

its widest sense, must have. Perhaps some great scholar of the future will have her first introduction to the pleasures of the life of the mind in this studious atmosphere.

Two new hard tennis courts were provided to compensate for the loss of court three and, at long last, hot water was laid on to two of the cloakrooms.

Although the pattern of these years is fluid, certain fixed ceremonies do emerge. Speech Day, now with the interpolation of spoken observations by girls, remained the climax of the Autumn Term. At Christmas, a school performance of either drama or music or a combination of both, was regularly given. Sports Day and the Garden Party came to mark the ending of the session.

Drama and music were not confined to Christmas and many plays and concerts were performed during these years. 1948 saw *Alcestis*, 1949 *Murder in the Cathedral*, and also three one-act plays by the staff. The proceeds from these went to provide, at last, stage lighting and back curtains. *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* started the fund for the Coronation piano. The choir was still the hub of the school's music and in 1948 it first broadcast, in *Children Singing*, as it was to do later on more than one occasion.

In 1953 girls were included for the first time in the Grammar School play, on this occasion *Our Town*, and a long co-operation began. In December, 1952 staff and girls gave one-act plays, *Everyman* was produced in 1955 and *The Brontës* in 1957, a memorable tour de force. The opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors* was given at Christmas 1958 and 1959, with universal acclaim.

The musical life of the school was enriched in 1956 by the foundation of the orchestra. Instrumental classes for girls seeking admission to the orchestra began and Mrs Leslie and Mrs Kershaw started their magnificent string tuition. Later, tuition in wind instruments was included. The orchestra appeared for the first time in public at a carol concert in 1957 under the baton of Miss Burns, to whose musicianship much was due.

The school was always rich in musical talent. Many gifted musicians were willing to share their love of music by contributing generously to the musical activities of the school. We heard first in school the names of many who were to distinguish themselves nationally and internationally. Phyllis Boar became the accompanist for opera at the Royal Academy. In 1960 Barbara Robotham won the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society's competition for contralto singing and became one of the youngest-

ever Fellows of the Royal Manchester College of Music. Felicity Leslie is one of the finest recorder players in the country and her oboe playing is winning her distinction. Joan Atherton was the Gold Medallist of the Royal College of Music and is enjoying a brilliant career. Ann Pickup is the accompanist at local festivals and a gifted concert pianist, and there have been many more.

In 1945 the parents met to elect their representative which, following the changes of 1944, they were entitled to have on the school's governing body. Mr J. K. Starkie was elected and the meeting decided to form a Parent-Teachers' Association. So the P.T.A. was born. The founder members were extremely active and social activities included a musical concert given entirely by talented parents. The Year Meetings were established when, each year, all parents had a chance to discuss their children's progress with members of staff and each year at least one evening was devoted to Careers. Occasional meetings were arranged as demand arose.

An unusual venture in 1964 was the financing of an Arab refugee teacher-trainee from the camps of the Middle East. On a visit to Palestine, Miss Humphries, who herself did so much in extra-curricular activities to foster service to others, met one of the adopted trainees and visited her college. Kathleen Grey, as editor of the school magazine, commented on the adoption scheme that "with so much to do, both in work and play, it is often easy for us to forget that we are fortunate to have an education which allows us so many chances of using our talents."

School was always encouraged to save in the National Savings Scheme as a useful habit and a public spirited one. During the first two years of the war school had saved £8,889 and the total for 1947-8 was £2,395. Miss Fletcher, Miss Drew and Miss Edwards urged the school to become one hundred per cent savers, though this goal was never reached.

An interesting link with wider horizons was the adoption of a ship in 1946, the first of a succession of such adoptions. In 1948 Captain and Mrs Harrison came to school to present a model of the then current ship, H.M.S. Wheatfield.

Visitors from abroad came frequently. Two American teachers exchanged with members of staff, Miss Helen Ansley with Miss Astle in 1951 and Miss Janetta Wright with Miss Drew in 1954. In 1965 Mr Van Zant joined the staff for a year. As early as 1949 Fraülein Fielitz had spent some time in school studying British education and several German girls from time to time spent a term

in school, working with our girls. On occasion, a Collegiate girl spent a term in a French or German school. Two Russian teachers came in 1957 for several weeks and stayed with members of staff. French assistantes were re-introduced after the war and in 1968 and 1969 we shared, with the Grammar School, an additional German Assistant. For several years, from 1950, Miss M. L. Taylor organised in school a two-day Réunion Culturelle Scholaire to which distinguished lecturers came.

