

The Anthony Cell



1576 = 1976

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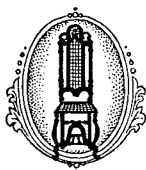
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Anthony Gell
School



1576 - 1976



A
Celebration

The beginning



The Grammar School was founded about 1575 by Anthony Gell, of Hopton Hall, though Agnes Fearne had demised in 1574 certain lands towards the maintenance of a free school when one should be established. The license for a free school was granted by Letters Patent of Queen Elizabeth in 1584. In 1818 Nicholas Carlisle, in his *Endowed Grammar Schools* (Vol. 1., p. 239), wrote that the school was "open to the boys of the Parish indefinitely, free of expense for the Classics, but [they] pay 10s. 6d. per quarter for English, writing, and arithmetic, and from 60 to 70 Scholars upon the Foundation usually attend. The Eton Grammars are used".

Letters Patent 1584...

By the letters patent of 27 Oct 1584 her majesty Queen Elizabeth granted that there should be a grammar school in Wirksworth to be called "The free grammar school of Anthony Gell, Esq." for the education, institution and instruction of boys in grammar and litrature; and that there should be an almshouse in Wirksworth called the 'almshouses of Anthony Gell Esq.' And her majesty established this school of one master to continue for ever; and this almshouse for 6 poor men to continue for ever. And her majesty said that there should be 6 discreet and honest men, from time to time living in the wapentake of Wirksworth to be the governors of the school and almshouses and named Michael Harrison (Clerk), Anthony Lowe, William Blackwall, Rowland Fearne, Edward Hopkinson and Martin Marshall, all living at that time in Wirksworth to be the first governors. And her majesty said that the governors should be a body corporate and that if any one of the governors should die, or be removed out of office as governor, or live out of the warpentake of Wirksworth then the governors or a major part of them and their successors could nominate any other fit person living within the warpentake to be a governor.

And her majesty also gave to the governors, for the maintenance of the school and almshouse, the school-house near Wirksworth churchyard, which had been recently built by Anthony Gell; and a plot of land with all the land belonging to it in Wirksworth, then rented by Anthony Cadman; and a plot of land with certain other land belonging to it, then rented by Thomas Wingfield; and a plot of land or a house, with all the land belonging to it, in Kirk Ireton, then rented by John Haynor; and two meadows in Kniveton, called the Tithe Meadows, rented by Thomas Gell; and a plot of land or house in Carsington, with all the lands belonging to it, then rented by William Hutchinson, totalling sixty-six acres, for the governors and their successors to use according to the Will of Anthony Gell.

And her majesty granted to Thomas Gell power to appoint during his lifetime a master for the school able to speak and teach Latin freely enough to instruct boys coming to the school; and power also to appoint six poor men to the almshouse. And her majesty granted to the governors and their successors, after the death of Thomas Gell, power to appoint the schoolmaster and poor men when there were vacancies. She said that if Thomas Gell or the Governors after his death should neglect to make nominations for the space of 3 months, then the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield should have power to nominate the master and poor men for that term only

And that it should be unlawful for the governors to grant or let this land for longer than 21 years, and that these leases should be kept at the usual or more than the usual rent.

And it was laid down that throughout Thomas Gell's life, and after his death the governors should make needful and upright rules for the controlling and directing of the master and the pupils of the school; and the paupers in the almshouse, which should from then on be kept. And her majesty granted to the governors the right to take besides the land afore mentioned any other plots of land, tithes or inherited property not exceeding the value of £16. 10s. per annum.

By an Indenture of Feoffinent (a deed of conference) of 26 March 1585, Thomas Gell, in carrying out his brother's will, gave to the governors appointed by the letters patent, and their successors, all the property specified in the letters patent; and also gave to them and their successors a yearly sum of £20 from his manor at Wirksworth and all his land in Wirksworth (except those already given) for the upkeep of the six paupers in the almshouse, according to the will of his brother Anthony.

The First Founders

Day Celebration



P. GELL

Now that elementary education was provided by the County Council, the endowments were devoted to providing scholarships and exhibitions. The Hopton grounds reached, Mr. Gell pointed out the old so-called Market Cross, which he thought had probably marked some ecclesiastical boundary, perhaps an area of refuge.

The boys and girls then dispersed to enjoy croquet and bowls and wandering about the grounds, which were looking their very best, having suffered singularly little from the continued dry weather. Since last year many improvements have been made, such as the planting of an avenue of young firs and the building of a high wall already overgrown with ivy and roses, and sheltering beds of white lilies and yellow snapdragons. Tea followed in a tent in front of the house at 4.30, where much assistance was given by Mr. Peddar and Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins. After tea a most orderly assembly gathered on the lawn to hear another interesting resume of some of Mr. Gell's wide reading and research. In the course of his address he asked why had Anthony Gell founded the school? He was the son of Ralph Gell, born under Henry VII, and like all Derbyshire men, a supporter of the Tudors. Anthony Lowe, who also lay in the chancel of Wirksworth Church, was another good type of the Derbyshire squire. He served Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Queen Mary, and in a battle in the reign of Henry VII, was so badly wounded in the head that on account of the scar he was permitted to keep on his hat in the presence of the King. He was a Roman Catholic. About this time came the dissolution of the Monasteries, and for a long time the religious pendulum swung backwards and forwards. Ralph and Anthony Gell received some share of the endowments, Anthony that of the ancient chantry of St. Helens. This chantry was probably of its origin dedicated to St. Helena, the British mother of Constantine, for even in the time of the Romans Wirksworth was a mining settlement. When people had received a share of the ecclesiastical endowments they often felt it a duty to use them to the best advantage by devoting them to the public good. This feeling led Anthony Gell to found the Grammar School. Associated with the almshouses was his aunt, Agnes Fern, a Beresford of Bentley, and a member of the same family to which the present Lord Charles Beresford belonged. Anthony Gell having been a bachelor all his life would doubtless be horrified to see girls taking their place in the school, though his aunt, Agnes Fern, might be delighted.

. . . Days Gone By . . .

