

Taniokey School

1840—1972 (132 years)

Taniokey School as the name suggests was situated in the townland of Taniokey — on the main Poyntzpass to Markethill Road — 2½ miles from Poyntzpass and 4½ miles from Markethill.

Thus it lies to the west of Poyntzpass — nestling just below the hilltops of County Armagh, equidistant from Banbridge, Newry, Armagh and Portadown.

This school of the name Taniokey, was built in 1840 by public subscription on land given for that purpose by Col. Close of Drumbanagher.

As this school came into being it was in the company of other schools in the immediate area, namely :— Corlust; Corenagh and Lisnagree.

Taniokey's name was to come to replace their names in education and to outshine them in achievement.

Taniokey School so erected was large and airy, consisting of 2 large classrooms with the school-master's house in between. In fact the classrooms, so described by us, would at the time of construction been called, The Male School and The Female School — since boys and girls were at that time taught separately.

At the rear of these buildings was the school playground enclosed by out-houses and loft on one side and the Dry Toilet building on the other.

Beyond the playground lay the school garden, where practical lessons were given and discoveries made in horticulture and agriculture. In later times we see the out-houses and loft demolished and on this site the canteen erected.

First among the masters, who taught in the school, was a teacher called Mr. McCulla, who taught for over 20 years and laid the foundations of the School's prosperity.

Then as his successor, Mr. Watson came in 1868 and for 30 years gave distinguished service in the school until his retirement in 1898. In his time we see a great interest in learning with the normal day classes being extended to cover such subjects as science in the evening. Indeed Mr. Watson's special contribution to education is witnessed by the illuminated address presented to him on his retirement in 1898.

Mr. Brown the next master married Miss Watson a daughter of his predecessor, who also came to assist him as a teacher in the school. With the coming of Mr. Brown we see a change take place in the structure of

the school, for while previously boys and girls had been separately taught in the Boys School and the Girls School, now it is boys and girls come together to be taught in their several classes in the two classrooms.

Mr. Johnston was the next master to come to Taniokey in 1912 and was to stay there until 1943 when he was in turn succeeded by Mr. McKee.



Taniokey School today.

Next to come in the illustrious line of teachers in the school was Mrs. Cox. Mrs. Cox came in 1943 to be principal of the school and continued to occupy this position with distinction until her retirement in 1968. Soon after coming Mrs. Cox was joined by her husband on the teaching staff, so that the names of Mr. and Mrs. Cox are linked together in the teaching at the school. Mrs. Cox continued to make the name of Taniokey, a highly respected name — a place of learning, a place of discipline, where “the 3 Rs” (Reading, Writing, Arithmetic) were important, but where pupils had the extra dimension of music and verse speaking, so that Newry and Portadown Feises saw many of the Taniokey pupils compete. Mr. Cox with his own love of painting encouraged the pupils in their appreciation of art.

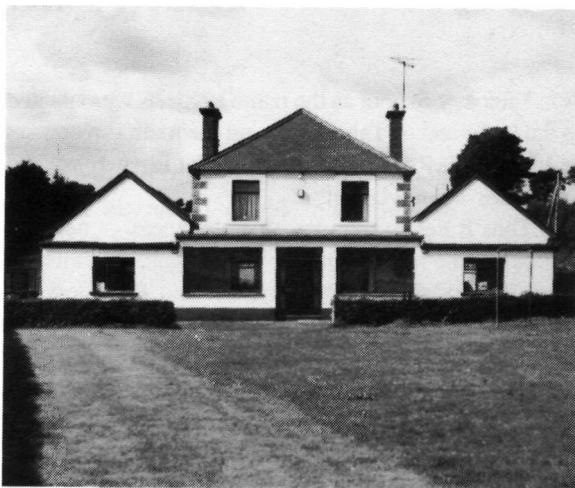
In this period of the school's life we see the parents interested and involved in a parents' association. We see the Christmas Party a highlight of the school year

with song, recitation and drama presented on the stage by the children.

