



Devon Family History Society  
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## SLAPTON SCHOOL REGISTER

1840

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The first school in Slapton was a charity school. In 1690, John Kelland had left £100 in his will to provide income for the teaching of 20 poor children. The bequest was later increased by his son. In 1821 the Charity Commissioners' report claimed that they believed a charity school had always been maintained in Slapton from 1690.

Although the first published reference to the planned erection of a school building appeared in White's Directory of Devon in 1850, a parish school had been founded before this, in connection with the National Society. This Society was the largest of the voluntary organisations active in the development of elementary schooling in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was founded by the Church of England in 1811, and a typical expression of the purpose of a National School was as follows:

*'To confer upon the children of the poor the inestimable benefit of religious instruction, combined with such other acquirements as may be suitable to their stations in life, and calculated to render them useful and respectable members of society'*

Existing local village schools which had been supported by the parish or subscriptions, 'decayed' endowed schools and those established as charity schools, all of which were mostly Church of England, originally, became National Schools. Religious teaching of course followed the beliefs of the Church of England, and the local Rector or Vicar often visited regularly to observe and teach.

Slapton School was one such charity school which was taken over by the National Society. It probably existed from Michaelmas 1840, when this admission register was created. No earlier register of pupils at the charity school survives. Kelland Charity scholars attended this National School, and were no doubt transferred there from the older charity school, when the National School was founded. Paying scholars also attended the school, certainly from 1840 onwards. Note that all of the pupils listed in this register were boys. Although most lived in Slapton village, there were also pupils from Stokenham, Slapton Sands, Start, East Allington and Halwell.

It is not known where the National School was first accommodated, but it appears that a purpose-built school building was not erected until the early 1850s. It was variously referred to as a Parochial School, Free School and Endowed School, and continued up

to 1876 when a new school was built by the newly-formed Slapton School Board. The old school building was then used as a Sunday School.

This register was among the records deposited by Slapton parish, and is catalogued with the other parish records. Correspondence and papers relating to the National Society and some National Schools are found in the Exeter Diocesan Records collection at the Devon Record Office – mostly in ref: Moger Basket C/23-25.

Other National Society records including those of individual schools are held at the Church of England Record Centre in Bermondsey, London, but [as of 2006] must be sent to the Lambeth Palace Library reading room for researchers to use.

The National Archives at Kew also holds the 1816 survey of elementary schools, and papers for National Schools which were awarded grants for building from 1833.