Kaleidoscope

We had to catch the 7.34 train from Kirkham after walking almost a mile to the station, arriving at Blackpool Central at 8.15 a.m. We were known as "the Kirkham and Wesham Girls" throughout school life, a title which made us stand apart from the rest, no doubt because of our broad accents. (1924-1930.)

Every so often the school doctor visited us. She was a formidable figure who filled us all with dread. Her tall, proud figure reminded me of the late Queen Mary as she wore a toque. On one occasion we all received notes that our teeth needed numerous fillings with the exception of Ruth Worthington who had filled her teeth with bread left over from lunch. Another time all our form were suffering from murmuring hearts! Marjorie Pye had a more elaborate complaint – "dissipation of the veins of the heart". Our family doctor dispelled all my mother's worst fears and wanted to know, "Who is this woman?" (1924-1930.)

I was often late for school and had to face the teacher who was on duty in the downstairs cloakrooms (hopefully one of the milder members of staff and at worst MISS CLARK, of blessed memory – more appreciated later than when one was 11). (1927-1934.)

Memories of Maths. lessons with Miss Clark – every girl standing up straight at her desk, with not a whisper in the classroom as Miss Clark's footsteps were heard along the corridor. Woe betide anyone who had forgotten to get all the appropriate books and implements out of her desk. Miss Clark's eagle eyes would spot any attempt to get them out surreptitiously from the desk with the lid slightly raised. (1927-1934.)

I feel I owe everything to my school and I shall be eternally grateful to the dedicated women who taught me. Miss Weatherup took me to Germany in 1934, against the advice of many people, including the staff. I was 15. The two of us travelled by train throughout Germany, stopping in any city that seemed interesting. She fostered in me a spirit of adventure and complete confidence in my ability to travel alone without the help of any agency. This experience coloured my life and enabled me to spend ten weeks alone in France at the age of seventeen, visiting Nice, Cannes and Paris. Because of my experience in Europe I was able to get a fascinating job with Thomas Cook, building up the travel business immediately after the war, when I spent a year in France and Switzerland. (1927-1935.)

Chapter Two

1. Pre-War Development

THE development of women's education continued from the 1902 Act to the outbreak of the Second World War, with no marked change in direction. By and large, grammar-school teachers born around the turn of the century came to retirement in the same kind of school in which they were themselves educated, mostly in single-sex schools, either built as a result of the Act or given a new lease of life by being taken over by the local authorities. Their childhoods were not dominated by the same precepts that had dominated the childhoods of those some ten or more years their senior. Secondary education was an accepted goal for the able girl, though it had to be worked for and could not be taken for granted. It also presented the possibility of university education for those who qualified and whose families were willing and could afford, with the help of loans, grants and scholarships, to let them leave home. For many women graduates teaching offered the obvious destination when the university course was over.

For these women, the initial battle for secondary education had been won by their precursors of the two previous generations. The municipal universities had joined London in accepting women as full members. Although university women were still a small minority, and felt privileged to be so, they were more confident for they were now accepted in their own right. They no longer felt obliged to be apologetic about their academic attainments, or fearful lest they should be thought betrayers of womanhood. A career was expected of them if they did not marry.

Members of staff in their 30s and 40s in the 1930s had been in their teens and early twenties during the 1914-1918 war. Less conditioned by pre-war standards and attitudes than their older colleagues when war broke out, they came into the post-war world with greater maturity and a new perspective. They had different

expectations for the future and different regrets about the past. The greatest proportion of casualties had come from their contemporaries, a large part of their generation had been wiped out. They were aware of the million "surplus women" who would never marry, but, in spite of this, and in spite of the differentials in salaries of men and women, they were also aware that their profession gave them opportunities denied earlier genteel spinsters. Women in general had proved their worth during the war and the position of women was never to be the same again. True, the vote was denied them at twenty-one until 1930 (they were obviously considered still politically inferior) but their horizons had been widened and their perceptions of possibilities sharpened.

They had valued their own educational opportunities and they believed in the contributions they were making in introducing others to those opportunities. So, too, of course, did their older colleagues. But, somehow, there was a difference. The older women had been educated either privately or in secondary schools of various foundations, usually in large towns or cities like Salford or Oldham, intended for boys but taking some girls. Their younger colleagues had been the product of post-Act development. Burnley High School, Ulverston Grammar School, Clitheroe, Aigburth Vale, Crewe, Blackpool Secondary itself, were typical of their schools.

