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FOUNDATION OF SHRIVENHAM SCHOOL
18TH and 19TH CENTURY

SHRIVENHAM-MONOGRAPH NO. 1.

Edith Jeacock.
Licentiate of the College of Preceptors.

The quest for the roots of Elementary Education in Shrivenham begins in London, during the reign of William the Third. It was in 1698 that the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was founded, one of its aims being the foundation of schools to give a sound education to the children of the Poor.

At its first meeting, the Society adopted a resolution 'to further and promote that good design of erecting Catechetical schools in each parish in and about London'. Funds for the erection and maintenance of these Charity schools were raised by issuing lists to the parishes inviting people to subscribe. This money was augmented by the preaching of special 'charity' sermons at which a collection in support of the schools was made. Rich and poor gave what they could in support of the movement. Wealthy individuals either donated a lump sum or guaranteed a fixed amount each year. Some of the clergy undertook to teach a number of children gratis or by paying the expenses of children attending the school. In some parishes, the parish clerk was appointed on condition that he would teach a number of children. Within a short time, the movement spread to all parts of the country.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN SHRIVENHAM DURING THE MINISTRY OF GEORGE STEPHENS.

In 1703, when George Stephens was the Vicar of Shrivenham, a Mr. Thomas Stratton left by Will a certain meadow in the parish of Shrivenham of eight acres and a half, out of which the sum of four pounds per annum was to be paid to the clergyman and his successors, so long as the Vicar of the time should teach ten poor boys of the parish to read and write. The ability of Mr. Stratton to grant this land was not recognised as it was claimed to belong to Mr. Stephens in right of his Vicarage. The endowment is known, possibly erroneously, as Stratton's Charity.

Be that as it may, George Stephens continued to teach poor boys of the parish for another fifteen years as the following reports of the S.P.C.K. show.

SHREVENHAM. BERKS. 1715

'A Sch. for teaching all the poor ch. towards which
4L forever is settled.'

SHREVENHAM, BERKS. 1714

'A Sch. for teaching all the poor ch. towards which
4L per Ann. forever is settled. Beside this, there are
2 other Sch. in this Parish, one at Watchfield for
12 ch. and another at Boreton for 7 ch.'

.....

The abstracts of the letters to the Society from Caleb
Parfect., Curate at Longcot, throw more light on the
work in the parish.

ABSTRACT. 3543

G.A. Parfect, Berks... that at Shrevenham in that
county there's four pounds P.A. for ever given to the
teaching of poor children to read and write.

ABSTRACT 3909

Caleb Parfect at Longcot in Berks, 24 February 1715
in answer to the Society's circular that he had recd.
the packetts for Mr. Stevens, W. Hutton and himself....

that Mr. Hutton had been very intent to erect
Schools in his own and other parishes though he had not had
so good success at home as he has abroad where two at least
owe their rise to his Conduct.

At Watchfield, in the parish of Shrevenham 12
children are taught to read. At Bourton, 7 more are taught.

that the school at Longcott was opened 4/Febr'y 1711~~1~~
1712 and he approves very much of adding a little work
to the Children's learning and is endeavouring to make
an Experiment of it there.

that he has sent 3 pounds with a request that it
may be lay'd out in buying 50 of Mr. Lewis's catachisms,
6 Copy Books, a Whole Duty of Man of the finest character,
6 Whole Dutys of Man of the lesse~~s~~ size, Matthew Youngman's
Companion and the rest in such Bills as are proper.'

.....

In order to understand the references in the
Abstracts that follow our attention must now transfer
itself to Scotland. The year 1715 was that of the
Jacobite rising-an attempt to put on the throne of England
a Catholic Stuart, James the Second's son.

Though unsuccessful, the rebellion led to fears of Jacobitism all over the country. Oxford was reputed to be a hotbed for the movement, with the dons swearing allegiance to George the First when sober and raising their glasses to toast the Stuarts when fuddled. It appears that Caleb Parfect had been asked by the Society regarding sentiments in Shrivenham and district.

