

The Peggy Wilson field (and a gazebo)

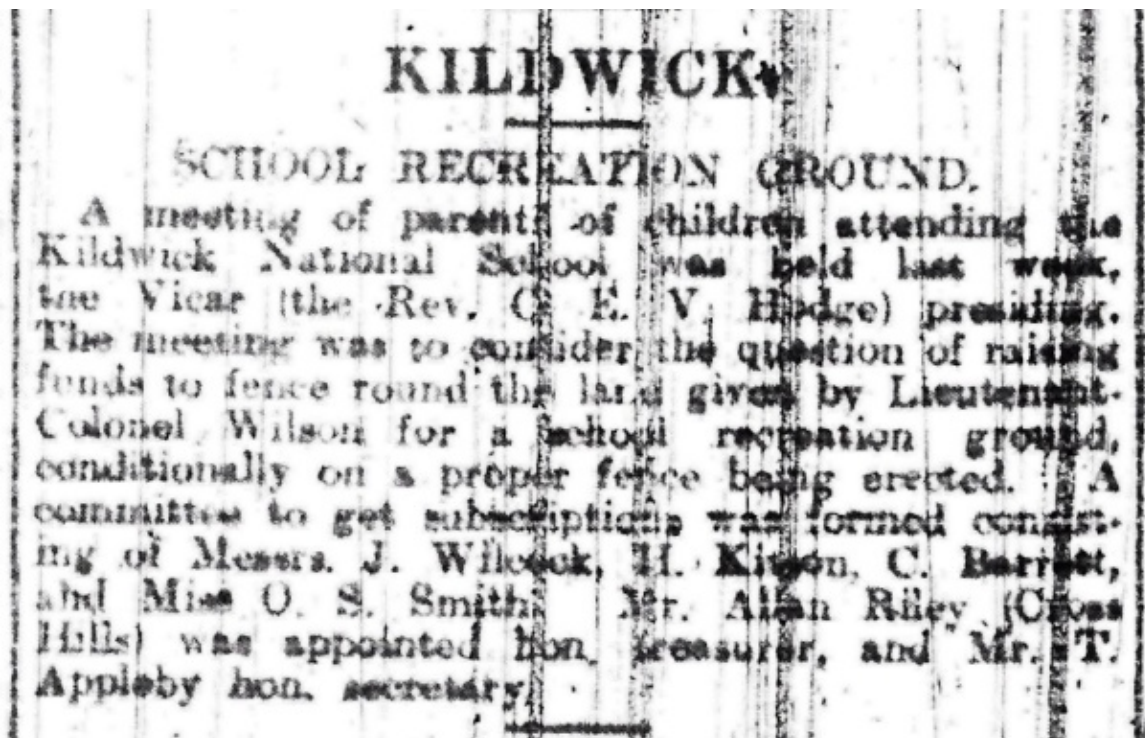
During and immediately following WW1 inspectors, whilst generally praising the quality of education provided at Kildwick School, repeatedly pointed out the limitations of the small playground.

However, by early 1920 the headmaster was confident that a solution had been found; in the form of an offer made by Col. R.H.F.W. Wilson – the owner of the Kildwick estate and lord of the manor of Kildwick. He recorded:

*Jan 23: The Correspondent (Rev. C.E.V Hodge) & the Head Master met with Mr. J. Broughton, agent for Col. Wilson, this afternoon & together they inspected the piece of ground given by Colonel Wilson for a girls' playground and school recreation ground.
The ground covers about an acre and is opposite the school.*

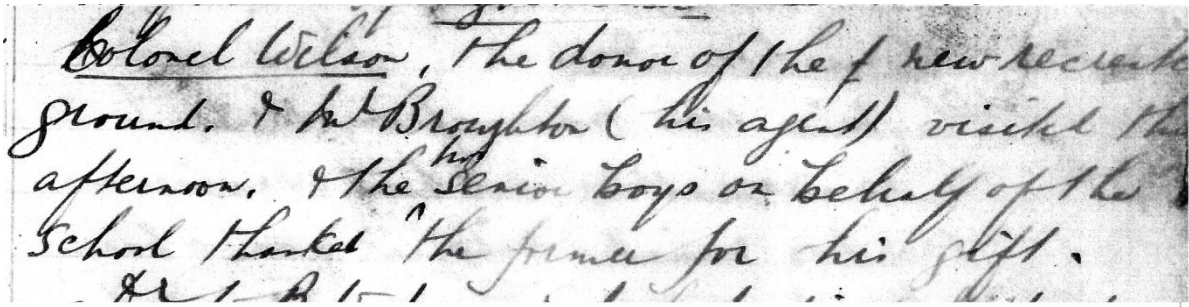
Transcript from the Kildwick School Log Book, January 1920
(the original is too badly water-damaged to be shown here)

Unfortunately, there was a small catch. The ground would have to be properly fenced off.



From Keighley News – 13/3/1920

It seems that raising the money and getting the work done took quite a while. More than 20 months elapsed before the headmaster was able to report that a formal hand-over had taken place.



