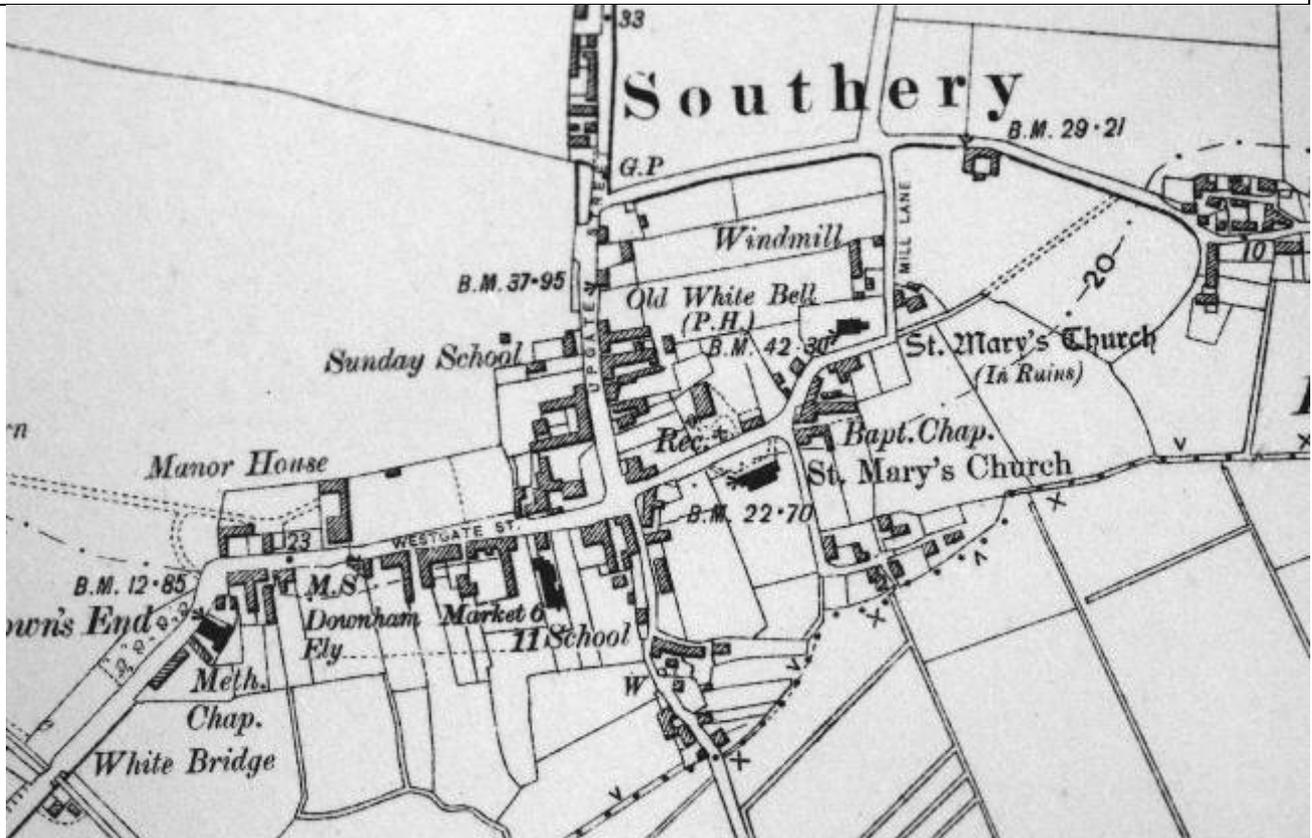


NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Name of school	Photo reference
Southery Primary School	Southery 1-26 jpg
Grid Reference 5619773E 294525N	
Is the building listed? No	
School Address Westgate Street, Southery, Downham Market Pe38 OPA	



An impressive large-scale Board school, still in use.

Photographs



Main room and infant room from west

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Infant classroom and school bell and new office of Head teacher



Steps to Boys entrance and toilets and main room



Two classrooms



Girls' entrance



Modern entrance

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY



Foundation stone



Infants' class



Middle classroom in main buildings



Screen across classrooms



Detail of tie rods, decorative ridge and cornice.

