

Bottisham Village College Newsletter

December 2025



The Principal's Desk

As we reach the end of a busy and rewarding term, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the many achievements across our community and to thank you for your continued support.



I am incredibly proud of the Class of 2025 and the superb results they achieved. These outcomes represent a tremendous collective effort and it is a real privilege to see the hard work of our students – and the dedication of their teachers with the support of parents – so richly recognised. Every student has much to be proud of.

I hope many of you were able to attend our recent production of *The Addams Family*. It was a sensational performance and a true celebration of talent, creativity and teamwork. My congratulations and thanks go to The Performing Arts Team.

Sport has also been a real highlight this term, with strong participation and success across a wide range of activities. I have been particularly pleased to see our girls excelling: sport and the arts are central to our college.

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I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the Friends of Bottisham Village College, who have been so active this term and tirelessly supportive of the College. From Duck Races and discos to the Christmas Fayre, as well as selling refreshments at The Addams Family, their energy and commitment have been incredible and are hugely appreciated. Alongside our Local Governing Board and Parent Forum, we have such support and guidance from all corners of our community.

I hope you will enjoy the contributions from the class of 2012 as much as we have.

I wish you all a restful, enjoyable break and look forward to welcoming everyone back refreshed for the term ahead: we are looking forward to what 2026 will bring!

Mrs Rankine



Baker's

DOZENS



“It was for the farming stock.”

On arriving at the college, Malcolm was very aware of its place within the rural community: you were not accepted easily and had to do your time. The pastime of fen-skating was still prevalent, the entirety of the staff could fit easily into the staffroom for Eccles cakes and coffee, and there were no laptops. These were different times. But Malcolm is very clear about what was, and still is, at the heart of the college: relationships.

“Staff are special at Bottisham and deeply supportive; it makes us unique and it is why people want to work here.”

Malcolm's experiences outside the classroom are entertaining to say the least: attending Blood Brothers with Peter Haines, ex-Principal, with a group of students who had never been outside Cambridgeshire; Normandy with Miss Dimelow; meeting Prince Charles at Anglesey Abbey with the gardening group; getting lost on The Great Ridge in the Peak District. Of course, the jewel in the crown of these experiences is Year 7 Camp.

1987 was an interesting year: underdogs Coventry City won the FA Cup, Margaret Thatcher secured her third consecutive term in office, and The Treaty of Canterbury was signed, giving the go-ahead for The Channel Tunnel. However, in rural and sleepy East Cambridgeshire, little did the world know that a dynasty was taking root. Moving from the city school of Nottingham, Malcolm Baker joined Bottisham Village College.

For those of you who do not know Mr Baker – we suspect that is only around 10 of you in the Eastern England region, such is his influence – he is less a member of staff and more a concept, embodying everything that the Henry Morris Village College vision stands for: inclusive education from the cradle to the grave. As SENCO, Head of Year, Teacher of Maths, Teacher of Geography, and primary school liaison lead, his impact on the lives of so many students and families in the last four decades is beyond compare.

We met with Malcolm to reflect on his time at the college.



As an epilogue to their first year at the college, our students are treated to a week away under canvas. Here, characters are built, relationships are forged and lifetime memories made: to this day, it stands as a milestone in the journey of the Bottisham student. In his first year, Malcolm oversaw catering and led the event from the next year; he made it his own, shaped its culture and developed an aspect of college life that transcends the notion of a “normal” education. Now in the hands of Mr Darling, this will be one of Mr Baker’s many legacies, once he decides to put down his teaching tools.

He's not quite ready yet.

Malcolm tells us that his happy place is in the classroom, particularly using new technology: the recent acquisition of a new even smarter smart board has filled him with glee.

“I am teaching as well as I have ever done.”

Of course, with four decades comes much change.