Colonel Wilson, The donor of the new recreation ground, & Mr Broughton (his agent) visited this afternoon, & the Senior boys on behalf of the School thanked the former for his gift.

From the Kildwick School Log Book, November 1921

Transcript:

Nov 25: Colonel Wilson, the donor of the new recreation ground, & Mr. Broughton (his agent) visited this afternoon, & the [most ?] senior boys on behalf of the school thanked the former for his gift.

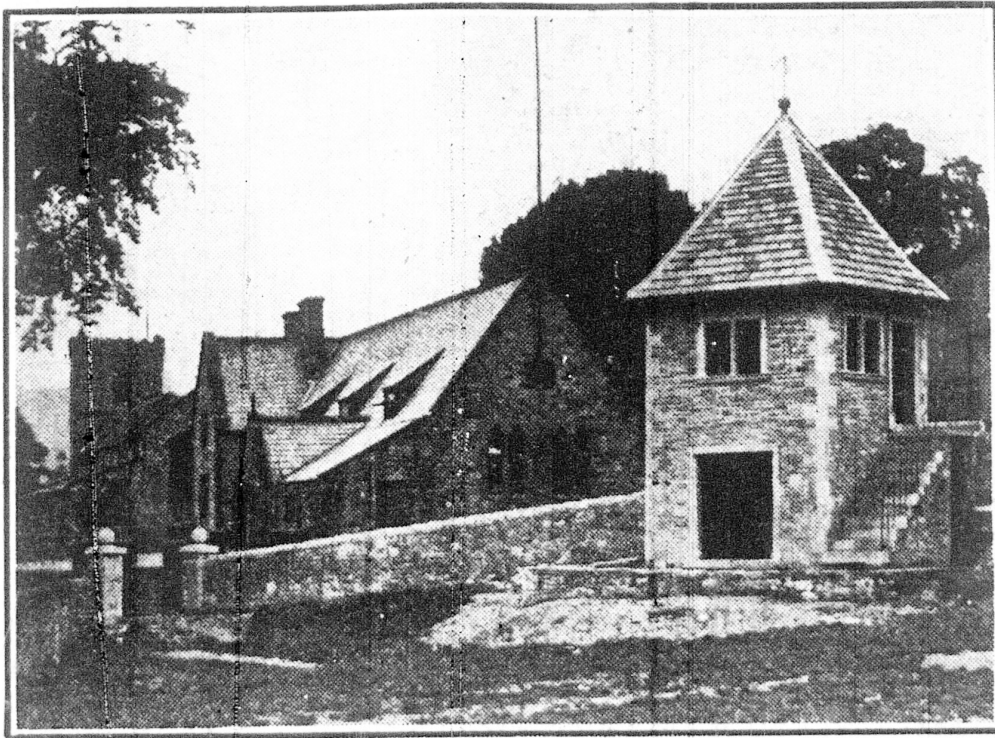
Four years later Col. Wilson went a step father and provided a two-storey gazebo for the field, built in memory of his daughter Peggy who had died in 1912, aged 18.



Peggy Wilson's gravestone, in Gargrave churchyard

The building was photographed and the images included in Keighley News on 13th September 1924.

KILDWICK CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND.



A gift from Colonel Wilson, of London, the youngest son of the late Sir Mathew Wilson, of Eshton Hall, in memory of his only daughter, Peggy. The shelter and tower stand at the entrance to an acre of playground.

The building was officially opened on 7th November 1924, as recorded in the Kildwick School log book:

Colonel Wilson D.S.O. Lord of the Manor came to Kildwick today & presented the Gazebo on the recreation ground to the children of the village. The gazebo has been erected in memory of Miss Peggy Wilson, his only daughter. The Gazebo is a gift from Colonel Wilson, of London, the youngest son of the late Sir Mathew Wilson, of Eshton Hall, in memory of his only daughter, Peggy.

From the Kildwick School Log Book, November 1924

Transcript:

Nov 7: Colonel Wilson DSO, Lord of the Manor, came to Kildwick today and presented the Gazebo on the recreation ground to the children of the village. The gazebo has been erected in memory of Miss Peggy Wilson, his only daughter.

The Craven Herald (November 14th 1924) felt it had to explain what a gazebo was:

A Useful Gift.—Col. Wilson, D.S.O., together with his agent, Mr. J. W. Broughton, and a party of friends, visited the village on Friday morning. The object of their visit was the presentation of a Gazebo to the village. The Gazebo (a word meaning look-out) is a substantial building which has been erected in the school recreation ground. The ground floor is intended for a shelter for the children, and the upper floor, which is fitted with window seats, as a resting place for the older people. On the outer western wall is a stone on which is carved, "For the enjoyment of children and others of Kildwick, and in memory of an only child, 1894 Peggy 1912, this building and the playground attached is given. R. H. F. W. W. A.D. 1924." [The playground was given by Col. Wilson a few years ago.] In making the presentation, Col. Wilson said it was a memorial to his only child Peggy, and he hoped the children would make good use of it. Songs were sung by the children, and cheers given for the donor. The Vicar of Kildwick (Rev. C. E. V. Hodge) acknowledged the gift.