The Pupils

Previous to the year 1800, this School had been almost a "Sinecure for many years". From 1815—1845 it was practically an elementary school, the headmaster having a good school for sons of county families in a large private house. These boys did not attend the Grammar School. Up to 1882 it remained little better than an elementary school, parents who wished their sons prepared for professional life sending them away from Wirksworth. The endowment of the school is £200 per annum.

In February, 1904, there were forty-three boys in the school, thirteen being boarders, and ten of these coming from outside the Administrative County of Derby. More than half the boys (twenty six) had received their previous education in public elementary schools. The minimum age at entrance is eight years, and the average age eleven. None of the boys were over sixteen; nearly seven-eighths of them were between twelve and sixteen. Not quite an eighth had been more than seven terms in the school. Most of the day boys, on leaving school, became clerks on the Midland Railway. Speaking of the school in general, one boy every two or three years goes to a University or other place of higher education, and, though none go direct to Oxford or Cambridge, occasionally one finds his way there later on; one every two or three years enters upon an articled clerkship; one about every two years goes into a bank or insurance office; the same is true of retail trade, engineering apprenticeships, manufacturers, and agriculture. About two boys in every year become elementary school teachers.

The School

The school building dates from 1826. It originally consisted of two large rooms, one on the ground floor and one above. Each of these has recently been divided into two. Two of these smaller rooms are used exclusively as class rooms. The third is a combined chemical and physical laboratory. The fourth is a wood work room. Both of the latter are also used as class rooms. The school is divided into six classes. There is no gymnasium and no music room. Adjoining the school is a small playground which in itself would be quite insufficient. About three hundred yards away, however, there is a good playing field, with a beautiful view from it, and a rough cricket pitch. At one end of the field is an open brook, which is said to be sometimes in a very unsatisfactory condition.

The Teaching

The actual teaching in the school, considering the drawbacks of inadequate accommodation, seemed praiseworthy. The teacher of zoology throws real interest into his work, and the boys evidently respond. In the teaching of botany, care is taken to correlate the work with drawing, and the notebooks of the pupils are required to be carefully kept. Interesting lessons were heard in arithmetic and geography, and the work seemed to be going on satisfactorily. The headmaster chiefly takes the lower classes, and the assistants become, to a considerable extent, heads of departments. As would be expected from the school having been in Division A of the Board of Education's former classification, science and mathematics played the chief part in the curriculum. There is no doubt that this type of curriculum is appropriate to the needs of some boys, but I would raise the question whether the interests of the majority would not be better served by the allotting of a much larger proportion of time to sound training in English, including English literature and history. It is only to be expected that but little time should be given to Latin, but it seems desirable that much more should be given to French.

It is intended to build a new Grammar School here, and to convert it into a co-educational school for boys and girls.

New Grammar School

For considerably over three centuries Wirksworth, the chief town of the "Middle Peak", has possessed a Grammar School, but the building is ill-fitted for modern needs, and Professor Sadler, who was called in to advise the county authority, was against its continuance in its present position. An effort has accordingly had to be made to meet the demands of the county, and the County Council have sanctioned the erection of a new building on a new site, at an estimated cost of £4,500. Towards this sum the County Council have promised one-third, and it will be possible to raise one-third by mortgage on the school-land, leaving the remaining third, about £1,500, to be raised by the public.

There has been a generous response, and up to this week the clerk to the trustees, Mr. Arthur J. Marsden, and Dr. A. E. Broster, J.P., the treasurer to the fund, have received £1,037 5s. The chief subscribers are Mr. H. Walthall Walthall, J.P., and the trustees of the late Mr. Charles Seeds, £330 each; Mr. J. Wheatcroft, J.P., £100; Miss E. E. Arkwright, £100; Mr. G. H. Wheatcroft, J.P., C.C., £50; the Duke of Devonshire, Mrs. Geo. Marsden and family, and Mr. Charles Wright, £25 each; Dr. Broster, £15 15s.; the Right Hon. Victor Cavendish, M.P., Mt. J. A. Wheatcroft, J.P., and Mr. K. D. Wheatcroft £10 10s. each.

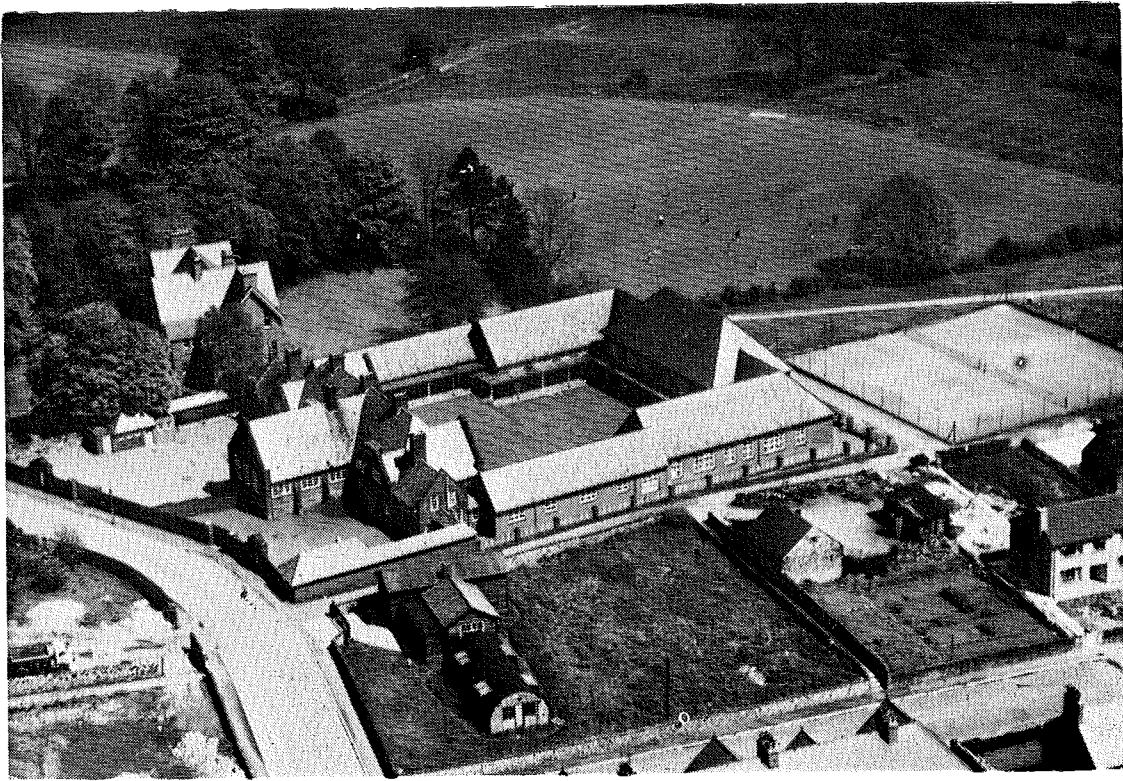
The new Grammar School, the plans for which have been designed by Mr. George H. Widdows, A.R.I.B.A., the architect to the County Council, will be 120 feet long, the main part being 62 feet back to front, faced with Wirksworth bricks and Black Rocks gritstone. It will accommodate 90 students in four class rooms, with a laboratory for chemistry, etc. There will be an extensive playground, and land to be devoted to cultivation by the students. The site of the school is on the Hannedges, and the present Grammar School is to be utilised for manual and other work in connection with the new buildings.