“ Moving to 10 form entry was brave and the college had to take time to adjust. Equally the move to longer lessons was a tough decision, but the right decision. The college is now in a strong place: superb key people at the top and teaching and learning at the heart of what we do. The students are a joy and it is a great place to work”

On finishing our meeting with Malcolm, it was clear that he looks back with a sense of gratitude: pleased to teach the children of ex-students, pleased to work with a wonderful team of Teaching Assistants and fortunate to be a member of the close-knit teaching team.

To say the college is indebted to Malcolm would be an understatement. When the day finally comes for him to hang up his whiteboard marker — we hope not for many years yet — it will mark the end of an era. Yet he can be certain of this: long after he steps back, the campfire songs, the camaraderie and the spirit he helped define will continue to echo through Bottisham Village College.

**Thanks for everything, Mr B:
it has been a privilege.**



THE CLASS OF 2012



BETH

Now nearing 30, we ask some alumni for a life-update and some BVC reflections.



"I have so many memories of my time at BVC, but one sticks in my head. Sitting comfortably on a "B" grade for English and happy with that, this new teacher suddenly walked into the classroom, shrugged his shoulders and told me to aim higher. Who did this guy think he was? It turns out he was right: with challenge, support and guidance I achieved an A*. Never in a million years did I think that could happen and it just goes to show how BVC inspired me. As a teacher myself, I never forget this and it shaped the teacher I am today.

After completing BVC, I went to Hills Road to take A levels and eventually made my way to The University of Brighton to study Philosophy and Politics: the sense of freedom and independence is exhilarating, and I learned much about my personal values.

After year of studying for a PGCE, I now hang out with the funniest people in the world: 4-7 year olds. I love being a positive role model and I am so glad I am doing a job based on passion and interest, one which motivates and inspires me.

My advice for current students is clear: make the most of your time at school. Think how lucky you are to get free education, starting the day by getting on free transport, going to a building full of inspirational people and making lifelong friendships. Enjoy learning for the sake of learning. Not everything is about grades."

JULIANNA

"My first memory of BVC was the ability to attend Art Club after school on a Tuesday. Although I am in no way creatively gifted, it was a great opportunity to switch off, spend time with friends and learn a new skill.

Duke of Edinburgh is also a great memory: developing teamwork, resilience and challenging yourself. It still looks great on a CV!

After BVC, I went to Hills Road to study English, History and Classics. Highlights here involved a trip to Rome, and Sicily, as well as my Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). I was fortunate to attend my first choice university, Sheffield, to study law.



Since graduating, and I manage my own caseload as a paralegal for a Cambridge law firm.

My advice to current students is to realise that mindset and willingness to keep going are far more important than grades. If you stay committed, put the work in and believe in your ability, you can build any path you wish. I do not believe anyone's future is defined by their popularity in school - it is shaped by effort and ambition."



ELIZA

"At Bottisham I always loved the Humanities and Arts, so for GCSE I chose History, French, Art and Textiles. I've always believed creative subjects matter just as much as academic ones because they make you think differently. In Art and Textiles I enjoyed making work inspired by different artists and eras, and my teachers introduced me to styles I'd never seen before. My Year 10 work experience at the Fitzwilliam Museum opened my eyes to how galleries operate behind the scenes, and it made me realise how many different careers exist in the arts.

This experience fuelled my passion further and I studied Art History at Cambridge University. In Art History you have to think about how an artist achieves certain effects. You also think about what that artwork tells us about a certain time period, or how historical events might have shaped what the artist was doing.

Fast forward to now, and I'm an Assistant Curator at the Tate Gallery in London. That means that I work on putting together exhibitions - researching the artist, choosing the artworks, writing the texts on the walls, and designing the space. I really like my job for how it combines both my academic and creative interests.

I would really recommend working in a museum or gallery if you enjoy history, art, or both! There are loads of fascinating jobs that range from really hands-on and creative, to more administrative or academic, or working with visitors and the public. I love that we make things that lots of people can visit and enjoy."

RAMA

"I have so many fond memories of my time at BVC. I'm incredibly grateful for the wonderful friends who helped me muddle through teenagehood, as well as the incredible teachers who worked hard to make lessons enjoyable.

