

# [Hurtwood Gypsy School - alburyhistory.org.uk](http://alburyhistory.org.uk)

## The school and living locations in Albury and Walton on Thames

Claimed as the first in the country, Hurtwood Gypsy School was started by Surrey Education Committee in January 1926 to serve 260 gypsies living in a camp around Wicket's Well on Winterfold Common, Albury.

Both children and adults were learning literacy after evening classes were introduced in March 1926.

By the end of 1933 the colony had dwindled to 60 and the school was moved to Walton on Thames, where housing had been provided.



**THE GYPSY'S "POLY."**—Gypsy children being instructed in gardening at the Surrey Educational Committee's Gypsy School in the heart of Burt Wood.

Head Alfred Milner and Hurtwood Gypsy School children - London Daily Chronicle, 4th January 1927: *THE GYPSY'S "POLY" – Gypsy children being instructed in gardening at the Surrey Educational Committee's Gypsy School in the heart of Burt Wood (sic).*

Extract from the AHS talk recording transcript of *A Pitch Hill Childhood* by Albert Carter, <http://www.alburyhistory.org.uk/attachments/Transcript/071%20Pitch%20Hill%20Childhood%20transcript%20&%20SLIDES.pdf>: *On the Farley Green to Winterfold road they had their own school, a long wooden building built up on brick stands. They also had their own water supply from a spring that flowed from the hill behind the school.*

Extract from Cranleigh Women's Institute Scrapbook of 1949, pp87,88, various contributors, <https://alburyhistory.org.uk/attachments/File/Hurtwood%20Gypsies%20Cranleigh%20WI%201949.pdf>: *The schoolmaster, Mr Milner, at first lived with his family in a caravan near the camp, but his children, being accustomed to separate bedrooms and darkness, stayed awake till all hours, and so the family moved to rooms in Shamley Green. Beside reading, writing and counting, the children were taught handicraft.*

*The school, which was the first of its kind in the country, was an unqualified success as it raised the children enough to enable them to enter elementary schools later on.*



The Pathé News film, *School For Gypsy Children*, of 14th January 1926 shows mothers and children walking along a straight level track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-zMB2kSKaU>



Beyond trees, set back from the school, some structure might be a storage shed or a toilet. Nearby was also a caravan, purchased for £174, where the headteacher Alfred S. Milner and family lived.



The camera pans to the right as they descend to enter the school beside the track.



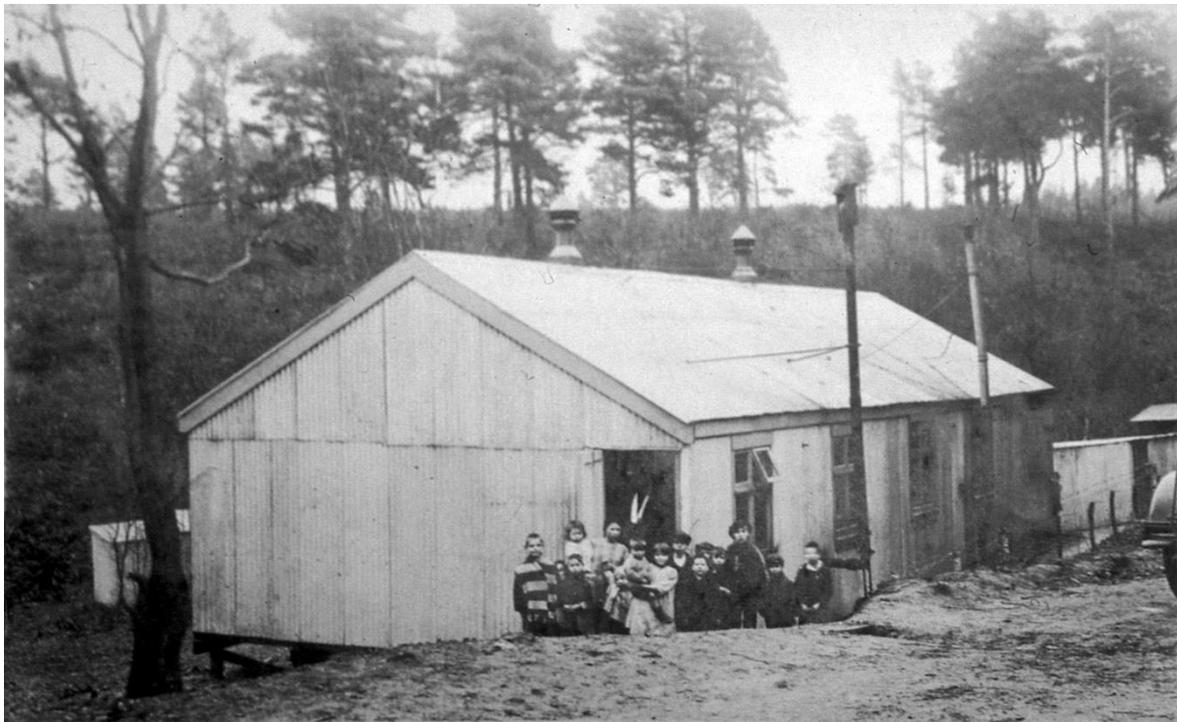
The children walk down a gradual slope to enter the school building of corrugated iron, purchased for £240.

## FIRST SCHOOL FOR GIPSIES.



The first school for gipsies, opened yesterday by the Surrey Education Committee on the Hurstwood, near Shere. The schoolmaster is to live in a caravan.

The Daily Express of 12th January 1926 shows one chimney fitted and a shed beyond.



The later AHS photo shows the rear of the building is on stilts and that it is skewed from the track. A vehicle is just visible. A fence and sharp drop at the front of the hut show the slope up to the track has now been cut away so you can walk all round on a flat path.