In 1950, too, the first girls attended, in London, the New Year Conference of the Council for Education in World Citizenship, which was to become an annual event. In 1959 groups of sixth form girls studying Advanced Biology or Geography first went on field courses. This ecological study became an integral part of these advanced courses and practical field work became a necessity.

Excursions within this country as occasion arose were legion. A memorable week in Stratford in 1947 was one such outing and a vast variety was organised, whether to London for the Art Galleries, or, very frequently, to the Lake District for walking.

Journeys abroad expanded from those which would help with French or German linguistic proficiency to include holidays concerned with places and activities. Soon after the war a party went ski-ing to Switzerland. The Netherlands and Norway as well as France and Germany were visited during the next few years. Scarcely a year passed without a journey abroad and in 1964 Miss Berryman and Miss Doughty took the first party from school to embark on an educational cruise, to Greece and Istanbul.

After the Russian teachers returned in 1957, Mrs Robinson attended a reception at the Russian Embassy. She found that the Russians were "vague about the value of the rouble in English money, but we reckoned the cost of a visit would be in the region of £300, so it is clear that there will be no School Journey yet behind the Iron Curtain." Eleven years later that school journey took place when Miss Berryman, Miss Doughty and Mr Firman took over thirty girls to the U.S.S.R.

During these years, all kinds of new activities constantly offered more and more scope for the talents of the pupils. School took part in "Top of the Form" on the radio and was twice invited to join the Grammar School in asking the questions in Granada's "Youth wants to know" once to Sir Compton Mackenzie and once to Bernard Levin. In 1959 the school won the Blackpool South Rotary Public Speaking Competition as they were to do on three subsequent occasions. This was essentially the fruit of the

successful training provided by Miss Humphries in the ever-active Discussion Group. In 1962 Heather Barnes won the Eric Alton travel scholarship and went to an international work camp in Germany. Trevis Wilson, Margaret Grundy and Ann Morton won national fame in swimming and Ann swam for Great Britain in the 1956 Olympics and Margaret in the Commonwealth Games. Rita Bentley became a Hockey and Tennis international. Elizabeth Martlew was English Schools 150 yards Champion in 1955 and 1956.

Regularly French and German candidates from the sixth form went to Easter language courses in France and Germany. In 1965 Karen Gains went to Israel for a year on a kibbutz before returning for the sixth form course. Averil Parker went as a Community Service Volunteer to work among immigrant children before training for Social Work. Sixth form leavers began to take less orthodox courses at college. Joan Cridland became our first woman civil engineer and her talk to the school inspired at least one other girl to follow her. Kathleen Grey is now working on Geological Surveying in Australia. Averil Mansfield (Dring) is a distinguished surgeon.

House activity widened to include more non-athletic ways of gaining House recognition. The Golden Book was introduced in 1955, to record in tangible form the record of work well done and signatures counted for the Houses, to balance the censorious measures of detention and order marks. The Singing Competition, which was discontinued in 1958 because of the pressure of rehearsal for *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, was not revived, but in its place a House Festival of the Arts was established as a school entertainment on the last day of the summer term. This grew into the House Drama Festival which reached a high standard before the fragmentation of the end of the summer term made rehearsal extremely difficult, though the Festival was held until 1970. House Public Speaking was for several years held at the end of the Easter Term.

The school had come a long way since its opening in 1925. It had become an energetic and outgoing concern, self-aware and aware of the needs of others. It was fitting that Mrs Robinson's parting gift should be the payment of the school's contribution to the newly-acquired Snow Heights, Blackpool Education Committee's centre for school excursions to the Lake District for study and recreation.

Kaleidoscope

The first post-war exchange, with Roubaix, in July 1947. We couldn't take money so Mademoiselle arranged for her mother to send some to me at the French address and I repaid Mademoiselle in English money. (1941-1948.)

Youth Hostel holidays in the Lakes with Miss Taylor and Miss Gibson. (1941-1948.)

Performing a dance to Ponchielli's Dance of the Hours in chiffon scarves, with an audience of Grammar School boys. One dancer squashed a worm with her bare feet. (1941-1948.)

We walked in crocodile style to St. John's for the twenty-first anniversary service. (1942-1950.)

Ski-ing holiday in the Burmese Alps with Miss Astle, favourite Geography teacher. (1942-1950.)

How much I loved my sixth-form course with Miss Nickson and Mrs Young. (1943-1948.)

Being summoned to a prefects' meeting for not wearing socks. (1943-1948.)

Singing in the coach every Saturday on the way home from netball matches. (1943-1948.)

Miss Bradley who said she dreamed in Latin. (1943-1948.)

I remember being so proud when I first wore my school hat and how soon I learned to tuck in the back. (1945-1951.)

I always wanted the examination results to be read from the bottom so that I didn't have to wait too long for my name. (1945-1951.)

