

# WEST BUCKLAND

## THE DIARY OF AN EDWARDIAN SCHOOL

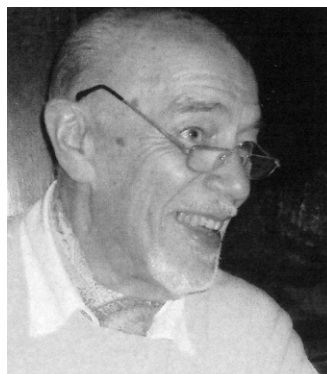
Berwick Coates

In the year when West Buckland School near Barnstaple celebrates its 150th anniversary, this diary presents the School as it approached its 50th. Thanks to a remarkably varied set of surviving records, we possess the names of every boy in the School in that year, and every member of staff. We have a full School photograph, and many group photographs as well. We have their cricket scorecards, their exam results, their house match details, the titles of the books they won as prizes, the results of their unending cross-country races. We know what they talked about in their Reading and Debating Society – reform of the House of Lords and a Channel tunnel, for example. We know what their Governors did at their meetings. We know what the School Inspectors wrote in their report. We know who sang what songs at the Old Boys' Dinners and Socials.

We meet scores of Old Boys, whose careers were celebrated in the pages of the *Register*, the School magazine. One discovered a cure for leprosy; one worked for the Emperor of China; one was almost certainly a Government spy. We know quite a lot about what these pupils of 1907 did after they left School. 64 of them served in the First World War: 24 were commissioned. 8 were decorated. 8 died. This out of a School roll of under 80. One lived to be 99. Another made it to 100, dying in 1995.

Put yourself in the position of a likely parent, and read the School Prospectus. Share the drama of a year which saw the appointment of a new headmaster; the imminence of bankruptcy; the voluntary liquidation of the School Company; and the re-naming of the School. The Devon County School became West Buckland School.

Quite simply, make the acquaintance of a totally un-self-conscious community, secluded in an obscure, quiet corner of Exmoor country, going about the absorbing business of living a hundred years ago.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

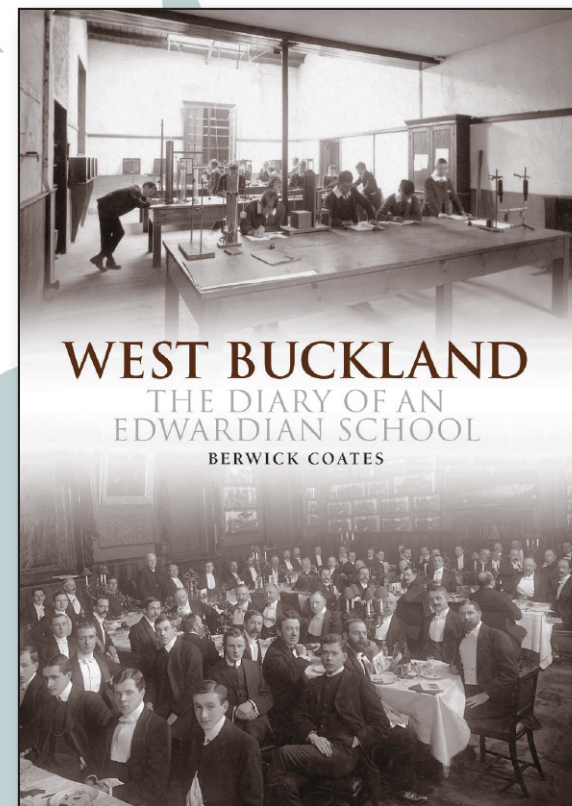
**Berwick Coates** holds a Cambridge MA degree in History, and has been at various times an Army officer; a writer, an artist, a lecturer; a careers adviser; and a teacher of History, English, Latin, Maths, Games, and Swahili. He has been a School archivist for nearly ten years. He has published five books.