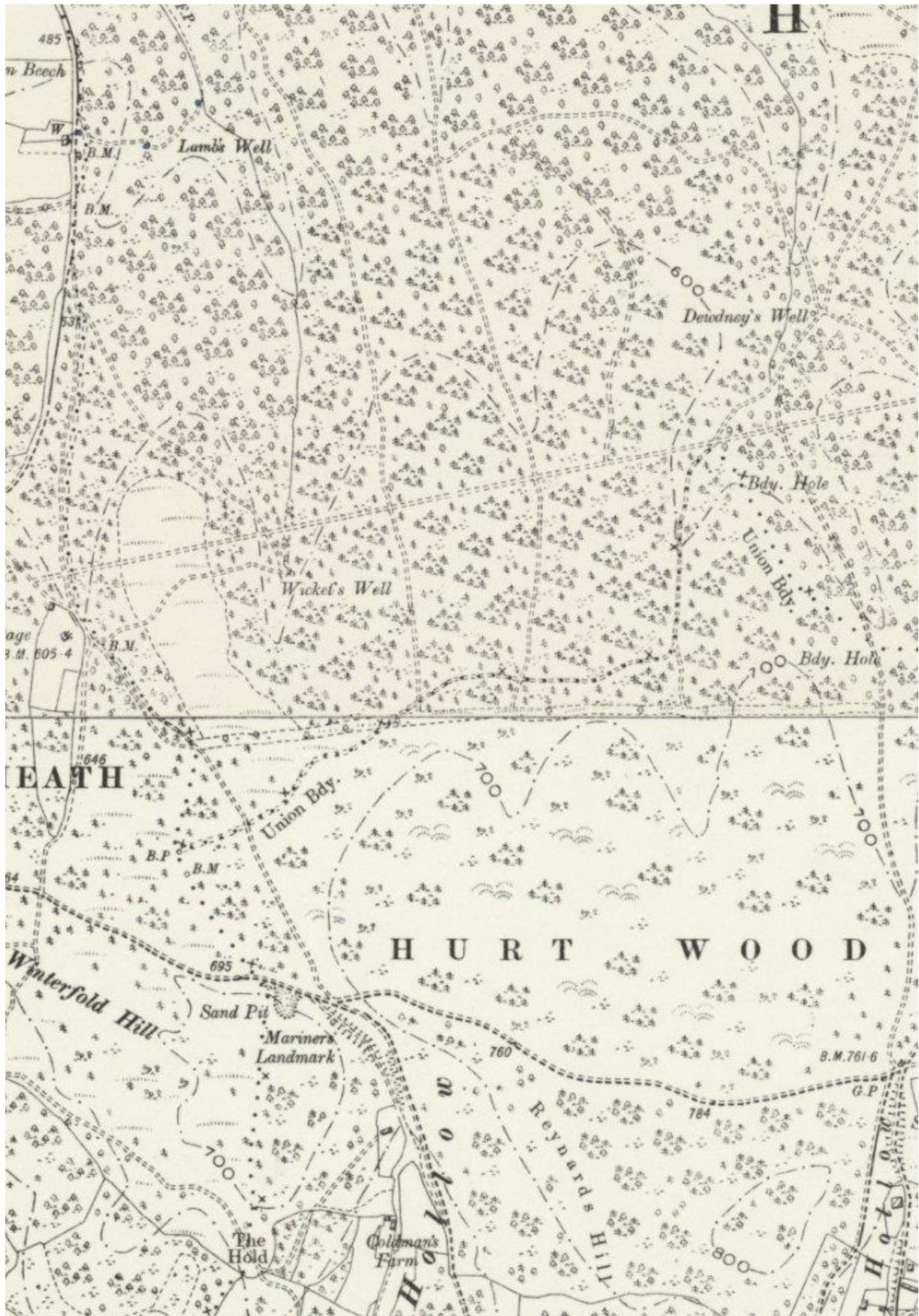
Trees beside the track have been cleared, two stove chimneys have been added and the original doorway has now become the third window along, with the door moved to the end.



The LiDAR DTM 1m of 2022 shows a rectangle skewed not quite parallel with a track, 70 metres north of the road by Jelleys Hollow. It has a short (white) footpath up to the track.



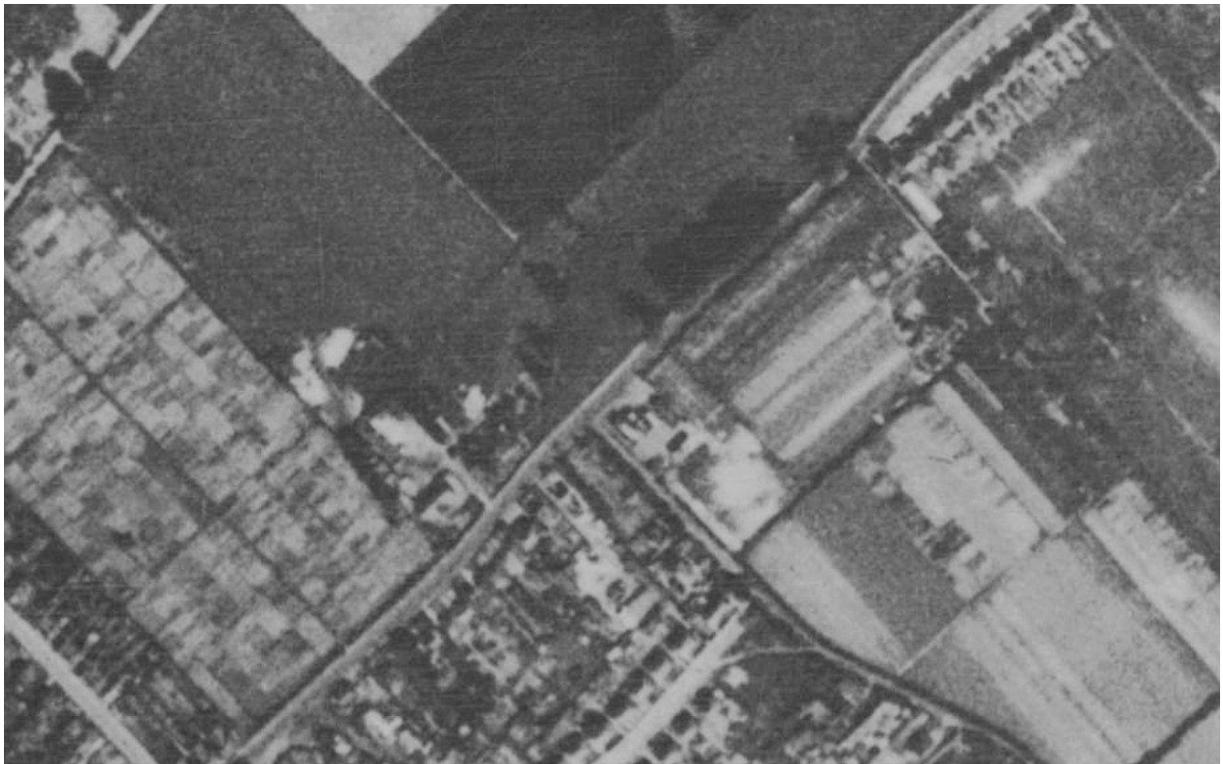
A wider view of the LiDAR DTM 1m of 2022



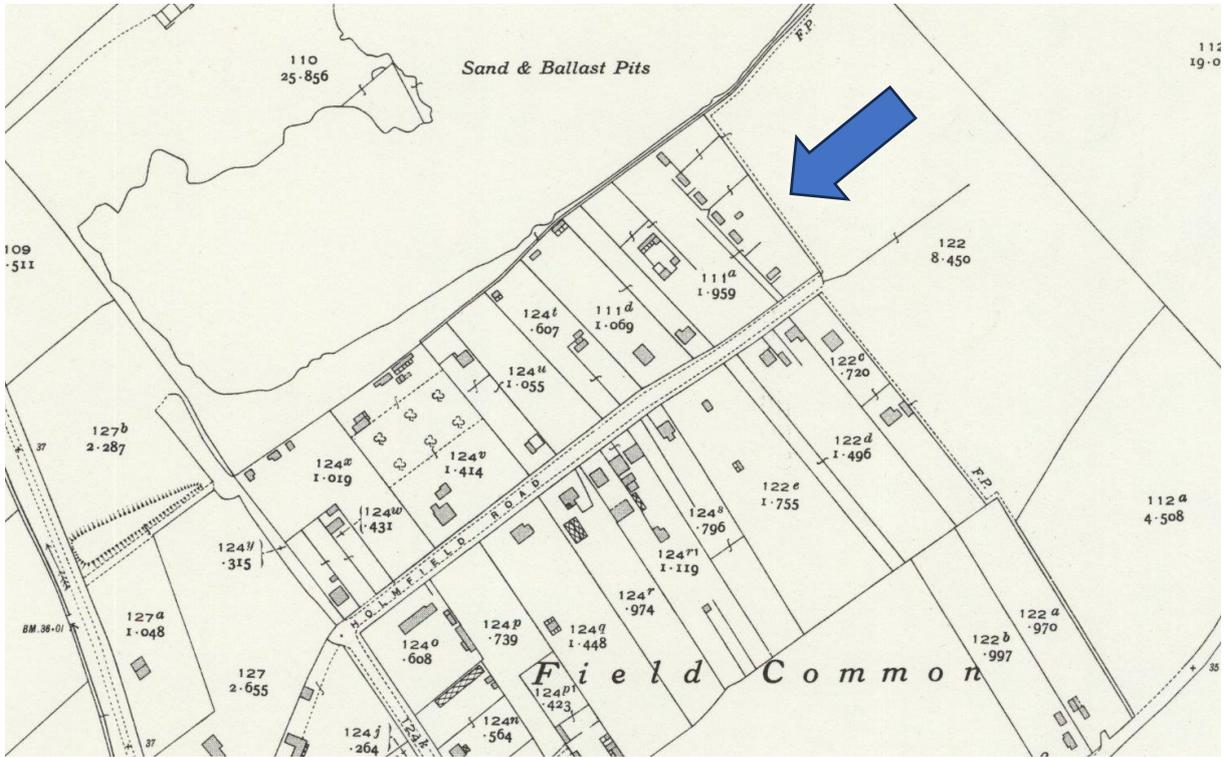
The corresponding 1897 OS map of Hurtwood, Winterfold Hill, Jelleys Hollow and Wicket's Well.