The foundation stones were laid on Wednesday at noon by the Right Hon. Victor Cavendish, M.P., who was accompanied by Lady Evelyn Cavendish, and supported by a distinguished company of ladies and gentlemen.

Following the stone-laying a banquet was held in the Town Hall, at which Mr. Walthall Walthall, J.P., presided.

The chief toast, "Success to the Wirksworth Grammar School", was proposed by Mr. Victor Cavendish. That day was not the beginning of the school, he remarked, but the adaptation of it to the requirements of the work of the present day. It had done a noble work in the past, and there had been a determination that the old Grammar School should be continued and made to meet present-day requirements. He felt confident that the institution would be a material benefit materially to the district and the surrounding area. This was not an occasion when it was necessary for him to say anything of the value of grammar schools, but he was glad to say that to whatever sect, creed, or political party they belonged, all could unite in that most useful and practical work.



♦ ♦ AND TODAY

1976 and all that . . .

by Roy Pearce

How can I capture the flavour of this school at a particular moment in cold February 1976? Each one of us will have very personal reactions to life at A.G.S. As Headmaster I begin by acknowledging that the school is the sum of individual personalities. Whatever the Head may contrive in timetable, administration, management techniques, exhortation, perspiration or desperation, our school will only be what we as pupils, parents and teachers make it. When I ponder A.G.S. in 1976 I see opportunity. The range of facilities, the expertise of the teachers, the enthusiasm and commitment of our students extend each year.

As I write after school, thirty pupils from year four are in residence at Lea Green, the Band is rehearsing for a concert, the basketball squad is playing Derby School in the gym, and a housemaster is interviewing a newcomer to the school with her parents. At lunch time a visitor from Action in Distress – a charity to raise money for children of the third world – talked to the junior assembly, three hundred first and second years. One day's events.

At other times the sixth form have visited plays and concerts, the House of Commons, and last week the local magistrates' court. Recently they talked with the deputy governor of Sudbury Prison. They travel the country on interview – Manchester for Metallurgy, Kent for Law. Our fifth form are involved in Preparation for Parenthood, organising a mother and baby club each Friday afternoon. At Christmas they arranged a party providing their own Santa, Stephen Wain in disguise. On Friday morning our minibus travels to Derby College, where fifth year students study Hairdressing and Engineering. The fourth year dared an adventure week at Buxton in hazardous weather. They climbed, canoed, walked, caved and remained cheerfully resilient. At half term a third year party goes to Germany, while seniors are skiing in Austria. Our French exchange takes twenty pupils to Paris at Easter. Our second year cricketers wrote to the Minister of Sport and are practising all winter under the guidance of Ian Buxton at Lea Green. The first year travelled to Chester Zoo to study animal behaviour.

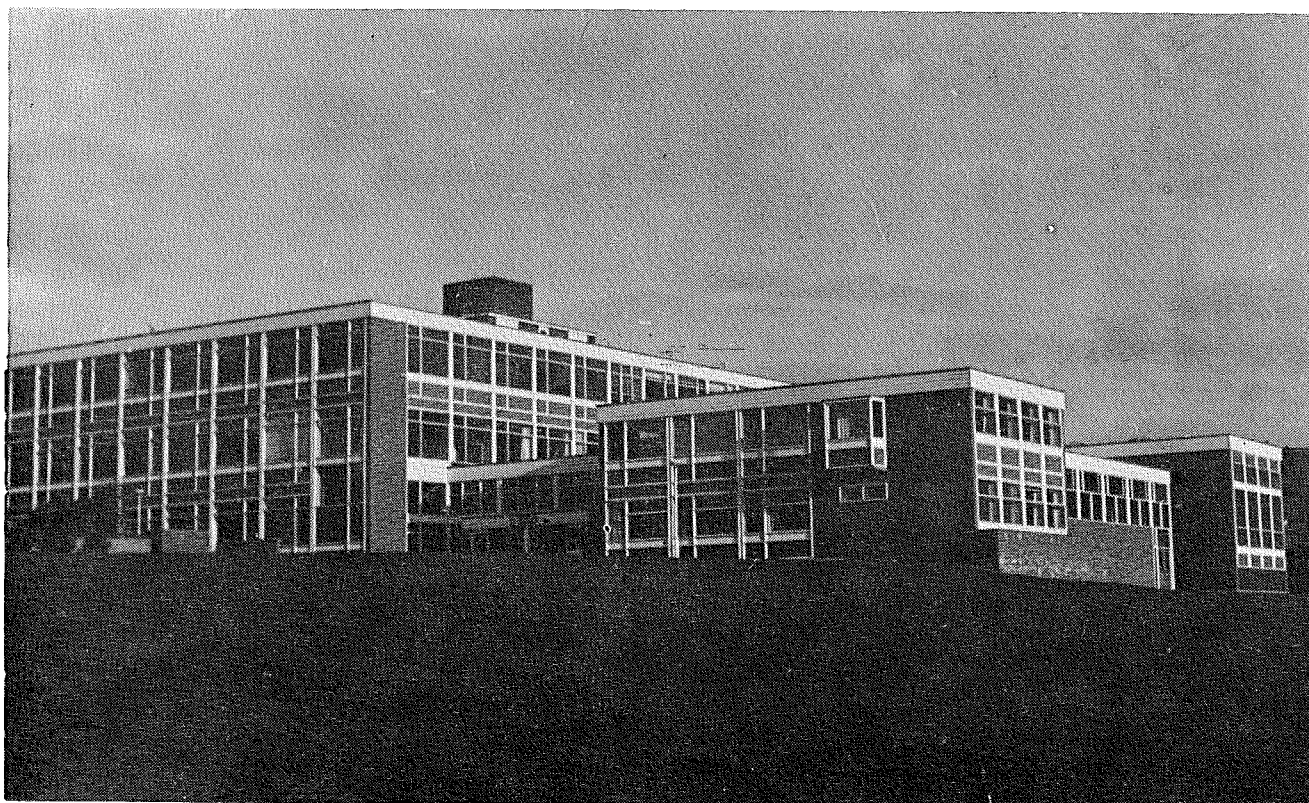
In sport Victor Rhodes and Mark Smith are British Wrestling Champions, two of our runners will represent Derbyshire in the Inter-County Cross Country races and Chriss Allwood is a county soccer representative. Penny Woodruffe was a National Gymnastics finalist.

