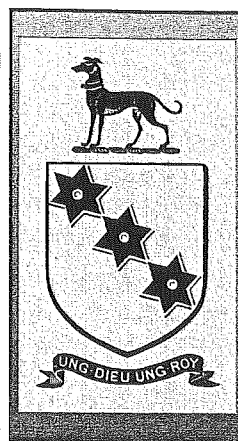


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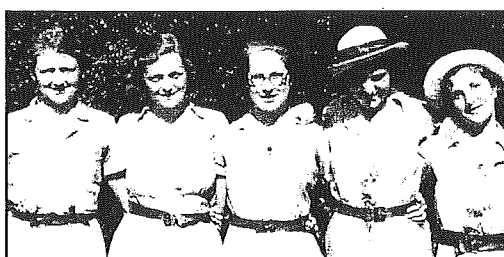


PAST TIMES OF ANTHONY GELL SCHOOL

£5



No tears now sweetheart: The story of a wartime romance — 18-19



The girl who wore fawn socks! — 10

Lesley Northrop remembers: How Guides saw off midnight invaders — 9



Edith and Phyllis, an inseparable pair of romantics — 8



Sports teams of bygone years — 44-48

DURING the annual dinner in October, 1998, it was suggested that a new impetus for the Old Wirksworthian Association may be the publication of a magazine depicting life at Anthony Gell School during the 20th century.

The task of gathering all the information at this time did not appear to be too arduous. However, since those first thoughts it has proved to be very time-consuming, although very enjoyable, to all members involved in searching memories, scrambling in attics and flipping through photo albums for memorabilia and committing one's thoughts to paper.

As time passes and therefore older members depart this world, the history of a 400-year-old school passes into oblivion, so it is nice that the O.W. Association in publishing this magazine is helping to contribute to the distinguished history of Anthony Gell School.

To name everyone involved in providing material for publication would

Magazine with a message

add a great many more pages, therefore I will deem it suffice to say a sincere thank-you to everyone who has committed time and effort in providing their memories.

However, I cannot close without mentioning a small group without whose efforts and dedication in collating all the photographs and stories this magazine would not have been possible.

Max Hodnett — for his editorial skills and advice and his work in putting together the magazine in such a professional manner. Many thanks, Max.

Dorothy Wigley and Brenda Rowland — for their time in speaking to, telephoning and writing to, and finally

cajoling, all the contributors to put their memories on paper, and collating the material for despatch to Max Hodnett in Cornwall. Sincere thanks, Dorothy and Brenda.

Rod Leach, headmaster, Anthony Gell School — for allowing us the use of school archives, to seek out material and confirm dates, etc., for the use of rooms for committee meetings and, as President of our association, providing reports on the current happenings in school. Thanks, Rod.

I wish the Old Wirksworthian Association every success in the new millennium and hope that through the publication of this magazine ex-members of Anthony Gell School will rediscover thoughts of their time and friends sufficiently pleasant to prompt them to enquire about the O.W. Association and join us at the numerous functions we hold each year.

Please contact Brenda Rowland — 01629 822679.

Gilbert Martin Beresford
Chairman
Old Wirksworthian Association

By ADRIAN GELL

IT WAS by pure accident of birth that, on the death in 1998 of my father, the last Anthony Gell, I found myself as head of one of England's most ancient of families.

From a tender age it was instilled upon me that at some time in the future the day would arrive when extra responsibilities would land upon my shoulders; responsibilities which, with my privileged upbringing (and there is no doubt that I was given just that) I *could* perilously ignore — but in doing so might rattle the bones of my ancestors and disappoint my peers and current kinsmen; responsibilities that I *ought* to adopt — as my forefathers, through their own devotion to the community, had done over the many previous generations.

In doing so they had earned for the family some good standing in the Derbyshire district. And who would I have been to ignore their fine example and refute their trust?