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY



General view



Roof of main room

Document references

Building plans in NRO	P/BG 108
Building plans in other	X
Sale particulars in NRO	X
Sale particulars in other	x
Log books in NRO	Minute Books Southery C/ED3/175 July 1874-Aug1890 Southery C/ED3/176 Oct.1890-Sept 1903

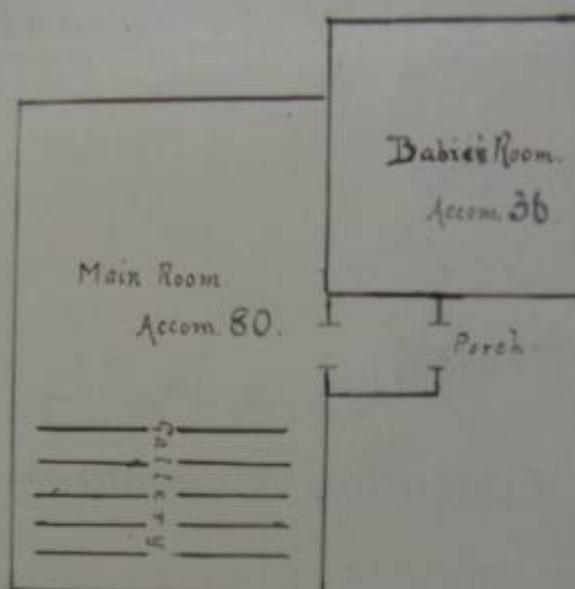
NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Log books in school	Southery Board School 1876-1992 infant Class 1876-1943
Photographs in NRO	X
Other docs in NRO	Acc 2009/304 1903 school survey p.338-339
Photographs in other	X
Other doc.sources	

x

Directory entry (1920s or nearest date)	Whites 1883 p.688 School Board formed 1874; handsome school with master's house adjoining built 1876, cost £2000. Kelly's directory 1925 p.474 Erected 1876 for 220 children, enlarged 1899 and will now house 350. Extra porch and class rooms added in 1909 NCC Ed. Com Development Plan 1947 p.574 mixed 5-14
Date of construction	1876 at a cost of £2000; additions 1899 and 1909
Architects (if known)	Mr. Green architect and Mr.Shanks Builder carried out major changes in 1907-10.
Position within parish	Centre of village
Catchment area in 1940s	Parishes of Southery, Methwold and Feltwell

Plan The school was built on the side of the island of Southery, the school house fronted onto the A10. The two infant classes were constructed next and then the main room, screened into 3 rooms. Two cloakrooms, two porches and two classrooms came from the big room on the east. The annexe, outside toilets and play shed formed part of the eastern boundary wall, the tarmac playground between. The playground on a slope was ideal for sleighs and slides, but not so ideal for a netball court on a hill. The canteen and car park made the western boundary with farmland. The kind farmer next door returns many balls. The hedge at the bottom of the garden forms the southern boundary with farmland.



NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

URGENT. The Head Teacher is requested to fill in this form as **RECEIVED 1903, 1904** and to send it to the SECRETARY, Norfolk Education Office, Norwich.

NORFOLK EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Return of the School Staff Engaged on Sept. 30th, 1903.

1.2—Every person in receipt of a Salary and is referred to this form, e.g., *unemployed* Teachers

Southery "Department" Infants' Head Teacher: *E. Stanley*

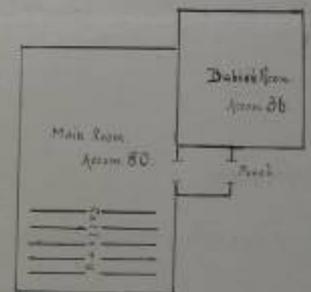
1.3—If separate class used to teach the next highest standard completed (as used by the Board of Education) in 1903 (Class used) has been a separate class.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LAST 3 YEARS, 1901, 1902, 1903	1901	1902	1903
(a) Pupils on the books at the end of the year	114	115	129
(b) Average Attendance in the Standards			
School Class			
(c) Total Average Attendance	57.5	59.6	58.6
(d) Accommodation provided for Standards			
On the books	116	116	116
(e) What was the District Average for the year 1903	17 1/2	17 1/2	17 1/2
What was the District average under Act, 1902 and 1903			

Staff Engaged on Sept. 30th, 1903, shown as placed for Teaching Purposes.

