

In 1932 new schools were established to serve the Burnthouse Lane Estate, which had been founded on a green field site to the east of Topsham Barracks, and to which many of the poor of the west quarter had been relocated. The schools accommodated juniors and infants, and also senior girls' and senior boys' departments. The latter department was transferred to new buildings at Ladysmith Schools in Pretoria Road in 1937, and the former was the origin of Priory School, Earl Richards Road, in 1952 (Bovett 1989, 104).

The existing buildings at Bradley Rowe were designed by the City Architect, John Bennett, and the foundation stone was laid on 31st October 1930. (Croump 1933-40, 108). The school was designed in a figure of eight pattern, around two small rectangular courts, and is generally single-storeyed and self-effacing in its architecture. The building is of brick articulated by 'rusticated' pilaster buttresses at the corners and at intervals along the façades. The copings and the grander architectural details are in concrete. Most of the roofs are flat, but several parts of the building have pitched, slated roofs, perhaps reflecting the relative importance of the different rooms within. Many of the original windows appear to have survived. These are white-painted and have margin lights. They may show the quality of what has been lost at many of Bennett's other Exeter school buildings. Unexpectedly the buildings also incorporate classical archways, with rusticated brick pilasters flanking high, semicircular arches and crowned with open pediments. These features are of considerable grandeur. The entrance gates and railings, although altered, are also beautifully designed, with patterned brick piers crowned with openwork iron obelisks resting on scrolled feet. These may have supported lamps. The school is presently scheduled for demolition and rebuilding.

**LADYSMITH ROAD SENIOR SCHOOLS,  
Pretoria Road.**

**Architect unknown, 1937 (Fig. 34)**

These schools were opened opposite the former Heavitree Council Schools in 1937, to house senior boys, and were erected at a cost of £18,755 (Bovett 1989, 118). They are arranged in a quadrangular form, with the main two-storey range facing south. This has a long, rectangular façade with continuous bands of windows to the ground and first floors. The façade is divided into groups of three bays by large brick piers running the full height of the elevation. Each bay is, in turn, divided by two smaller piers. Low flanking wings on either side have roofs of plain tiles. The attractive railings

enclosing the site have openwork iron gate piers, topped with ball finials. The architect is unknown, but may well be the City Architect of the time, John Bennett, in view of his very nearly contemporary work at John Stocker Senior and Bradley Rowe schools.

This rather plain façade may once have been redeemed by the quality and pattern of its glazing. It has been recently reduced to insignificance by the insensitive use of plastic replacement windows.

**JOHN STOCKER SENIOR SCHOOL, Buddle Lane.**

**John Bennett, 1938. Alterations by H.B. Rowe, 1954. (not illustrated, due to access restrictions)**

The opening of the new John Stocker Senior School is recorded in the *Express and Echo* for 22nd April 1938. The school was designed to accommodate boys from both John Stocker Infants' Schools (the former Council Schools) and from the former National schools at Exwick. The school accommodated 360 boys and was conceived as a series of workshops surrounding a central assembly hall. There were five classrooms, a laboratory and a science demonstration room, a 'manual instruction room' (woodwork etc.), 'light craft' and geography rooms, plus a headmaster's room, staff room, medical room and a kitchenette. The building was designed by the City Architect, John Bennett. Sir James Owen declared at its opening that the school 'would keep John Stocker's memory green for generations to come' (E&E 22.4.1938).

The school is arranged in a figure of eight, around two quadrangles which were maintained as gardens. The assembly hall forms the central vessel, initially rising higher than any other part of the school and with an attractive curved ceiling within. In 1954 the rear range was provided with an extra storey, by a succeeding City Architect, H. B. Rowe (E&E 11.9.1954). This addition was most sympathetic to Bennett's earlier buildings and provided five additional classrooms and an art room. Following the fire, which destroyed the former Council Schools, the buildings became a mixed Middle School. The elegant entrance gate piers with openwork metal obelisks have been destroyed in recent years. The building is currently scheduled for redevelopment as part of the plans for the new 'Bowhill Combined School'

**OTHER EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS**

(Fig. 35)

**Sunday Schools**

A major feature of educational provision in the 18th and 19th centuries was the operation of Sunday schools by Church of England parishes and

Dissenting congregations. Some Sunday schools were in fact charitable foundations, run by boards of trustees, with a degree of independence from the parish church or chapel. In these cases the rector or minister might simply serve as the chairman of the trustees by virtue of his office. Many of the larger parishes were operating Sunday schools from purpose-built school-houses by the late 19th century. These were often elaborated into 'institutes' where adult education, lectures and rallies for suitable causes could be accommodated. Few Anglican Sunday schools now survive; however a number of highly attractive buildings remain attached to the larger Nonconformist chapels. These form a characteristic feature of the English townscape and, as a building type, may well be worthy of a detailed study in themselves.