Following approval by Surrey Education Committee, in February 1934 the Hurtwood Gypsy School / Albury Gypsy School building was dismantled and moved beside East Walton Junior Mixed and Infants' School (later Grovelands School) at Terrace Road, Walton on Thames. Arthur Milner 'from Godalming' then became headteacher of both schools.



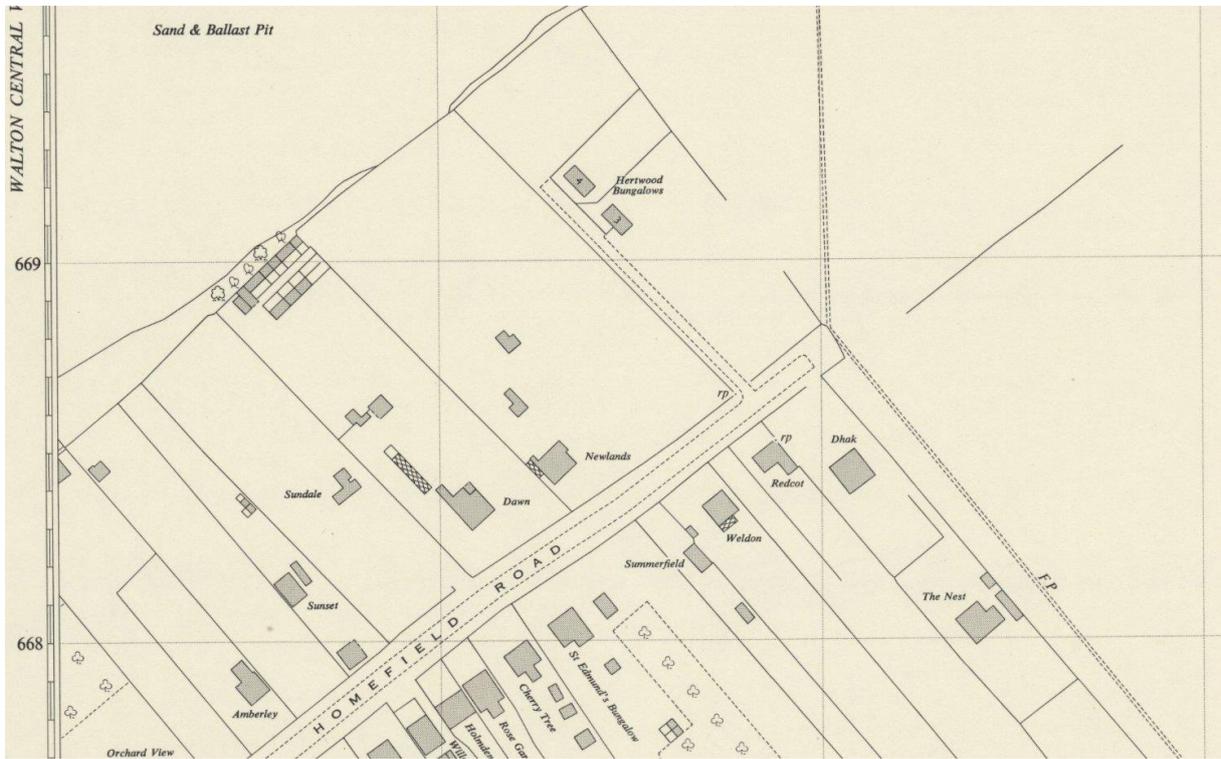
The corrugated iron hut may still be one of the buildings in this RAF aerial photograph of May 1948.



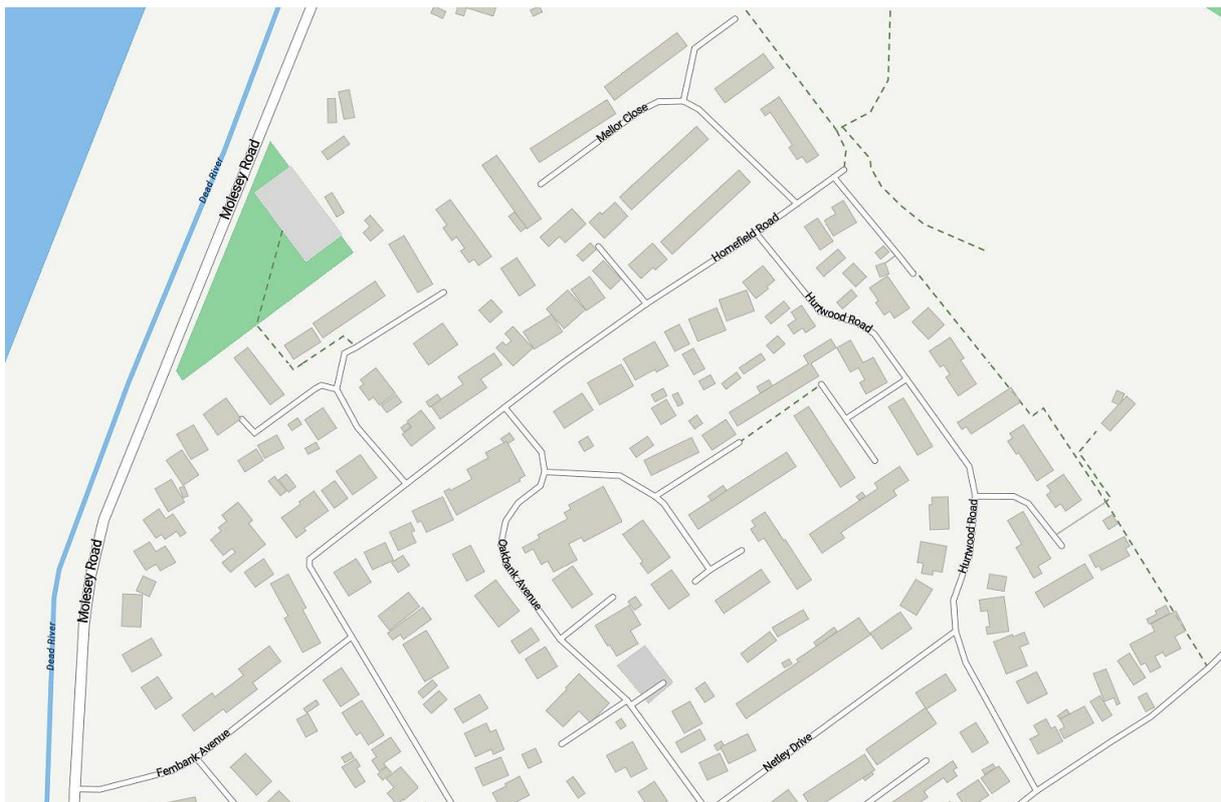
One mile south east of the school, six bungalows for gypsies, known as Hurtwood Bungalows, were built at the north east end of Holmfield/Homefield Road on Field Common in eastern Walton on Thames.



