

## EDUCATION – 100 YEARS AGO

At the end of the 19th century, the churches provided many schools for children who could not afford to go to private schools. Then the Government decided to start schools in areas where there were no church schools. In 1902 the Government started to give money to the churches to help them to run their schools.

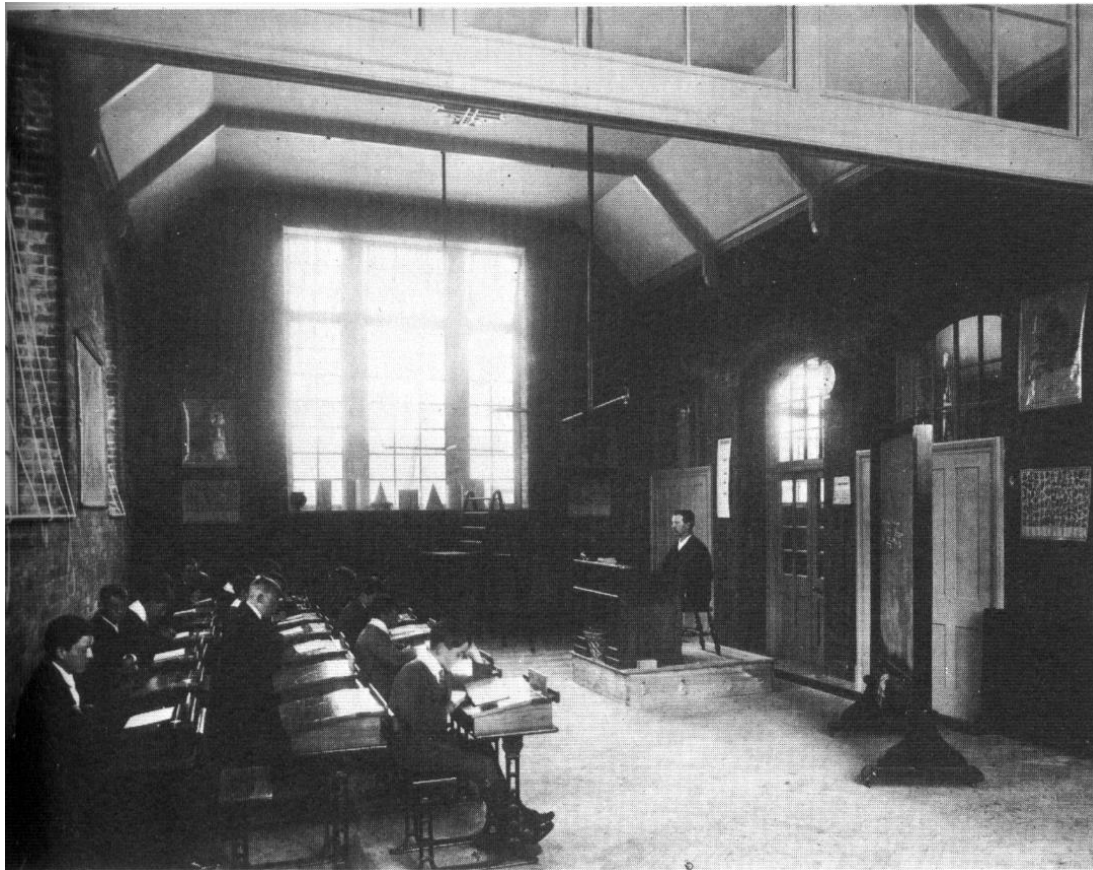
Between them, the Government and the churches made sure that every child received free 'elementary' education up to the age of 13. In the towns, the school classes held up to 60 children, closely packed on benches as they said their times tables or worked out sums on slates with squeaky pencils. They had geography and history lessons which taught them all about the British Empire. At that time Britain ruled lots of other countries in the world as well, and British people were very proud of this. Some of the better schools provided copy-books for writing practice, paints, crayons and clay for modelling.

There were experiments with special subjects. Girls had lessons in domestic science where they were taught to cook and wash and clean things. All children had to do exercises when they were at school. They went into the school yard and they were made to march around. This was called Swedish drill. Sometimes they did arm-swinging with Indian clubs. They did not do organised sports or team games.



In the Swedish drill lesson the children had to line up and march around. They had to obey instructions like 'arms stretch, knees bend'. They did not usually change out of their heavy clothing to do drill. Schools had tried to do gymnastics in tarmac playgrounds, but this was stopped after a number of accidents. But sports activities outside school were improving. There were school football associations and there was cricket in public parks. Some authorities provided swimming lessons. The 1918 Education Act encouraged schools to provide games and exercises.