NAME	QUALIFICATIONS	AGE	DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE	DATE OF LEAVING SERVICE	REMARKS
<i>Miss Alice B. Selvey</i>						<i>65-100</i>
<i>Miss Sarah Hawley</i>						<i>30 30</i>
<i>Miss Annie Collier</i>						<i>15 15</i>

1. Is any Occasional Teacher employed? *Yes, Sewing Machine, Doll Instructor* **No**
If so, give Name — Date — Salary —
2. How far does the Organising of it differ from the Organising for Classes for the teaching of Reading, Geography, History, Object Lessons, and Domestic Things and Music?
Classes 1, 2, 3 group for Singing
Boys Paper Drawing - girls needlework
3. Make table a rough sketch, stating the position of the room and the arrangement of desks and the Standard occupying class.



SCHOOL FURNITURE.

1. For how many Children have you proper sitting accommodation in Desks? *40 movable, 20 fixed on casters, 20 fixed in partition*
(a) In the Standards? (b) In the Infant Class?
2. How many of the School Desks in your opinion—
(a) Are unimpaired condition? *4* (b) Are quite fit for use? *All*
(c) Require to be replaced?
3. What is the type of Desk used? *long*
4. Is there a table for Tablets? *Yes* If so, is it provided with Desks? *Yes. 12 inches*
5. How many Englishes have you? *2* Give the length, breadth, and height of each? *4' x 12' x 6' 6" each*
6. Have you a School Museum? *No* If not, have you any specimens for use? — How many? —
7. How many of the following have you? Blackboards *3* Maps *3*
Is any Blackboard unfit for use? *In fair condition*
8. What is the condition of the Master's Desk? *No desk for Mistress*

Southery Infants 1903 NRO 2009/304 p.338

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY



Plan – describe or include scan

How many storeys	1
How many rooms	Originally 1 large room was partitioned into 3 rooms; 2 junior classes, 2 infant classes and 3 porches later additions.
Present use	Primary school for children aged 4-11 years.
Name of present owner	Norfolk County Council
Condition (1 = derelict – 5 = good)	5
Is there a teacher's house associated with school? Give some idea of date, size and style	The schoolhouse was demolished in 1995, because of subsidence. It was built in 1876, the same time as the school. The Victorian House had its own well and offices, but not the bow window until the 20 th century. It was an imposing building, fronting the main road.

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Building Features

<i>Windows: number, position, size, no of lights, style (sash, leaded, etc)</i>	Gothic sash windows often arranged in groups of three. Adults could see out of the high windows, but not the children.
<i>Chimneys: number, style</i>	The infant chimney was removed as unsafe.
<i>Ventilators: number, position</i>	Patterned grates to ventilate the brick walls.
<i>Doors: number, position, inscription over (Boys – Girls) style</i>	Steps up to Boys section, boys inscription and girls section inscription
<i>Porches: number, position, inscription etc</i>	Porches for boys, girls and infants. Only the Infant door remains at the top of the school.
<i>Bell towers/clock and other ornamentation</i>	Bell housing and bell

Overall style

<i>Gothic/ecclesiastical (pointed windows and doors)</i>	Victorian Gothic
<i>Classical/Georgian (triangular pediments, sash windows)</i>	X
<i>Tudor/flat headed windows with drip moulding, ornate chimneys</i>	X
<i>Plain and functional with no ornamentation</i>	x
<i>Inscriptions, coats of arms etc</i>	Foundation Stone with names of Board Members on west wall of infants classroom

Building materials

Roof-note decorative features (coloured and fancy tiles)	Decorative patterned ridging tiles
Walls-note decorative work (flint work, diaper bricks etc)	Patterned brickwork in gables and around windows, Bath stone dressings. Round tie rods

For architectural terminology, see the glossary in Pevsner

Internal (room by room) materials and features such as:

<i>Panelled walls</i>	All the Victorian classrooms had picture rails and in the past had the dado painted a different colour.
<i>Fire places/heating appliances</i>	Old coal fireplaces in Infant classrooms, the rest were removed when the main room was remodelled.
<i>Plaster/modern ceilings, open to roof</i>	Lowered ceilings in 1984 to reduce noise and heating bills, the rooms became much warmer.
<i>Original cupboards</i>	There were panelled glass doors and cupboards as a museum, removed 1990s.
<i>Room divisions/folding doors</i>	The main room was divided into 3 rooms with

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

	screens. These were pulled back for parties and performances on the stage in the bottom classroom. Teachers and children had to walk through classrooms as there was no corridor. Teaching was difficult if the class next door had music and you were doing chalk and talk. The screens were removed in 2006.
<i>Permanent art work</i>	x

