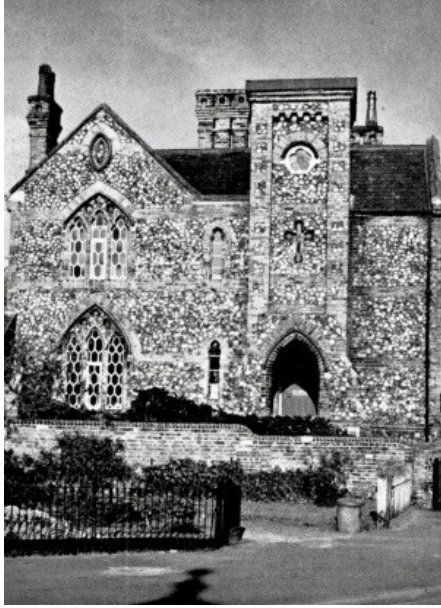


THE OLD SCHOOL LODDON



This copy of an old postcard from around 1900 shows the completed building with a more modern picture of the headmaster's house, on the left. The very ornate bell housing and elaborate chimneys have long gone but the main building still remains today.



This picture shows a class of children in the schoolroom that is now Loddon Library. Note the partition doors that could be pulled across to separate the area into two classes.

It can also be seen, in enlarged form, on the current library wall.



The school teachers.



*The writing on the slate in the centre reads:
Loddon Girls
Class 1
1911.*

The earliest record of a school in Loddon, found to date, is of one mentioned in Loddon Church Records of 1636. This seems to have been held in The Priest's Room, over the porch in Holy Trinity Church. In the Churchwarden's account book for 1781 a Thomas Reynolds was being told to leave the premises. He was given 10 guineas compensation, to provide another school and was also allowed to keep the benches and stools. He was however 'required to build or cause to be built' another schoolroom for the teaching of children of the parish.

It is not clear where this new school was built. However, records do show a 'charity school' on Church Plain near the then Guildhall, owned by the Town Estates. This school was almost certainly connected to the established church.

The nineteenth century saw a rise in the population which meant a rise in numbers of children. The establishment of a Sunday School in Loddon, in 1809, was subsequently made into a daily school. By 1814 there were 24 boys and 37 girls on the schoolbooks.

There were also several private schools available in the area, at varying times, taking pupils in from further afield.

By 1856 it was decided to build a new school for the education of 180 pupils. This was to be sited on Church Plain on the site of The Old Guildhall. Money was raised from the Town Estates fund that existed at the time and also by public subscription. After some delay the new building was eventually completed in 1859.

In June 1880, the first meeting of the Loddon School Board was held in the schoolroom. They had taken over the management of the school from the Churchwardens, Vicar and Parish Overseers. It was decided that the school should be extended and the ground at the rear of was purchased with money from the Public Loans Department with permission from the Charity Commissions. This was to build two new classrooms for 80 girls and 80 infants. The boys would remain in the existing section. This new extension was constructed in plain brick, after having had much criticism as to the ornate design and cost of the original building.

The extension allowed for access from Market Place and the construction of a toilet block.



These children are a mixed class from around 1948.

Loddon and District Local History Group have collected many photographs in recent years, including several of other school classes. The names of children recognised by local residents have been recorded in their archives. They also hold copies of some of the original school records that have been deposited with Norfolk Records Office.



For more information please refer to the website at loddonhistorygroup.co.uk where you can view other photographs and contact details.



This photo shows a clearer view of the headmaster's house from a different angle. The building to the left, which was a cafe, is now the Co-op supermarket. This was extended in recent years.

By 1902 the Education Authority had taken over the responsibility of the School Board and, it seems, the ownership of the building.

In 1953 a new Secondary Modern School was built in Loddon. This school, now known as Hobart High School, took all children from Loddon School who had failed to pass the 11+ exam. The Old Primitive Methodist Chapel on the High Street (The Hollies) was purchased by the Education Authority and became the Infant's School in 1956 and the Old School then had only 7-11 year olds.

In 1969 the new, open plan, Loddon Middle School was opened at the top of George Lane. All of the remaining children were transferred there and after 110 years the school on Church Plain was closed.

By 1978 the new Loddon First School had been built in Kittens Lane and all of the infants transferred there from The Hollies.

The original building, now owned by Norfolk County Council, became Loddon Library in 1977. The Headmaster's House was sold as a private dwelling after a brief period as an office for Loddon Youth Service.

The later extension, always known by locals as The Annexe, has had various uses over the years. This has been primarily for hire by community groups including a one time Playgroup and a meeting place for Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides.

Currently it is used by The Town Council, as their office and the large room at the rear is occupied by Loddon Community Gym.



One of the classes in the 1950's