

Steeple Barton Primary School - 150 Years

Two centuries of teaching in the Bartons

- 1800 Two Dame schools in Steeple Barton
- 1815 Most pupils went to Worton and Deddington schools
- 1816 William Wilson establishes a village day school for 40 children
- 1833 85 pupils at Wilson's school, 28 pupils at two other schools
- 1860 School held in village buildings rented from Henry Hall
- 1865 Alexander William Hall funds and builds current school buildings
- 1866 3 teachers and 90 pupils on opening, all ages in one school
- 1866 It is a voluntary church school following the National Standard
- 1867 School receives a government grant
- 1868 Enrolment drops by 50 because parents cannot pay 'school pence'
- 1890 158 pupils enrolled
- 1923 School transfers from voluntary operation to local authority control
- 1930 School reorganised as a junior school. Seniors go to Steeple Aston
- 1979 Seniors attend Warriner School, Bloxham, then Chipping Norton
- 2016 150th anniversary of Infant and Junior School founded by A. W Hall

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

Henry Hall and Alexander William Hall

Henry Hall

- Born 1809, married 1837, died 1862
- Family owned 'Hall's Oxford Brewery', founded 1795
- Restored and lived at Barton Abbey
- 7 boys, 3 girls, eldest son was **Alexander William Hall**
- 1850s - contributor to the restoration of St. Mary's, Steeple Barton

Alexander William Hall

- Born 1838, married 1863, died 1919
- Educated Exeter College, Oxford
- Inherited Barton Abbey estate on the death of his father in 1862
- **Built Steeple Barton School 1865/1866**
- 1867— Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff Oxfordshire
- 1874 — 1880, 1885 — 1890 MP for Oxford
- Died in 1919

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

The Victorian Education Argument

- The Henry Hall family had contributed significantly to the restoration of Steeple Barton Church in the 1850s. His eldest son, Alexander, may simply have wanted to continue the family's local patronage
- **But education was a very lively Victorian topic:**
- The National Education League aggressively campaigned for improved education
- Demands from industrialists, who feared Britain's status in trade was threatened
- The need to educate the citizens recently enfranchised by the electoral Reform Acts
- Gladstone attributed the successes of the Prussian army to their educational system
- Farm/factory owners wanted the simple reading, writing, arithmetic pupils were taught
- **But, many people still remained hostile to the idea of mass education:**
- It would make poor people think their lives dissatisfying and encourage them to 'revolt'
- Handing children to educational authorities might lead to indoctrination
- Many farm/factory owners feared the removal of children as a source of cheap labour
- Uneducated people feared that mass education would equip others to defraud them

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

The Parish gratefully accepts A W Hall's proposal for the new School

decision." On the 21st of July, 1865, the parishioners, at a vestry meeting, presided over by Vicar Green, resolved unanimously, that they gratefully accepted the proposal of A. W. Hall, Esq., to erect the buildings required for new parochial schools at his own expense, and on his own freehold near Middle Barton Village. Nine days before, another vestry meeting had constituted a body of school trustees, consisting of the Vicar and Churchwardens, A. W. Hall, Esq., Messrs. H. Harris, W. Luing, and J. Soden, jun., Mr. Luing being also constituted treasurer to the trust, but as yet he only holds a single donation of £5 given in aid of the school; doubtlessly, however, subscriptions will speedily flow in towards the working expenses, now we have seen such a beautiful set of buildings arise through the liberality of our largest proprietor, who, having placed the chief stone in October last, on the day after his infant son had been admitted a member of the Christian Church, has thus given earnest proof that, while he enjoys the advantage of a College education and University degree, he is anxious to diffuse educational advantage among his neighbours, so that

The mind with moral sense endued
May crave for all things right and good;
May those well-wrought foundations lay,
Which are not subject to decay,
May form the base on which to rest
Of this world's cheering good the best;
May be well disciplined to know
What to the Gospel 'tis we owe.

FINIS.

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Jackson's Oxford Journal: 6th September 1866. Retrospective report of the meetings setting up the School's organisation.

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years



1906 The Primary School. Photograph taken by the Director of Education of the time.

The entrance in the photograph was for the boys; the girls' entrance was at the other side of the building.

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

The World in 1865-66

1865 October	Foundation stone of Steeple Barton Primary School laid by A. W. Hall
1866	A cholera epidemic in London causes over 5,000 deaths
1866 January	London Fire Brigade is formed as The Metropolitan Fire Brigade
1866 January	SS London sinks in a storm in the Bay of Biscay with the loss of 244 people
1866	Cadbury's first sell cocoa for drinking
1866 April	Steeple Barton Primary School building complete
1866 May	London bank Overend, Gurney collapses precipitating a financial crisis
1866 July	Demonstrations in Hyde Park, in favour of parliamentary reform turn violent
1866 July	SS Great Eastern completes laying the transatlantic telegraph cable
1866 September	GPO begins erection of hexagonal pillar boxes to the design of John Penfold
1866 December	Explosion in the Barnsley coal seam in Yorkshire kills 388 coal miners
1866	The Society of the Cowley Fathers is founded by Richard Meux Benson
1866	Colman's mustard receives a Royal Warrant
1866 Births	Beatrix Potter, Herbert Austin (cars), H. G. Wells, Ramsay MacDonald
1866 Deaths	George Everest
1867	Readings, Concerts, Songs and Theatrical events start in the main room of the School