These younger women were still "ladies", chosen because of that by Miss Dunn, but they were also independent women in a way some of the older women were not. The older women tended to live with their families; the younger lived in lodgings, where meals were cooked for them but in which they had freedom of movement. Miss Dobson had her own house. They were assured by their academic training of a place in society.

They made a professional rather than a social statement and the standards they demanded and demonstrated were to do with professional integrity and responsibility, coupled with commitment. (Miss Taylor, on teaching practice, had surprised the practice school staff by her query, after sampling the delights of teaching, "And do you get *paid* for doing this?")

To them academic effort for able girls was not over-taxing when properly regulated. Effort, presentation and attention to detail were important. Courtesy and acceptable behaviour were, of course, expected. But they had a more rounded view of what they were about. Education was no longer a lady-like accomplishment; it was an integral part of a girl's life, broadening her opinions, quickening

her sensibilities and training her mind. It was to equip her to play an independent part in a wider world in which she would be able to hold her own. The boundary between teachers and taught was still there but it was less high. Equally respected as their older colleagues, they were more approachable and had a more relaxed relationship, particularly with the sixth form.

There were, of course, exceptions to these generalisations. But Miss Walton, Miss Fletcher, Miss Farrow and Miss Parkin were in a different mould from Miss Taylor, Miss Humphries, Miss Dobson and Miss Hudson. Miss Weatherup was, as always, a law unto herself.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many recollections of those who attended in the 1930s are more specifically centred on individual members of staff and isolated events connected with them. Incidents of no special significance have left snap-shot-like vignettes in the memory

Miss Dunn still appears as the presiding genius, still the advocate of lady-like behaviour, but by the '30s she had become the accepted Head, no longer needing to make the overt impact which every new head has to make if she is to succeed, making clear the standards expected and the direction desired. Other members of staff, women of individuality and personality, now made their impact on the pupils. No doubt they, too, had become accustomed to what was expected of them and were better able to spread their wings.

Many of the remembered impressions are of the staff with their hair somewhat let down. Miss Hughes rushing round the hockey pitch in Staff matches "more like school than staff", Miss Dobson, a former county player, tackling with only one hand on the stick, Miss Taylor, suitably accoutred, more placidly keeping goal. Miss Ward is remembered for losing her shoe heel on the summit of Ingleborough, Miss Humphries for leading the country dancing on school journey evenings. Dinner girls, then a rare breed, recall the discomfiture of new staff when confronted with the roast for carving and Miss Taylor's vegetarian distaste for the job. They remember, too, the polite but relaxed conversation with the duty staff. Miss Cottam and Miss Humphries are remembered for their bearing, in their elegant evening gowns, at school parties "like two very dignified queens". Miss Read is remembered for the Choir Trip to Chapel Stile and Miss Hudson and Miss Taylor for their acting of Tony Lumpkin and Marlowe in She Stoops to Conquer. Even Miss Dunn is remembered in a less than formal guise,

Pre-War Development

enlisting the help of two girls playing tennis on the front courts to arrange her room and not only inviting them up the forbidden front steps but rewarding them with tea and cream cakes.

In class, Miss Jones' recreational cookery for the sixth form is recalled, with special reference to the nougatine. Miss Weatherup is seen marching round the room leading French songs like some latter day Pied Piper, or climbing onto the desk to illustrate "Grimper" or bringing a French salad shaker to demonstrate how to make a salad. (Her teaching by the direct method was in advance of her time.)

Miss Cottam is remembered for her lucid lessons and her "military bearing", Miss Hudson for conducting the chanting of "qui quae quod" and Miss Clark for her "wonderful teaching of Maths." Miss Walton's lip reading and Miss Farrow's "Vapex" which accompanied her, like an aura, wherever she went, are reminders of the frailty of the flesh, even in such stalwarts.

The satisfaction of personal achievement is, of course, also recalled. The winning of a French Oral prize reminds us of the emphasis on the spoken word, and the awarding of a deportment badge, mentioned with modest pride, acknowledges notice for non-academic achievement. The girls selected to present a bunch of white heather to Captain Slack as he left Stanley Park for his flight to India, or a button hole for Councillor Duckworth on Speech Day, remembered their honoured tasks, even if the latter did fall up the steps to the Opera House stage.

