

BUILDINGS AT RISK

Schools of thought

In this week's edition, Peter Kelly of the Isle of Man Victorian Society explores how some of the past educational buildings have been adapted for other uses or lost to our architectural heritage and how the future of some remains in the balance.

The announcement in November 2019 that Castle Rushen High School was going to be replaced by a new £30 million building came as something of a shock to many. 'Why, it's not all that old, why do they want a new one?' was heard across the island. The current school was officially opened in November 1962 – it doesn't sound a long time ago, but it will be 62 years old when the new school is due to open in 2024.

Nothing appears to be built to last anymore.

The present Noble's Hospital, when completed in 2003, was said to have an anticipated 40-year life expectancy.

It has nearly reached the halfway point.

In the past, expressions like 'outlived its usefulness' just didn't exist.

If a farmer built a new farmhouse, then the old one wasn't pulled down, it was converted into another agricultural building.

So too with schools; if they became too small they were extended or if a new one was built then the old one was often sold off and used for another purpose.

This could be as housing, or as a Sunday school, or even a church hall.

In this first of a series of occasional articles, we look at some of the island's schools that became redundant, either because a larger or more satisfactory new building was erected or the number of pupils dropped to such a level that the cost of running them per child was too great and so arrangements were made for the pupils to attend the next nearest school.

BARREGARROW WESLEYAN SCHOOL

This school appears on the 1869 Ordnance Survey map and was on the opposite side of the road from the present chapel towards Glen Wyllin and about 200 yards further down.

The date it opened is lost, but by the 1870s it was reported as becoming run-down.

In 1872 it was taken over by the Kirk Michael School Board and once the board school in the village was erected it was closed and the pupils transferred to the new building.

The old school was con-



The Barregarrow Wesleyan School also doubled up as a Sunday School. The building probably started life as a thatched cottage and certainly reverted to being a cottage when the pupils were transferred to the new Board School in Kirk Michael Village. A new Sunday School was built opposite the chapel in 1901 by Mr Crowe the mason and Mr Kelly and sons the joiners of Michael Village. Many years later it was converted into a metal worker's workshop

verted into a dwelling and is now called Barregarrow Cottage.

JURBY PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

As with other parishes, there was a parochial school at Jurby, but its condition was poor

and Archdeacon Moore engaged Joseph Henry Christian, the architect from London, who produced plans for a new school and master's house.

These were approved by the school committee on Feb-

ruary 14, 1861 and work began.

Other works designed by Christian were the bell tower at Andreas Church, the Lunatic Asylum at Ballamo-

na, the north wing at Cronkbourne House in Braddan and Braddan School and master's house.

He was the President of the

Architectural Association and a cousin of Ewan Christian, the great ecclesiastical architect. The master's house at Jurby bore a close resemblance to



Jurby Parochial School designed by Joseph Henry Christian. In this post-war picture the school master's house has been rendered on the outside in the same way that the master's house was at Braddan School, also designed by Christian

Photo: Richard Davis



The site of the Jurby Parochial School today. Nothing left of the old school and little left of the garage and filling station that replaced it after it had served as an early HQ for the RAF Bombing School in 1938. Now everything in the picture is to be demolished to make way for new private houses, close to the Bretney Estate



Bride School was built to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of children in the parish but things have changed to the extent that Bride children now go to Andreas School. This was the only Parochial School in the north of the island built entirely out of local brick. Note the position of the former ventilators on the roof and how the original wooden window frames have been replaced with uPVC. Now the building lies empty

the farm house at Lanjaghan, Abbeylands, which he designed for the Archdeacon's brother, W F Moore.

The school closed on July 31, 1937 and from then on the children were taken to Andreas by bus.

In October 1937, the school and house were advertised to let.

The Air Ministry had just negotiated to build a bombing school based at Jurby and they took on the lease of the school as a headquarters from 1938 to 1945.

It was offered for sale in 1951 and sold the following year.

Then it was demolished and a commercial garage with petrol pumps erected.

More recently, approval has been given for houses on the site.



Built for the children living on the outskirts of Ramsey and ended up that more than half the pupils came from Ramsey itself. Walking a mile and a half to the school rather than going to one of the schools in Ramsey. Since its closure it served as a builder's store and was then converted into a dwelling showing that buildings have a life after their original purpose has passed. It is currently for sale

BRIDE BOARD SCHOOL

There was a parochial school within the grounds of Bride Church, but responsibility for education was handed to the Bride School Board in 1876 when the new school down the road was complete.