I'll always remember Mr. C's masterclass on finding the "golden thread of the argument," a skill I've continued to use in essays at university and beyond. History came alive when we role-played German families surviving hyperinflation or Viet Cong soldiers plotting guerrilla warfare in the Vietnam War. In science the Electromagnetic Spectrum song will be permanently stuck in my head! I couldn't be more thankful to BVC for teaching me the foundations of how to study, write, and genuinely enjoy learning (cringey as it sounds!)

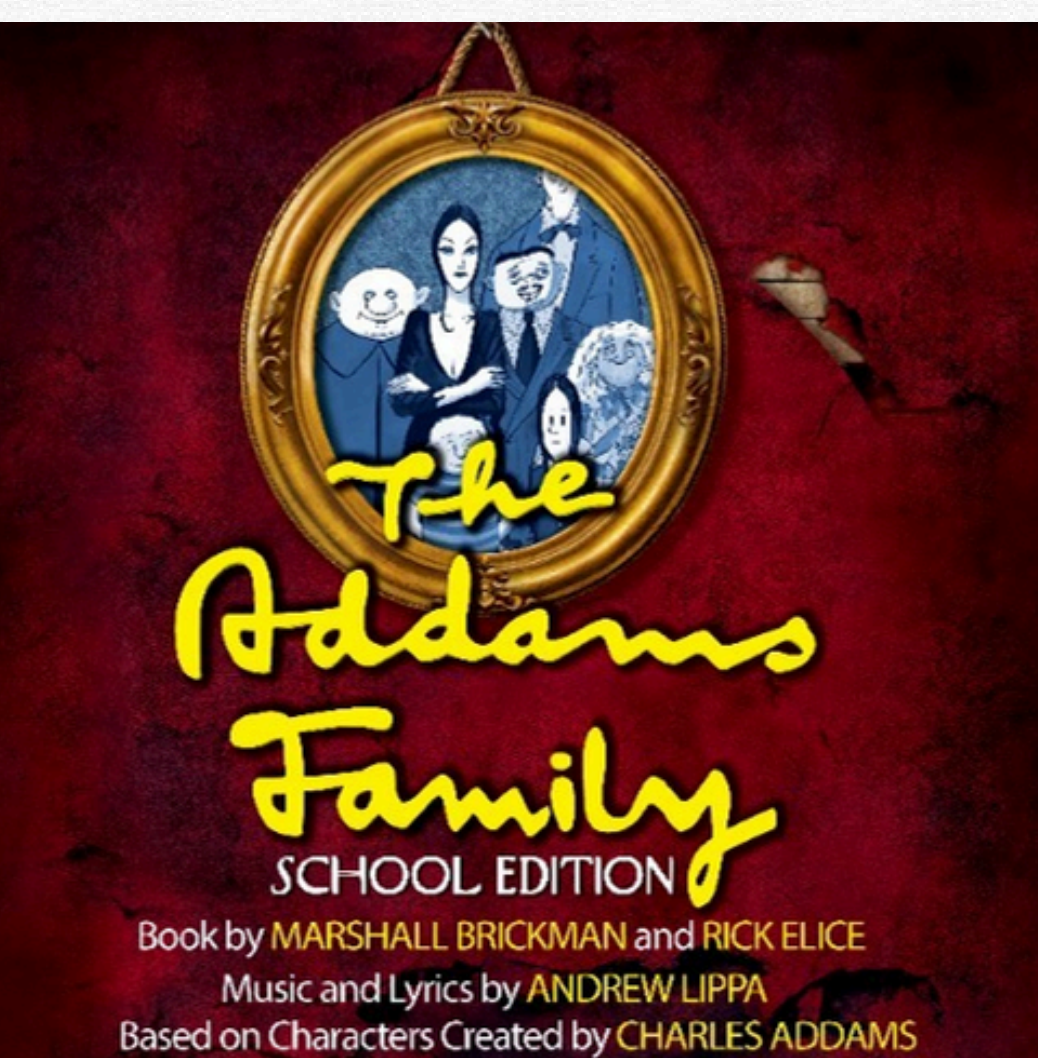


After BVC, I did A levels at Hills Road before going on to study Medicine at the University of Cambridge. It was incredible to have access to a hundred different clubs and societies and meet so many interesting people. In 2020, I began working as a doctor at King's College Hospital during the peak of Covid. It was a tough start: daily deaths, breaking bad news to loved ones, and the isolation of restrictions. Fortunately, things improved, and I was able to enjoy London life—including meeting my (now) husband. I've since followed him to Northern Ireland for the next stage of our medical training.

