



The École-Mairie

The Old School

Before it was moved here, the schoolroom used to be in premises **rented by the local council**. It was a simple building made of cob with a thatched roof. It at least had the advantage of being **located near to the church** as it was the priest who was in charge of teaching the children. Things changed in the 19th century, even more so with the separation of Church and State in 1905: from then on, teaching was the job of a layperson. On **10 August 1833, only 19 pupils**, mainly boys, attended the "school-house". Most children spent their time helping on the farm rather than going to school.

In spite of **a series of repairs to the building**, it left a lot to be desired in terms of sanitation. Acquin needed to have a proper school worthy of the name. Moreover, **the Duruy reform** in 1867 made it compulsory for villages with a population of over 500 to have a girl's school, and **the laws passed by Jules Ferry** in 1881-1882 made school attendance compulsory and free for all children.

Reconstruction in the typical 3rd Republic style

It was in **1889** that the new building was constructed in the style of the 3rd Republic. This meant **symmetrical façades, with large windows**. By law, the town hall, called "chambres communes" at the start of the 19th century, was integrated into the **two school buildings which flanked it on either side**. The skylights on the first floor still show where **the schoolmaster's tied accommodation** used to be. The school also had a garden and a well.

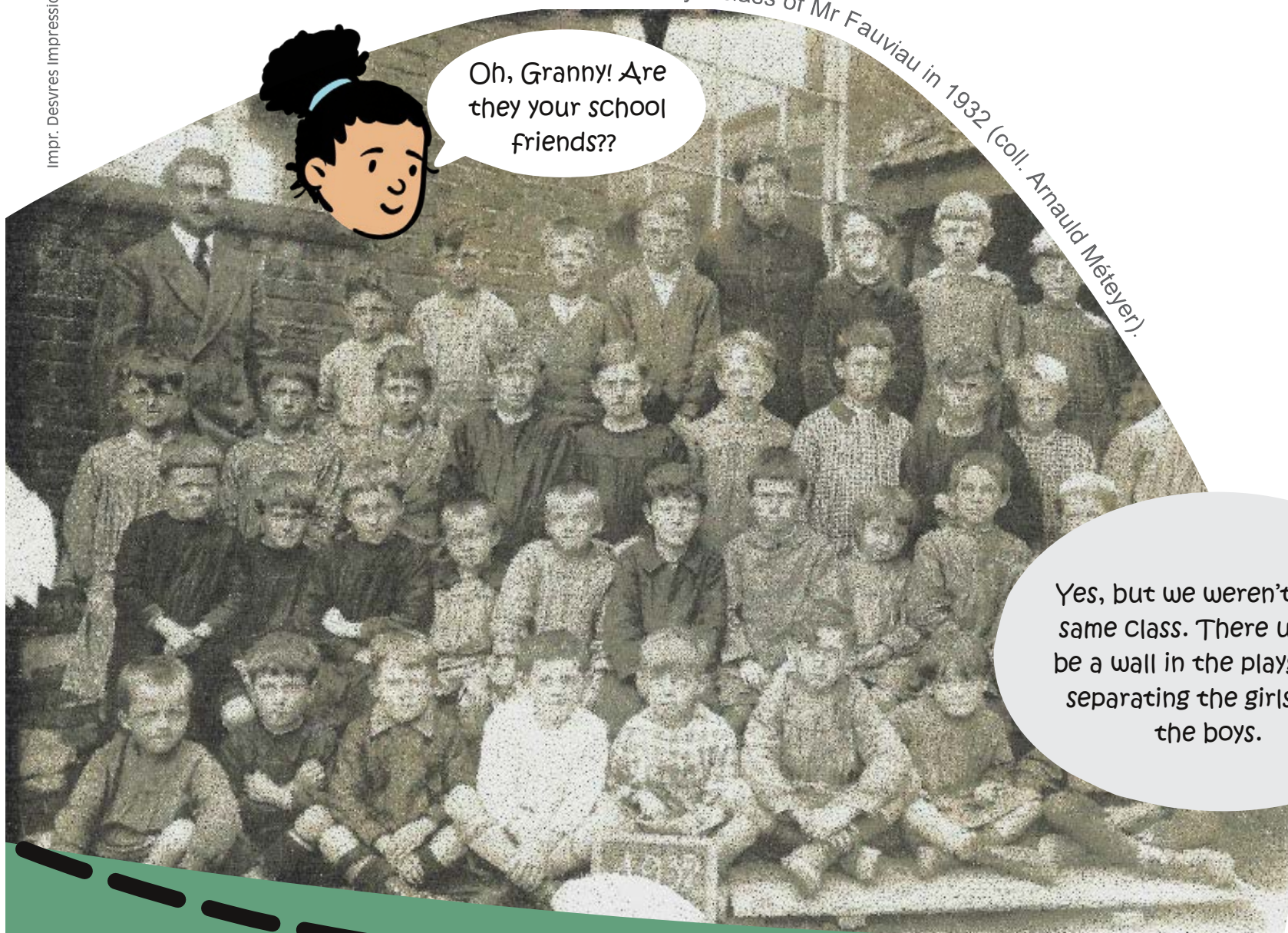
Because the school was beside the newly opened railway line, **a fence** was erected around the school for safety purposes.

School days revolved around **writing and mathematics exercises**, and learning moral quotations by rote. On cold winter days, the children would leave their wet shoes beside the **stove** in the centre of the classroom.