The houses are full of activity, a Council in Wright, girls' football in Arkwright, Fearne dominating the sportsfield. Gell House Council has arranged discos, films for old people and a handicapped children's party. They are supporting an Indian village boy at school with the money they raise.

Music thrives. Hear them. The choir sings, the band blows, the orchestra floods, the jazz club swings, the brass quartet booms, the wind quintet plays so elegantly. Derek Taylor plucks his guitar to near professional standard. Mr. Blood, very calm, smiles.

In class a rash of new subjects, or old subjects made new; Nuffield Science, Bruner's MACOS, Social Education, Schools Maths Project, Parenthood, Textiles, Technical Studies. In Maths we use calculators, in English video-tapes, in French a space age language lab. Tape recorders abound. What is a resources centre? We foster bantams, rabbits, locusts and mice. Yes, Education in 1976 is full of theory, jargon and technical aids. And I omit so much.

But it is people who matter. Our parents are long-suffering, uncomprehending at times, steadfastly supporting. Our staff work very hard and care very much. Visitors comment on this, many coming in the last year not only from this country but from America, New Zealand, Africa and Japan. Our fame spreads, but our essential task remains to care for the children of Wirksworth. These young people have a wealth of opportunity never offered before in our 400 year history. It is to their credit that so many of them seize the chance eagerly. I am optimistic about the younger generation – their honesty, their vigour, their commitment to life. Floreat Anthony Gell.



THE BEST TIMES

When we go outside we have some fantastic fun. We have lots of crazes, like ticky ball where the one that is 'on' throws the ball at the others. If it touches them they are 'on'. We play this all round the school. We are not supposed to run inside, but everyone seems to. With these crazes we play one for one week and then move on to another.

The all-important school piano stood at the "Girls' end", and was played by the schoolmistress who had accompanied my parents from Peterborough, Miss Kirkby. She was so beautiful, I thought, with raven wings of hair swept back from her forehead, a most elegant figure in high-necked striped blouses and long dark blue skirts brushing the ground. She taught French and needlework, and lived in a cosy small bedroom at the head of the back stairs, at the juncture of the landings for the private quarters of the house and the boards and masters' room. She left in 1914 and was succeeded by Miss MacPherson.

Two masters had joined the staff. One, a Welshman, Mr. Warren, taught English and Classics. The other, a complete antithesis to Mr. Warren with his correctness, his gold-rimmed pince-nez, was Mr. Taylor. He was a jolly, outsize young man, a giant, athletic and full of laughter, and he had also accompanied my parents to their new school, fresh from the sixth form at the Deacons School. Mr. Taylor taught the lower forms in mathematics and science. He also played games with the pupils on the new playing field or on the extensive asphalted playground where in muddy weather tennis was played in summer and basket-ball in winter.

At either end of the building were smaller asphalted playgrounds. The girls would play skipping games, or whip tops or run hoops in their territory. The boys would kick an old tennis ball about, or play yard-cricket, batting against a wicket painted on the wall. And there were days in midwinter when the boarders would pour water down the sloping asphalt to make the best slides ever skimmed.

By the time I had been in the school for three or four years I had discovered the excitements of a schoolboy's life and used to join in most heartily all unbeknown to my parents. And turned into a real tomboy, so I was told.

The best times were in the gap in the dark winter evenings after tea in the Schoolroom and before 'Prep' in the same room swept and cleared, lit by the inevitable popping gas mantels, and supervised by one of the three resident staff.

It must have been the bracing Derbyshire hill-air that filled us all with so much energy, bringing together from far distant farmsteads and small villages those boys and girls, from six years old to eighteen.

There was Jo Talbot who, under my father's expert coaching, won an open Maths Scholarship at Worcester College, Oxford. He, and his sister, Lily, a very pretty girl, lived in Wirksworth, across the road.

There was Winnie, daughter of Charlie White, Liberal M.P., who lived in Cromford. And there were Wirksworth's stately daughters, awesome goddesses to ten-year-old me, Veronica Stafford, Doris Pashley, Hilda Buxton, and Gladys Fritchley. The young Eleanor Fritchley, and Elsie Baggaley, were among those of my own age. They allowed me to share skipping games with them in the morning Break, if I could dodge my parents and Nanny.

PHYLLIS S. M. PATTERSON,
daughter of former headmaster L. Hansen Bay

SEPTEMBER 1907 . . .