Among the earliest purpose built Sunday schools to survive, is the two-storey school attached to the former Castle Street Independent Chapel in Little Castle Street, Exeter. This is a detached building in the former churchyard, consisting of classrooms on the ground and first floors (?for boys and girls) lit by high, arched windows. The original staircase with metal balusters and a continuous handrail survives. The building may have been constructed between 1800 and 1840. It is currently in use as a nightclub and restaurant.

More elaborate, late 19th-century Sunday school buildings remain attached to the large Nonconformist chapels at Bartholomew Street West and Northernhay Street. The former (Fig. 35) were Sunday schools for the adjacent Baptist chapel and were designed in 1876 by George Packham, the architect of St Michael's School in Heavitree (Croump 1933-40, 180). The red brick elevation, with arched windows and incised foliate decoration, has lost its crowning cornice; it may well be a façade added to an earlier building. The Sunday schools in Northernhay Street, at the corner of Maddox Row, were attached to 'Providence Chapel', a former meeting of the Plymouth Brethren, which was in use by a Methodist congregation in the late 19th century. The foundation stone records that the buildings were designed in 1894 by the architect W.S. Croote. They consist of an attractive block of cream brick buildings, with arched windows and slate roofs picked out with red ornamental ridge tiles.

One of the finest Anglican Sunday school buildings to survive is the St Mary Steps Sunday School in Stepcote Hill, behind St Mary Steps Church. This was an existing charity school run by a board of trustees, with the Rector of St Mary Steps as chairman. The school had been housed in inadequate buildings elsewhere in the parish, but in 1896 a new site immediately adjacent to the church

was acquired and new buildings were provided (Fig. 36). These are of red brick, in the 'Queen Anne' style, and were designed by Edmund C. Warren 'Hon. Architect' (Croump 1933-40, 194). This very attractive, though dilapidated, building has a most remarkable feature - a decorative ceramic ventilating louver, reminiscent of medieval examples recovered in archaeological excavations. The building now serves as St Mary Steps Parish Hall and is occupied by a theatre company.

#### *Educational Institutions*

During the 19th century several large institutions were founded in the city and on its outskirts, to cater for the educational of those with special needs. The earliest of these was probably the *West of England Institution for the Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Children*, founded on a site in the Topsham Road in 1826. The Institution was housed in 'handsome' Egyptian style buildings, which regrettably do not survive (White 1850, 102).

A similar institution was the *West of England Institution for the Instruction and Employment of the Blind*, founded in 1838, which moved to premises in St David's Hill in 1843 (*ibid.*). The original property included several early 18th-century houses, which remain at the nucleus of the present buildings. A very fine staircase, plasterwork and panelling remain. During the 1860s the institution expanded massively, along the frontage to St David's Hill and also to the rear of the site. Many of the classrooms and workshops remain, approached rather perversely perhaps, given the needs of the pupils, by complicated routes up and down ornate cast-iron external staircases. At the rear of the site a particularly attractive range of buildings was constructed in 1893 by James Jerman to provide a gymnasium and workshops (fig. 37). The gymnasium is lit by tall arched windows, while the adjoining range has four powerful chimney stacks linked by wavy parapets, steeply battering buttresses and metal ventilators on the roof. It is unfortunately partially obscured by a shed, possibly replacing an open verandah.

The older buildings on the street frontage are currently occupied as the St David's Community Centre, whereas the buildings at the rear are occupied by Exeter College. These latter buildings are now showing signs of severe neglect. This complex represents a well-preserved 19th-century charitable institution of great interest and importance, which should not lightly be allowed to vanish.

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Fig. 35: A typical Nonconformist group of Baptist Chapel (1817) and Sunday Schools (G. Packham 1876).



Fig. 36: St Mary Steps Sunday Schools, Stepcote Hill (E.C. Warren 1896).



Fig. 37: Gymnasium and workshops at the 'West of England Institution for the Instruction and Employment of the Blind' (James Jerman 1893), viewed from Mount Dinham.

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WEPG Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette; 24.01.1862, 18.7.1862  
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MD P&D 4982 The Devon and Exeter Central Schools, Magdalen Street. 'taken down in 1856'. Undated pencil drawing by G. Townsend.  
MPR P&D 07611 The former British Schools in Bartholomew Street. Pencil drawing by G. Townsend, 1868.  
SPH H/B/ 0173 Photograph of Hele's School in 1901, from the tower of St David's Church. Heath and Bradnee, 1901.  
EPRS 0285 P&D 07270 Photograph of the Exeter High School for Girls, May 1903. By Mary Hare, 1903.  
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