Two specific snippets of advice are brought to mind: from Miss Dunn, presumably looking ahead (unless the much-filled teeth mentioned above had gone already beyond repair) – "Always brush your dentures over a bowl of water": from Miss Weatherup – "Remember to wear warm bloomers under your Speech Day dresses".

The sixth form enjoyed a status of pre-eminence. There are many memories of the deference accorded to the Prefects, who exercised a real authority on corridor and cloakroom duty, and also in the classroom when supervising for absent staff. (This continued until the school closed in 1971). There were miscreants, of course, who were summoned from lessons to Prefects' Meetings which sat in weekly judgement.

Although Miss Dunn was available at a set time each week to see parents, interviews were the exception rather than the rule. Most pupils preferred to soldier on alone and fight their own battles. Perhaps they suffered for their independence. Some anomalies remained undetected which today would be rectified, but their self-reliance is to be commended.

The public examinations of this period were the School Certificate, taken at fifth form level, and the Higher School Certificate two years later. This system was introduced in 1917, during the war, to regularise the "dense jungle" of unco-ordinated examinations and examining bodies. Administered by a small number of examining boards, based on the universities, the School Certificate was a group examination. That is, a certificate was awarded only to those candidates who achieved a pass mark in English Language, a foreign language, Mathematics or a science, and two other subjects, which excluded Art, Music and Housecraft, subjects available for examination but not counting towards a certificate. For university matriculation the five subjects had to reach credit standard. The sixth-form course offered subjects at Principal and Subsidiary level, three Principal at Good grade or two Principal and two at Subsidiary level being required for university entrance. Girls also took Civil Service Examinations, which were separate from the School Certificate.

Miss Dunn's notions of propriety affected all aspects of school life. Jane Eyre was not suitable for fourth form pupils because of Mr Rochester's natural daughter. No Sports Day was held because competitive sport was not suitable for young ladies (although girls had competed in the Dual School Sports Day). A school photograph was allowed only in Coronation Year, 1937. Quite why a group photograph was unladylike is not clear. Could it have been because of the

disruption to lessons and the difficulties of organisation?

Miss E. M. Taylor would often relate how she once said to a sixth form that the eccentrics she remembered among the teachers of her youth no longer existed, only to be met with a hail of laughter: the sixth assured her that eccentrics were as numerous as ever. I suppose that, of all people, teachers would be surprised to see themselves as others, particularly their pupils, saw them. But, in the end, these pre-war years were in many ways the years of the staff, of dedicated women of character for whom their careers were of prime concern, not for personal advancement, for no promotion ladder existed, not for prospects of increased monetary gain, for scale posts also did not exist and the yearly increments on the salary leading to the maximum after fourteen years were fixed, but for personal satisfaction in a job done as well as they could do it. The final impression, eccentricity or no, must be in the words of one recollection, "the respect and admiration given to the staff".

2. The pattern of the years 1928-39

HE yearly routine of the school, when at last adequately housed, soon settled into a pattern. In the Autumn Term, Speech Day and the Christmas party were the high water marks. In the Spring Term the Singing Competition and the School Concert were held, and the climax of the year came in July with the public, and school, examinations. The year came to an impressive end with the final assembly on the last day of term when Miss Dunn read the Prize List.

Speech Day was a Great Occasion. Held first in the Opera House and later in the Palace Theatre its ceremonial character was marked by the fact that every girl in the school was attired in a white dress. The

Order of Proceedings.

2-30 p.m. prompt.

IN HER MAJESTY'S OPERA HOUSE, WINTER GARDENS.

PRESENTATION OF PRIZES

BY

THE DUCHESS OF ATHOLL.

Alderman T. G. LUMB, J.P., in the Chair.

teachers wore academic dress and the chief guest was always a person of eminence. In days when ceremonial was not so familiar as it is now an atmosphere of circumstance was created. Perhaps the most distinguished speaker of these years was Margaret Bondfield, the first woman cabinet minister. The Duchess of Atholl was another chief speaker and because of her interest in music a special musical performance was arranged. The custom of the Choir's singing on Speech Day was established from the beginning.