Moments during a morning

I am a fifth year, 'Arkwright' girl.

It is thirteen minutes to nine on this cold, yet sunny, Wednesday morning. The first electric bell of the day sounded precisely two minutes ago; signalling pupils to begin wandering to their respective tutor groups. All is quiet. In the room, besides me, are two small first year boys. One is examining, somewhat anxiously, the contents of his huge 'Derby County' bag; the other gazes dreamily through the misty window. Three older girls suddenly enter, chattering noisily.

The school is split into four houses, which are then – in turn – divided into eight tutor groups, containing approximately twenty five pupils – five from each year. This means all ages talk, and are friendly to each other. Perhaps this is why so little bullying is found in our school.

The second bell sounds, at ten to nine. People are coming through the door faster and more frequently now. They all wear their outdoor coats, and carry bags. Talking fills the air. The tutor herself comes in, complete with register; which she calls amidst general friendly talk; and the Bulletin, which is then read.

The 'Bulletin' is a duplicated news sheet containing information for the school that particular day, for example if a pupil has lost, found or wishes to sell anything, this is gladly printed, along with such other notices as; dates for school concerts or the names of pupils a certain teacher wishes to see.

Everyone remains talking, either sitting, standing or leaning, till nine o'clock, when the bell rings again for the first lesson. We all pile through the door.

Break is at twenty past eleven, when the majority of pupils, myself included, fill the school hall. There is a long but patient queue both for the 'hot 'n' cold' drink vending machine and the crisp and biscuit selling 'tuck-shop'. Packets of crisps and hot tea are offered round generously, among friends, who stand talking in relaxed groups. The sound of voices and laughter is very loud, if you actually listen. Teachers are wandering towards the staff-room opposite, for their well-earned morning coffee. Behind the thick curtains, pulled across the stage, I can vaguely detect sounds of progressive 'pop' music. A kindly member of staff has obviously lent the record-player to some pupils.

The school hall is altogether a cheerful place. Paintings and posters designed by Anthony Gell pupils adorn the walls. The floor is brightly polished, and curtains are strikingly patterned with reds and greens.

The bell sounds, after fifteen minutes. Pupils empty their plastic cups and crisp packets, which except for a careless few land in the numerous litter-bins placed round the school. It's time for the last lesson of the morning now.

Caitlin Measham



SCHOOL

The new and modern bridge leading to Fearne contrasts sharply with the old steps and brick walls in Gell. The clatter of feet on the hollow steps echo through the school as they run to their next lesson. Some enter the Geography room while some of the first years leap onto the white pebbles, skid a little then climb the steps onto the higher level of Gell.

David Derbyshire

Gell House



Carol Lake



Life in the Sixth Form

When I was in the first year of this school I can recall looking up at the 6th formers with great admiration. I considered them grown-up because they were so 'old' and they acted in such a sophisticated manner. I used to think that I could never be as big and grown-up as they were. Now I am.

Although I realise I have changed a lot since then, it has been so gradual that I haven't noticed. I am sure that they were bigger than we are now.

Sixth form life is totally different to any other year in the school. It is almost detached from the school. Unless you are taught by the teachers or they have any contact with the 6th form you hardly ever meet members of staff. There are a number of teachers whose names I don't even know and I am sure they don't know I even exist. Pupil-teacher relationships change considerably with sixth formers. This is probably because the classes are a lot smaller and some of the teachers are only a few years our senior. It wouldn't seem right to us if we had to call them all 'Sir' or 'Miss' and I am sure they would feel uncomfortable too.

Life is a lot slower but more intensified. We have more free time than anyone else but we can still manage to arrive ten minutes late for a lesson.

On the whole sixth form life is very enjoyable. You can almost choose when you want to work. Everyone is in the same boat and everyone knows there is a lot of work to be done so whether you choose to do it now or later is entirely up to you. It may appear that all we do is sit about drinking coffee and playing records, but I feel sure everybody does their work before or after because they realise it is only them that will be effected if they don't work.

Jackie Cachart.

THE HALL

The hall is a large room, in two separate sections. One is the well, the lowest area of the floor and this is surrounded on two sides by the other raised area. The remaining two sides are the sliding doors stretching from floor to ceiling, which separate the hall from the gym, and the front edge of the stage with its green, velvet-like, curtains hanging in thick folds.

Chairs are stacked waiting for the caretakers to set them out for assemblies or other functions that take place there. These range from assemblies and films to exams. After school the hall is still used as it is one of the most convenient places for large gatherings, such as discos, sales, fete stalls, parents evenings, open evenings and gala nights.

During the daytime of the school week the hall houses a steady routine.

People slowly drift into the school from as early as half past eight and sometimes before. A few people choose the hall to stand in and talk. Others just go to take their dinner money to the desk by the office doors or to cross their name off the absentee list. Teachers walk to and from the staff room but when the nine o'clock bell goes, everyone makes his or her way to lessons and the hall is deserted apart from the odd person wandering through or the occasional P.E. class when the weather is too bad to go outside, or the gym is also in use. It is a well used passageway when it comes to changing rooms too. At twenty past eleven a surge of pupils return for the morning break. Buying crisps from the tuck shop, or drinks from the machine. It's funny when you listen to the crowd of people laughing and chattering in small groups. The hall is deserted again at the end of break but a few people wait, sitting on scattered chairs, or leaning against the pillars and railings, while they wait for their turn in the dinner queue. Bags, brief cases and satchels are heaped round the edge of the balcony after lessons.

Gillian Hartland

The School Hall during a P.E. lesson.





MUSIC AT GELL

On April 1st and 2nd of this year two full scale public concerts were given in the School Hall by the young people of the Music Department. It was a rewarding experience to see so many musicians working together in their own time in preparation for the Concerts, both of which were highly successful and well attended by parents and friends.

Parents have generously provided money to buy expensive instruments so that their children may participate in the opportunities available through the musical activities of the School. Parents' support over the years has been vast and tremendously encouraging, and through their wisdom they have helped to provide an investment for their children in life, which will grow in value as the years go by.

Keith Blood.