ABSTRACT 5442

'Caleb Parfect at Faringdon, Berks 19 November 1717 to thank thee society for their packet of Books to the Charity School Library.

that there's no disaffection to the present government in their School nor in any of the neighbourhood that he knows of. they keeping as near as possible to the regulations of the London Schools, which have been so successfully observed that instead of giving offence, they afford the utmost pleasure to all that wish the Prosperity of the Constitutry in Church and State.

that he had the misfortune very lately to hear from no mean person that the Charity Schools do a great deal of hurt by prejudging Children in their Youth, who should only be taught to read and learn Texts of Scriptures without any exposition, that they may judge for themselves when they are of age, and that by these Schools we shall want hands for husbandry-that the children are bred up in sloth and idleness and that they are encouraged in sedition and Disloyalty, most of the Promoters very diaffected persons.

that Mr. Stephens intends to write to the ~~Society~~ for a MA. for the School erecting at the West End of the parish of Shrivenham, which will shortly be open'd for Shrevenham, Bourton and Watchfield.

that the person shall be wellcome to his beliefs and be accompany'd from thence to the place where he is to reside.'

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THE FIRST APPLICATION FOR A SCHOOLMASTER AT SHRIVENHAM

ABSTRACT 5447

Geo. Stephens of Shrevenham, Berks 18 November 1717' do desire the Society would recomment a M.A. for a Charity

School at Shrevenham, to teach the poor children of that parish and two villages adjacent to it, for which there will be allowed 20L a year salary.

that he makes application to the society in order to have one duly qualified in all respects, but particularly of known affection for His Majesty King George, wherby a Jealousie may be prevented, which in the Circular Letter is desir'd may be removed were it has been raised.'

This application evidently had the desired effect for on December 16th 1717, Stephens writes:-

'in answer to the Society's of the 14th that the Inhabitants of his neighbourhood are oblig'd to the Society for their Care to procure a good master for their School who will think one well qualified that's recommended by the Society.

that they want a master not only for the Instruction of the Poor children but for those that are able to pay of which there's a pretty many in and about the villages.

that what the master may get for teaching them and the cheapness of things there with 20L Salary will be as good as 30L in London.

that they may board there for 10L to 12L a year.

that the Contributors to the School are now very easy since he read the Society's letter to them and think if the master came by Candlemas he'll come in a proper time, but if sooner he will be very welcome.'

INTERVIEW AND APPOINTMENT OF FIRST MASTER FOR SHRIVENHAM

On 24th December 1717 a bewigged interviewing board was sitting at St. Dunstan's Coffee House, London. Those present were Mr. Chamberlayne, Mr. Dolins, Dr. Bray, Mr. Beeham and Mr. Shute-Barrington.

The minutes read:-

'The Committee considering of Mr. Stevens letter of Shrevenham of the 18 Nov and 16 Dec and Mr. Harbottle who has been a writing master in St Andrew's Parish Holborn and being recommended by the Rew. W. Hazlewood.

The Committee examined him and found him well qualified as to his writing and knowledge of accounts and he promised to procure against Thursday next a proper certificate of his being possessed of the other qualifications expected in a Charity Schoolmaster.

See over 71

The Committee recommended that if he procure such a certificate he be sent to Shrevenham.'

add Mr. Harbottle's name

.....

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Another meeting on December 31st 1717 at St. Dunstan's Coffee House found Mr. Barrington reporting that ' in his opinion in relation to the school erecting at Shrevenham, the first regard should be most properly bestowed on the girls. The great complaint in the county was that they could not get maidservants qualified for service so easily as the men servants.'

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All was not well between Barrington and Stephens, however, for by Oct. 1718 the former is asking for a copy of the Society's rules and stating that ' he finds that he shall meet with all the opposition Mr. Stephen's the minister of the parish is able to give him.'

Another portion of the letter shows Barrington's fear of the rise of Jacobitism in Shrevenham. He says:-

'disaffection has publicly shown its face in the parish since the school has been opened, which it never did before. They being now as famous for white roses and oaken boughs as their neighbours.'