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

The Parish thanks A W Hall for the new School in the Vestry Minutes

*It was resolved unanimously
That the Parishioners in Vestry assembled
desire to express their heartfelt gratitude
to Alexander William Hall Esq. for his munifi-
cence in erecting a Schoolroom and Buildings
in the parish as a locality for an improved
system of education which they hope and believe
may be as sound and useful as the Architecture
of the erection is ornamental and substantial*

STEEPLE BARTON.
At the Easter Vestry, on Wednesday, which was attended by the Rev. Wm. Green, the Vicar, who presided, Messrs. Wing, Barnard and Hollier, the Churchwardens, Messrs. W. Haynes, J. Nicholls, Barman, Savory, Harris, Baker, M. Haynes, J. Haynes, Luing, Osborn, Simpson, Cole, and Matthews, the Churchwardens and Waywardens were re-elected; after which Mr. Wm. Wing proposed, Mr. George Barnard seconded, and the Vestry adopted the following resolution:—"That the Parishioners in Vestry assembled desire to express their unanimous and heartfelt gratitude to Alex. William Hall, Esq., for his munificence in erecting a School-room and buildings in this Parish, as a locality for an improved system of education, which they hope and believe may be as sound and useful as the architecture of the erections is ornamental and substantial." Every Vestryman present attached his signature.—A Church Rate at 2d. in the £ was granted *nem. con.*

Jackson's Oxford Journal: April 1866. Parishioners thank A W Hall for his 'munificence'. Subsequent report in the newspaper.

*William Green Vicar
Jury Barnard
Joseph Hollier
Mark Sharmar
Henry Harris
Robert Matthews
Wm Luing
William Osborn
John Haynes
Thomas Grantham
John Savory
William Haynes
Samuel Furson
Caleb Nicholls
William Wing*

Text taken from Steeple Barton Church Vestry Minutes, courtesy Oxfordshire Records, Cowley.

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years



1906. Internal Classrooms

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years



1894 School Photograph. John H. Whitehead as Head Master, Mrs. Elizabeth Howitt as Mistress.
Rhoda Kirby, Mary Howitt and Sarah Chadbone were also working at the school. Photo by Arthur Howitt.

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

Early School Inspections 1873 - 1876

Report of Her Majesty's Inspector held June 17th 1873

"The School has been carefully taught and is in a fair state of efficiency. The Room ought to be enlarged so as to give more room for Marching and Physical Exercises".

Elizabeth Pyke Howitt. 3rd Class Certificate.

Report of Her Majesty's Inspector held 1874

Infant School. "The room has been enlarged and greatly improved. It is now very well adapted for an Infant School. The children have not yet had time to learn to march thoroughly well but I dare say they will before long. The lessons are well varied and Mrs. Howitt teaches with diligence and skill. The children in the first class passed a very good examination in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic."

Elizabeth Pyke Howitt 3rd. Class William Green (Rector) School Correspondent.

Report of Her Majesty's Inspector on examination held June 11th 1875.

Infant School. "The Infants have again passed a very good examination. The School is in an excellent state of efficiency."

Elizabeth Pyke Howitt 3rd Class William Green (Rector) School Correspondent.

Report of Her Majesty's Inspector on examination held June 15th 1876.

Infant's School. "Mrs Howitt has been ill and the children have had whooping cough, so the lessons were not given quite so well as usual, nor were the children as bright as could be wished. The marching is very inferior to what I see in good Infants' Schools. The singing is also scarcely satisfactory. But the reading, writing and arithmetic are very good."

S. Butler having been returned last year as over six was disqualified by age for further presentation under Article 19 (b) 1.

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

Nights out in Steeple Barton 1866-style

Once the school was built, it appears that they lost no time in using it for community use as well. Through the 1860s and 1870s it appears that there were concerts, recitals and meetings in the schoolroom. More than once, Jackson's Oxford Journal commented on the excellent lighting. This must have been novel to the residents of the Bartons as it was, of course, at a time before electricity. A common way of lighting the room on these special occasions was by limelight.