Building sequence

Building Schedule

- 1826 National School in St.Mary the Virgin old Church
Accommodation is sufficient.
- 1828 St. Mary's Church enlarged, W. Legge of Ely Surveyor
- 1844 National School built
- 1870 Inspection states inadequate accommodation
- 1871 Penny in pound for Extension to National school, reopened
- 1873 Notice to build new school
- 1876 Southey Mixed Board School and School House built
- 1877 Old National School became a reading room, library of 700 volumes,
adult education, classroom and Sunday School.
- 1890 Inspection criticism of 2 fire grates only in main room
- 1892 2 tortoise stoves installed in main room
- 1896 Museum Cupboard in school.
- 1899 Brick floor of schoolhouse replaced by wood
- 1903 Girls' closets moved, too close to Infants classroom
Playground enlarged, latrines against east wall.
- 1906 Removed galleries in classrooms, desks supplied
New washhouse and coal closet at schoolhouse.
- 1909 Extra classrooms, class (staffroom)for babies and porch opening to the East.
Boys cloakroom enlarged
Steps to Boys entrance rebuilt, iron rail added.
New fireplace in main room.
- 1910 Folding Screens completed by Gregory Porter
- 1919 No water in wells from Christmas to August
- 1927 Stage in big room for The Mikado
- 1929 No water in wells at the schoolhouse and the boys playground.
- 1930 New floor laid in main room.
- 1934 Installation of heating apparatus
- 1935 Electric light has been installed.
Mains water
- 1937 supply
- 1941 School dinner Canteen opened in annexe
Screens secured and covered with net.
- 1943 Mixed and Infants Departments amalgamated

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

	A door and steps have been constructed between Infants and Juniors
1946	Central heating in operation New boiler in new boiler house
1947	New canteen new bike shed
1956	Reorganised as a Junior School
1962	School connected to mains sewer
1971	New Village Hall. Old National School converted to residence.
1979	Indoor toilets installed for children and staff
1980	Traffic can use new A10 bypass
1984	Ceilings lowered in classrooms
1986	School roof retiled kiln in school
1995	Remodelling of school Schoolhouse demolished, new hall and PE store constructed Outside toilets and ghost hole demolished canteen demolished playground resurfaced
2007	Screens removed, main room made into IT suite and 2 classrooms Resources area and classroom made into 1 large classroom Construction of office and Headteacher's room security fencing and gates
2009	Outside play area for Playgroup and class 1
2010	Disabled toilet Extended hall into library, small classroom and PE store
2011	Demolition of bottom shed (boys' playshed)

Playground

<i>Size (approx)</i>	2 acres
<i>Type (tarmac enclosure, field – nature garden, climbing frames, games painted on ground Boundary –original brick, iron fencing etc.</i>	The garden has a pond area and a growing area, was the Headmaster's garden and school garden The playground was divided into infants and girls at the top and boys at the bottom, a corrugated iron fence separating the two. The boundary fence of green corrugated iron remains and the bottom hedge. The tarmac enclosure now has lots of playground games and security fencing by the road.
<i>Buildings – out houses, mobiles, 'offices'</i>	The old canteen, the annexe, is now used by the playgroup. The outside toilets, ghost hole and boys' play shed have been demolished. The 1940s canteen was pulled down to make more room in the playground and car park.

Include here any additional material (scans of sketch plans, old photographs, oral evidence, etc, précis of school history

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Schools in Southery

The fen island village of Southery belonged to the Abbey and monastery of Bury St. Edmunds. Monasteries were centres of learning, where monks scribed the gospels of the Bible in beautiful, illuminated handwriting and kept manorial records, the charters for Southery are dated from 942 A.D. Schools were run in Latin for novice monks and boys from wealthy families to teach them reading, writing and accounting. Monks were sent to civilise the rough folk of Southery, who could not read or write. In the little church on the hill, the Rector read passages from the Bible, recited the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer and perhaps there were wall paintings to show heaven and hell. Over the next centuries, an education was limited to a small minority, those who could pay or those who were intending to take Holy Orders. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, some schools were endowed by royalty or local benefactors.

Often the parson was called a clerk, because he was asked to write legal documents, such as death and marriage certificates. He maintained the church registers. In 1624, the Rev. Charles Smith, parson of Southery, included in his will and inventory books in his study. The Rev. Gershom Malcolme, Rector of Southery, had a library, which was the most valuable part of his inventory, £25, in 1705. The clergy could educate any bright boys in the village wanting to learn, girls were taught how to run the household.