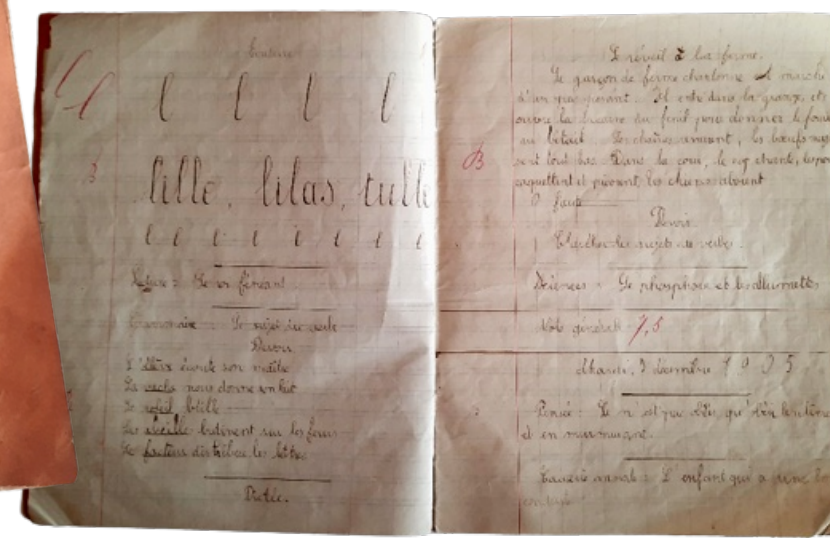
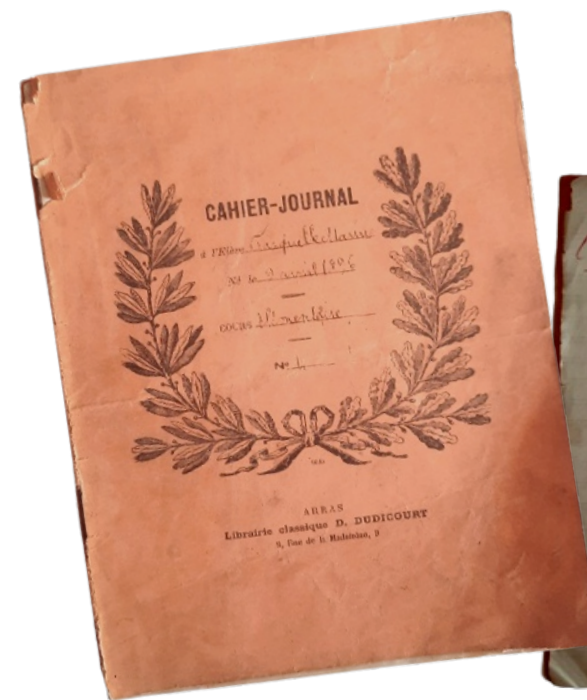
Plan of the école-mairie in 1884: its layout remains unchanged apart from two new rooms which have been added next to the original schoolrooms, and the fact that there are no longer any pilasters at either side of the doors (coll. Municipal archives).

The boys' class of Mr Fauvieu in 1932 (coll. Arnauld Méyer).

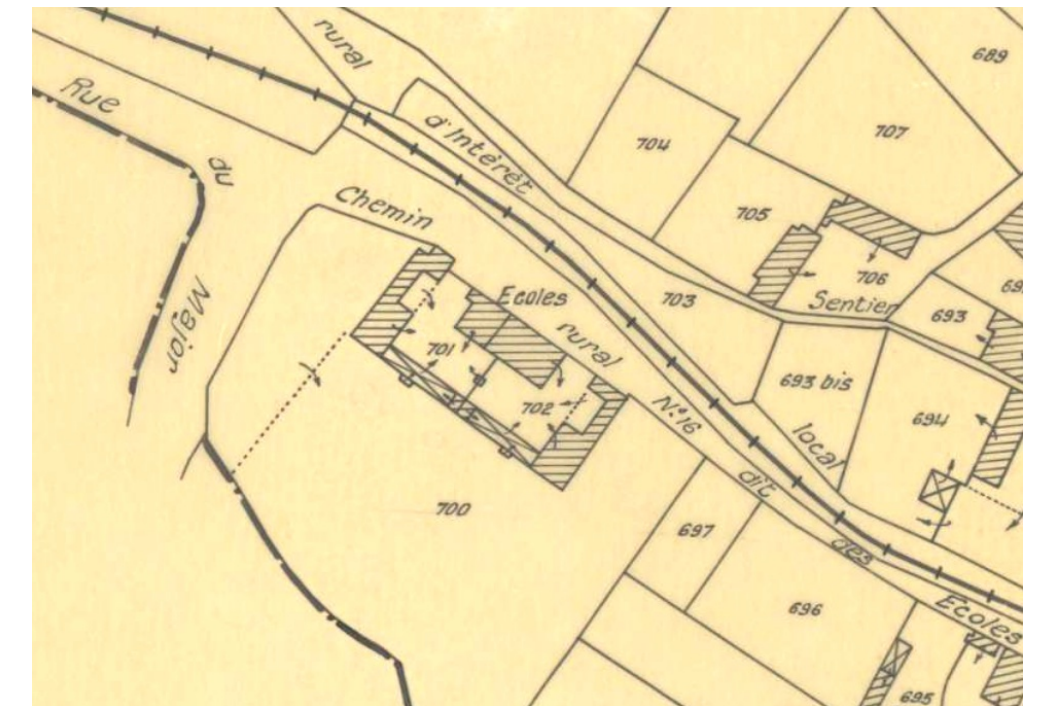


Oh, Granny! Are they your school friends??

Yes, but we weren't in the same class. There used to be a wall in the playground separating the girls from the boys.



Journal of Louis Fasquelle, a pupil in Acquin in 1905. Louis was ranked 11th out of 18 pupils although his writing appears to be faultless! (coll. Paulette Héricourt).



Plan of the school in 1935: the Anvin-Calais railway line went alongside the school (registry office plan, AD62, 3P 008/6).