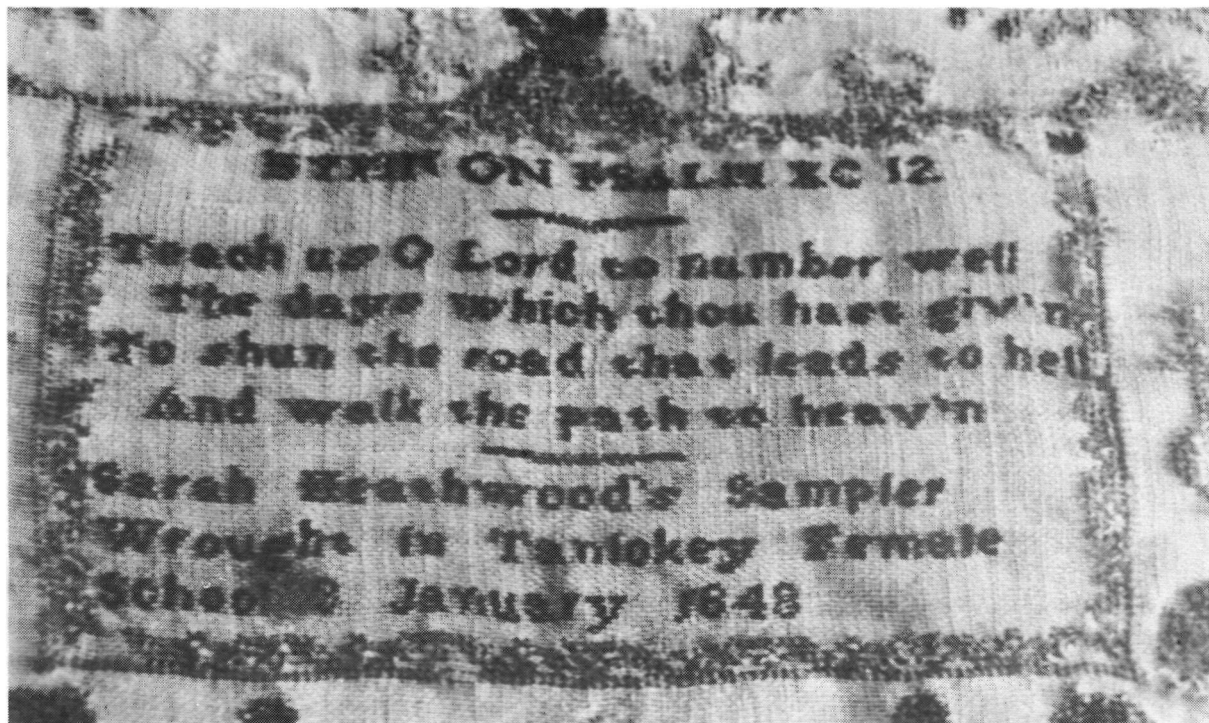
Mr. Cox became principal of the school, on Mrs. Cox's retirement in 1968 and continued to be principal until the school closed in 1972.

The closing of Tanikey School in 1972 was deeply regretted by the community — it was mourned, as the mourning of any only son. To mark it an Exhibition was held in the School and a Service of Thanksgiving held in Cremore Church, where pupils formed the Choir. Bible Readings were read by Mr. Cox and Mrs. Sterritt and an address given by the Minister of Cremore and Tyrone's Ditches.

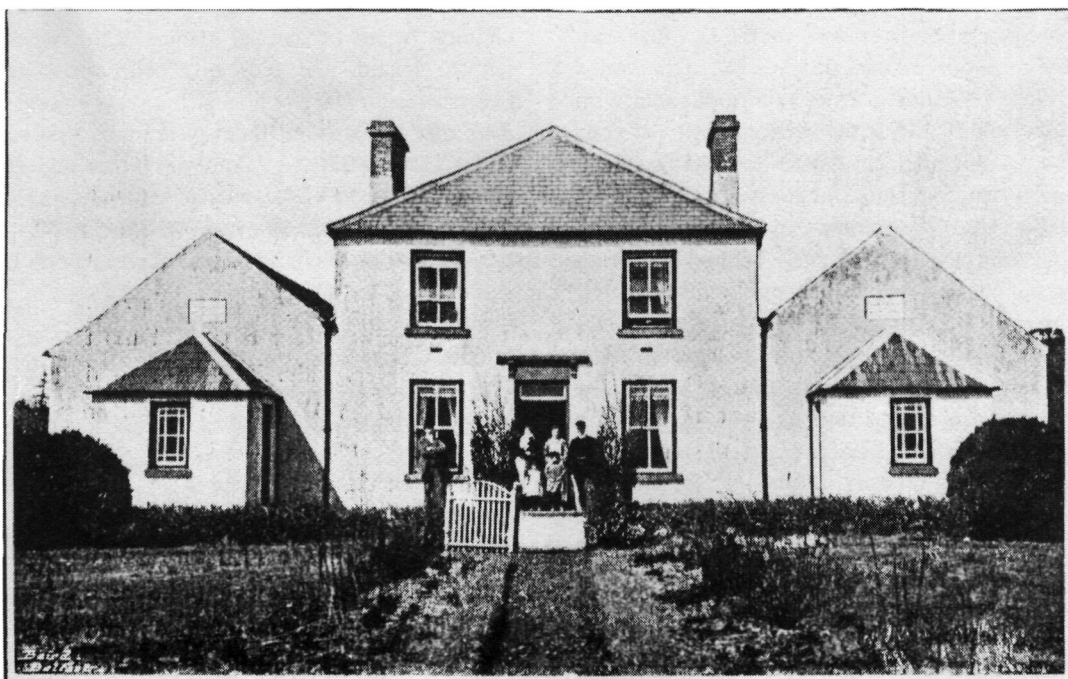
Thus Tanikey's 132 years of life closed and with Jerrettspass, Drumbanagher, Fourtowns and Poyntzpass was united to become one school in the new county primary school in Poyntzpass, which opened in September 1972.



