

**Transcript of a letter from Revd. Legh Richmond dated 29th November 1815 to
Major Gibbard, Secretary to the Bedfordshire Auxiliary National School
Committee.**

Legh Richmond had been due to attend this meeting at the Swan Inn, but a heavy cold prevented him from so doing. As a consequence, he wrote the following letter to Major Gibbard, a copy of which is in the Bedfordshire Archives (GA2568), which after an explanation of his non-attendance contained the following:

There has been established in this parish (*Turvey*) a Sunday School endowed (between 20 or 30 years hence) by the late Charles Higgins free to all poor children of the parish. But, soon after my residence in the village (*1805*) I perceived the great want of a much larger schoolroom for the Sunday purpose, also of a free, general day School, for the instruction of poor children in reading and writing. Arithmetic (if practical) and works of industry. About 3 years since I commenced application to my friends in the Parish and to many others at a distance, unconnected with it, and succeeded to a considerable extent in raising money for the requested building. My friend, Mr Higgins of *Turvey* abbey gave a piece of land for the purpose with the materials from an old cottage standing upon it. Subscriptions, late as £20. From other friends in the Parish about £50 has been subscribed and by my other private friends in different quarters of the Kingdom about £ 150 has been given. Including a few unpaid bills and requisite completions, about £ 100 will still be wanted. A very excellent building is constructed which will accommodate from 200 – 300 children, properly divided for both sexes. My object is that a day school be established for the education of the children of *Turvey* and its vicinity (so far as the neighbourhood may be disposed to allow) on the following plan.

1. That all the children of the labouring poor of the Parish of *Turvey* shall be taught gratuitously.
2. That the children of farmers, tradesmen as such, shall pay to the master, as they have been hitherto accustomed to do in a private agreement between themselves and the village schoolmaster.
3. That if any of the neighbouring villages choose to avail themselves of the benefit of this school, it may be done by paying the small sum of half a guinea a year for the master for each child of a poor family (also what is wanted) for the necessary articles of books, copybooks etc. Only be each adjacent parish paying a stipulated annual sum and having the liberty of sending as many of the children of the poor belonging to their respective parishes as they may think proper.
4. That in the case of all children, in or out of the Parish of *Turvey*, where parents are above the condition of the labouring poor; the master to be paid by the parents or friends as a private agreement.

5. That in order to make a suitable compensation to the Schoolmaster for the free education of the children of the poor of the Parish of Turvey an annual subscription of not less than £25 per annum be raised in such ways as may be expedient and practicable. The foregoing regulation (No. 3) points out the provision for any poor children's education, who may belong to any other parish which compensation will of course be in addition to the sum given annually to the master for the children of Turvey.
6. The School to be under the superintendence of the clergyman and such of his friends as he may associate with him in this work of charity and parochial usefulness.

Such has been the outlines of my plan. About 3 years ago I procured some instruction in the National Plan of Education for our schoolmaster at the Central School in London; but he will now register, as it is essential to his conducting the mechanical part of it with effect that he should attend at some well managed school on Dr Bell's Plan for a little while, previous to occurs opening in Turvey.

I shall feel glad to embrace the offered opportunity of some assistance from the Bedfordshire Auxiliary Society to the National Schools, both as it concerns the remaining expense of fitting up the school and the subsequent salary of the master as well as the expense of his being fully as well taught in the mechanical process in its present improved state. This might probably be done at Northampton or wherever in the vicinity a school of the National Plan has been sometime established. A well conducted model is essential to the teaching of a master so as to enable him thoroughly to manage a whole school of his own.

Independently of my failings as a parochial minister, I feel anxious that this school should in every respect be so conducted as to satisfy the expectations and kind intentions of the many friends in different quarters who have so liberally aided me in the persecution of my plan. I trust with the present prospects this object will become soon attainable.

The three first points of attention in a pecuniary view are:

- The completing furnishing of the School including books.
- The procuring instructions for the master
- The providing for his salary.

You will be pleased to make any idea which you may think proper of this information. Wishing you and the gentlemen of the National School Auxiliary Committee every blessing in the persecution of so important a work of charity. I am sir

Your faithful servant

Legh Richmond