Since August, I've been working as a medical registrar—the most senior doctor in the hospital after 5pm. It's daunting with constant requests for advice and decisions ranging from routine to life-and-death -the imposter syndrome is still strong. Nevertheless, I love my job: every day is different, you never stop learning, and it's so rewarding to diagnose and treat patients and then see them recover.

In terms of advice for current students: Medicine is hard work, but if you enjoy it is great to have a job where you help people so directly. For now the main thing you can do is let the BVC team help you get the best GCSEs you can – work hard, don't feel bad for asking for help and help others whenever you can.







The

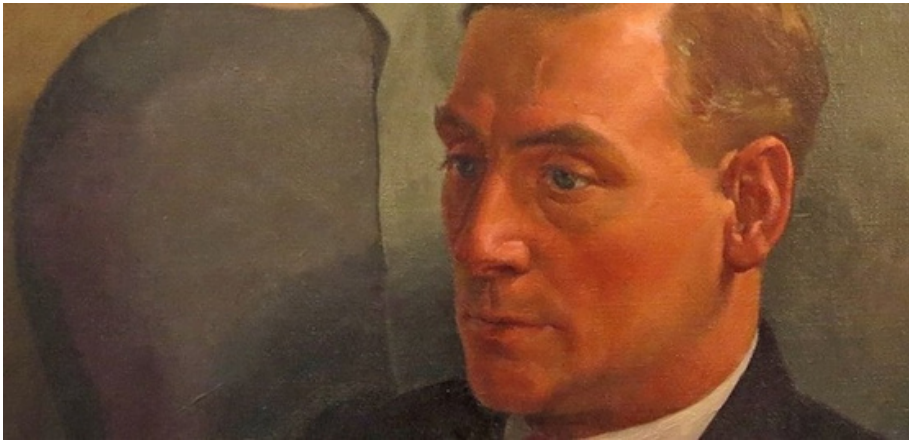


ADDAMS



Family





When Henry Morris, Cambridgehire Secretary of Education between 1922–1954, published his Village College Memorandum and created the “Village College” concept, he made his life’s work to improve standards of Education and to keep the rural parts of Cambridgehire alive.

Adult Learning

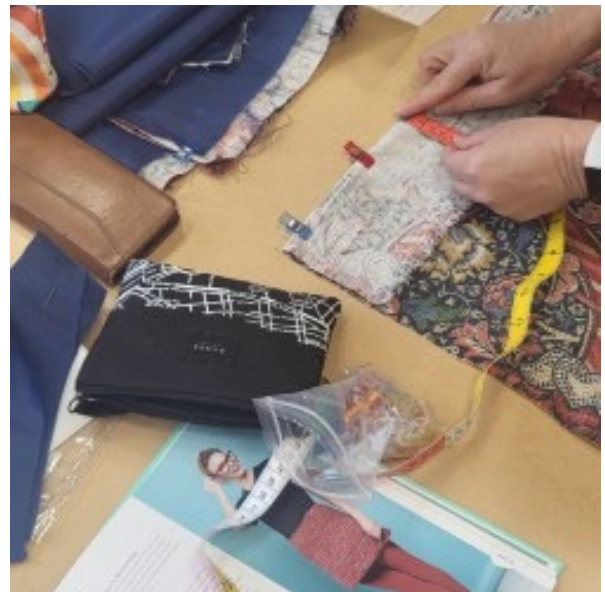
Henry Morris was keen to ensure that everyone, no matter their background, had access to quality education in spaces that would be available to the whole community. He proposed that those centres should be built across the county, at the heart of the communities they were to serve.

