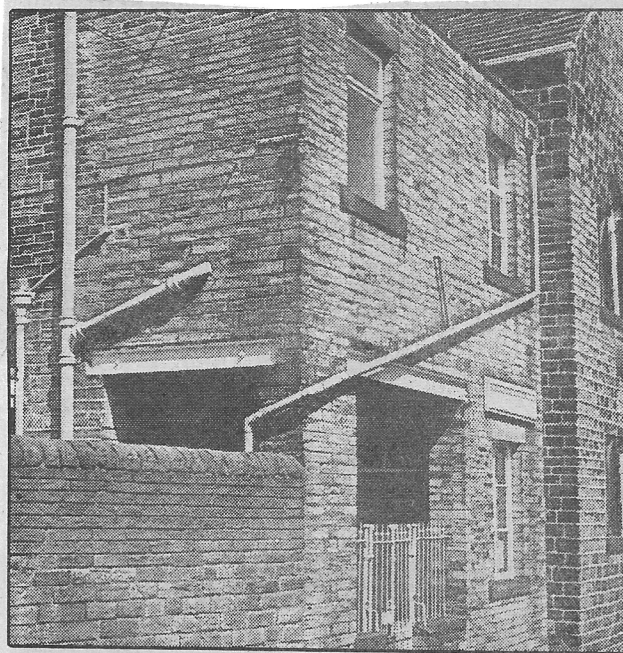




Luddenden Church of England Junior School

NEXT month marks a milestone in primary education in the Luddenden Foot area.

Three schools will close to be replaced by the new £2 million Luddenden Dene Church of England Junior School, on the Kershaw Estate.

It opens in August and replaces Luddenden Foot Church of England Junior and Infant School, Blackwood Hall, Luddenden Church of England Junior School and Luddenden Church of England Infants School, High Street.

The three schools are preparing for closure with a series of events for pupils past and present, and a joint service will be held at St Mary's Church, Luddenden, on Sunday, June 27, at 2 pm.

Luddenden Foot Junior and Infants head teacher Mrs June Coldwell, said an open day would be held at the school on July 7, from 10 am to 3 pm, and from 6.30 pm to 8 pm.

"Anyone with any connection with the school is welcome to attend," she said.

Visitors will be able to see children at work and buffet lunches can be ordered in advance.

There have been 122 years of education on the Blackwood Hall site and 122 commemorative plates have been produced, some of these will be available to former pupils.

The school opened in 1871 as St Mary's Church of England School. It was renamed Luddenden Foot National School in 1914, and it took its present name in 1950.

Children are producing a tapestry featuring events during the school's history which will be displayed in the new school.

On July 9 a final assembly will be held when mementoes will be presented to pupils, governors and staff.

There are 39 children on the roll and three full-time staff. Mrs Coldwell is retiring.

"I was appointed two years ago to oversee the closure with the brief that the school closed as happily."

The church authorities hope to sell the site with planning permission for three homes.

Luddenden Junior School has 88 children on its roll and staff will move to the new school with the children.

But head teacher Mrs Carole Lumb is retiring after 25 years service.

The school will mark the closure with a barbecue and children will visit the new school on July 1.

By BRIAN COATES

An open day will be held on July 2 when children will be presented with mementoes of the school and a party will be held on July 6.

Mrs Lumb said the school would close early on July 7 to enable staff to transfer equipment to the new school.

"We have had the class of 1943 and 1963 visit us and generally had a lot of interest from former pupils who we are very happy to see," she said.

It is the oldest complete school in Calderdale dating back to 1825 and houses a former prison in its basement.

"Moving is very much a head and heart job. The heart says 'what a shame,' but everybody knows it's a jolly good move to modern facilities and the children are looking forward to their new school," she said.

It is hoped the junior school could be turned into flats, a house, or craft workshops.

Luddenden Infants School has 106 children including nursery children and four full-time staff.

Head teacher Mrs Janet Thomas has 20 years service and she is also retiring.

Events planned include a final school sports day, and an assembly concert on June 30, at 9 am, attended by parents and friends of the school.

Children will also be given a tour of the new school and will be presented with mementoes of the infant school which was built in 1874.

It will also close early on July 7 and Mrs Thomas said the children were already looking forward to the new term.

"I think it's a lovely new school with excellent facilities and children and parents are pleased with the modern premises," she said.

No decision has yet been taken on the possible future use of the infant school.

On July 3, at Mytholmroyd Community Centre, parents of all three schools will join forces for a hoe-down.

The head of the new school will be Mr Stewart Bradley, a former head of Wainstalls Junior and Infant School and former acting head of Elland Junior and Infant School.

He is also a former teacher at All Saints Junior and Infant School, Dudwell Lane, Halifax, and the former Boothtown Junior and Infant School. He was deputy head at Ripponden Junior and Infant School before being appointed at Wainstalls in 1983.

The new school will cater for 210 children and will have nursery provision for 26 full-time children.