From the 16th century, elderly women, who could not earn a living elsewhere, set up Dame Schools, where parents paid for a child minding service and some instruction. The standard of education varied enormously, depending on the education of the dame. These Dame schools were common throughout the 19th century. The Rev. Charles Kingsley, whose father was a curate in Southery, described in 'The Water Babies' published in 1863, how Tom, the chimney-sweep's boy, sheltered with the dame and twelve or fourteen rosy chubby little children, learning and reciting. This romantic view of Dame Schools is not shared by William Shenstone's poem, The Schoolmistress.

In ev'ry village mark'd with a little spire
 Embow'r'd in trees and hardly known to fame,
 There dwells, in lowly shed, and mean attire,
 A matron old, whom we schoolmistress name,
 Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame,
 They grieven sore, in piteous durance pent
 Aw'd by the power of this relentless dame.
 And oft-times, on vagaries idly bent,
 For unkempt hair, or task unconn'd, are sorely shent.

At the end of the 18th century, the government was concerned about the effects of the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution on the growing population. The Nonconformist churches began setting up charity schools called Lancastrian or British Schools, established by the British and Foreign School Society. The Church of England introduced Sunday Schools for teaching reading and religious instruction to children in church on a Sunday for religious and social aims. In addition the Church of England began the National School movement for daily instruction to poor children in 1811, it was felt that an education would reduce crime and improve loutish behaviour. The Rector, churchwardens and overseers were responsible for the National School, whose schoolmaster was expected to be a member of the established church. The Church of England had a history and tradition of providing education to the poor to live upright and industrious lives. Southery, population of 536, had a charity school for girls, containing 40, supported by the Patron, Robert Martin, the Rector, Rev. John W. Butt and Samuel Barker, the curate, in 1818. It was observed that the poor have not the means to educate their children and from the poverty of the inhabitants the girls, who are taught in this charity school, have a great advantage. It was most

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

unusual to focus on education on girls as they were expected to marry and bring up a family.
(Education of the Poor 1818 County of Norfolk Select Committee)

Wealthy farmers and gentry in Southery sent their children to private schools in Downham Market or in Ely, Needhams School. Girls were taught at home by a governess, who covered reading, writing, languages, art, music, behaviour, deportment and domestic skills. The daughters of the Rev. E.S. Morton had their own governess as late as the 1930s. Some girls attended schools for ladies in Downham Market, such as Hill House, run by the Misses Markham.

In the autumn of 1826, a school was set up for boys from 6 to 12, the Rev. John Butt wished to admit girls when funds allowed. There was sufficient accommodation for the children at Sunday School at church, but during the week their attendance was not regular due to agricultural employment. The same reason was given by the master, Joseph Kirby, for non attendance, when the visitors came to examine the children on July 18th 1827. Rev. James Royale and William Maxey tested the 30 children on their reading, spelling, writing on slates, simple addition, tables and their Catechism and private prayers. In view of the newness of the school, they could not have reasonably expected greater proficiency and Joseph Kirby was fully equal to the task. He felt the income of £13.13 per annum was wholly inadequate, the committee added £10, which he hoped would continue.

A survey of educational provision in Southery in 1833, population 739, recorded two Day and Sunday National Schools, one of which (commenced in 1826) is kept by a master and attended by 50 children daily and 20 on Sundays. It was supported by subscription, assisted by a grant from the Norwich National School Society and by payments from the children. The other school is kept by a mistress and has 50 daily and 30 on Sundays: of those attending daily, 18 are paid for by the lady of the principal landed proprietor, who wholly supports the Sunday School. This could be the wife of Robert Martin, Lord of the Manor, and patron of the National School. (Parliamentary Papers Vol.42 abstract of educational Review 1833)

In nearby Methwold Parish, population 1266, one daily school, containing 26 males and 10 females, is supported by the Duchy of Lancaster. The master has a salary of 30l per annum, with house, firing and the means of keeping a cow. One Sunday School, commenced 1819, wherein 108 males and 109 females are taught gratuitously by Wesleyan Methodists. Methwold Parish boundary came right up to the village fen edge of Southery.

When the new curate, the Rev. W. H. Henslowe, arrived in Southery in 1838, he was horrified to find a stronghold of Satan, destitute of a Sunday School or any school. He made plans for a National School, a Sunday School and a lending library, but moved in a hurry to Wormegay in 1840, when he fell out with the only churchwarden John Sayle.