Sitting in the Hall writing an English essay (a prize exam). Mine was about 'Gates'. (1945-1951.)

Mr Marsh R.E. - lovely! (1945-1951.)

All lining up on the stairs after putting chalk on a master's chair. (1945-1951.)

I remember not having a Wednesday window seat when the Grammar School boys went by. (1945-1951.)

I remember how awful I felt the day I left. Panic. Uncertainty. Security gone. (1945-1951.)

Sitting behind Maureen Breakell in English exams. and feeling depressed. (1945-1950.)

School dinner - every Monday; corned beef, mashed potatoes, mushy peas! (1945-1952.)

I remember playing for school Assembly and the first time I read the lesson (1954-1951.)

I remember Miss Ansley, the exchange teacher. (1945-1951.)

Long black P.E. shorts made from blackout material in needlework lessons. (1945-1951.)

In Miss Clark's Maths. lessons, we had to have pencils as sharp as compass points - or else. (1945-1951.)

Some of us thought Mrs Robinson announced a trip, "Rice picking in Persia with a day trip to the Tropics" and were duly interested. What she had actually said was; "Rasp. picking in Perthshire with a day trip to the Trossachs." (1947-1953.)

I remember the garden party cricket match when fathers had to play "knock handed", i.e. with whichever hand they weren't used to playing with, to even up the odds for the girls. (1947-1953.)

The descants sung to the psalms on a Wednesday morning must still be sung by lots of old pupils in the various churches, they became so ingrained. (1947-1953.)

We had to thank Ann Morton's butterfly stroke medal for an extra day's holiday. (1947-1953.)

Mrs Robinson insisted on "Auld Lang Syne" the Scottish way. (1950-1955.)

The Deputy Head Girl was suspended from her duties for smoking in the "hovel" (the sixth-form cloakroom). (1950-1957.)

I remember summer lunchtimes spent sunbathing and eating forbidden sandwiches bought from the Tuck Shop with money meant for dinner tickets. (1952-1959.)

I recall my great pride on the first day in September 1954 wearing "the uniform" and entering the majestic hall with its splendid panelling and windows. (1954-1960.)

The first year made lavender bags to sell, nervously, at the Garden Party. (1950-1957.)

I remember the St. Joseph's boys making comments when there was a fire at school as we stood on the playing fields, some in gym knickers. (1960-1965.)

I remember 600 pairs of eyes turning to see "Mr" Smith when he was

introduced on the first day of term. (1959-1966.)

I remember speaking in the Inter-Schools Public Speaking Competition, run by South Shore Rotary Club, on women's emancipation: "Bustles to Blue Jeans". (1959-1966.)

In the gym competition we used to get the most marks for neatness, the least for agility. (1959-1966.)

I remember a dream about getting nine 'O' levels and being so excited that I broke my ankle running down the steps. When I did get nine 'O' levels I walked sedately down to the last three steps which I jumped, badly twisting my ankle! (1959-1966.)

Miss Burns used to go from B to D when testing singing voices. (1959-1965.)

Sticky buns from the Tuck Shop and charity collections on Monday mornings. (1959-1966.)

On the very first day I noticed my hat fringe was on the incorrect side. I felt as if everyone noticed, though I'm sure they didn't. (1959-1964.)

Having to run three times round the hockey pitch to warm up, after which I was too exhausted to play! (1959-1966.)

I remember the English Oral Competition - standing on the stage, feeling very lonely. (1959-1966.)

What a memorable occasion Speech Day was - the school hymn, the staff in their academic robes (we made our own suggestions for the letters after their names) and the adulation as the senior girls received their prizes, not to mention our hopes that we might ourselves one day achieve some success. (1961-1966.)

I remember boys from St. Joseph's being thrown over the dividing wall and having difficulty getting back. (1961-1967.)

The Quality of Mercy

OUR sins don't always find us out. At least mine didn't always, but that was due less to my own cunning than to the remarkable restraint of teachers. How many, I wonder, turned a carefully Nelsonic blind eye to the group of non-P.E. enthusiasts who gathered in the sanctum at the back of the chemistry laboratory, or took refuge in the cloakrooms or the dressing rooms beside the stage, whenever the dreaded "Gym" or "Games" appeared on the timetable? Such unco-operative conduct, pursued consistently through the years, earned me a regular "Satisfactory" from the P.E. mistress on report after report.

Only once, though, can I remember playing truant from an academic lesson, and that was nearly my undoing. It was a hot summer afternoon. Margaret Swift and I agreed that Latin in a stuffy classroom was a prospect not to be endured. We made our escape, albeit duly equipped with Latin books, to the wood. Remember the wood? - by which name we dignified the copse at the end of the playing field.