Older children could try for free places at grammar schools. The grammar schools charged fees but the Government paid the schools to take some children who were clever but could not afford to pay the fees. Some children went to school for half the day and spent the other half of the day at work. This made extra money for their families but it was not good for the pupils as they were too tired to study properly.



This is a typical scene in a grammar school for older children. This is Shepton Mallet School in Somerset. There is gaslight, and there are maps and pressed flowers on the wall.

In the 19th century the elementary schools had been developed to educate younger children. In the first ten years of the 20th century, secondary education was expanding as more grammar schools were started. The school leaving age was put up to 14 and 'higher grade' schools appeared for the older ones.

In 1900, 5.000 elementary school pupils had entered grammar schools by having their fees paid for them. By 1918, the Government was talking about opening schools for pupils up to the age of 16.

School meals were provided for children who did not have enough to eat. There were medical inspections for all children. The doctors and nurses checked the children's hearing, eyesight and general health. Nits were a big problem and the nurses cleaned the children's heads.



This is a medical inspection in 1903. Education authorities were taking increasing care of children's health.

Children learned by saying things over and over again in lessons. Handwriting was practised letter-by-letter. Boys and girls in large elementary schools (schools for younger children) were taught separately after the age of seven. Sometimes they had to use different playgrounds. Classes were kept in order, but not savagely. In the past, teachers had kept order by hitting the children, threatening them and beating them, and this happened a lot. Children were still smacked and sometimes they were hit with a cane and made to stand in the corner. By this time, though, punishments were not as severe as they had been in earlier times.

For people who had learned to read, there were other ways of finding out more about the world. The public libraries were expanding and many people used them to continue their education. Books opened up new worlds to people and lots of people loved to read in their spare time.

Popular newspapers also brought new interests to people who could read. This article is from the Daily Mail in 1909. It tells the news of Bleriot's flight across the Channel in an aeroplane, and it brought the news to almost every home.

The Daily Mail started in 1896. It cost one halfpenny, or less than 1/4 of 1p now. The paper had been planned specially for people who had just learned to read. Newspapers helped a lot to educate people at the beginning of the 20th century. They were written by good writers and they gave lots of information and serious news.



END OF THE GREAT FLIGHT.

M. Bleriot (marked with a cross) standing by his machine at Dover after flying the Channel.

M. Bleriot was unharmed. He immediately jumped out, "and that was all," he said. Of course, it was not all, or anything like all. We got a little more out of M. Bleriot afterwards. His by his we learned how he had started from Sarzeau without having had even a cup of coffee, how, when he saw the sea underneath, a feeling of astonishment came over him; how, when he first saw the English coast, his imagination for a moment got the better of his knowledge, and it seemed to him almost impossible to reach Dover; and how he had passed right over an English battleship.

We got him away as soon as possible, the French correspondents, and I, and with the tricolour waving above us drove to the Lord Warden Hotel.

Dover by that time was beginning to learn the news, and it hardly needed the flag to tell the persons we passed that the gentleman in the blue blouse, with the grimace and perspiration on his face and with that queer, French way of the man who had flown from France to England. There was cheering all along the road. There was more cheering at the hotel, where the guests and servants were all up to welcome M. Bleriot.

But he would not stay long. He went to the pier, he said, to meet his wife, who was in the French destroyer. Lending on the arm of several of his friends he jumped to the landing-stage. The *Escopette* had just arrived. She was standing quite a little distance off, and was not possible to shoot the news of M. Bleriot's triumph to those on board.

**CHERRING THE VICTOR.**

There came a cheer that could, I suppose, be heard half over Dover. Some body once wrote that the French did not know how to cheer. He should have heard the *Escopette's* men. A boat put off from the destroyer, and M. Bleriot, wearing a kamishatchee, waved his hat and saw his wife. In a few minutes she was at the landing stage and her husband was kissing her.

What a wonderful couple they are, to be sure. We thought the French would not cheer. That was one mistake. We thought all Frenchmen in business and some excitement, showed their emotion more unreservedly than the average Englishmen. That was another mistake. M. and Mrs. Bleriot welcomed each other as quietly as if they had just come down for breakfast. But, with it all, Mrs. Bleriot could not quite hide her emotion. She has not left her husband for a moment all day.

We all went back to the Lord Warden, making those three one stop on the way, while M. and Mrs. Bleriot amably consented to be photographed.

At the hotel on our arrival there was a small incident which for some of us provided a startling light on the significance of the wonderful thing that had been done. Two Customs House officials had been waiting. M. Bleriot had brought a vessel into port, and they wanted to see if everything was in order.