The Lord of the Manor, Robert Cunningham Taylor of 2 Lower Berkeley Street, London, conveyed land to the Rector Charles Mann as a site for a school for poor persons and a residence for the schoolmaster. The National School was to promote the principles of the established church and was to serve the parishes of Southery, Feltwell, Hilgay and Methwold. At that time there were two Dame Schools run by Sarah Barley and Frances Feltwell, containing 20 and 15 children respectively. Two schools for boys, Edward Porter and William Peckett also had 30 and 15 children.

The National School was a neat, carrstone building, built opposite the coaching inn, The Old White Bell, by William Pymore Goose and surveyor George Osler in 1844. The Committee of Trustees were Revd. Charles Mann, R. C. Taylor, Lord of the Manor, curate Rev. D. Calliphonias and churchwardens, John Sayle and Frederick Robinson.

The dimensions were;

Boys' playground, outside toilets and garden 64 feet by 40 feet west

Girls' playground, outside toilets and garden 64 feet by 40 feet east

Schoolroom, including master's desk and stove and possibly partitions, 40 feet by 16 feet

East elevation porch and school turret and bell

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Bricks and mortar foundation

Walls 14 inches thick with internal plaster

Gables

Height of schoolroom 9 feet to ceiling, roof 6 feet higher and boarded

6 windows 5 feet by 4.5 feet English oak frames and casements

Ventilation air holes in side walls, brick guttering and wooden spouts

Floor bricks bedded in mortar

The Trustees were looking for financial help, because the village had no charities, the landed proprietors or gentry did not live in the village and there were lots of children in a population of 1023 (census 1841) in need of education without the means to obtain it.

Cost of erection

Site is given by the lord of the Manor Mr. R. C. Taylor

School house £172.7s.0d

Fittings £ 10.0s.0d

Boundary fences 15.0s.0d

Legal expenses 10.0s.0d

Total required £207.7s.0d

Amount raised £87.0s.0d

Carriage £20.0s.0d

National Society £25.0s.0d

Deficiency of £75 7s 0d

An inspection report detailed in 1846 boys, girls and infants, School well built and arranged.

Judgement, school was conducted at this time in a slovenly inefficient manner by master, engaged in the incongruous occupations of butcher, innkeeper and village schoolmaster: another teacher has been appointed.

Late on in 1846, it is reported in tolerably good order: the instruction appears to be satisfactory, but much progress could not be expected in the short time since the opening of the school.

According to White's gazetteer, in 1854, Henry Headin Kirby was Headmaster of the National School, where Vestry Meetings also took place and school accounts were checked. In the minutes of the Vestry Meetings for 1859, it was planned to sell the National School and make the old church into a schoolroom and schoolhouse, so the funds raised could pay for the new church. Somehow the village managed to pay for the new church without resorting to the school sale.

By 1864 over 90 children were taught by Mr. and Mrs Thomas White, but this number was drastically reduced when in 1865 a measles epidemic carried off 20 children. The only way known to stop the epidemic was to close the school for several weeks. Four years later Charles Bolton was master and Mrs. Bolton the mistress.

The government was concerned that some children were slipping through the net of voluntary provision, because their parents could not afford the fees or their wage was too important to the family finances. The 1870 Elementary Education Act made the education of all children compulsory to the age of 12. The general system of basic education was not free, one or two pennies per week, which was too much for some families. The National School was inspected and the accommodation was deemed inadequate, so the Trustees discussed plans for enlarging the school. The School Trustees consisted of the Rev. A.E. Julius, George Daintree, Joseph Martin, Thomas Brown, Christopher Porter, John Wootton and John Sayle. David Porter, an overseer, looked into plans that would comply with the Education Act. May 1871, the school was re-opened with the new extension, which was paid for by a penny in the pound on the rates.

By 1873 the trustees were given notice to build a new school in Southery. At this time there was the National School and a school near the ferry, which Percy Lack attended. Grants were available from the Government for the new Board School. The Board was set up in 1874 and comprised of the Rev. A.E. Julius, the chairman, John Sayle, Mrs. Brown and Christopher William Porter, clerk

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

to the Board, but the school took two years to build at a cost of £2000. In the meantime, according to the admission register, many children attended Dames' Schools or Mr. Lindsey's school at Hilgay, only a few went to the Old National School. The old building was then used as an Institute for adult learning, a library and a reading room and as a village hall till it was too small for that purpose in the 1970s.