This last sentence appears to refer to the white rosettes given out to men rallying in Edinburgh to the Stuart Cause and the oaken boughs to oak-apple day with its association with Charles the First. There is evidence that young people of neighbouring villages to Shrevenham were sporting these favours and that some of the Charity Schools and their teachers caught the Jacobite infection.

add appendix

In January 1718, Barrington laid a proposal before the Committee for employing the charity children in some useful labour beside their learning- the Committee to appraise Mr. Harbottle, the Schoolmaster, with the proposed terms.

Nothing more of Shrevenham School, is mentioned for the rest of the century. Presumably, to use the stock phrase of the Shrevenham churchwardens ' all things well.' It is not recorded how long Mr. Harbottle stayed at the school and Mr. Stephen's ministry came to an end in 1733. The Vicars Caleb and Barford Colton followed, with , no doubt, unnamed schoolmasters working conscientiously to educate the children in their care. The Barrington family continued to act as keen patrons of the school.

also 1750

Just on the turn of the century, a new schoolroom and Master's house was built at Shrivvenham on a piece of land conveyed by deed of 17th October 1799 for the residue of 500 years from 1792 for this purpose. The buildings were provided partly from subscriptions and partly by the parish.

Elsewhere, the S.P.C.K's work flourished strongly. By 1754, over 2000 schools had been founded. This contribution was immense because it aimed at raising the level of life for the Poor. Though the condescension of the 'dogooders' would be painful to tolerate today, undoubtedly sincere were the Christian aims.

Rivalry between the Dissenters, who had been forced to found their own Charity Schools because of their religious views clashing with the Orthodox Church and the rule that all Schoolmasters had to be licensed by the Bishop of the Diocese, acted as a spur to both sides. A monitorial system of teaching, expounded by Mr. Bell, enabled large numbers of children to be taught by older pupils in the Church Schools: a similar system used by Lancaster-a Quaker- served the Dissenter Schools. Either way, the Poor became literate to a certain degree. For more details of the rules and aims plus the curricula see Appendix.

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(Appendix 2)
Inclusive with*

*NOTE
TO PARENTS
7A (Rules)*

... will show why the Dissenters objected.

**DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE MINISTRY OF EDWARD BERENS
1804- 1859**

The Barringtons and Edward Berens worked together most amicably for the School's benefit. The National Society took over the work of the S.P.C.K. in 1811 and it is from ~~their~~ records that the information on the early 19th century is mostly based.

At the time of the 1818 Parochial Returns, 10 poor boys were receiving free instruction under the endowment and a further 26 boys also attended the school on a payment basis. There was also a daily school with 36 girls-10 of whom received free education and clothing at the expense of Viscountess Barrington. In addition, there was a Sunday School with 30 boys supported by Lord Barrington: another with 50 girls supported by subscription.

By 1833, there were 65 boys attending the daily school and 60 on Sundays: in addition to the endowment the school was supported by other charitable funds and the children's pence. The girls' daily school was attended by 34 pupils and the Sunday School by 46 and this was supported by private charity and the children's pence.

The girls' school, situated in the churchyard, was conveyed to the Vicar and Churchwardens under the School Site Act by deed dated 2nd September 1847 although the foundation continued to be known as Lady Barrington's School. In an article by Wilfred F. Harms on early schooling in Shrivvenham, he stated that Edward Berens built two schools, one for boys and one for girls. Whether he took over existing buildings or had new ones erected is not quite clear. Another interesting sidelight comes years later in Canon Hill's book when he refers to the building known as Forrester's Hall having to serve as a school. This is situated to the rear of the Thatched Shop in Hazell's Lane and sufficiently close to the Vicarage to lend credence to an idea that this could have been a school site from the start.

Certainly, one can walk from the High Street today and see the former Girls' School and the Mistress' residence. The former is now the Church Room with a Cross marking George Ferris' grave immediately in front of it: the latter, attractive Jasmine Cottage where Mrs. Adams lives. The Schoolmistress for the first 23 years of its existence was Mrs. Mary Finch (nee Harms) who was formerly ladies' maid to Lady Bouverie, Mrs. Berens' sister. To quote her great-great nephew, Wilfred Harms:-

'Mary Finch, despite her lowly origins as a result of her diligence ultimately proved herself fitted to carry out this task in a manner which was acceptable to her eminent friends for a period of twenty-three years.'