The Bride School Board sought tenders for the construction of a new school in June 1875.

Copies of plans and specification could be inspected at the office of Messrs Goldsmith and Cowley in Parliament Street, Ramsey.

They were builders' and agricultural merchants. The name of the architect is not known, but the contractor was Mr Corkhill of Ramsey who also built the new school at Lezayre at the same time.

Of all the new 'Board' schools built at this time, Bride was the only one constructed out of local brick. As the years went by, the

number of pupils decreased. Changes in farming methods resulted in fewer labourers and families living in the parish.

Eventually, the school was merged with Andreas, in a similar way to The Dhoon and Laxey today.

With only three children of school age attending, the school closed in July 2012.

The remaining pupils went to Andreas School.

There was hope for the building when it was let for a privately-run day care centre for pre-school children.

Unfortunately, this only lasted for a short time and now the building is empty.

There are many uses to which it could be put – it just requires some bright person to come forward.

THE DHOOR SCHOOL

There had been a school at The Dhoor, which is about a mile and a half outside Ramsey on the Andreas Road, but by 1876 it could not pass the school inspector's annual inspection.

Consideration was given to erecting a new one by the Lezayre School Board.

It was delayed, however, until the school at Sulby had been financed.

In July 1883, the local press advised that Mr Corkhill of Ramsey had commenced to build the school seven weeks before and it was going to be finished that week.

An incredible feat, but it did present problems with damp penetration.

The anticipated cost of site, building and furnishing

was £550, which was helped by a grant of £212 from the Board of Education.

The inspector's report of 1903 recommended an increase in classroom size.

This was carried out in 1905/06, together with enlarged cloakroom, a new boiler, ventilation and out offices.

By now there were 78 pupils, plus a further 30 infants.

About half the children lived in Ramsey and walked to The Dhoor as the school was free, whereas in Ramsey each school charged a fee.

The school closed in 1965 and for many years it was a builder's store, but some years ago it was converted into a dwelling.

It is currently for sale, if you are interested. ● Series to be continued.

First schools in the Isle of Man established in 1675

Prior to 1675 there were not any schools in the Isle of Man. If children did receive any education it would be from the vicar at their parish church, but there would be very few children who were fortunate enough to be helped in this way.

When Bishop Isaac Barrow was appointed as both Bishop of Sodor and Man, as well as Governor of the island, things began to change. He established a school in every parish and also obtained from King Charles II a Royal Bounty of £100 per annum to be used for the improvement of the ministry and the instruction of youth. He induced the Earl of Derby to make an Order which effectively made education compulsory.

The Order stated: 'All farmers and tenants in my Isle of Mann of what degree or quality so ever doe and shall send their oldest sonnes and all other their children to such pettye schools as soone as they are capable wherein if any doe fail or be remiss they shall not onely be fined severely, but their children made incapable of bearing any office or place of trust.'

A grammar school was established in the capital, Castletown, and another in the ever-increasing in size fishing village of Douglas.

In the country parishes the teaching took place in the parish churches by the vicar or other person licensed by the Bishop.

By the Ecclesiastical Ordinance of 1703 there was a requirement to promote religion, learning and good manners.

Children were to be sent to school as soon as they were capable of receiving instruction and were to stay until they could read English distinctly. Eventually, teaching moved out of the churches and into

especially built school rooms, leaving churches for the purpose which they were built.

There were private schools and some were established by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England and were known as National Schools.

Those erected by the Parish Churches were known as Parochial Schools. Some were built on land owned by the churches, but in other cases land was given by a landowner but often subject to a covenant that should at any time it not be required for educational purposes then the land was to revert to the donor.

The Education Act of 1872 saw a big change to the education system in the Isle of Man.

It brought about School Boards in every parish with an Education Rate that had to be paid by householders to fund new Board Schools that were built over a period of time.

Education of children was still compulsory and the Act required that religious instruction be given.

In addition to the parochial schools run by the Church of England, there were also day schools run by the Methodist, Roman Catholic and other churches.

In some cases, the parochial school buildings were used as the board schools, but ownership remained with the church.

In 1893 the Education Act paved the way for evening classes and higher education schools with four higher education boards being established. The Education Act of 1920 brought about the Isle of Man Education Authority which dispensed with these four boards, along with the other 21 school boards and education passed into the hands of one body.



Tynwald Street School was opened in the mid-1880s