

## The Edward Betham Church of England Primary School

The Revd. Edward Betham was the rector of the parish of Greenford Magna and in 1780, he gave a lot of money to found a school, the first school in Greenford, and he especially had the children of the poor in mind to attend his charity school. He endowed the school with a Trust fund of £1600 which was a very large sum of money in those days, and to some extent, still is a large sum of money today.



This is Holy Cross Church where Edward Betham was rector. Looks nice in the snow, doesn't it!

The building is very much the same as it was in 1780 and in the church is a plaque showing the details of his gift and the curriculum for the children to follow.

He wanted them to learn to "read, write, cast accounts and to learn the principles of the Christian religion."

We are still doing these subjects, but a lot more as well!

This is the original school house, still standing next to the current school buildings and within sight of the church. A nice cosy community has been created.

We remember that until the turn of the 20th century, Greenford was a sleepy village with hay-making as the most important industry.

The old school house is now occupied by three individual owners.



Following the Forster Education Act of 1870, Government Inspectors visited Edward Betham's school and found the building inadequate for the purposes of a modern education. Consequently, a new school was opened in 1878, with a lovely clock tower giving Greenford a new landmark.

The Clock School now houses the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One.

In the 19th century log book, the Head Teacher wrote about how cold it was in the school and they had to spend extra money on more coal for the fire. He wrote that the fingers of the pupils were so cold, they couldn't hold a pen to write.

In 1975, the building known then as Coston Junior for Boys became surplus to the requirement of the LEA and the Trustees purchased it and opened the Betham Middle School.

It is strange to think these days that there was a time when Local Authorities were selling off surplus property!

This very important and visionary purchase of the Coston building has meant that Edward Betham's school is now no longer simply a First or Infant School, but a school offering education from the age of 3 to 11.



The Trustees and Governors financed the purchase of the Coston building by selling the original school house for £25,000 and borrowing from the LDBS, a loan which we were still paying back late into the 1980s.

Having a road running between the departments can be a difficulty. Much has to be duplicated and there are other additional costs, but on the other hand, the departments retain a sense of being small and friendly places for both children and adults to work in.



Edward Betham died in 1783 and you see here the headstone of his grave, close to the wall, a scene of modesty. He didn't need to flaunt his wealth by an elaborate grave stone. He had given Greenford and it's children so much through his generous gift, and we are proud of him and of the work done under his name for 231 years, preceding the National Society's initiative by 31 years!

The pupils keep Edward Betham in mind every year in November when we have our Founder's Day and reflect on how beneficial his generosity has been down the years.



These photographs were taken in 2000 as part of our celebration of the new millennium. Already many of these children will be at work or full-time study, building on the foundation laid at Edward Betham School



We are proud of our close association with Holy Cross Church and see the work of education as being in imitation of the life and work of Jesus the Teacher.

And we are proud to be part of the life and work of Edward Betham, a pioneer of providing education for the children of the poor.