Edward Berens' Ministry ended in 1859.

MERGING OF THE SCHOOLS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF GEORGE WILLIAM
duny MURRAY.

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In 1863, Viscount Barrington granted a new site in the village with the buildings thereon to be used for the purpose of a school in union with the National Society.

With the consent of the Charity Commissioners, the existing boys and girls schools and schoolmistress' house were sold for £260, £34 and £96 respectively and the proceeds used towards the cost of erecting new buildings on the newly acquired site. Canon Hill, writing on the village in 1929 tells his readers that on the site of the present school there was a gabled house which had fallen into disrepair and was pulled down when the school was built. He also describes what is a portion of Shrivenham school today.- 'village school with Master's house adjoining built of grey stone.' Canon Hill continues:-

'The school was erected by voluntary subscription in the year 1863 on a site given by William Keppel, Viscount Barrington and as set forth in the trust deed for the education of the children of the parish of Shrivenham and to be conducted upon the principles of the National Society for promoting the education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church.'

Kelly's Directory of 1869 records:-

'A new school room, capable of containing 100 boys and girls, with master's residence was opened in August 1863 by the Bishop of Oxford. The funds were raised by private subscription and the site granted by Viscount Barrington. There is a foundation of £4.00 for the boys' school.

National School. George Tebbutt. Master

Mrs. Tabbutt. Mistress.

Lady Barrington's School for Girls.

Mistress. Mrs. Mary Finch.

This marks the end of the quest for the early education at Shrivenham for the rest of the story lies in the School Log Books which began in 1863 and continue to the present day.

Edith Jeacock. L.C.P.

September 1978.

Hon Secretary Shrivenham Local History Society.

BRITISH MONARCH'S DURING PERIOD STUDIED.

William the Third	1694-1702
Anne	1702-1714
George the First	1714-1727
George the Second	1727-1760
George the Third	1760-1820
George the Fourth	1820-1830
William the Fourth	1830-1837
Victoria	1837-1901

VICARS OF SHRIVENHAM DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

George Stephens	1697
Caleb Colton M.A.	1733
Barford Colton M.A.	1764
Edward BerensM.A.	1804
George William Murray M.A.	1859

NAMES OF THE MASTERS AND MISTRESSES SO FAR FOUND.

Mr. Harbottle	1718
Mr. J. Hughes	1854
Mr. George Tebbutt	1863
Mrs. Tebbutt	1863
Mrs. Finch	1847

CHARITY SCHOOLS.

I. That the subscribers meet at some convenient Place on the first Wednesday after every Quarter-Day: And what shall be agreed on at such meetings, by the Majority of the Subscribers then present, shall be observed: of which Meetings every Subscriber shall have notice.

II. That a Treasurer and six Trustees be Annually chosen out of the Subscribers, on Wednesday in Easter Week, who with the Minister, shall have the immediate Care and Government of the said School, and shall report the State and Condition of the same, at the said Quarterly Meetings of the Subscribers.

III. If there should happen to be any Money in Stock, at the Entrance of the Treasurer upon his Office: or that there be a considerable Subscription to be received: the Treasurer shall give his Bond to 4 or more of the Subscribers, to lay out the same as the Subscribers shall order: but especially, that in Case of his Death, the Money so receiv'd, and not expended, may be answer'd to the School.

iv. That the Treasurer keep a fair Account of all Receipts and Disbursements for the View of all Subscribers and Others, who may desire to know how the Monies are disposed of.

v. That the Treasurer bring in his Accounts once, or oftener in a Year, to be audited by the Trustees, or Persons appointed for that Purpose.

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vi. THE QUALIFICATIONS TO BE REQUIRED IN A SCHOOL-MASTER.

1. That he be a Member of the Church of England, of a sober life and Conversation, and not under the age of 23 years.

2. That he will understand well the Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion, and be able to give a good Account thereof to the Minister of the Parish, or Ordinary, on Examination.