M. Bleriot went up to Mr. Berg's room to wash and change his clothes, reappearing in a suit. Mr. Berg had been to him. Then he had some real breakfast and afterwards he and his wife drove to the North wall station to have another look at the aeroplane.

By the time we reached the meadow a large crowd had assembled. M. Bleriot was immediately recognized and there was a cheer that equaled that of the destroyer's men. "Bravo, old fellow," cried one gentleman. "Bravo for you." "Well done," shouted others, and then "Good-bye, good-bye," the crowd all cried at once.

M. Bleriot, hat in hand, waited till he got to the middle of the crowd before

**M. BLERIOT'S HOME.**  
**CHILDREN'S REJOICINGS.**

It was through a special edition of the *Continental Daily Mail* that Parisians learned of M. Bleriot's brilliant triumph. A whole of one page, entirely in French, was devoted to the daring aviator's flight from Calais to Dover, and the *Daily Mail* was two hours ahead of any other paper with the news.

The most sincere and joyous expressions of delight were witnessed at M. Bleriot's home at Neuilly. The chauffeur brought in a copy of a special edition of the *Daily Mail* containing the good news at 6.30. Miss Kavanagh the previous evening immediately ran out and seized another

**M. AND MRS. BLERIOT.**



A photograph taken after their landing on Dover. Mrs. Bleriot having arrived by the destroyer which the aeroplane so easily out-distanced.

When I called later Miss Kavanagh was having a lively time with her charges. "They are good children, as a rule," she said, "but today I can do nothing with them. They are simply wild."

Since, the silent, a pretty child of seven, explained to me in a very impressive manner that "Papa a travers la Manche et la mer est grande, vous savez." Then, to show me that she spoke English as well as French, she recited "Pussy out, pussy out, where have you been? I've been to London to see the Queen." All five children, ready and sturdy, were in rapture and when, little Nellie, three years of age—an "awful chatterbox," according to Miss Kavanagh—reminded them of their daddy, before leaving, pronounced if he saw the *Daily Mail* girls to take them to the beach and buy them toys; they clapped their hands with glee and danced round the room, light a line of red dog, romping with them and barking with delight.

The Times this evening is a leading article headed "An Historic Date," the marker: "Everything else disappears today before the magnificent and sensational exploit of M. Louis Bleriot. We may say without exaggeration that the date when an aviator crossed the Channel for the first time is an historic date, which leaves an indelible trace in the annals of science and civilization."

The writer breaks M. Bleriot's name with those of Pasteur, Mon Curie, and other great French citizens, and says: "By his heroic act he has inscribed his name in history."

**WHAT ORVILLE WILL DO.**  
From Our Own Correspondent.  
New York, Sunday.

None of the aviators who crossed the Channel here shortly after Bleriot's flight in the night were present at the breakfast-table. The *World* interview daily, which I interviewed the aviator, will not be there, and the flight which will be made in going over the hills, and back would proceed between Fort Myer and

**CHERRING THE START.**



M. Bleriot's machine during his flight across the Channel.

the meadow. "Vive l'histoire! Vive l'histoire!" he said, waving his hat in the air. The aviator of the machine was greatly amused with peculiar expressions of Bleriot, who of them accompanied by complimentary remarks. "Bleriot was a great leader," said one well-meaning pilot.

M. and Mrs. Bleriot were leaving the hotel for the last for the moment. It was now past six, and in the afternoon the Dover authorities hit on the ingenious idea of cheering Bleriot

down time, M. Bleriot was made to tell his story. The man's extraordinary energy was never later in the afternoon, when he left Dover in the *Escopette*, which took him back to Calais. He has promised to return to Dover in the 1 a.m. boat from Calais, in order that he may tomorrow meet Mr. Walter Eason, the Mayor of Dover, and other leading citizens, who desire to give him an official welcome.

**MRS. BLERIOT'S JOY.**

Just before M. and Mrs. Bleriot started for Calais I had a chat with Mrs. Bleriot. "I am very happy," she said. "It seems a great pity I waited on the bridge of the destroyer longing for him to come. When he was gone, something like a bird into the sky, tears came from my eyes. How could I help it when I thought the danger he was about to pass into?"

But my tears, vanished when I saw how well he was flying, and when at last he passed overhead I clapped my hands for joy. Again I was disappointed when he disappeared from our sight, and feared greatly. It seemed that he could never reach England. I cannot tell you what I felt when I saw him again on the pier and knew that he was safe. I have begged him not to fly again, and he has promised that he will not enter one aviation meeting."