CRISIS,

The school was small, not much over a hundred boys and girls mainly from Wirksworth and nearby villages, with a few boarders in the Headmaster's house adjacent; ten or a dozen dedicated staff (including Cecil Round, the humane but awe-inspiring Head himself), no library, no school hall (Morning Assembly in the main corridor, Speech Days and School Plays in the Town Hall), no dining room (sandwiches and flasks in a classroom), no gymnasium ("drill" in the yard), one laboratory (for physics, chemistry and biology), woodwork, metalwork and domestic science in the Old Grammar School by the Churchyard – but spacious sports fields and we prided ourselves on holding our own usually with larger schools in the county – all looked after by Fred and Ernie (Steeple) who served as Stokers, Caretakers, Cleaners, Porters, Groundsmen and all! An annual visit to Hopton Hall on Founder's Day, decked in our blazers and white flannels – with the soaking inevitability of at least one mishap in the lake!

No mixing of boys and girls in school (we sat at our own respective sides of the classroom) or when journeying to and from school (but the Meadows and Friday night at the cinema proved as popular as "winding up the Church clock") until the blackout as War began (when the boys had to help and protect the girls!), air-raid shelter practice with gas masks, half-time schooling with the evacuation of Burnage Boys' School from Manchester to Wirksworth (more scope for the girls) troops billeted in the town (even a few Americans); the ravages of War brought home to us when we attended the funerals of our own friends killed before the younger of us had left school, and others a year or two later, while those of us who returned unscathed from military service were reduced in numbers and now scattered far and wide.

L.H.F.

* * * * *

When I joined Anthony Gell's as a part-timer in 1939, we were plunged into the difficulties of evacuees, air-raid scares and later actual paper shortage. I was sent some from the U.S.A. I remember the first raid warning come one morning when all was quiet and all intent on work, Mr. Young burst open the door and shouted "Don't panic" and rushed on to the next room with his message. I always took the opportunity to clean out cupboards while the children filed off to the Wine Vaults in the town.

Who can forget Speech Day, the shining hair, polished shoes, all of us at our best, when a guest mounting the platform kicked over a wine-jar of flowers, a quart of water trickled back until it reached Mrs. Gell's chair, What fun the sweepstake was on the length of the Headmaster's speech, although I never won I got value for money.

D. Robinson

REBELLION . .

We hear a great deal of un-official strikes in these days. There was one at the Grammar School about the year 1863 which I thought might be of interest to your pupils in their school journal. In those days there was the upper and the lower school ; my father and uncle were in the lower school being small boys of 6 and 9 years of age. There were two masters the Rev. Harris for the upper school and Mr. W. Beeson for the lower. One very cold winter's day Beeson decided to bring a bottle of whisky with him in the afternoon and just have a wee nip while the boys were out at play. However, it must have been a large nip, for the whisky and a warm fire sent him off into a sound sleep. The Rev. Harris thought it strange that the boys in the lower school were having an extra long play time so he went to investigate and went down to the lower school and peeping through the window found Beeson on the floor snoring heavily. The door was locked so he hammered on the window. This brought Beeson quickly out of his sleep ; he also got his marching orders for he was told his job was finished. But this was not the end of the trouble for nearly all the boys parents wanted the governors to give him another chance but Harris objected and said he would resign if Beeson came back. Beeson and his wife started a school—Beesons Academy in Coldwell Street and not only did practically all the boys in the lower school leave the Grammar School but most of the upper school, and Beeson Academy also had girls. He also started night classes for art, writing and mechanical drawing which were a great success.

G. BARTON.

AND CONFORMITY

At school during the Great War years (1914–1920) about 80 pupils, mixed boys and girls, made up of fee paying and scholarship staff. In 1914 the headmaster was the Reverend L. Hansen Bay. The other staff were Mrs. Bay, Miss Macpherson, Mr. Warren and Mr. Hansley, though they varied during the war years. As there were many changes owing to the men teachers joining up.

The exams taken were Oxford, Preliminary and Senior. If the pass standard was high enough then you Matriculated. All the subjects were taken at the one exam. (Maths, English and French were failing subjects) which means that if these were not passed the whole exam was failed. The fee was approximately £2.

A very high moral code was expected. Smoking and the more serious breaking of rules were punishable by caning (sometimes in front of the school) by the headmaster. Otherwise by the headmaster in his own room. The boys raised their caps when meeting other school members. The other offences were punished by loss of conduct marks or missing their Games period (held on Wednesday afternoon).

The pupils who stayed at school for dinner (which were sandwiches brought from home and eaten in the cloakroom) were only allowed out in the town if permission had been sought and granted.

Mrs. E. Gallimore, 1914–1920.



HANSEN BAY & VI FORM (early 20's)

I am sure nearly all my old school friends will agree with me when I say that it was not just a school, we were more like a large family, welded together by the personality of our Head Master, The Rev. Hansen Bay, and his truly artistic wife.

I will not start to recall the happy memories I have – it would take too long – but I am quite sure there are no schools like it nowadays. We all got personal attention and affection from the 'head' and his staff. The girls loved our handsome, sports loving headmaster and his wife, and the boys respected him. We were well-mannered (Mr. Bay saw to that) and disciplined in such a way that it was no hardship. Learning was a pleasure, and as we did not specialise in subjects as they do today, we had a general knowledge of most things. Maybe we were not quite so 'free thinking' as they are these days, but that, in most cases, is all for the good.

I wonder if children nowadays are happier and cleverer than we were? My answer to that is 'No'. Do they finally emerge as better citizens? I repeat 'No'. Our little 'W.G.S.' was a special school – dear to the hearts of all of us. All the happy, happy memories – and there are many – will remain with me always – and at least, we can SPELL!