3. That he be of meek Temper and humble Behaviour.

4. That he have a good Government of Himself and His Passions, and keep good Orders.

5. That he frequent the Holy Communion.

6. That he have a Genius for Teaching, writes a good Hand, and understands Arithmetick.

7. That he be approved by the Minister of the Parish. And here it may be noted, That it will be advisable for any
selected School Master to consult with some of the



ORDERS TO BE OBSERVED BY THE MASTERS AND MISTRESSES.

1. That they constantly attend the School, from the hours of 7 to 11 in the morning, and from 1 to 5 in the Evening, the Summer Half-Year: And from 8 to 11 in the Morning and from 1 to 4 in the Evening, the Winter Half-Year.
2. That they teach them the True Spelling of Words, make them Mind their stops, and bring them to read slowly and distinctly.
3. That the Children be taught to Write a fair legible Hand, with the Grounds of Arithmetick: and that the Gilrs be taught to Knit their Stockings and Gloves, and to Mark, Sew, mend their Cloathes, Spin or any other work used in the Places where they live, to fit them for Service and Apprenticeships.
4. That they make it their chief Business to instruct the Children in the Principles of the Religious Religion, as professed in the Church of England, and laid down in the Church Catechism: which they are first to teach them to pronounce distinctly: and then explain it to them by some good Exposition approv'd by the Ministers and afterwards shall more largely inform them of their duty by the Help of the Whole Duty of Man, Mr. Ostervald's Catechism or some other good Book: and that when any Number of Children can say the Catechism, they give Notice thereof to the Minister, in order to their being Catechised in the Church.
5. That they take particular Care of the Manners and Behaviour of the Poor Children: and by all proper Methods, discourage and correct the Beginners of Vice, such as lying, Swearing, Cursing, Stealing, taking God's Name in vain, Prophaning of the Lord's Day, etc. putting them in mind of such Parts of the holy Scriptures, and of the Catechism, where those things are forbidden. And in general(in the Business of Religion) they shall follow the Direction of the Minister.

Note. the Christian School-Master, advertised at the End of this Account together with the Art of Spelling, and Reading English, will be of excellent use for the Master, and such as are employed in the Instruction of Children.

6. That they shall take particular care not to suffer the Children to join, or to be seen with any Mob, in a tumultuous Manner, upon any occasion whatsoever: nor to go about begging money for Bonfires, and that they

Lord's Day and Holy Day: and instruct them to behave themselves there with all Reverence, and to join in the publick Service. And to take Care the Children bring their Bibles and Common Prayer Books with them.

N.B. In many places the Masters and Mistresses bring the Children to Church every day.

8. That they Pray Morning and Evening in the School and teach the Children to do the same at home, when they rise and go to Bed: as also to say Grace before and after Meat. The Prayers to be collected out of the Publick Prayers of the Church, or other forms to be approved of by the Minister.

9. That the Children's Names be called over every Morning and Afternoon: And if any be missing to be put down with Notes for Tardy or Absent: and great Faults as Lying, Swearing, Stealing, Truanting, etc. that they be noted down in Monthly or Weekly Bills, to be laid before the Subscribers or Trustees every Time they meet, in order to Correction or Expulsion.

10. That the Children be permitted to break up at the Three Great Festivals, and no oftener.

11. That where the Children are Cloathed, they wear their Cape, Bands, Cloaths and other Marks of Distinction, every Day: whereby the Trustees and Benefactors may know them and what their Behaviour is abroad.

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NOTES TO PARENTS.

Parents were ordered to send their children to school ' constantly, clean wash'd and comb'd. They were also warned against mobs and begging for bonfire money, and asked not to complain to the Master or Mistress if their Children ' were chastised for their Faults' so that the teachers might not be discourag'd in the 'performance of their duty' . With other orders those were printed on sheets of paper to be given to the parents to put up in their homes ' for the better Observing them.'

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CLOTHING BOYS AND GIRLS IN CHARITY SCHOOLS.

It cost 16s 11d in 1715 to cloth a boy in a coat of grey Yorkshire broad cloth with pewter buttons and a waistcoat of the same, cloth lined, a pair of cloth breeches or leather lines, knit cap with taft and string, a band, skirt, pair of woollen stockings, pair of shoes , pair of

Manner of conducting, it must be left to the Managers of the several schools, who are the best Judges of what is most proper and convenient to be done.