**FRENCH WELCOME AT CALAIS.**

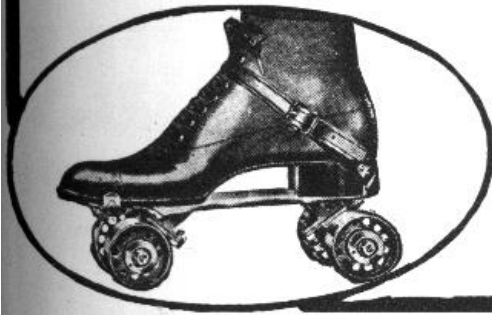
From Our Special Correspondent.  
Calais, Sunday Night.  
When M. Bleriot returned here tonight, he was met with a crowd frantic with enthusiasm. He was embraced twice without number, was acclaimed as the hero of France, and his hands were shaken off all. The town of the Legion of Honour conferred on him on Saturday was publicly proclaimed before he retired for a few hours' rest.

M. Bleriot was a particular made a member of the Legion of Honour for his heroic act. The city of the Legion was also conferred on MM. Lestonnec, Desgroux, and Ardouin.

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Roller skating was a popular craze both in the playground and out in the streets and parks. At one time, Olympia (the big exhibition centre in London) was turned into a vast roller skating rink. In 1911 the record time for a mile was 2 minutes and 48.4 seconds. As tarmac replaced cobbles (round stones used for paving) in the streets, children who could afford skates became experts and they got lots of exercise. Skates cost about 25p. As the craze for skating wore off, many of the newly-built skating rinks were turned into cinemas.



These boys have made 'cars' from old wheels. Only wealthy people bought toys. Most people made their own toys and they cost very little. Sticks and stones were used for 'tip-cat'. A piece of wood was balanced on a stone like a see-saw, and a pebble was put on one end. People hit the other end of the wood and sent the pebble flying off. The winner was the one whose pebble went the furthest. Glass stoppers from lemonade bottles were used as marbles. Children played with conkers, fivestones, whipping tops and skipping. The games changed with the seasons.

## EDUCATION - 100 YEARS AGO



(Note to parents: some questions follow which ask children to respond to the information in the text on pages 1-6 above. The questions on page 7-10 are designed for younger children or for those who find writing difficult. Space for the answers is provided on the pages. The second set of questions invite the child to give more detailed answers on a separate sheet of paper. Alternatively the child might like to use the computer. Encourage them to record their answers in complete sentences)

## EDUCATION - 100 YEARS AGO

Fill in the blanks:

One hundred ..... ago, rich people and poor people lived very different lives. Children of rich families went to ..... schools which were paid for by their parents. Poor ..... went to schools that were paid for by the ..... . The Government started some ..... too. The Government ..... gave ..... to the churches to help them to run their schools. At the beginning of the 20th century every child got free ..... education until they were 13 years old.

schools	children	money	private
elementary	also	years	churches

Write two things that children would have done in their maths lessons one hundred years ago.


What did they learn about in history and geography?

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Find out the names of four countries that were ruled by Britain and were part of the British Empire around one hundred years ago.


What did girls do in domestic science lessons?

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How did children get exercise in school?

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Look at the picture on page 1. Write five sentences about what you can see in the picture.

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Do you think the children would have enjoyed playing in the playground? Give a reason for your answer.

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.....

Why were some children very tired at school and unable to learn properly?

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How did children from poor families manage to get to grammar schools?

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Two other things were provided at school as well as education. What were they?


How did children learn in their lessons?

.....

How were children punished when they behaved badly?

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As well as school, there were two other things which helped people to learn. What were they?

.....

and

.....

## EDUCATION – 100 YEARS AGO

- 1 Which two organisations provided schools at the beginning of the 20th century?
- 2 At what age did children leave school in those days?
- 3 What things did they learn at school?
- 4 How big were some of the classes?
- 5 How were children kept in order? Was this better or worse than what had been happening in the past?
- 6 Describe a typical classroom in schools of this time (use the picture to help you).
- 7 How did the children get exercise at school?
- 8 What did they wear to do their exercises in?
- 9 Why did schools stop doing gymnastics outdoors?
- 10 Write down three improvements which were made in the early 1900s which encouraged people to take exercise.
- 11 Which craze started in the early years of the 20th century? What happened to the places which were made for the sport when the craze was over?
- 12 Which schools were not free for children to attend?
- 13 Why did some children go to school for half the time? What was the disadvantage of this?
- 14 What other things did children get at school besides an education?
- 15 Which two other things helped to educate the public?