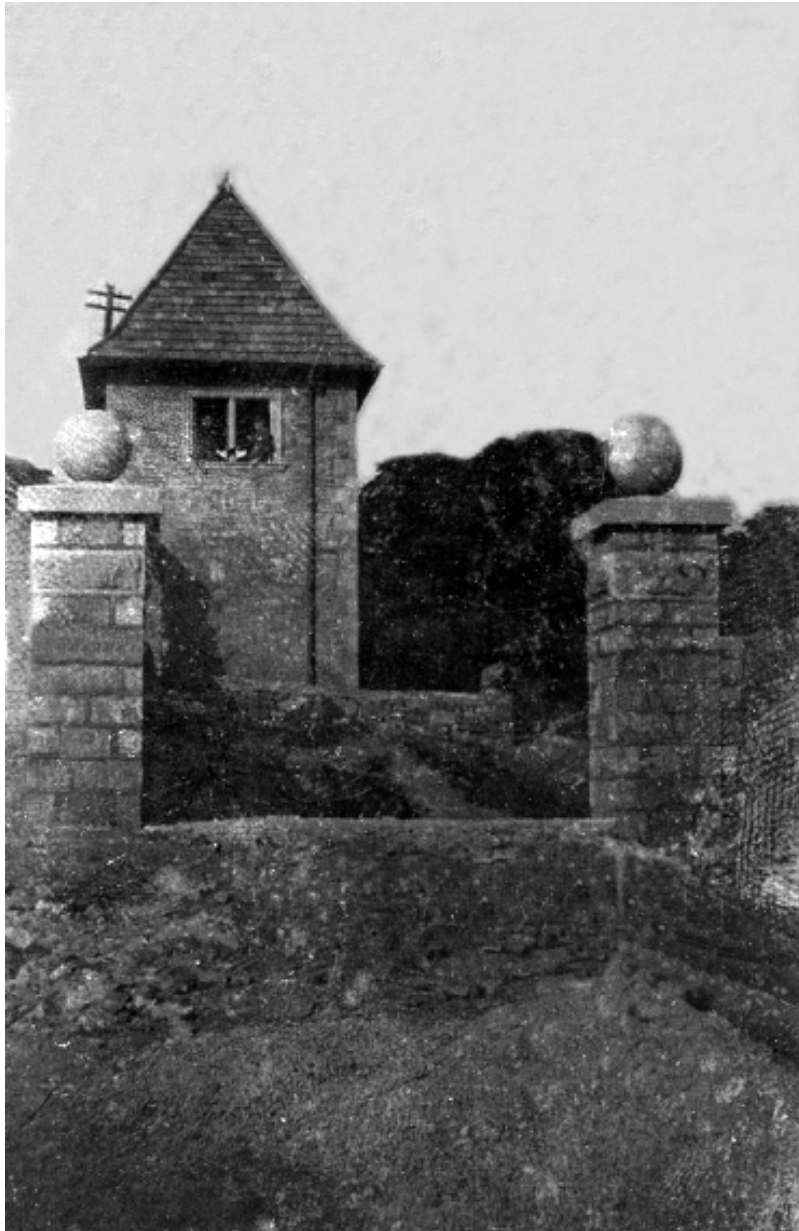
From Craven Herald – 14/11/1924

The Craven Herald's report was correct: the gazebo would, indeed, turn out to be a "useful gift".

Just a couple of weeks later, on the 24th, the gazebo was pressed into service when staff and pupils arrived at the school to find that the heating system's boiler was over-heating and could not be switched off. Worried about their safety, the headmaster had some of the younger pupils moved into the gazebo for the rest of their morning lessons, until the situation could be resolved.

Thereafter, the school log book frequently records the use of the gazebo as an outdoor classroom, particularly in the summer months.

The History Group has just one photograph of the gazebo in its archive. Sadly it has suffered some water damage, but has been digitally restored for us by the efforts of Dr. John Laycock of the Keighley and District Digital Archive.



**The gazebo. An undated photograph, probably from the 1950s.
Donated to the History Group by Chris Law.**

It is thought that the gazebo was demolished, without any prior discussion, by Rev. Selby in the 1950s. Quite why he thought he had the right to destroy a building which was not the property of the Church, and which did not stand on Church land, is unclear.

The recreation ground today

Since 1928 the recreation ground has been operated as a charity. Known today as the “Peggy Wilson Playing Field”, the charity aims “to benefit the children of both Kildwick and Farnhill villages as well as Kildwick Primary School”, under the custodianship of the national [Fields In Trust](#)

It is the location of the Community Garden and provides an open space for the people of both villages.



The logo of the Peggy Wilson Playing Field

For more information see www.peggywilson.org