.....

HYPOTHETICAL STATISTICS.

Suppose England and Wales to contain 10,000 Parishes and that but 10 persons in every Parish, one with another were by this Method employed, who were perfectly idle before, then the whole number of persons to set to work by this means would be 100, 000, who, if they work'd but 300 days in a Year and one with another earned but Halfpenny a Day the Produce of their Labour at Year's End would amount to £62,500.

.....

NOTES ON SPINNING.

The Spinning of course Wool, Flax or Hemp is a Thing easily learnt, and the Waste which will always be made by Beginners won't amount to much. And if it were possible to contrive it That the parents of the Children might reap some advantage from what is so named, it would be a great Inducement for them to keep the Children to their Business: and if the Undertaking succeeded, it is to be hoped, that many good people would send in course Materials to be work'd up for the Benefit of the School.

Tho' the Spinning of Wool and Flax or Hemp is proposed as most advantagious, yet where this is found impracticable, the Children should be employed in some other way, and always have what they earn for their Encouragement: that would make them diligent, and induce all good Christians to assist in an undertaking which so much conduces to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind.

CIRCULARS SENT TO FARMERS? GARDENERS AND OTHER OCCUPIERS OF LAND.

The Trustees of the Society understood there was a shortage of labour for Tilling the ground and performing other Parts of Husbandry and gave notice that they were prepared to bind boys apprenticed for seven years to learn the art off husbandry, and girls for five years to do housework to any Gardener, Farmer, etc. and girls for housework to other persons of substance and character.

With each boy went £5: with each girl £3 paid out by the local treasurers.

HINT ON CURRICULUM

This circular letter not@d that each boy be taught "the first five rules of Vulgar Arithmetic, Writing and to read English, and the girls to read and write English and to do Plain-work."

In addition, in a later account:-

"All proper methods off inuring the children to labour and industry were taken- apprentices to manual trades, servants especially in husbandry, putting out to service in sober families."

Spinning, sewing, knitting, gardening, 'plowing' harrowing, were all mentioned as children's occupations.

Taken from the S.P.C.K. leaflets.

E. Jeacock.

Gratefully acknowledged is the help given to me by Mr. Arthur Barker of the S.P.C.K. Miss Blake of the National Society, Miss Molly Barrett of the Bodleian Library, Miss A. Green of the Berkshire Records Office, the Librarians at Swindon Reference Library and Mr. Lidworth of the R.M.C.S. Shrivenham Library, Beckett House, Shrivenham. Oxon.

Also, my appreciation to Councillor Francis for writing the Preface.

PREFACE.

Shrivenham Local History Society must be congratulated on their initiative in encouraging their members to contribute to the writing of a Parish History.

As a former Chairman of the Berkshire Education Committee (before local government reorganisation under the Local Government Act ,1972) I have read with much interest Mrs. Jeacock's monograph on the Foundation of Shrivenham School. In a disturbed and changing world it is essential that sound research should be undertaken into the history of our local communities in order that the pioneering work done, and, very often, the firm foundation laid down, by our ancestors in a seemingly less troubled age may be recorded.

Much commonsense, still applicable, can be gleaned from such research, and I particularly appreciated the appendix to Mrs. Jeacock's paper, which might be read today with profit!

I commend this monograph-number one and look forward with pleasure to reading its subsequent companions.

County Hall,
Oxford.

JOHN FRANCIS.
Chairman of the Oxfordshire
County Council

April 1979



Royal County of Berkshire

County Secretariat Berkshire Record Office

Shire Hall Reading RG1 3EE

Telephone Reading (0734) 55981 Ext 230

Your reference

My reference JT/R12/1

When calling ask for Mrs Thorp

19 April 1979

Dear Mrs Jeacock

I confirm with pleasure the safe receipt of your monograph on Shrivenham School, which we are very pleased to have. It will be put into our Search Room library, and read with much interest.

I am glad that my talk on the B.R.O. was helpful, and look forward to meeting your members again when they come here.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Thorp

Assistant Archivist

Mrs E Jeacock
17 Sandy Lane
Shrivenham
Swindon
Wilts
SN 6 8 DZ

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