Under the trees it was cool. We relaxed, blissful, knowing ourselves invisible. To our dismay, some minutes later the whole class emerged with the Latin teacher for an outdoor lesson. Again we relaxed, however, for they took up a position out on the hockey field. Alas, the sun proved too strong, and it was not long before they too were seeking the shelter of the trees. We were cornered, for there was no escape over that high wall. We gave in gracefully, rose to meet our teacher and admitted our guilt. To our surprise, we went unpunished. The Latin books were in our hands; we were top and second in the form at Latin and easily able to translate the passage at which the rest were toiling. It was enough to tip the scales in our favour.

In those days academic excellence covered a multitude of sins. But I never discovered what saved me from the wrath of Mrs Forgan (she was then Mrs Robinson) in my fifth form year.

Ours had always been an enterprising form. There had been the form newspaper in the first year, the clubs in the third year (sketching, rowing, tennis, debating and writing, if I remember

correctly.) In the fifth we initiated, for the entertainment of the rest of the school, a mannequin parade of school uniform. Every item of the required rig was shown, concluding with an amusing parade of school hats as worn in different styles by every year group from first to sixth. It fell to me to write a commentary in rhyming verse and to declaim this aloud as compere.

The show was applauded, and a repeat performance requested for the P.T.A. Somehow the *Gazette* got wind of it, and then one of the Manchester papers. I was summoned to the telephone in the school office, to be interviewed by a reporter. Mrs Robinson, very much in charge, sat below the telephone so that she could hear the entire conversation. I stood humbly by her knee, answering questions.

"And are you wearing school uniform yourself?" asked the persistent journalist.

"Er - not exactly", I wriggled apprehensively.

"Would you tell me what you are wearing please? Describe everything from the shoes up."

Trying not to meet the Headmistress's eye, as it too travelled slowly from the shoes up, I painfully listed my erring garments, not one of which conformed to rule. Surely trouble lay ahead? But no, I was dismissed without a word. Perhaps Mrs Robinson knew something of the struggles of a home where no out-of-school clothes could be afforded. Or perhaps she forgave me for the sake of the words. It was mercy with a Collegiate quality.

For whatever The Collegiate gave me or forgave me, it was above all for words that I was then, and have always remained, grateful. Latin words, French words, Spanish words and all their lovely intricate connections; but above all, the inexhaustible wealth and wonder of English words.

When I was a very new first former, I gazed with awe and worship at sixth former Theresa Magnani. I had read Theresa's article in the school magazine, and was so struck by its conclusion that I can quote it forty-five years later:

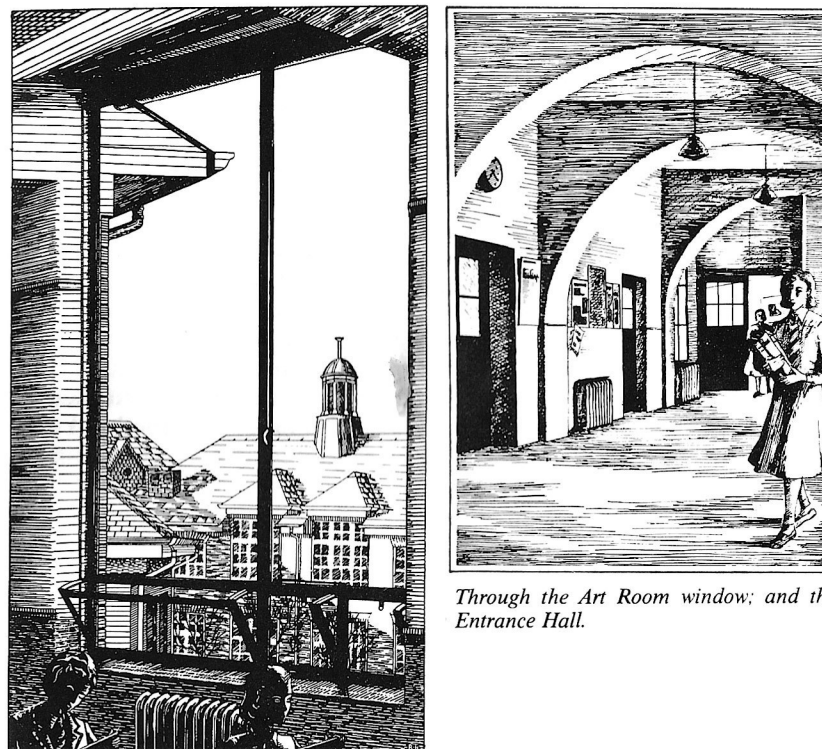
"Those who have worshipped at our shrines and offered incense to the virgin pages of an uncut book, will know what we mean."