Hurtwood Bungalows are visible on this RAF aerial photograph taken in May 1948.



Marked as 'Hertwood Bungalows', numbers 3 and 4 were still extant on the 1956 OS map.



Part of their track later became Mellor Close, while Hurtwood Road was constructed on the south side of Homefield Road.

## EDUCATING THE GIPSY.

### PORTABLE SCHOOL IN SURREY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

ALBURY, JAN. 11.

From time immemorial gipsy encampments have been a characteristic feature of the long line of woods and heaths which curves from Dorking towards Guildford, and it is in Hurtwood—about midway on the loop—that the first gipsy school in England has been opened to-day. It is the hope of the Surrey County Council, which is responsible for the experiment, that gipsy children will attend the school regularly during the day and that evening classes will attract adult gipsies.

This educational venture has been planned on severely practical lines. If and when, for one reason or another, the community served by the school resumes its wanderings, the school will in due course be transported to their next settlement. If not actually on wheels, the schoolroom—a temporary structure of wood and iron, built in sections—is easily portable, and can be taken down and put up elsewhere with the minimum of trouble and expense. It is the intention of the schoolmaster, Mr. A. S. Milner, who will be assisted in the school by his wife, to live in a caravan beside the school. Obviously the success of the experiment depends largely on the personality of the schoolmaster, for attendance at the school, though free, is voluntary, and it is a tribute to his understanding of the gipsy mentality that the school opened to-day with 40 pupils. There is at present no accommodation for more. The small cloak room adjoining the school contains two baths, but all the pupils who attended the first class this morning appeared in new or newly washed pinafores, their swarthy faces shining with cleanliness. It would seem that this gipsy community has fully appreciated the advantages which the school has to offer them.

The children will be taught the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but a great part of their time will be spent learning basketry, woodwork, rug-making, raffia work, and other handicrafts, as well as gardening. Although their ages ranged from four to 14 years, only four of them could either read or write, but although lacking in literary accomplishments they were obviously not dull-witted, and for the course of work which has been mapped out for them their nimble fingers make them promising pupils. At the night classes it will also be necessary to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, but most of the curriculum will be concerned with infant welfare work, bootmaking, and other definitely utilitarian subjects. All gipsies, it appears, are musical, and on Saturday nights the schoolroom will be devoted to singing and dancing.

It is estimated that there are 100,000 gipsy children in the country who have never attended school. Hitherto their vagrant life has defied the wit of educationists to encompass with a system, and it may be that this portable school, set in the high woods some three miles distant from the nearest village, will prove that a way to reconcile normal education with a nomadic existence has been found.

## Educating The Gipsy

### Portable School In Surrey

Times, 12 January 1926

## Gipsies And The Caravan School

Times, 21 January 1926

### GIPSIES AND THE CARAVAN SCHOOL.

The Surrey Education Committee's experiment in opening a caravan school for gipsy children has not made a good start. Many families have made haste to put distance between themselves and civilization as represented by the school at Hurtwood, near Shere. Last week the Holmwood Common keeper and the police had to move on 27 caravans and owners, which were not allowed to camp on the common. Nearly all of these were leaving the vicinity of Shere.

## Adult Classes At A Gipsy School

Times, 17 March 1926

### ADULT CLASSES AT A GIPSY SCHOOL.

At a meeting of the Surrey County Council at Kingston yesterday, the education committee reported that, as an experiment, they had sanctioned the holding of classes on three evenings a week for the spring term at the Council's gipsy school at Hurtwood Common, near Dorking, in response to applications from adults for evening classes. The school for gipsy children was opened in January, and is proving very successful. The head teacher, who lives in a caravan, reports that there are over 50 children on the books.

## PERMANENT GIPSY CAMP

### SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT IN SURREY

A permanent residential settlement for gipsies has been established by the Hurtwood Control Committee at Winterfold, between Cranleigh and Albury. The committee, which is composed of the Lord of the Manor and a number of local residents, grant licences to the gipsies, who are limited in number. At present they number 92 inhabitants, of whom 42 are under 14 years of age.

Complaints having been made to the Ministry of Health regarding the encampment, the Hambledon Rural District Council instructed their medical officer of health (Dr. T. M. Bonar) to inspect the settlement. His report states that the success of the experiment can best be judged by the unusual tidiness of the interior of the respective tents and the cleanly surroundings. He continued: "I found no sanitary nuisance whatever, and the supply of drinking water, as determined by analysis, is beyond reproach. The people who live there are happy and contented, and none of them are 'on the dole.' Would that one could apply these adjectives with equal generosity to our modern villages! The moral and sanitary atmosphere of this settlement is a decided advance on that of the fitting gipsy camp, and there is no excuse for any irresponsible scribe, innocent of the actual conditions, seeking to decry the good work of the committee."

The rural district council decided to forward the report to the Ministry of Health.

## Motorists Who Spoil The Country

Times, 22 March 1927

## Permanent Gipsy Camp

Times, 31 August 1931

## MOTORISTS WHO SPOIL THE COUNTRY.

### NEW RULES FOR SURREY COMMONS.

Owing to the bad manners of certain motorists, the Duke of Northumberland, Mr. R. A. Bray, of Shere, and other big land-owners in Surrey, have combined to form the Hurtwood Central Committee, which controls about 2,000 acres of country, stretching almost from Holmbury to Cranleigh, and taking in Pitch Hill and the Hurtwood and Peastake Commons.

Mr. R. A. Bray, who is lord of the manor of the larger part of Hurtwood Common, said the Committee were anxious that the public should enjoy the privilege of visiting that beautiful part of Surrey, but they had been compelled to take action against gipsies and a certain class of motorist. They allowed some of the older gipsies to camp on the commons in places set apart for them, and issued permits for a month. The gipsies behaved very well, and they had had to refuse to renew only one permit.

Most of the motorists also behaved, but some of them ran wild when they went into the country and did not care what damage they did. They left paper, bottles, tins, and other litter about, and dogs and horses had had their feet cut by broken glass. Some of them even went into people's gardens and cut flowers, and into parks and took rhododendrons. Great damage was also caused by the careless manner in which they had made fires. The behaviour of this class of motorist was getting rather worse every year.

The Committee had put the commons under the Law of Property Act. This gave the public the right to walk freely on the commons, but made it an offence to take motors on to them without leave, and to do damage by lighting fires and in other ways. They had set apart certain open spaces near the roads where motors could park, and had appointed a common ranger. There would be no unsightly fences, but just a simple board to indicate the parks.