The School Party was held at the very end of the Christmas Term in the Spanish Hall. This was an opportunity for new party frocks and for seeing the school, including staff and old girls, in an unfamiliar light. Everyone had a printed programme of the dances, with tassel and pencil, and partners were booked in advance as in Edwardian society. The favourite dance of the evening was the Lancers, learnt in gym lessons and danced with gusto and relish, if not with grace. It was more popular than the modern Waltzes and foxtrots, no doubt because more energetic. During the interval allowed for the band's refreshment, piano accompaniment was substituted. Miss Humphries and Miss Edwards were particularly noteworthy as duettists. No boys were present; this was a school event and was enjoyed as such. That it really was enjoyed, any suitably aged old girl will testify.

The Singing Competition was a House contest. Two test songs (earlier three) one in parts, one in unison, were given to the choirs of each House. The House singing captains took rehearsals and the Competition took place on a spring evening with an outside adjudicator. In 1930 Mrs Hood (Patuffa Kennedy Fraser), who was famous for her arrangements of Hebridean folk songs, was the adjudicator. House loyalty always ran high and as many old girls as possible returned to hear their House choirs.

In the earlier years, a school concert was given in addition to the competition songs. In 1932, for example, the programme opened with a French play and the "audience enjoyed the play immensely, because, even though they did not understand all the French, the acting was so good that they were able to follow the story." The same writer sums up the evening as "very exciting".

Eventually the School Concert became separate from the Singing Competition, though the winning choirs (junior and senior) contributed the competition songs to the concert. In 1936, scenes from *Twelfth Night* were followed by a short French play, songs by the School and House choirs, dances from members of the dancing class and an "orchestra" playing upon pokers and culinary instruments.

Certain years saw an Open Day to show to parents aspects of the school's work. Sometimes this was held on the day of the concert, sometimes during the Summer Term. Tea was served in the dining room.

Around these fixed feasts the other activities of the school were arranged. House activities, meetings of the Literary, Debating and Musical Society, and of the Scientific Society, and school journeys and visits had all to be fitted in.

The four Houses were formed with the new school and the

names had been chosen because all the natural features they referred to – the Trough of Bowland, Longridge Fell, Parlick Pike and Pendle Hill – were visible from the playing field before building obscured the view. They served as a reminder of the rural hinterland of Blackpool and when Miss Humphries left in 1964 she commissioned the painting of four very pleasant scenes, each one taken from the actual area after which each House was named.

The Houses competed from the first in hockey, tennis and netball and, when a cup was presented by Major Eric Read for a House Squadron Race in swimming, the school migrated en masse on a summer morning each year to Cocker Street Baths to watch the contest. Swimming was always a strong point in school and in the Inter School Gala held in the Open Air Baths school usually did well. Points gained in individual swimming certificates also counted for the Houses, so a humble length of Cocker Street was an unspectacular contribution open to the feebler brethren. Lucy Morton (Mrs Heaton), herself an Olympic swimmer, did much to foster the tradition of swimming.

Apart from the Singing Competition the other non-athletic House activity was the annual House Parties which catered for the age range of the Houses and were run by the House officers. Often they were organised around a theme and in the 1930s, to the party that was representing foreign travel, Miss Weatherup went in beach pyjamas. This cycle of fashion might surprise some readers today!

The Literary, Debating and Musical Society started in January 1926. The Scientific Society was inaugurated in 1929. These two societies covered between them a wide range of interests and had many active members. They continued to flourish until the war curtailed their activities.

Many of the topics debated, such as the place of women, the comparative value of science and the arts, the materialism of the modern world and so on, are still debated today. Two ingenious arguments are worth noting. Could the proposer of the motion "That corporal punishment is better than detention" really mean that the mental strain imposed by those undergoing detention was so great as to make the practice inhumane? She carried the motion by 41-26; and quite what did the opposer of the motion "Modern authors should be studied in schools rather than the classics" mean by her emphasis on the "inadvisability of studying modern authors owing to the disturbing effect they are liable to have on the schoolgirl"? She failed, but only just, to defeat the motion. It became traditional for the members of the First Year Sixth to give a

one-act play at one of the meetings of the Christmas Term and a Christmas programme with Boar's Head (cardboard), carols and a nativity play or tableau became established.

The Scientific Society, though smaller, had supporters who were prepared to work at papers to be given at the meetings. Talks on Davey, Faraday, on Glass, on Fireworks, on the manufacture of soap and many other topics were given by girls. Outside speakers were invited, a photographic competition was organised and visits to local places such as the Gas Works, the Model Dairy, a bakery, the Fire Station, the *Gazette* printing works, were arranged. Each year the society planned an excursion to some more distant place and the first of these was to the Soap works at Port Sunlight in July 1929.