The Village Colleges would be schools and community facilities at the same time. They would become focal points in their villages where people of all ages came to learn and to be inspired by learning. Henry Morris created community education, a revolutionary concept in the first half of the 20th century, a concept that translated in many parts of Britain and abroad.

The speed of today’s changes calls for opportunities to learn throughout life, for personal fulfilment, social cohesion, and economic prosperity. Education can no longer be limited to a single period of an individual’s life. Adult Education encompasses all forms of learning that help adults develop new skills, acquire knowledge, and improve their quality of life. Adult Education recognizes that learning is a continuous journey that adapts to changing life circumstances and needs.

Research shows that adult learning contributes to improve health, civic engagement and economic opportunities as well as higher levels of life satisfaction and better mental health. The cognitive stimulation keeps minds sharp, potentially delaying age-related cognitive decline. Moreover, lifelong learners tend to be more actively engaged in their communities, contributing to stronger social cohesion and civic participation.

Adult Education is not merely a solitary pursuit of knowledge; it’s a vibrant avenue to build connections. much alive still at Bottisham Village College.



Marta Luengo – Adult Learning Manager

www.bottishamvc.org/adult-learning

LEADERSHIP



Student Leadership Opportunities

At Bottisham Village College, students are encouraged to develop leadership skills and make a positive impact. From mentoring younger pupils to influencing school decisions, student leaders play an important role in school life.

Student Council

The Student Council meets every half term and represents pupils' views through feedback from form representatives. Senior leaders attend meetings to ensure student voices are heard. The Council has contributed to improvements such as new picnic tables, improved queuing systems, and updates to the school uniform. Minutes are shared with all students to maintain transparency.

Wellbeing Mentors

Year 11 Wellbeing Mentors support younger pupils by visiting form groups, assisting with quizzes, and providing opportunities to discuss concerns. They also deliver anti-bullying lessons, promoting kindness and respect.

Leadership Roles Available

Students have access to a wide range of leadership opportunities:

- Sports Leaders
- Wellbeing Mentors
- Student Council Representatives
- Form Representatives
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Participants
- Year 11 Student Leadership Team

These roles allow students to develop confidence, responsibility, and teamwork whilst supporting the wider school community.



Student Leadership Team

The Year 11 Student Leadership Team represents the school at events such as Open Evening, meets weekly with Deputy Principals, and leads assemblies, acting as positive role models.

Positive Impact

Through these varied opportunities, students demonstrate commitment, maturity, and pride, helping to create a supportive, inclusive, and aspirational school environment.



Update from Jonathan Culpin, CEO



As CEO of Anglian Learning, the school Trust which supports your child/ren's school, I would like to share some key highlights of the work we have undertaken in the last few months. These activities have benefitted the pupils, workforce and communities of our Trust.

Firstly, I was delighted to attend our Platform 25 exhibition in Cambridge which brings together artwork from each of our secondary schools. As usual, the quality on display was impressive and many congratulations to all pupils whose work was exhibited. My thanks also to the art teachers across our Trust for their support of the exhibition, which was open to members of the public.

I was also proud to see secondary pupils take the spotlight in Anglian Learning's Stage 25 dance festival. Their confident performances and powerful interpretations of this year's theme, Belonging by Design, were both moving and inspiring.

We also launched Anglian Learning's long-term strategy, which has three main areas of focus: Belonging by Design, Great Schools and Connected Communities. Next term, I will share with you more information about this strategy. We have already started to drive forward in each area, including the launch of webinars to support parent, carer and pupil wellbeing as part of Belonging by Design and working in partnership with the Foundation for Young People's Mental Health. More details can be found [here](#).