**GIPSY CHILDREN'S SCHOOL IN THE WOODS.**—Mr. A. S. Milner, the headmaster of a school for gipsy children at Hurtwood, in Surrey, with some of his scholars, who belong to eighty gipsy families which gather in the district.

GIPSY CHILDREN'S SCHOOL IN THE WOODS, Leeds Mercury, 22 April 1926



**A GIPSY CLASS** in the woods. Mr. A. S. Milner teaching a class of young gipsies from the gipsy settlement on Hurtwood Hill, near Guildford. These gipsy homes are to be destroyed by fire, and the dwellers will remove to bungalows at Walton-on-Thames. Mr. Milner is chiefly responsible for the scheme.

A GIPSY CLASS IN THE WOODS, Liverpool Daily Post, 10 January 1934

## GIPSY SCHOOL "ON THE AIR."

### B.B.C. BROADCASTS LIFE AT HURTWOOD.

#### THE PROPER TIME TO TOUCH SNAKES!

Through a wireless talk by Mr. A. S. Milner, headmaster of the gipsy school at Hurtwood—the only institution of its kind in England—listeners in on Saturday heard from the B.B.C. at Savoy Hill some interesting details of the life of the gipsy community and the education of their children. The talk formed the second of a series on country life.

At his home at Wonersh, Mr. Milner told a "Surrey Advertiser" representative that this was his first experience before the microphone and that it was rather uncanny at the start. On the Friday he had a "try-out," and on the Saturday he was accompanied to London by Mrs. Milner, who assists him at the school.

"After I had read my first two paragraphs," he said, "I felt perfectly at ease, and could have gone on for a 'month.' I would not mind doing it again."

Mr. Milner was allotted 20 minutes for his talk and he finished "on the tick."

So far as he knows, only one gipsy, a woman, heard his remarks, and she has two children at the school. The school has accommodation for about 60 children, and commands an average attendance of about 40. Mr. Milner has had communications from gipsies in many parts of the South of England who wish to come to the Hurtwood, but to stay in the district they must be licensed.

There are 36 children on the books, and they are now on holiday until September 15th. Of the scholars only five are girls.

Asked for an explanation of the great disparity between the sexes, Mr. Milner said he could not venture one, but, he added, during the last 18 months some 14 babies had been born in the district, and only one was a male. The children, he said, were attentive to lessons, but showed a decided preference for handcraft coaching.

An interesting point mentioned by Mr. Milner was that despite their open-air life the gipsies are not a long-lived race, and this he attributed in part to the lack of the right kind of food.

#### TRACKING DOWN SNAKES.

"Can they really detect the smell of a snake?" Mr. Milner was asked, and he replied that this was not only true concerning the gipsies, but he himself could do so. There are plenty of snakes in the Hurtwood, including adders, and sometimes they killed large reptiles. "They will kill them with a stick or crush them with their heels and bring them in on the end of a piece of wood, but nothing will make them touch a reptile until the sun has gone down, believing, as they do, that until then the poison remains," said Mr. Milner. That also applies to toads. "Whether it is true or not I don't know, but they hold the belief very firmly."

From Savoy Hill, Mr. Milner appealed for literature for the gipsies, and while there has been a generous response, periodicals of the right type are still needed. Strangely enough only one parcel has been received from the London district, but several have come from Wales, Bristol, Worcester, Ramsgate, and the North of England. The periodicals that Mr. Milner chiefly desires are illustrated papers and journals recording by pictures and news daily events.

"If you have pictures," he said, "you can get them very interested, and they will understand more easily comments on the subjects. We rely largely upon pictures in our work of educating the children."

GIPSY SCHOOL "ON THE AIR"

BBC BROADCASTS LIFE AT HURTWOOD

Surrey Advertiser 23 August 1930

The Country Life programme was broadcast at 7PM on 16 August 1930 on the BBC National Programme, 193kHz (1554 m) Long Wave.

No recordings seems to exist.

#### SOLVING THE GIPSY PROBLEM:

Has a solution of the gipsy problem been found? Mr. A. S. Milner, a Godalming resident, head teacher of the Hurtwood Gipsy School, answers the question in the affirmative. Lecturing here last week on Surrey County Council's experiment in starting a school for gipsy children, Mr. Milner said he felt that education was the only way in which they could deal with the problem. He had been criticised for saying that he held out no hope for the grown-up gipsy. It was through the children that they would eventually get rid of the nuisance, by making them dissatisfied with their mode of life. Mr. Milner said that of eight girls who had left the school since it was started, six were away from the gipsy camp, one being in service. Of nine boys, who left on attaining the age limit, six were still at the camp, but one was in employment in Godalming.

West Sussex Gazette, 7 April 1932

#### OUR OWN COUNTIES

Mr A. S. Milner, head teacher of the Gipsy School at Hurtwood, Surrey, claimed, in a lecture at Godalming, that his was probably the only school in the country where the cupboards were not kept locked. Only two articles disappear - plasticine and indiarubber - which the gipsy children ate! Mr. Milner stated that the infants got through about 12 lbs. of plasticine per term.

West Sussex Gazette, 5 May 1932

# A SCHOOL IN THE WOODS

## CLASSES WHERE PUPILS MAY SMOKE

The Hurtwood gipsy school at Albury is to close down at Christmas and reopen at East Walton.

The decision to close the school is due to the dwindling attendance; in fact, the present number of children on the books is only 19.

At Walton there is a large number of gipsies, and by transferring the head master of the school, Mr A. S. Milner, the Surrey Education Committee hope that certain families from Hurtwood will migrate there and send their children to the school.

Opened in 1926, the school has met with a considerable degree of success

### GIPSIES SETTLE DOWN

The head master has long experience of gipsies, and he has won their confidence and respect. His task at the school in the woods has not been easy.

He has had the satisfaction of seeing a number of his pupils relinquish the nomadic life and take up useful and settled work in industry.

Apart from the education of the children evening classes are held for adults, and the pupils, both men and women, are permitted to smoke their pipes during the instruction.

Basket work and handwork of any description, particularly if the instruction leads to making an article of commercial value which can be sold readily, is very acceptable.

Most of the estimates of the ages of the gipsies' children and their animals, too, are based on the end of the War. To receive an answer that a child was born "seven or eight years after the War" is fairly common.

SURREY GIPSY SCHOOL TO BE CLOSED  
West Sussex Gazette, 14 December 1933

## SURREY GIPSY SCHOOL TO BE CLOSED

### DWELLERS ON COMMON GIVEN NOTICE TO QUIT

Hurtwood Common Gipsy School, near Guildford, the only one of its kind in England, opened by the Surrey County Council eight years ago, will be closed on December 31. The Hurtwood Control Committee has given notice to quit to the gipsy colony of about 60, who occupy rough, primitive shacks at Hurtwood, where there has been an encampment for 100 years. Mr. W. W. Stopford Brooke, Secretary and Treasurer of the committee, has collected over £1,000 and formed a trust under which land has been bought at Walton-on-Thames, where six bungalows are being built, with the prospect of others. The gipsy families have been given the opportunity of moving into the bungalows at the end of the year, after which no gipsies will be allowed to live on Hurtwood Common. With one exception, all the families had, by last week-end, applied for bungalows, which will be let at a small rent. Also, for the first time in their lives, the gipsies will pay rates, and the women will have to master the mysteries of a cooking range.