The first official school journey abroad was in 1928 when seven girls accompanied Miss Weatherup to Calais. In 1929 twenty four girls went with her to Dunkirk and twenty eight two years later. In 1934 one girl and Miss Weatherup went to Germany; in 1935 thirteen. 1936 saw fourteen girls in Paris and in 1939 a party of ten spent over a fortnight in Clermont Ferrand, arriving back in England less than a month before war was declared. As early as 1930 Phyllis Crossley had exchanged visits with a French girl. These activities reveal the enthusiasm and zest of Miss Weatherup, who was tireless in organising French excursions whenever possible, whether to the Comedie française, which played each year in Manchester, or to the local Cercle français, which resulted from the presence of Belgian soldiers in Blackpool during the 1914 war and, affiliated as it was to the Alliance française, had many distinguished lecturers. Miss Weatherup wrote:

French was a living language in the Collegiate School. Each year there was an oral examination for every girl. This was conducted in each class and then the top performers competed against each other. The facility in the use of language was seen when the school journeys took place to France.

In addition to these foreign journeyings, parties were taken to Stratford and the Lake District, apart from more local excursions. These journeys took place during the weekend of Tradesmen's Holiday, lengthened to three school days and a weekend by the inclusion of a carefully saved holiday awarded for University Scholarships. In 1937 a party went to Stratford for *King Lear* and the Shakespeare places. In 1938 and 1939 there was youth hostelling and walking, with Grasmere as the centre. Miss

Weatherup, Miss Taylor and Miss Humphries were devoted school journeyers and, at a time when such journeys were by no means common, gave their time to organising, and their holidays to accompanying, these excursions.

Of the many plays which the school, or part of it, was able to see during these years, two must be singled out for mention. The first of these was on home ground when the Staff of the Collegiate and Grammar Schools combined to present Mystery at Greenfingers in May 1939 to raise money in response to the Mayor of Blackpool's appeal for support for the Manchester University extension scheme. Miss Humphries' prodigious feat of memory was equalled by her histrionic skill with the result that she "so captured her audience at her first appearance that every subsequent entry was greeted with delight." This was a major production for Miss Taylor. The second was in Manchester; I wonder how many of those eligible went there in 1938 to see John Gielgud's Hamlet, for this is generally regarded as the Hamlet of the century, if not of all time. There were many such theatre parties to the first class programmes arranged by the local Schools Music and Drama Association, to orchestral concerts by the Hallé and to Opera and to Ballet as well as to the theatre. The standard of professional plays and music available locally was very much higher than it is today.

The musical life of the school was particularly flourishing, under the enthusiastic guidance of Miss Read, and membership of the Choir was much sought after. In December 1928 Miss Read reported that, "Recruits for the choir were more numerous than ever this term and have been temporarily banded together as 'Sub-Choir' and meet on Wednesdays during the dinner interval." In 1927 the Choir had won their class in the Musical Festival at their first attempt. Each year there was a Choir Picnic when the Choir spent a day in the country, a closed and revered corporate body.

In the dual secondary school it had been the custom to sing the chorus *Tarantara* from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* as a school song, the boys taking the policemen's parts and the girls taking the maidens' parts. The tradition had been carried to the new school, with seniors singing the policemen and juniors the maidens. This song was learnt by all new girls and enjoyed with relish, arrival in the fourth form being marked by a change of role.

The school hymn, Lift up Your Hearts, was chosen by Miss Dunn. There is no doubt that this hymn, sung to the tune of Woodlands, has stirred more loyal nostalgia in generations of old girls than any other single item connected with school. It is now sung each year

before the Annual Old Girls' Dinner.

What today seems an incongruous feature of these years was the dancing classes which all girls could attend on Saturday mornings and which were eventually included in the time table of the senior school. Greek dancing for the heftier damsels of the Fifth Form was not the most appropriate exercise and many will recall with amusement their galumphing efforts to tread the grapes in a Greek harvest dance with grace and ease. However, the more willing minions of Terpsichore had a moment of glory in 1938 when a ballet, Jill's Magic Island, was performed on Speech Day with a large cast, the corps de ballet diaphanously clad in blue butter muslin to represent waves. Ballroom dancing was also taught in these classes, Madam Thomas standing on the platform to keep the reluctant under surveillance.

