

## Early Schooling in Reynoldston

The first day school (as against the Sunday School, often the only school available in the early 19th century) was established in Reynoldston in the 1830s - the National Church of England Day School at the Manse. The school (just a school room) was financed by C.R.M Talbot of Penrice, who owned the land. During the 1860s, the schoolmaster was Evan James Harris who had moved from Porteynon to Reynoldston. In 1869, Harris left school teaching to run a shop and Post Office on the Lower Green. His grandson was John Wyndham, the science fiction writer.

The 1870s saw real conflict in the village over the nature and location of the school. Should it continue as a Church of England school? The law now allowed for the establishment of non-sectarian schools to be set up with a local Board of Governors, paid for from the rates.

Eventually, in 1884, the Reynoldston United District Board School, a voluntary non - sectarian school, opened in Knelston, housed in Providence Chapel.

The purpose built school was opened in Knelston in 1878, but the name “Reynoldston” was kept until 1944 when the school became known as “Knelston Primary School”.

The Old Manse.... from Susan Callow

*I know that my great uncle Jack (John Francis Davies, born in 1867), who was the eldest of 7 children of Francis and Mary Davies, of Hills Green attended school at the Old Manse. It is probable that some of his siblings also attended*

*school there, but the younger children, including my grandfather, Arthur (the youngest, born in 1884), attended Knelston School.*

*Before moving to Reynoldston in the 1870s Francis and Mary Davies ran 'The Three Brothers' in Landimore where they brewed their own beer. Francis was a stonemason and smallholder, keeping sheep and ponies at Hills Green. As a skilled stone mason and banker-hand he worked on the construction of Knelston School (known by generations of school children as "Casey's College"), later attended by his own children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grand children! He also worked on Parkmill School and built the vestry and west window of Reynoldston Church and formed the archway over the pulpit in the church.*

*Jack was born in 1867 and trained as a blacksmith. In his early 20s he joined the Scottish Regiment and later served with the Royal Engineers in China, erecting telegraph wires. George followed in his father's footsteps as a stonemason. Will became Chief Clerk at Briton Ferry Steelworks. Arthur learnt his trade as a carpenter and joiner. Two of the girls, Annie and Lizzie, learnt their trade as dressmakers, and the youngest daughter, Louisa, worked as the first telephonist at Reynoldston Post Office. Jack was the only member of his family not to marry and he is buried with his parents in Reynoldston churchyard, between Francis's parents, Elishon and Margaret and my grandparents, Arthur and Lucy.*

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