The gipsy school building is being moved and attached to East Walton Council School, of which Mr. A. S. Milner, of Godalming, head teacher of the gipsy school, has been appointed head. The gipsy children—no longer called such—will attend East Walton School as ordinary scholars. Some of the parents are reluctant to leave the bleak Hurtwood camp, where the older gipsies were born, but the children eagerly anticipate moving into the bungalows. The gipsy school building will be used as extra accommodation and for evening classes.

Mr. and Mrs. Milner, states a correspondent, have done capital work among the gipsy children, who are expert at basketry, woodwork and boot repairing. They repair their own shoes. Mr. Milner told a "W.S.G." representative: "*I am satisfied with the result of the experiment, because the school has really been the means of wiping out the camp, and because the children now at school will have an equal chance with more fortunate children of making good. There is no doubt the school has justified itself. A big change has taken place in the habits of the gipsies, and there is no doubt they are ripe for living under ordinary civilised conditions as normal citizens. Since the children have learned to read, and with what they have been taught at school, they have become conversant with the outside world and grown discontented with their outlook. Their eagerness and excitement at the idea of going into civilisation are definite results of education.*"

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## HURTWOOD GIPSIES

### ENCAMPMENT NOT TO BE BURNED

Although, as announced in the "Surrey Advertiser" some months ago, the century-old gipsy settlement at the Hurtwood is to be disbanded, its end will not be so spectacular as that envisaged by a special representative of a daily newspaper, who, on Tuesday, stated that it would "go up in flames."

The gipsies, about six families of them, are to exchange their "benders"—small huts made from bent over willow branches—for bungalows at Walton-on-Thames. Frost, however, has held up the erection of the buildings, and it is not possible yet to state definitely when the gipsies will move into their new homes.

Laughing at the suggestion of the burning of the settlement, a member of the Hurtwood Control Committee told the "Surrey Advertiser" that fire was the last thing they wanted on the common.

Mr. A. S. Milner, who has been in charge of the gipsy school at the Hurtwood, is now master of East Walton School.

HURTWOOD GIPSIES

ENCAMPMENT NOT TO BE BURNED

Surrey Advertiser, 13 January 1934

## AFTER 100 YEARS. GIPSY COLONY ON THE MOVE. FROM WOODLAND TO RIVERSIDE.

The gipsy encampment, which for 100 years has been situated at Hurtwood Common, Surrey, is removing this week to Walton-on-Thames. Eight years ago the Surrey Education Committee formed the first gipsy school in their midst, and the educational progress which the school has achieved will be completed at Walton.

Here the gipsies will live in bungalows offering accommodation considerably superior to their rude dwellings at Hurtwood. Their school building is coming with them and will be re-erected on a site adjoining the Council School in Terrace Road.

Mr. A. S. Milner, the first gipsy schoolmaster in England, will continue to be in charge, and under his direction the gipsy children will continue with their handicraft work, in addition to the ordinary subjects taught at school.

About 60 men, women, and children will form the colony, the school children numbering 18. When the Hurtwood encampment is finally closed down 20 childless gipsies are going "on the road."

GIPSY COLONY ON THE MOVE

Ballymena Weekly Telegraph,

3 February 1934

## A GIPSY SCHOOL

Deep in a Surrey birchwood, almost pathless, where one finds by luck rather than by direction the camps and caravans, the first English Gipsy school has just been opened. Must Gipsies, too, go to school? In childhood, if we used to fear, how thoroughly we envied, them. The abundant young, presumably, "stolen," were exempt from compulsory washing and roamed the greenwood, careless of truant officers. How good the soup smells, stirred in the pot dangling from the tripod by an eldrich hag, her tatters rich in sky and sunset. Alas! Gipsies are "progressive." Years ago we lost our confidence in them. The then American King of the Gipsies—forgotten is the statelier "Duke of Egypt"—was worth \$100,000. Horse-tamers and horse-swappers, some of them, have sunk to the use of the automobiles. The population of school age deserves its fate.

It is some consolation that the pride of old descent and separate tradition is still strong in the Romany breast. A mother in her dingy bracken hut, with its central fire, speaks her aversion of common schools:

I have brought up my children with care. What I dislike about schools is that well-brought-up children will have to associate with brats who come from piggish surroundings.

What caitiff said that every woman is a snob at heart? Geography, history and woodwork are among the studies. Some of the boys might be more interested in "The Confessions of a Poacher." There is a carpenter's bench for them. Children more than 14 will go to night school, where shoemaking will be the main craft taught. We never liked our Gipsy shoed. In the school garden small Egyptians will learn botany; and every family will have its own plot to delve in. If we were Duke of Egypt, every mother's son of a Gipsy would be a tinker. Among the schoolmaster's troubles is the delightful easy system of nomenclature. Thus, one mother's three jewels are all Jobs. She calls them Job, "Jobbie" and "Doughy." Can pedagogical majesty sanction nicknames? The boys and girls are "musical." They sing. They play the accordion and the cornet.

At night, the master says, "You can hear their music all through the woods." So the woods are as bad as New York. There are eighty pupils to begin with. "Seats for every child" will soon be the cry. "Most of the Gipsies have large families. Six married couples taken at random had a total of twenty-one children under 4 years of age."

New York Times  
1 February 1926

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It is some consolation that the pride of old descent and separate tradition is still strong in the Romany breast. A mother in her dingy bracken hut, with its central fire, speaks her aversion of common schools:

I have brought up my children with care. What I dislike about schools is that well-brought-up children will have to associate with brats who come from piggish surroundings.

What caitiff said that every woman is a snob at heart? Geography, history and woodwork are among the studies. Some of the boys might be more interested in "The Confessions of a Poacher." There is a carpenter's bench for them. Children more than 14 will go to night school, where shoemaking will be the main craft taught. We never liked our Gipsy shoed. In the school garden small Egyptians will learn botany; and every family will have its own plot to delve in. If we were Duke of Egypt, every mother's son of a Gipsy would be a tinker. Among the schoolmaster's troubles is the delightful, easy system of nomenclature. Thus, one mother's three jewels are all Jobs. She calls them Job, "Jobbie" and "Doughy." Can pedagogical majesty sanction nicknames? The boys and girls are "musical." They sing. They play the accordion and the cornet.

At night, the master says, "You can hear their music all through the woods." So the woods are as bad as New York. There are eighty pupils to begin with. "Seats for every child" will soon be the cry. "Most of the Gipsies have large families. Six married couples taken at random had a total of twenty-one children under 4 years of age."

# The PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

Official Organ of The National Organization for Public Health Nursing

Volume XVIII

SEPTEMBER, 1926

Number 9



## AN ITINERANT GYPSY SCHOOL

Hot baths once a week, hair trimmed at the same time, pursuit of the three Rs within four confining walls—surely no true gypsy would consent to such indignities. But in Surrey, England, a school has been opened for children of the Romany population. A small hut of corrugated iron has been set up in the Surrey hills, and its pupils will be the children of the colony of gypsies at Hurtwood, some eighty vagrant families living in caravans.

The fears and suspicions of the pupils were largely allayed in the first days of their schooling by the presence of a true Romany, the janitress, who has taught the schoolmaster the Romany language, so that he has been able to give bi-lingual lessons. Besides reading and writing the young gypsies are being taught sewing, knitting, woodwork, bootmaking and gardening. Evening classes are attracting the adults and older children, and the Romany's passion for music is being encouraged by dancing and singing lessons. Infant welfare work will also be taught the adults.