The stage in the hall was not initially provided with either curtains or stage lighting. Private enterprise had to supply the means for both. In 1930 Miss Dobson and Miss Humphries produced X=0, A Night of the Trojan War, by John Drinkwater and it was presented by the Literary Society to the School. The magazine records:

The staging of the play was rendered exceedingly difficult by the absence of curtains, but this difficulty was temporarily overcome, for the audience obediently closed their eyes between the scenes, whilst the actors, whether supposed to be dead or alive, walked off. The need for a curtain is urgent and members of the society will be pleased to hear that a committee has been formed for the purpose of acquiring one as soon as possible.

But it was left to the staff to raise most of the funds for the curtains by the proceeds of their *She Stoops to Conquer* produced by Miss Taylor in March 1931 (the lighting came much later after years of effort). For many years a photograph of the cast in costume hung in the corridor and provided much scope for speculation. Earlier than this the grand piano for the Hall had been bought by the school. A bazaar in October 1928 raised £190 and this was added to the existing fund to enable the purchase of the Bechstein for £222 7s. 6d. This bazaar was run by the Houses, and in the previous July it had been reported that:

Already some of the houses have had "Sewing Teas" where much stitching and serious discussion of "prices" took place. Some of the goods have already been seen – a lovely raffia tea cosy for one, and a fine etching for another.

The need to buy these large items precluded much activity for charity, but the first magazine reports efforts for the local blind, and for many years eggs were collected annually for the hospital to preserve. The sale of poppies for Armistice Day raised more money in actual amount than it did in 1971, a sign that the legacy of war was more acutely realised. Certainly the school assembly held each year on November 11th was very moving.

Two awards are worth mentioning. The first was the granting of umpire's whistles to girls who had umpired all games and succeeded in a written paper. This custom began in 1931. In 1936 Councillor Singleton gave a Form cup for Deportment to encourage the girls to walk well and take care of their appearance. The time taken in the allotting of marks for hair, hands, uniform, carriage and so on must have been considerable, but the idea was

good.

From time to time distinguished visitors would address the school. Margaret Bondfield came the year before she officiated at Speech Day. Jim Mollison and Captain Neville Stack came just before their glamorous flights and the Rev. F. Coleman gave an account of the Abyssinia - Italian debate in the League of Nations at which he was present. Councillor Duckworth, Chairman of the Education Committee and subsequently M.P. for Moss Side, talked to the school about his journey to India and each year the Rev. Courtney Weekes spoke on the dangers of intemperance. Each year, too, Mr Archer spoke about the League of Nations, a Junior Branch of which the school had formed in 1932.

From 1926 the school was enabled to save through the National Savings Association which Miss Fletcher worked hard to promote. By December 1931 the branch had saved £2,166 and the record

£622 had been reached in the year.

In winter, the navy blue serge uniform gymslip was varied for the fifth and sixth form by permission to wear a plain navy blue dress. In summer 1932 the magazine comments:

Many pupils have taken advantage of the new style of summer dress and panama hat introduced this term. The dress is of an attractive blue cotton with white collar and cuffs, while the panama hat which can be had in two shapes, bears the new band in the School colours. This uniformity of colour scheme as seen in the classrooms or on the school field is certainly refreshing and attractive.

In summer, girls in the first two years were allowed to wear white socks (to mid-calf "like the little princesses") but from the third form upwards fawn lisle stockings were the only concession. In winter, all wore hated black woollen stockings. These regulations were in strict operation until war time clothing restrictions made

them impossible.

In 1935 it was decided that Wednesday night should be free from homework, a practice which persisted for twenty years. One weekend, in 1935 too, the flagpole suddenly appeared, for no explicit reason and with no attendant flag. In 1938 some of the girls in the Science Sixth had the unfortunate experience of having their notebooks destroyed by a fire which broke out during one December night and gutted their form room (Room 23) in the year of their Higher School Certificate. As the boilers were put out of action, the Spring Term began late.

The school grew gradually. By 1932 there were 408 pupils, by 1936, 462. There were steady examination successes, mainly in university degrees, teachers' diplomas, civil service classes and nursing and secretarial qualifications. But long before courses in "business studies" were established, in 1933 Marjorie Noble was awarded the Diploma of the Manchester Society of Associates in

Commerce.