Eleanor Hatchett

DAILY LIFE

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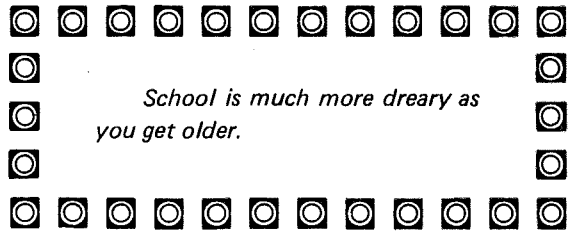
I remember :—

- a) Being let out of school to see the first aeroplane to fly over Wirksworth and also the first airship (R33)?
- b) Allowed to follow the High Peak Hunt although we got into trouble for staying out all morning.
- c) The fireworks each Armistice Day anniversary including hot air balloons.
- d) The School Speech Days when we were addressed by well-known people. About 1925 Dr. Fisher, Headmaster of Repton, subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury.
- e) Going to the old School by the church for woodwork lessons.
- f) The boys building one of the first wireless receiving sets in the area.
- g) Playing Ashbourne Grammar and Derby Grammar Schools at Cricket on the Wirksworth Cricket Ground.
- h) The Old Boys Cricket Match. Playing in this against W. T. Taylor's father. Mr. Taylor was secretary of Derbyshire C.C.C. for fifty years and is still mentally active at ninety one, living at Breadsall. On my retirement I became honorary scorer of Derbyshire C.C.C. and my predecessor who will be ninety two in June was an old boy of the school.
- i) The school plays held annually in the Town Hall for three days? to capacity audiences. (Shakespeare, Goldsmith etc.)
- j) The school Cadet Corp and firing practice in the Headmasters House yard next to the school playground when on one famous occasion I nearly shot the Headmaster.
- k) The school sound evenings when entertainment was provided by the pupils.
- l) The competition between the Houses, Arkwright, Wright and Gell.
- m) The annual match between the boys and girls at Hockey and my other sporting activities. I still have my school badge and prize cards for throwing the cricket ball at the annual Sports Day.

C. Beardsmore



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*School is much more dreary as
 you get older.*

THE SCHOOL I WOULD LIKE

Schools should never be overcrowded and an ideal teaching group size would be about eight. Pupils do not get enough attention and help with their work in a class of thirty or more. Teachers should have patience, a liking for children, great knowledge of the subject they teach, discipline, kindness, nothing in them that enjoys punishing, a good way of explaining the subject, a voice neither too loud or too soft and a sense of humour. Sadistic brutes or whining softies or anyone who nears these two categories should never be allowed to teach. Slimy teachers who have a great opinion of themselves are the worst. They hardly ever tell a fact or give the pupil a piece of writing based on a subject to do without first telling them exactly what great idea they themselves have formulated about it. Giving the pupils no chance of working out an opinion of it themselves.

Basic skills *must* be taught, that is reading, writing, understanding, how to communicate with people, thinking and how to learn. Everybody must know these and people should be taught as individuals, *not* as part of the class.

Discipline is essential, I don't mean that the teachers should stand over the pupils with a cane. Classes should not be allowed to get rowdy or noisy. Quiet conversation should be allowed but anyway a good teacher can control a class so that both the pupils and teachers are satisfied.

Bethan Radford



*I think this is a good school
 because you feel free.*



A Metalwork Class

The teachers in the school are quite friendly but sometimes they can get a bit nasty. The system of the school works well because everyone co-operates with each other.

In Metalwork we can make rings, jewellery boxes, tool boxes, candlesticks, gates, bobsleighs and go-carts.

Moment during a History lesson



Drama in the Old School...

During the first World War when pupils numbered about one hundred, there was no black-out and any out of school activities were limited to daylight hours. After the war, the Headmaster's wife, Mrs. Hansen Bay used to write and produce plays for us. Judged by present day standards no doubt a make-shift stage at one end of the double classroom in the old building with gas footlights would seem quite primitive, but we had a great deal of enjoyment from these productions.

Odd things stick on one's memory such as when a Mr. Peason, from Cromford who, I think, was there as press photographer, was, for some strange reason, called upon to play for me to sing the 'Pipes of Pan'. This was during the performance of one of Mrs. Bay's plays. 'Pans Christmas' – a lovely little play with dryads and fauns and angels!

Mrs. K. L. Young, wife of former Deputy Head of the Grammar School (also an old pupil of the School).