If and when the colony folds its tents and resumes its wandering, the school, a temporary, portable structure, will go along.

AN ITINERANT GYPSY SCHOOL, The Public Health Nurse, USA, September 1926

# THE BUILDER

A JOURNAL FOR THE ARCHITECT AND CONSTRUCTOR.  
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED "THE BRITISH ARCHITECT."

VOL. CXXXII—No. 4387. MARCH 4, 1927

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**ALBURY (SURREY).—Gipsy school is to be enlarged at £300.**  
**ARMAGH.—R.D.C. approved scheme for 66 cottages,**

GYPSY SCHOOL TO BE ENLARGED, The Builder, 4 March 1927

21.—HURTWOOD SCHOOL

Hurtwood School has closed, and the century-old Gypsy encampment has been destroyed.

Hurtwood was not the first Gypsy school; but it was the first official attempt to educate the English Gypsy. The school was opened by the Surrey Education Committee in 1926, under the charge of Mr. Milner. Only four of the forty pupils could read or write. In addition to the ordinary rudiments of education, the children have been instructed in various handicrafts, such as basketry, woodwork and rug-making, also in gardening. Nor has the physical well-being of the pupils been neglected; smoking has been discouraged, and has almost entirely disappeared during school hours.

The Hurtwood Gypsy colony has dwindled since 1926. When the school was first opened there were 260 Gypsies at Hurtwood. At the close of last year the colony numbered 60, and the scholars numbered 19.

The bungalows provided for the colony at East Walton contain a living room and three bedrooms, and the *Romané* are pleased with their new quarters. The portable school building, which has served Hurtwood for so long, has been taken down, and removed to East Walton for erection beside the Council School, of which Mr. Milner is now master.

What will be the end of the effort to civilize the Gypsy? If it means the ultimate merging of the *Romano* into the *gajo* the movement is to be deplored. But I, for one, firmly believe that, in spite of intermarriage, gentile regulations, and education, the Gypsies will remain a distinct and independent race until the end of the world.

If education will tend to bring out the best traits of the *Romano*, it will be a blessing to the race—many of the younger generation are finding their lack of education a serious handicap in modern conditions of life. The Uzhorod experiment, described in *JGLS.* (3) xiii. 117-19, has been an undoubted success, tending to bring out the best traits of the Gypsy character, and to develop the latent talents of the pupils.

Provost McCormick, in his able article on the Perthshire Education Committee's experiment (*JGLS.* (3) xii. 142-7), pointed out some of the difficulties which beset the path of the would-be civilizer of the Tinkler-Gypsies, and we are pleased to learn that one or two of his proposals have already been effective in Scotland.

Will the Gypsy continue to be a picturesque and interesting figure, or will he become an ideal citizen? No one would venture to call the average Gypsy of to-day an ideal citizen, or the average ideal citizen either picturesque or interesting.

The world needs the picturesque for its own sake, and we can ill spare the *Romano* as we now know him.

25 May, 1934.

ENID CAMM.

dreary place, the campus of the high school. Many girls were crying, and some boys." There was a critical ball game scheduled for that day and virtually the whole Oak Park team was "fired." Some of the 51 went into legal conference to get a special injunction restraining the school board from taking action until after graduation day. Others went to other schools, tried to enroll and finish their year's work. Principal McDaniel refused to comment. Board President George Harvey Jones said: "There is nothing sensational about this affair. Every student, upon entering school, knows exactly what the law is and what the penalty. . . ."

### Mens Sana

It remained for Brown University to propound the modern application of that ancient pedagogical canon, *mens sana in corpore sano*. Last week, President W. H. P. Faunce announced that hereafter his undergraduates will be examined not only as to their lungs, hearts, livers and eyes by physicians, but also as to their worries, doubts, despairs, loves and hates by trained psychologists. There will be the physical examination at the gymnasium, the psychological examination in the laboratory.

Inverting a famed trade slogan, Dr. Faunce declared: "Hundreds of American students are held back by mental conditions of which their best friends are often unaware." The appointment of "the best men in the medical profession" was expected to save unbalanced Brown students from the tender mercies of the psychiatrist, from whose diagnoses amateur introspectors have been known to derive harmful results, trying to "live up to their characteristics."

### Eloquent Hoosier

For Wabash College (Crawfordsville, Ind.)—triumph. A fortnight ago, her pride, her young Demosthenes, her handsome Maurice ("Red") Robinson journeyed to Northwestern University (Evanston, Ill.) with his elocution coach, Professor W. N. Brigrance, for the National Contest of the Interstate Oratorical Association, for which he had qualified by winning the Indiana state contest (TIME, March 1). Other doughty state champions were there at Evanston: a forceful South Dakotan with an oration on prohibition; a West Virginian propounding that "Science Has a Rendez-vous"; an Iowan primed to deliver "Cat and Cattle." But none was so shrewd, none so compelling as Hoosier "Red" Robinson (his home is in Anderson,

Ind.), who, when he found Illinois humming with talk about that week's triple murder, scrapped his prepared speech and got up another one overnight called "The Eleventh Commandment." The seven judges were his to all but one man when he declaimed, among other ringing sentences: "Do you blame our youth for turning to a criminal career when, in those formative years before character is made or habits fixed, they see handed down to them, from a modern Mt. Sinai of sentimentality, a new and Eleventh Commandment which says, 'Thou shalt get by with it?'"

His nearest competitors were Carl W. Forsythe, Ypsilanti State Normal (Mich.), and Edson Smith of Monmouth College (Ill.).

Orator "Red" Robinson is slender and dapper. Dullards who judge by appearances alone might take him for a dancing man, a talkative "cake-eater."\* Than which nothing could be more misguided. He is a state champion pole-vaulter, a college basketball captain of all-Western calibre. When they heard he had won the oratorical title, his college mates rushed to prepare a demonstration at the railroad station. He had joined the distinguished roster of national intercollegiate elocution champions, a roster including an author, a bishop, a governor, senators (including the late LaFollette, the retired Beveridge), six college presidents and many another Who of *Who's Who*. Incidentally, he had won for Wabash her fourth national championship in seven years, her second in succession. "If," said Elocution Professor Brigrance with pardonable pride, "if there be such a thing as a crown of American oratory, certainly there could be no disputant of Wabash's claim to it."

### Gypsies

Reports from England revealed that attention had been turned to an educational problem as old as Robin Hood—the schooling of England's 100,000 or more gypsy children. The Surrey County Council opened a peripatetic school, with a master and mistress, to teach them, besides the three R's, crafts like basket-weaving, rug-making, wood-working, gardening. The "school house" was pitched in open country near a large gypsy encampment and though attendance was distinctly voluntary, 40 pupils enrolled the first day.

England's gypsy tribes, many of

\*Species of young human male to be found in mixed company from noon to midnight and after. He is lavish in his attention to dress, complexion, repartee, new dance steps, light refreshment. The name which newspaper readers have sickened of seeing for several years, without fully understanding it, is thought to have originated in Washington or farther south, deriving from the species' propensity for tea, cakes and soda-fountain goodies.