A cooked midday meal was provided for those few girls who could not get home. In addition a few pupils brought a packed lunch which they ate in the dining room while the school meal was in progress. Until 1939 not more than about twenty girls took the school meal and for many years the number was considerably less. Two members of staff supervised the meal, also carving the joint and serving the pudding. Dinner girls watched with amusement the reaction of newcomers to this procedure; Miss Dunn held a watching brief, usually visiting the dining room and kitchen once during the meal. She insisted on a very high standard, and tinned fruit from Fortnum and Mason's could be had as a substitute for unpopular pudding. The meal, unsubsidised of course, cost one shilling a day. Occasionally Miss Dunn would come to the music room where dinner girls congregated for the dinner hour unless they wished to do homework in the Biology Lab., and offer chocolates as a compensation for having to stay in school for dinner.

Miss Tarver (Mrs Walton) remembers the Friday evenings the staff spent at Miss Dunn's house with Mrs. Dunn, Miss Dunn and Miss Bessie Dunn. The staff took their needlework and listened to

Miss Dunn's account of life in London when her father was editor of the *Morning Post*, and were provided with a delicious supper. A full length portrait of Mr. Dunn hung in Miss Dunn's room at school, as it was too large for her house, and fascinated girls and parents alike when they went to see Miss Dunn.

When Miss Dunn died in 1956, her obituary stated:

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Many generations of Old Girls of this school, and of the old Grammar school, will remember Miss Dunn with affection and respect. She was pre-eminently, and in every sense of the word, a lady. Her courtesy, her profound care for the welfare of the individual girl, her shrewd assessment of character, her most successful teaching of history, were combined with a rigid sense of duty to her work and profession. In her sixteen years here, as Headmistress, she laid the strong foundations on which we have built our School and in all those who knew her, something of her still lives.

These years which read so easily with their comfortable routine and their variety of minor incidents were by no means so comfortable in the world outside the school. It is true that as early as 1932 Margaret Bondfield's Speech Day address had looked very far ahead and could be transported to a 1982 speaker with no hint of anachronism. The magazine records:

Her interesting and eloquent speech held the attention of the huge audience for nearly half-an-hour. Miss Bondfield stressed the point that economy in education was usually very short-sighted. In view of the fact that we shall soon be living in what the Americans call an age of technocracy, or government by machines, she urged the need for recognition of the fact that education was just as important for training pupils to be fit to make the right use of leisure, as in training them to be capable tenders of machines.

Yet in 1931 the editorial had begun:

We write at a time of national anxiety and strain, with numerous problems to be solved for our nation and the world. Not even the most thoughtless pupil can be entirely unaware of the atmosphere of suspense and anxiety in which we are now living. Talk of the failure of the Round Table Conference, reparations, income tax, mortgages and economy cuts, may convey little to our schoolgirls, but the most thoughtful ones at any rate must have wondered in what way they can share the

burdens, family or national, and how they can best prepare themselves for worthy citizenship.

The family burdens meant in all too many cases that girls could not enter the sixth form because they felt obliged to earn what money they could to help at home and the economic pressures of the depression were felt everywhere. The immediate crisis of 1931 passed without war, but the murder of Dollfuss, the German Chancellor, in 1934 led to the withdrawal of all save one of the girls intending to go on the school journey to Germany and Hitler's Munich putsch took place that summer. For the next years the skies gradually darkened even as we lived our lives in the hope the threat would pass.

The Spanish Civil War was for the Nazis a dress rehearsal. For the school the only immediate reminder was in May 1938 when a party of thirty-two Basque refugee children from Keighley, on holiday in Blackpool, were entertained at school. But the even tenor of our ways was rudely shattered in the Autumn of that same

year. As the magazine reports:

the term began in an atmosphere of strain and gloom, for the international crisis overshadowed all our activities. Two days were devoted to organising and practising the evacuation of children to their homes if near enough or to the Park along with the mistresses, and still more time to the fitting of gasmasks, and the practising of putting them on and taking them off correctly. It was a great relief to find that war had been averted. Several mistresses have attended A.R.P. courses, and others are still undergoing the same training . . . Armistice Day seemed more solemn than usual, with the memory of the days of strain and the crisis still so vivid.

Before the next Autumn term began, we were at war with Germany.