*CONCERT. THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF FORTNIGHTLY READINGS WAS GIVEN HERE ON TUESDAY LAST TO A MOST ATTENTIVE AND GRATIFIED AUDIENCE. THE ATTENDANCE FROM THE NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES WAS NOT AS LARGE AS USUAL, BUT THE PARISHIONERS (WITH WHOM THESE ENTERTAINMENTS ARE IMMENSELY POPULAR) AND THEIR FRIENDS LEFT BUT LITTLE SPARE ROOM IN **THE LARGE AND BEAUTIFULLY LIGHTED SCHOOL ROOM**. THE VICAR PRESIDED. **A.W. HALL, ESQ.**, W. FOSTER-MELLIAR, ESQ., AND THE MESSRS, LANE AND BARTHOLOMEW WERE THE READERS. ALL WERE HEARTILY ENJOYED. THE PROGRAMME WAS TOO SHORT TO ADMIT OF THE USUAL VARIETY OF MUSIC; BUT THE GENERAL APPROVAL OF THE EARLIER HOUR OF CLOSING **SHOWED THAT THE PEOPLE OF BARTON LIKE SHORT READINGS**.*

*JACKSON'S OXFORD JOURNAL **EARLY 1867**.*

*CONCERT. ON MONDAY EVENING NEXT AN AMATEUR CONCERT UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MR. AND MRS. JENNER MARSHALL, WILL BE GIVEN IN THE **NATIONAL SCHOOL ROOM, AT STEEPLE BARTON**, WHICH HAS BEEN KINDLY LENT FOR THE OCCASION BY **A. W. HALL ESQ.**, THE PROGRAMME IS A MOST ATTRACTIVE ONE, AND AS **SEVERAL ARTISTES OF LOCAL CELEBRITY** WILL TAKE PART IN ITS PERFORMANCE, WE DOUBT NOT THAT THE CONCERT WILL BE A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ONE.*

*JACKSON'S OXFORD JOURNAL **2ND MAY 1868**.*

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

Nights out in Steeple Barton 1866-style

CONCERT. ON MONDAY EVENING LAST AN AMATEUR CONCERT OF A VERY HIGH CHARACTER WAS GIVEN IN THE *SCHOOL-ROOM AT STEEPLE BARTON*.....

THE ROOM WAS CROWDED WITH A DELIGHTED AUDIENCE.....

DR. ARNE'S "CUCKOO SONG" WAS SUNG BY MRS. JENNER MARSHALL WITH HER USUAL TASTE AND EFFECT.....

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PIANOFORTE DUET BY THE MISSES MARSHALL WAS MOST ASTONISHING FOR SUCH YOUNG PERFORMERS. THE MEMBERS OF THE WESTCOTT AND STEEPLE BARTON CHURCH CHOIRS SANG THE CHORUSES VERY CORRECTLY, AND DESERVE GREAT PRAISE FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY PERFORMED THEIR PART OF THE PROGRAMME.....

MR. MARSHALL, IN RESPONDING, THANKED *MR. AND MRS. HALL FOR SO KINDLY LENDING THEM THE USE OF THEIR SCHOOL ROOM*.....

JACKSON'S OXFORD JOURNAL *9TH MAY 1868*.

DR. ARNE'S CUCKOO SONG:

*WHEN DAISIES PIED, AND VIOLETS BLUE,
AND LADY-SMOCKS ALL SILVER-WHITE,
AND CUCKOO-BUDS OF YELLOW HUE,
DO PAINT THE MEADOWS WITH DELIGHT,
THE CUCKOO THEN ON EVERY TREE,
MOCKS MARRIED MEN, FOR THUS SINGS HE,
CUCKOO,
CUCKOO, CUCKOO, - O WORD OF FEAR,
UNPLEASING TO A MARRIED EAR!*

.....

Steeple Barton Primary School—150 Years

SCHOOL LOG BOOK—FUNERAL OF ALEXANDER HALL

ENTRY OF MAY 3RD 1919

April 28th 1919. Reopened school. (after Easter break).

Weather very cold and 5 inches of snow and slush on the roads have caused attendance to be low. We cannot have fires as there is no coal.

May 3rd 1919. Mr. A. W. Hall founder of this school in 1866, Chairman and Correspondent to the Managers since that date, died on Tuesday last at his residence Barton Abbey and was buried at St. Mary's Church, Steeple Barton this afternoon. A party of the elder children and all the teaching staff represented the school at the funeral.

May 5th 1919. Mr. Ayres is absent suffering from an attack of acute rheumatism and I am taking charge until his return.

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Material in this document has been provided by:

- Bartons History Group (BHG): www.bartonshistorygroup.org.uk
- Jackson's Oxford Journal 1865-1868: www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk
- Victoria County History, Wootton section, Steeple Barton village:
<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/oxfordshire/volumes/oxfordshire-xi-wootton-hundred-north-part>
- BHG web-site: www.bartonshistorygroup.org.uk
- Wikipedia: 1866 National and World events (Page 6)
- Middle Barton School - Aspects of School Life 1866-1996, Audrey Martin book, available today at a special 150th anniversary price of £1.00

The document has been created by David and Rosemary Wharton who may be contacted with errata, queries, updates, points of view and additional material on e-mail address david@thistledome.net. This document is available from the same address in pdf form.

25th June 2016.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY MIDDLE BARTON SCHOOL!