

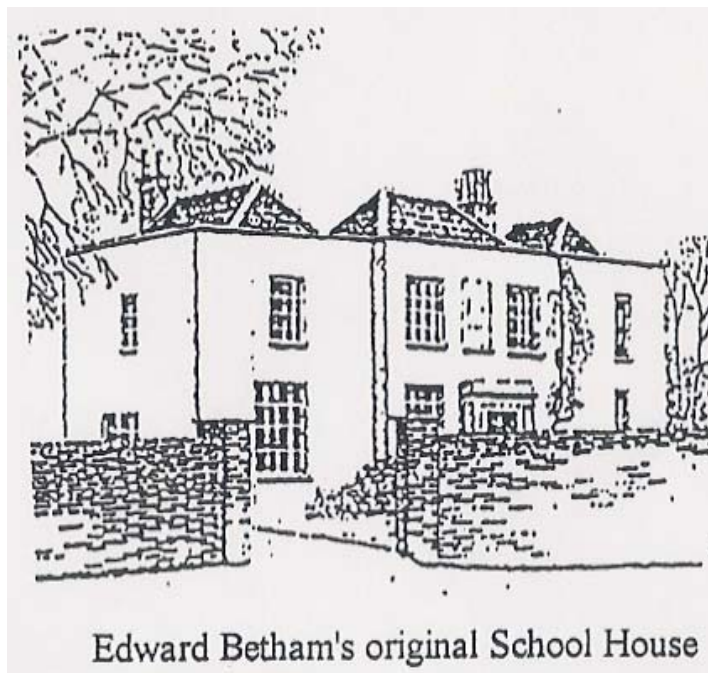
# Edward Betham School Founder's Day

Monday 24th November, we will be observing as Founder's Day and there will be a representative group of pupils from Edward Betham School attending a special mass in the Old Church, to which everyone is invited. So, for those new to the subject, here is a little bit of the history of the first school in Greenford.

In 1780, The Revd. Edward Betham, Rector of Greenford Magna, *built a Charity School with house for the master and mistress and endowed it with £1600 Bank Stock.*

Nobody seems to know why. It is not clear if he married, or had children. Betham came from a privileged echelon of society. He gave the money for the education of poor boys *and* girls, which on the face of it, was a very far-sighted thing to do in the 18th century.

Edward Betham was born into a clergy family in 1709. His father was the Rector of Silchester, near Southampton. Edward was educated at Eton College and in 1728, went up to King's College, Cambridge. In 1731 he became a Fellow of King's and, for some time, Bursar. He was an antiquarian and a collector.



Edward Betham's original School House

In his Will, he also bequeathed money for the maintenance of the Botanical garden in Cambridge and £700 to pay for a life-size statue of Henry VI which was sculpted by Bacon and now stands in Eton College Chapel.

From our point of view in Greenford, it is his generosity in giving money to found his school, and also to help poor elderly people, which is our main interest. The Betham School House is on the east side of Oldfield Lane at 164 Oldfield Lane South. The original school was increased in size by the addition of two wings.

In 1876, Betham School became an Elementary Public School in accordance with the Education Act of that year. In 1878, it became a residence for the Head, and the children moved into a new Victorian school built to provide better facilities. This building, known as the Clock School, was eventually expanded several times and then, administration of the school passed into the hands of the Local Authority.

In 1928, Coston School opened with 401 pupils, the first of a series of new schools built to meet the ever growing demand from the growing population.

In 1939, as the Second World War began, Betham school was taken over by the Home Office for Civil Defence purposes.

The original school building was sold by the Trustees in 1974, and is now divided into 3 separate houses, privately owned. The capital raised by the sale was used to buy the buildings formerly known as Coston School for boys, and this opened in 1975 as Betham Middle School, joining the Betham First school in providing Church education for local children from 4-12 years of age.

In 1993, the London Borough of Ealing re-organised its education system and the former Betham First and Middle schools were united under one Head Teacher as The Edward Betham Church of England Primary School, with a Nursery class, educating about 450 children from 4-11 years of age or from Nursery to Year 6.

The advantages of such a generous benefactor as Edward Betham were evident in 1995 when two brand new classrooms were opened to give more space for modern educational work, and £60,000 of the cost was provided by the Betham Trustees, using the interest from the original bequest of Edward Betham.

In 2001, a large contribution from the Trust was made to support the building of a new classroom for housing a network of computers for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education.

You may read 2 plaques concerning the foundation of the school. One is in English in the Old Church on the south wall of the nave. The other is in Latin on the wall of the original school house. It is visible from the road at 164 Oldfield Lane South.

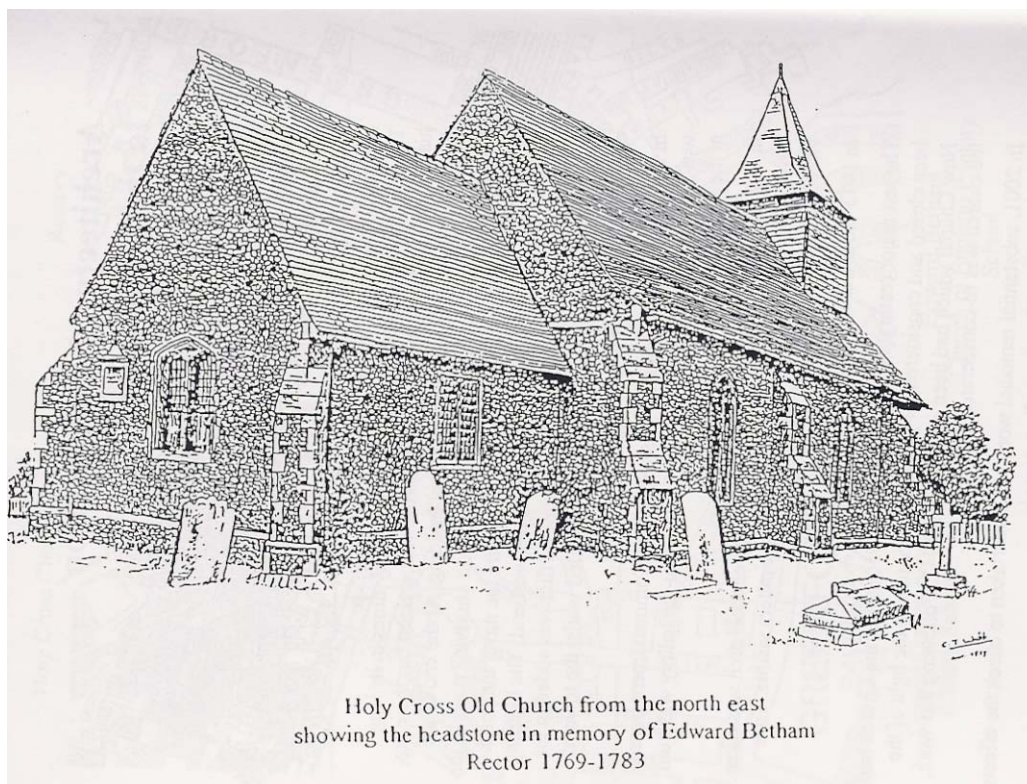
It reads:

AD PAUPERUM PUEROS  
RELIGIONIS RUDIMENTIS  
IMBUENDUM FUNDATAS  
Has AEDES D.O.M.D.

E.B. MDCCLXXX

*translation*

To the poor children  
rudiments of religion  
to teach the fundamentals  
this building is dedicated  
to God, the best, greatest  
Edward Betham 1780



Holy Cross Old Church from the north east  
showing the headstone in memory of Edward Betham  
Rector 1769-1783