According to Harrod's Directory 1877, the new Board Schools, which have recently been erected, are a very neat block of buildings, faced with white and red brick, and Bath stone dressings, consisting of a large mixed school-room, infants' school, classrooms, lavatories etc; also a pretty residence for head teachers, Mr. and Mrs. John Teasel. The old National school is now used as a Sunday school, and opens on week days as a reading room and circulating library. John Teasel was the librarian for over 300 volumes and taught evening classes to adults. When John Teasel opened the school on October 9th 1876, there were 44 children present. By December 12th there were 205 children, taught by Mr. Teasel and young Mr. Wootton, certified teachers, and Sarah Ward, Elizabeth Porter and Charles Proctor, pupil teachers. Attendance figures were a continual worry, because grants were paid on attendance and performance inspections "payment by results".

Every year pupils had holidays for the Oddfellows' Feast, Church Sunday School Treat, Foresters' Club Feast, taking the Choir to Hunstanton, Wesleyan Chapel Treat, Southery Feast week, Winnold Fair, religious holidays and skating, if the weather permitted. Harvest holidays started on August 10th and ended about September 24th as children helped with gleaning and potato picking.

The inspection carried out by the Rev. Smith commented in 1877, that Mr. Teasel appears to have worked with much diligence in this new school. By 1880, his comment was "The master appears to me to be working hard and conscientiously, but the difficulties are more than usually great. School will never be efficient until greater regularity of attendance is secured." As a large area of Southery was in the parish of Methwold, the Rev. Denny Gedge was the contributory member to the Board for Methwold. By 1883, there were 200 boys and girls and 65 infants. The Board members were now Rev. A.E Julius, chairman, John Wootton, Thomas Porter, T. Russell, G.E. Daintree and J. Boggers, Mr. Harry Wayman is clerk. In his book about Methwold, the Rev. Denny Gedge commented that at Southery we have singular difficulties to contend with, the fen population being recruited from the failures on the high land, and somewhat migratory, and many residing without the school radius. Also the difficulty of inuring the young sufficiently early to agricultural labour, so that they may not resent its loneliness and roughness in fenny localities, as they do if brought to it later, and resolve to quit the country for the towns at the first chance of an opportunity of escape, renders managers, who have a fen population to deal with, unwilling to enforce full attendance beyond the third standard; which militates against educational proficiency. The Southery schools have in consequence never become "excellent" and I find myself obliged to give in somewhat to the exigencies of the locality. Also, the board members were not of a class to have the time for personal attention to the working of the schools under their charge." As you would expect Methwold Primary School was excellent under his charge!

Joseph Osler, the attendance officer, chased up irregular children and collected school money, parents were taken to court for non-attendance. The weather was a contributory factor to low attendance. Children from the fen, especially infants, would stay at home, if it was raining or snowing hard, the droves would be impassable. 1879, 1880, 1881, 1889, 1891 and 1891 were good years for skating championships with prizes to be won. The attendance for May 21st 1880 was 224 names on the register, 26 legally employed part-timers, 117 present and 81 absent without reason. Harry Wayman was still the clerk in 1892 with Joseph White as Attendance Officer. Attendance was variable as the children were needed to work on the farms and their wages were an important income to many families. Sometimes the older children were responsible for younger children, so the parents could work.

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Sickness added to the variable attendance figures. The school suffered several epidemics and children frequently died. The Medical Officer closed the school to prevent the epidemics spreading.

1880 Scarlatina

1884 Diphtheria

1887 Measles School closed June 6th – July 4th.

Whooping cough and harvest holiday July 6th – September 12th

1888 Scarlet fever

1892 Mumps

1893 Measles and Typhoid fever

1896 Diphtheria

1897 Whooping Cough school closed Feb. 26th – April 5th

1897 Scarlet Fever and harvest holiday July 30th – September 13th

1899 Diphtheria offices whitewashed.

1902 Measles School closed for a month

1903 Whooping Cough School closed

1904 Chickenpox school closed for a week

1907 Over 70 children succumbed to measles, the school was closed for 9 weeks 3 days, including the harvest holiday.

1912 Measles School closed

W. H. Barrett recalled in “The Fenman’s Story” how he was asked to bring pennies to school to purchase an artificial wreath under a glass dome, labelled “In tribute from the teachers and scholars of Southery Board School” to remember another pupil that had died.