We have been supporting the development of our school estate, using government funding to invest in EV chargers, refurbishing numerous classrooms, toilets and play facilities and, most ambitiously, working alongside the Department for Education to start the remodelling of Sawston Village College.

In January, we look forward to welcoming four new schools to our Trust, with one being Soham Village College. The school's vision and values align well with Anglian Learning's, making them a perfect fit for our community. We look forward to learning from each other and inviting their pupils to take part in our Trust-wide events in the coming months and years.

I wish all families a restful break and thank you for your continued support as we work together. For more information on our Trust's activities, please visit our website www.anglianlearning.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Jonathan Culpin, CEO of Anglian Learning



Mr Culpin



GALLERY



Remembrance Day



Berlin Trip



Year 7 Coffee Morning



Open Evening 2025



Year 11



GCSE Further Maths



Duke of Edinburgh



Our Crochet Club Postbox "Topper"



Post-16 Evening

ENRICHMENT UPDATE



BVC at Wembley

A feature of our school is the range of opportunities we offer our students outside of the curriculum: trips, visits, clubs and experiences. Here's a brief snapshot of the events which have taken place this academic year so far.



Sasha's Bus Stop Award



Debating



Sporting success



*Meeting
Charlotte
Cane
MP*



Key Dates

SPRING
TERM
2026

JAN

5

START OF TERM
(ALL STUDENTS)

FEB

2-12

YEAR 11 MOCK
EXAMINATIONS

JAN

8

CLASS OF 2025
CERTIFICATE
EVENING

FEB

13

PROFESSIONAL
DAY (NO
STUDENTS)

JAN

12

ICELAND
INFORMATION
EVENING

FEB

16-20

HALF-TERM

JAN

14

YEAR 11 MOCK
INTERVIEWS

FEB

19-22

ICELAND TRIP

JAN

22

YEAR 9 PARENTS'
EVENING (X BAND)

MAR

10

PATHWAYS TO THE
FUTURE FORM
DEADLINE

JAN

28

YEAR 9 PARENTS'
EVENING (Y BAND)

MAR

12

YEAR 7 PARENTS'
EVENING (X BAND)

FEB

2

PATHWAYS TO THE
FUTURE EVENING
(YEAR 9)

MAR

16

YEAR 7 PARENTS'
EVENING (Y BAND)