Sarah Heathgood's Sampler, January 8th 1848.



"Teach us O Lord, to number well,
The days which thou hast giv'n
To shun the road that leads to hell
And walk the path to heav'n".



Tainokey National School around 1920.

The following is the text of the illuminated address presented to Mr. William Watson in 1898.

Address and Presentation Mr. William Watson

It is with feelings of more than ordinary pleasure that we your attached pupils, their Parents, together with a few friends, desire to express our warm appreciation of your character and works, and also present you with some tokens of our affectionate esteem, when retiring from the Principalship of Tanoiokey (Male) National School.

It is now thirty years since you came to this vicinity, during which time we have had ample opportunities of witnessing and admiring your unflagging zeal in endeavouring by every possible means to arouse, develop and direct the mental and moral faculties of the youth committed to your training and fostering care.

Imbued with a genial and kind disposition, a well-trained logical mind, extensive scholarship of a high and varied order, united with a noble character and unswerving principle, all qualifying you in an eminent degree to not only secure the confidence and esteem of your pupils, but make you the successful preceptor of youth, while aiming to awaken the careless, stimulate the laggard, and direct the ductile and inquiring. Your noble aim has ever been to impress on the mind of each, the moral truth that each had talents to improve, a reputation to build up, a character to maintain. Your success in thus firing their minds with a noble ambition is evinced by the fact that very many of your pupils are now treading the higher paths of life, filling positions of trust and emolument with honour and fidelity, while the great majority of your scholars have been raised above the Dead Sea level of mediocrity in intellectual attainments.

You Sir, have been among the first to organise Science Classes at various centres. While conducting these you not only burned the midnight oil, but spared no expense in procuring the necessary apparatus and books, through and from which to present the most modern views on the subjects taught: and your thorough grasp and accurate knowledge of each enabled you to break into crumbs of instruction imparted, rendering it easily imbibed by the weakest capacity. You taught the whole range of the higher sciences, from the harmonious revolution of the heavenly bodies down to the nature of the soil, its constituent parts and the food required to develop the seed desposited therein and it must have been highly gratifying to you Sir, when the fact became known that a large majority of your pupils obtained first and second

class prizes through your painstaking care.

We would be guilty of a grave omission did we overlook the fact that in Mrs. Watson you had a judicious and cultured assistant, whose magnetic influence not only stimulated but was an inspiration to you in your uphill career. She too, in the near future will be retiring to enjoy a well earned rest, at which time we fondly trust, the same judicious wisdom will be displayed as in your own case, by selecting another talented and promising member of the family to occupy her responsible position. And here permit us to remark, it is highly gratifying to perceive that your son has so profited by your careful training that he is now conducting the Male School at Tanoiokey with ability, zeal and prudence.

But language may deceive, Deeds are the best exponent of feelings, therefore as a tangible proof of our esteem and gratitude to you, Sir, for the manner in which you have advanced the interests of education in this vicinity, we solicit your acceptance of this Illuminated Address and this Gold Watch, and to Mrs. Watson we respectfully present this Silver Tea Service as a small token of our love and grateful esteem for her very successful life-work in the female department.

Our prayer is — May you be long spared to exert (as in the past) an ennobling influence for good in the vicinity, be the occasional mentor in the School, the faithful friend, the judicious counsellor, and the generous exemplary contributor to every good cause. And after the lapse of many years may you hear the Great Teacher say — “Come up hither and drink at the full fountain of knowledge with unsated delight throughout the endless cycles of eternity.”

Signed on behalf of the Subscribers by the members of the Committee.

Revd. George Laverty M.A. Chairman,
Thomas Haire
James Acheson
Hugh J. McDowell

Hugh Flack P.L.G. Treasurer
Robert S. Milne
Robert N. Savage
H. C. Cromie and Alexander Stewart,

Joint Secretaries

Tanoiokey, 8th March, 1898.

(Wm. Strain and Sons, Illuminators, Belfast)

Address & Presentation

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Signed on behalf of the Subscribers by the members of Committee.

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Thomas Haire.

James Bekeason.

Hugh S. M. Dowell.

Hugh Black, W. L. S. Treasurer.

Robert S. Milne.

Robert N. Savage.

H. C. Cromie.

Alexander Stewart. Joint Secretaries.

Taniokey, 8th March, 1898.

Wm. Smith & Sons, Illuminators, Belfast.

Illuminated Address to Mr. Watson, 1898.



School Group 1950's.



School Group around 1960.