When he was 8, he joined the reaping gang for 6 weeks. On his return to school, the Board School Managers, the parson and six big farmers decided to close the school, because of an epidemic of scarlet fever. This coincided with the potato harvest, so Jack Barrett had the laborious job of handpicking potatoes till the cases of scarlet fever had ended and the school reopened in November. The building could accommodate 200 children, but average attendance was 150. Mr. and Mrs. J. Teasel left, when the Board only allowed a short Christmas holiday of a few days, to go to Great Hockham. In 1885 William Challenger and Marina Challenger were Master and Mistress with Miss Kate Annie Porter as Infants’ mistress. Mr. and Mrs. Challenger were replaced in 1894 after an inefficient inspection, the Inspector criticised the heating, two fire grates in the large room, and the teaching of subjects. Two tortoise stoves were installed in the big room, the whole school was painted and extra teachers were employed. The new headmaster and his wife, Mr. Joseph Stanley and Mrs. Effie Stanley, made an immediate impact as attendance figures had risen to 190. In the inspection report, Mr. Stanley “deserves much credit for the good and painstaking work he has done. All the higher grants have been awarded.”

However, the Report of 1906 found serious problems with the building that had to be rectified. The galleries in the classrooms were to be removed and desks supplied. Partition screens were to be constructed in the main room to aid teaching. The Infant cloakroom was to be enlarged to make a porch with an east facing door. The range of buildings by the schoolhouse, closet, school copper and coal house, were to be demolished and a new washhouse, coal house and earth closet installed. R. Shanks of Chatteris built new latrines away from the Infant classes and constructed a new playground. The scavengers would take the night soil from a tunnel behind the latrines. By 1910 and with extra holidays, most of the alterations were completed.

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

The junior school had an average attendance of 171 pupils in 5 classes, children leaving at 11 years of age. It was often the case that one teacher looked after 60 children and there was the dreaded form filling too. The school was closed for a month in 1912, due to an outbreak of measles in the spring, over 100 children were excluded, and then again in the autumn, when the Little Ouse broke its banks. The floods returned in 1915 and the flood waters covered the school garden. Refugee families took over the Infant Department and Room 5. Families moved away from the flooded fens, so attendance figures decreased from 191 to 139.

The First World War was not so distant, when a raid of German Zeppelins dropped bombs on the fen district. The scholars practised drill every day and collected eggs for wounded soldiers and sailors. Several Southery families lost young men in the World War 1, Laurence Stanley included, and lost children too in the influenza outbreak after the war. Mrs. Stanley ceased her duties in the Infant Department in 1923 and was succeeded by Miss Payne. Mr. Stanley retired in 1926 after 32 years service of large classes in difficult times.

James Lee achieved notable successes with the school choir, who performed *The Mikado* and *The Merchant of Venice* on the stage at the southern end of the big room. The inspection report of 1928 details "his brilliant and inspiring teaching of singing has produced results which are nothing short of remarkable." In January 1930 the school choir of 32 children from a small fenland village went to London to give a broadcast on the BBC.

Back at school, there was no water, the well at the schoolhouse had run dry and the pump to the well in the boys' playground did not work. Mr. Lee moved on and Mr. George Bartholomew took over. The 30s saw the installation of heating, electric light and a mains water supply.

Children from Hackney were evacuated to Southery during World War 11 and occupied two classes with their teachers. More evacuees came from Great Yarmouth. The School Dinner Canteen was opened in the annexe in 1941, so more women could work on the land throughout the year, summer holidays, too, to make Britain self-sufficient in food.

Miss Payne left in 1943 and the Infants and Mixed Departments amalgamated. A door was constructed between the Infants and the rest of the school. After the war a new canteen block was built and central heating installed with a new boiler house. However, many families left Southery when their fen homes were flooded in the 1947 Floods. Some families stayed in the school temporarily and the Search light unit was based there too.

Neville and Monica Ibberson moved into the schoolhouse in 1964 and the school children were encouraged to take part in lots of community events to raise money for the new Village Hall, opened in 1971. The old National School building became a residence. Mr. Ibberson was the last village head teacher to live in the old schoolhouse, which was demolished in 1995, because of subsidence. In its place, the children had a multi-purpose hall, new kitchen and PE store. A major remodelling of the old Victorian school buildings occurred 12 years later as the screens were removed, 4 new classrooms and a corridor were created. Additions continue as a small classroom, a disabled toilet and offices for the head teacher and secretary have been constructed.

NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

The oldest picture was taken about 1900 and shows the water fountain. The schoolhouse was covered later with pebbledash.



NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY



NORFOLK RURAL SCHOOLS SURVEY

Southery School House 1900

Date of survey	August 2011
Name(s) of surveyor(s)	Mrs. Judith Legge