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Fax: 01823 216796  
[www.halsgrove.com](http://www.halsgrove.com)  
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## HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



**Format:** Hardback, 160 pages, 297x210mm, profusely illustrated in mono throughout  
**Price:** £19.99  
**ISBN:** 978 1 906551 05 6  
**Imprint:** Ryelands  
**Published:** December 2008

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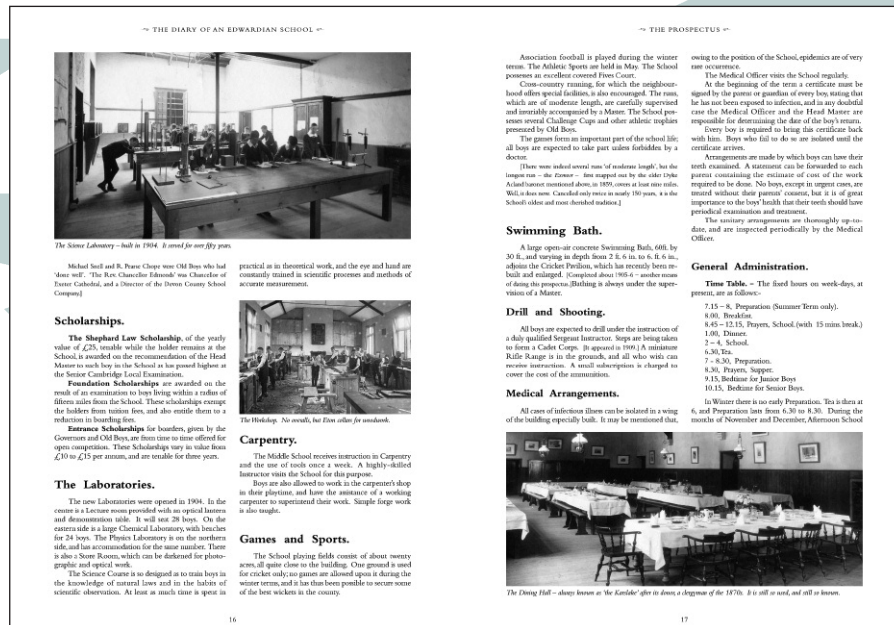
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The Devon County School – founded in 1858. This building had its foundation stone laid in October, 1860. The building was opened in October, 1861.

Example of a double page spread



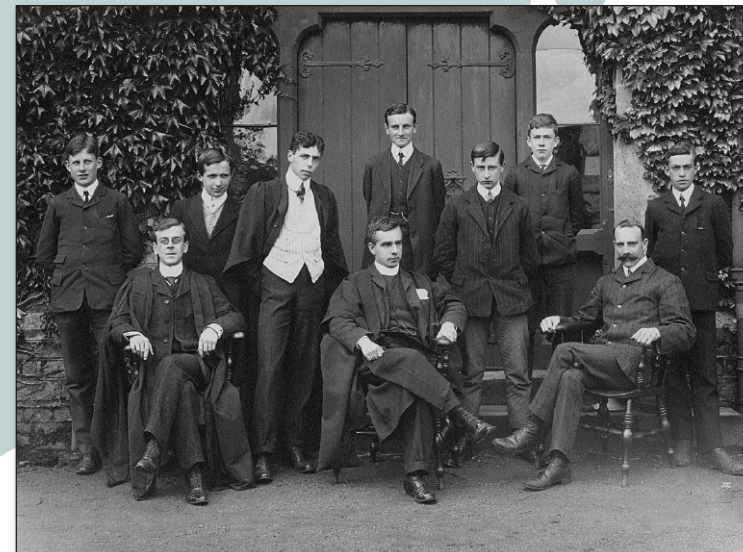
Above: The Old Boys' Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant in London. Joseph Thompson, the first Headmaster, is standing at the left. Between the wars dinners were held, among other places, at Simpson's and the Dorchester.



Above right: The School (with Masters) Cricket team – July, 1907. Standing, L. to R. – A. Pearce, P. J. Were, A. O. Parker, A. E. Preston, L. K. V. Job. Sitting, L. to R. – R. W. Seldon, W. L. Giffard, E. C. Harries, A. Taylor, J. B. Harris, S. Bendall.



'Right: Big School', as it was known, where the prizes were presented. It is a couple of Modern Languages classrooms now.



Devon County School – Staff and Prefects. Standing, L. to R. – W. Saunders, J. Britton, W. L. Giffard, S. Bendall, W. M. Burridge, W. L. Armstrong, J. B. Harris. Seated, L. to R. – C. G. Fry, Revd. E. C. Harries, A. Taylor.