

West Dean Village History Trail

WEST DEAN SCHOOL

No 14



WEST DEAN SCHOOL IN 1945

The school was built in 1868. The £500 building costs were paid by Thomas Baring, the then owner of the Norman Court Estate, who also provided an annual endowment of £40. It was designed to provide teaching space for 60 children and, in the attached school house, living accommodation for the head teacher. The teaching rooms were two, the little room for the five and six year olds and the big room for those aged seven and upwards. There was one teacher to each room.

For most of its life the school catered for all the village children from age five until school-leaving age which, by the 1940s, was age fourteen. This changed with the Education Act 1945 which raised the school-leaving age to fifteen and introduced the eleven-plus examination which divided pupils among other schools for the second part of their schooling. Once this Act was in effect the school catered for children from age five to eleven only. By the early 1960s numbers had dwindled to the low thirties and the school was closed.

Out of school hours and before the advent of King George's Hall the school was used for a variety of village activities including socials, whist drives, concerts and meetings of the Football and Cricket Clubs.



THE GIRLS OF THE SCHOOL C 1925



THE PUPILS OF THE SCHOOL IN THE 1950'S