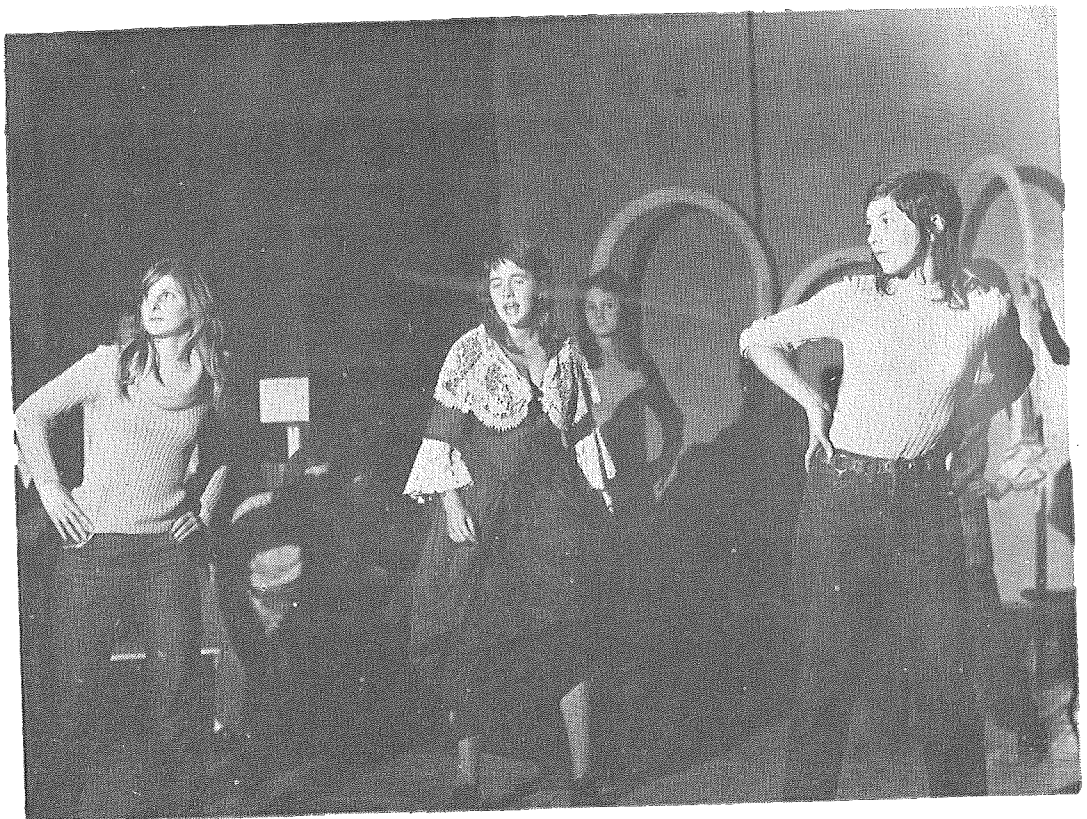


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GELL SCHOOL SHOW JUSTIFIES

THE
CALL
FOR
'MORE'

What can you say when a school moves out of the well-trodden traditional paths of end-of-term productions to stage a show like "Oliver" with such tremendous success as the Anthony Gell School, Wirksworth, achieved last week-end?

The customary superlatives seem strangely inadequate to pay tribute, firstly to the courage and confidence of staff and pupils in tackling a modern musical, with all the pitfalls of possible comparison with the professionals; and secondly, to the zest and expertise with which they put over an immensely enjoyable and memorable production.

The production merited top marks on all counts. A 25-piece orchestra under Mr. Keith Blood, Head of the school's music department, composed mainly of experienced instrumentalists but including a number of pupils, set the right pace and tempo, and the response from the performers was more than adequate.

With an open-plan stage set in the gymnasium adjoining the main assembly hall, imaginative scenery—all built in the school—was used fluently and effectively to portray settings ranging from the workhouse through Fagin's notorious den to London Bridge.

Such was the superb teamwork in a cast of over 60 that it seems almost invidious to single out individual performances. But the rich promise of 16 year-old Jill Atkins as the hapless "Nancy" cannot be ignored. In an out-standing contribution, Jill sang sweetly, had a fetching Cockney accent, and in every way captured the character most convincingly.

One of the most delightful features was the obvious enthusiasm of the children who appeared variously as Fagin's and workhouse boys, workhouse assistants, Bow Street runners, acrobats, and street vendors—clearly they enjoyed their involvement.

Miss Wendy Hepplewhite, a painstaking producer; Mr. Blood, as musical director; Angela Bennett, the choreographer, and all concerned in the show well deserved their reward of capacity houses for each of the four performances.

S.V.F.

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ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

"What are you going to do with yourself when you leave here?" asked Mr. Jordan, the senior English master. "Journalism," I replied. "Does that mean you'll learn to type?" "Yes, sir." "Good, that will mean your awful handwriting won't be a handicap!"

I was the boy that the headmaster, Mr. Draycott, called into his office on the eve of a summer holiday and handed an exercise book. "Take it home with you," he commanded, "and during the holiday practise your writing. When you return I want to see an improvement."

I can't recall whether he got his way in any degree at the time. I do know that today, many years later, my handwriting is the opposite of copperplate. To spare addressees, I even type personal correspondence. Oddly enough, soon after starting my first job I put in some handwritten copy to the news desk. The news editor found all sorts of faults with its subject matter, but concluded: "Your handwriting is quite neat." Mr. Jordan would have been devastated. It just goes to show that all things are comparative.

I shall always be grateful to Mr. Jordan for a grounding in English Grammar which frequently seems superior to that of later colleagues and acquaintances whose full-time education continued for longer than mine (I left Gell's after taking O-levels).

Mr. Jordan had a wonderful repertoire of languages: those I recall were Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic – and Swahili! The first three were academic: the fourth was learned during his service in East Africa during the Second World War.

It was he who started a school debating society. He nominated me to propose the motion 'That society can operate on a set of ethical values which are not associated with a religion' at the inaugural meeting. The day came, I got up, opened my mouth – and nothing came out. I had totally forgotten that I had been appointed to launch the society and had not prepared a line of argument – and I had no experience of ad libbing. I was never asked to speak again.

I wonder how Mr. Jordan compared his world of English with the one that I was to enter on leaving Gell's: 'Richard the Second' and 'Silas Marner' seemed far removed from the writings resulting from visits to magistrates' courts and Methodist church fetes.

I've heard it said that journalism is one of the careers that people pursue if a good education has been wasted on them. In my final year at Gell's, I was juggling with half a dozen different jobs, proposing to take up one of them. None of them was scientific. I was hopeless at physics and chemistry at school. Mr. Grasby, who taught these subjects, would be staggered to know that 95 per cent of my present job with a government department consists of writing on developments in science, technology and industry. (Actually, the trick is to pick other people's brains, rather than use what's contained in my own).

My best subject at school was French – yet it's something I've never put to practical use. I often think I'm the last person left in the country who's never *visited* France!

Mr. Young was the senior French master. I chiefly remember his puns. They could be quite useful as mnemonics: "A cedilla is like a submarine – it goes under the 'c'."

The junior French teacher was Miss Gregory, mainly recalled for the two words with which she prefixed every utterance: "Now, boys . . ." (On second thoughts, this could not have been invariable – sometimes we had mixed classes . . . oh, well, it *seemed* she always said them).

How much do I owe to Gell's? Only *part* of my schooling: education is a constant process from the cradle to the grave, acquired in many places other than the classroom. Nobody should think it ends on the day of leaving school – or even university or other institution of advanced learning for that matter.

Were my school days my happiest days. Not necessarily – but they were as happy as any other period. I can confirm the frequently made observation that you never have friends as good as those you make at school – except for when you're in the Army. And school and the Forces have something in common: you're all in the same boat together!

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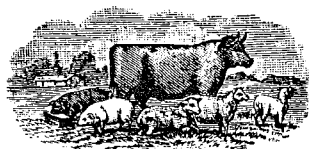
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