To think such thoughts, to express them in such rhythmic cadences, seemed to me then sublime, olympian.

There are no uncut books now, and what latterday sixth former would write such a sentence? But oh! Theresa Magnani, you pointed me down a path I am still exploring.

*Anne Ashworth (née Rowe) (1942-1947)
Librarian, Collegiate Sixth Form Centre.*

Indelible Image



Through the Art Room window; and the Entrance Hall.

THE sweep of the main drive, neatly tarmacadamed, with the immaculate Austin 30 of Miss E. M. Taylor parked upon it. Elegant steps leading up to an impressive front door and entrance hall. Beyond, the assembly hall, complete with wall bars and a stage of a suitable height. Returning to the entrance hall with the school office on one side and the "sick room", which I like to think bore the official title of "sanatorium" on the other. In one corner, a classroom overlooking the front drive and reserved for the splendours of sixth form education in my time, and in the other was the unique portal to the sanctum of the Headmistress, bearing above it two or three

coloured lights which indicated whether one should wait or enter after that first attempt at the firm but discreet knock. From either side of the entrance hall ran angled corridors leading past several classrooms and from which led stone stairs to the upper floor and the basement; one corridor culminating at the Physics Laboratory and the other leading, past the Biology Lab. to the Staff Room; plenty of access to light provided by generous window space along the way.

The basement was understandably less endowed with natural illumination, although beneath the light bulbs great matters of moment were discussed in the sixth formers' "den" and throughout the extensive cloakroom facilities. The den accommodated the ubiquitous shoe-bags, sports gear and assorted garments in navy, "lost-property" that nobody, perhaps understandably, seemed prepared to claim. This subterranean area also provided the site of the daily distributing of bottles of milk and sticky white buns. The rear exits from this level led towards the tennis and netball courts and the playing fields, but first to the prefabricated canteen where lunch was consumed on a rota system to cope with numbers far in excess of dining accommodation. Grassy banks and steps provided the link from basement level, as it were, to the sports areas and the latter spread generously until confronted by the large wall of St. Joseph's, the school garden plot or the bank that graced the side of the fields and was well planted with evergreen shrubs.

The school building itself - pleasing red brick, nicely punctuated by the stone surrounds to the windows. An attractive cupola above and below, alongside the front forecourt, more netball courts, leaving no doubt as to what this handsome building's function could be. It was a school with the luxury of self-containment. It was the hub of a wheel the spokes of which went out to the wider world beyond.

Carol Martin (1953-1960)
Head Girl (1959-1960)
Theatrical personal manager

Miss Roberts Remembers

WHEN I came to the Blackpool Collegiate School for Girls as its third Headmistress in 1965 I did not know how short the school's life was to be. I was heartened from the beginning by the help and support I received from Dr. Wilkinson and by the co-operation of the staff.

When I discovered that the school's life was to end, I was determined that the pupils in its final years should not suffer in any way and that the school should not stagnate or run down. Hence innovations were made and all activities continued and societies flourished. We tried to maintain a friendly atmosphere and to set high standards of honesty, courtesy and morality, encouraging the girls to work hard, play hard, and help those less fortunate than themselves. Community service, helping the housebound and the elderly, developed and efforts for charity raised record sums. I was particularly glad that the girls were eager to devote time to these activities as the world was becoming increasingly materialistic and selfish.

I had found a lively, warm-hearted school, not wholly absorbed in its own affairs but playing a full part in the world around it. I was pleased to encourage the girls to continue their interest in the world outside school, but, in the mid-sixties, many changes were taking place in this world. The generation gap, which, of course, had always been there, was "discovered" and exploited, moral standards were weakening and many pressures were exerted on adolescents, encouraging them to rebel against parental, and indeed all, control. Young people, now at the mercy of the media and commercial interests as never before, were thoroughly confused. To counter these external influences was not easy. We found the time had come to turn a little more inwards, and to emphasise the need for holding fast to sound standards and to try to help the pupils to develop an independent outlook among their peers so that they would have the courage to stand up for what they knew to be right in the face of opposition and ridicule. The general studies programme was designed to help in this and to allow girls to discuss the problems of adjusting to life in the rapidly changing

world. It was not easy to be a "teenager" in the latter half of the sixties.

Despite all these outside pressures and problems, academic standards were maintained and many girls came to realise that there is satisfaction in doing a good job for its own sake and not for material reward.

I was sad when the school closed in 1971, but glad that I had been able to make some contribution to its life, even if only for a short time.

Mary Roberts