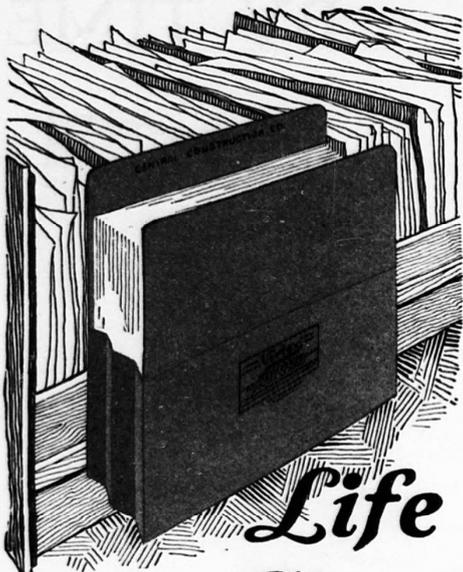
them, are unusual in this respect: unlike the nomadic folk of other countries they are not Romanies\* but Englishmen. During famines and plagues and—as in the legendary case of Robin and his merrie men—during political upheavals, poor townfolk or villagers have taken to the open road, the woods and the fields to scrape, beg or poach a living as best they can. England's winters are not severe enough to have killed them off. One generation of nomads has spawned another; continued poverty has bred shiftlessness; until today, if you stop at a romantic sylvan encampment in the New Forest and converse with its chief personage—usually a hawk-faced great-grandmother, who will offer you dirty tea and whine for a shilling—you will find that none can remember when any ancestor of the band first "took to woods." They have no legends.

Their language is lowest Cockney, guttural and larded with strange terms of the wayside. Their occupations, when pursued, are raising scrubby ponies (they milk the mares and sell the foals to tinkers, small farmers, etc.); working intermittently for the Crown, usually at ditch cleaning or road-making; collecting wild birds' eggs for city oologists. The women go into the towns in rags, carrying their grubby offspring to excite pity and alms from passing motorists. The men, for the most part, loaf about, in and under their wagons.

Far different are the true Romanies still to be found in England. The large attendance at Surrey's first day of gypsy school suggested that the encampment chosen was one of several Romanies usually to be found in Kent, Devonshire, Surrey, Berkshire or Buckinghamshire from late March on, after wintering on the Continent or in London. One *pater familias* or headman, Tombino, is typical of his fellows. Tombino raises a strain of horses that command top prices at any county fair in the kingdom. He moves his caravan from one fair to the next, establishing coconut-shies at each as a side-line. His children, numbering six† are sent, immediately upon arrival at a new location, to the nearest village school, presentably dressed and bearing testimonials to their character and ability from their last teacher. Tombino, large of girth, bright of eye and smile, possesses many of the good things of life and does not intend that his children shall be

\*Properly speaking, the gypsies are a race by themselves, known in western Europe since 1417. In language and origin they are Hindus, speaking a corrupt Sanskrit dialect. Strong admixtures of Persian, Slavonic, Magyar and Greek blood and language were picked up in their migrations. As inhabitants of the ancient Greek empire or Empire of New Rom, they were identified as Romanoi before the prouder term Hellenes was assumed by the Greeks.

†As of 1924.



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denied them through want of wit and learning. There is a boy of 17 who can con Vergil with any Etonian. A younger one—"Pedge" he was called—is bound for a medical career. He began by helping Tombino with the veterinary duties of the camp, and later—through Tombino's shrewdness and hospitality—acquired books on the subject from a London publicity-man, an Irishman with a bent for the free life, whom Tombino received first as a guest, then as an assistant in the coconut shies and finally, with due ceremony, as a blood brother.

### "Darkness of Erebus"

In the 20th Book of Homer's *Odyssey*, a minor character, Theoclymenus, exclaims to Penelope's drunken suitors:

"Ah, unfortunate men, what horror is this that has happened?

Shrouded in night are faces and heads. To the knees it descendeth.

See, too, crowded with ghosts is the porch, and crowded the court,

Hurrying down to the darkness of Erebus. Out of the heaven

Withered and gone is the sun, and a poisonous mist is arising."

If such a state of affairs came to pass today we should say, "Ah, an eclipse." British astronomers have, according to despatches last week, determined that the only total solar eclipse visible from Ithaca, home of Ulysses, during the first quarter of the 12th Century B. C., occurred at 11:41 a.m. local mean time, April 16, 1177 B. C. From this deduction the Trojan War was dated 1197 to 1187 B. C.; Ulysses' wanderings, 1187 to 1177.

## RELIGION

### Methodists

Two Methodist Episcopal conferences took place last week—the semi-annual conference of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church (at Washington) and the quadrennial conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South\* (at Memphis).

**Methodist Episcopal.** The bishops convene in semi-annual conference only as an administrative body and to hear reports. This time they heard that Bishop Anton Bast of Denmark could not join them because pardon or reprieve from his prison was refused (TIME, March 29); that reports of Mexican religious persecution were false; that England lags in restricting liquor sales in India. The conference was calm.

**Methodist Episcopal, South.** The general conference is legislative

\*John Wesley founded U. S. Methodism by his visit to Georgia in 1735. In 1784 the Methodist Episcopal Church took form. In 1845 slave-owning Methodists of the South established the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Although recent years have witnessed some comity between the two branches, regional prejudices have prevented unification. They exchanged fraternal greetings last week.

and judicial. Last week the lay and clerical delegates hoped for a sedate session, but occasionally broke up into opinionated wrangles. An attempt to railroad through a stiff fundamentalist resolution caused the noisiest row. The resolution was pocketed in committee. Prohibition was approved, theatres damned. At one session the 2,000 delegates paused to pray that "peace and brotherhood be restored to England."

## S P O R T

### Sails

Cocky little boats with pale sails, maneuvering this way and that on quiet water like a fleet of river butterflies, swerved at the sound of a gun and passed between a committee yacht and a red buoy, putting out of Larchmont harbor into Long Island Sound. They were the interclub sloops (Maconi-rigged yachts, 19½ feet on the water line), the new racing boats; and their appearance meant that the yacht-racing season had begun again in Eastern waters. Soon the boats of the other classes—the graceful, low-leaning "S" boats with their big spread of canvas, the shorter "Victory" boats (single-masted crafts with self-bailing cockpits, easy to handle in rough weather), the midget "Fish" and "Star" classes, 15-footers in which yachtmen's young sons and younger daughters dabble and pull ropes and get wet—soon these, and all the other bright pleasure craft of the Sound will be brought out of boathouses and moored at the ends of private jetties, ready for summer racing. Bronzed Captain "Juggy" Nelson, who was in charge of the races, said that he liked the new sloops. One called the *Bandit*, owned by Samuel Wetherill, crossed the line first; the *Ardelle*, with the water boiling under her side, won in the "R" class. . . .

Similarly on yachting waters elsewhere in the U. S.

### Oars

Boats of another sort—needle-sharp bodies with eight yellow legs apiece—measured speed, three of the outlandish creatures appearing on a river in Connecticut, two on a lake in New Jersey.

At Princeton. Coach Logg\* of Princeton has shuffled the varsity boat this spring, wags have said, "like a man who is trying to cheat himself at solitaire." But last Saturday he made no shifts; it was Coach Stevens of Harvard who had to rearrange his boat when Barton, No. 3, sprained three vertebrae in his neck in a boathouse accident. Harvard men were not so ready to bet on their crew after that, and indeed their caution

\*Appointed this season to succeed Dr. J. Duncan Spaeth.