MAR

27

END OF TERM

The Archive

LIFE IN 1885

A GLIMPSE INTO A BYGONE AGE

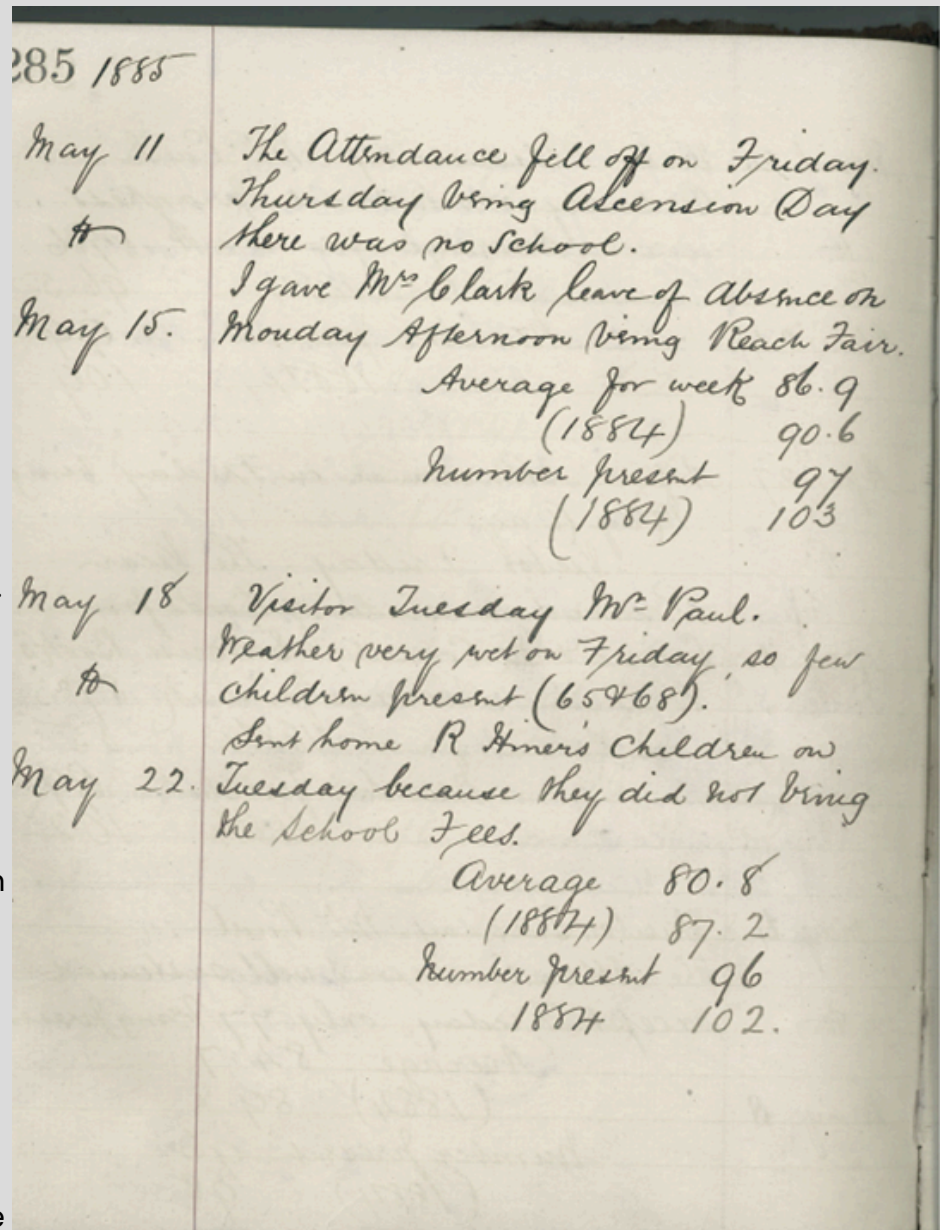
As we look back through the archives, we uncover fascinating snapshots of school life long before Bottisham Village College opened its doors—around fifty years before, in fact. An extract from the 1885 school log book paints a vivid picture of how different education was in the late nineteenth century.

The village school at the time was located beside the church, serving the local children much as we do today, though in very different circumstances. Attendance was monitored just as closely as it is now, but the results make for interesting reading. Bad weather, for example, had a dramatic impact: when it rained, attendance dropped sharply—quite unlike our modern students, who arrive come rain or shine!

There were also school closures, though not for the reasons we are familiar with today. The log book records the school being shut for Ascension Day celebrations, whereas now our occasional closures tend to be for staff training and professional development.

Perhaps the most surprising—and shocking—detail is the note that children were sometimes sent home for failing to bring in their school fees. This stark reminder of the inequalities of the past highlights just how fortunate we are today to have access to free education for all.

These glimpses into school life in 1885 help us appreciate how far we have come. While many aspects of education have changed dramatically, the sense of community and the commitment to learning remain at the heart of our school identity.



A handwritten page from a school log book, dated 1885. The page is divided into two columns by a vertical line. The left column contains dates and some initials, while the right column contains detailed notes about school events, attendance, and weather. The handwriting is in cursive and ink.

Date	Notes
May 11	The Attendance fell off on Friday. Thursday being Ascension Day there was no school.
May 15	I gave Mr. Clark leave of absence on Monday Afternoon (being Beach Fair). Average for week 86.9 (1884) 90.6 Number present 97 (1884) 103
May 18	Visitor Tuesday Mr. Paul. Weather very wet on Friday, so few children present (65 & 68).
May 22	Sent home R. Hiner's children on Tuesday because they did not bring the school fees. Average 80.8 (1884) 87.2 Number present 96 1884 102.