Amongst those from whom the Gell family directly descend can be counted admirals and generals, bishops and rectors, explorers, writers, poets, industrialists and scholars; maybe even a Roman, should it ever be proved that the burial urn upturned at Hopton in the 19th century genuinely contained the ashes of Philipus Gellius, who is supposed to have arrived in Britian in 45AD.

With all this in mind it was understandably with some humility and certain trepidation that I donned, albeit without the ancient lands, the "Squire's Cap".

Now, as to the present, perhaps it is not quite so surprising that my corpuscles should so surge through my veins on each successive venture I make into Derbyshire, county of my blood and my history. Whilst no member of the family currently lives within its bounds, perhaps one day in the future, just one fine day . . . Who knows what the future might hold?

One thing is for sure and that is the inextricable link between the Gell family of today and one of the oldest schools of the Realm, namely, Anthony Gell School.

There must be few institutions in the country which still retain their link to the founding family over 400 years after their inception, and I am hugely proud of my attachment both as a school governor and as a trustee of the foundation governors.

Since its foundation in 1576, the school will have witnessed some extraordinary history: Civil War, revolution — both agricultural and industrial, the rise and fall of the mills and the mines — the loss of innumerable lives through war, not least the two great wars of this century.

Countless children have passed via its portals throughout its years; some, regrettably, have

Comradeship — hallmark of the Old Wirksworthians

struggled whilst others have experienced huge success and the wealth it brings. The variety of career paths they have chosen would be anybody's guess.

The Anthony Gell School has, over its life, never ceased to evolve and having moved premises to its current site it has enabled itself to grow and expand as one of the great centres of the Wirksworth area and, indeed, the county as a whole.

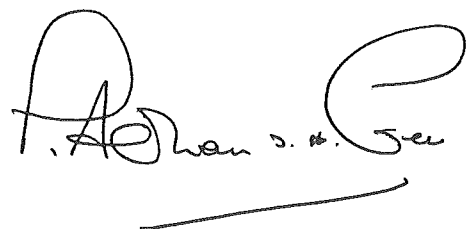
As modern history develops in front of our very eyes at the outset of the "e-revolution", for those who grab the opportunity further success stories of a new age of Old Wirksworthians will be seen.

For those who make the choice and meet the demands of a rigorous modern world, who knows what further fortunes might be made and through what medium — e-commerce, sport, academia, industry, finance or the arts.

One might also ask in which part of the globe might they end up? It would appear that already OWs feature globally — and I wonder what Anthony Gell would have said to that in 1576!

One thing is for certain, and that is the comradeship of Old Wirksworthians. Brought together by no mere run-of-the-mill school, they take pride in their school's history, pride in their year, pride in their foundation and pride in themselves.

Anthony Gell would, I am sure, be more than satisfied at the results of his original labours. I, for one, consider it to be of the greatest pleasure to be a friend of all Old Wirksworthians, and, as Anthony Gell School nears its 425th anniversary, one year into the new millennium, I am happy to send this publication my family's very best wishes for its success.

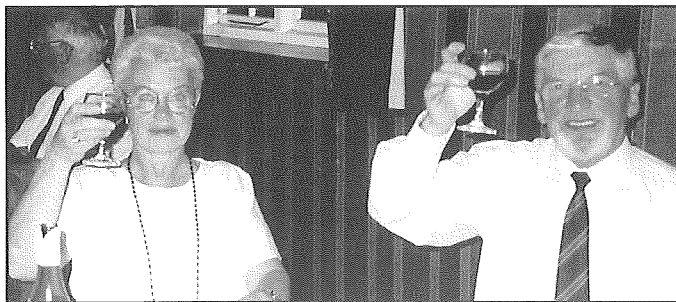


A. Gell

75 attend annual reunion at The Bear

ABOUT 75 members and guests had a memorable time at the 1998 reunion dinner at The Bear, Alderwasley.

Here are the printable results snapped by our roving photographer — negatives of the others are for sale at outrageous prices.



Treasurer steps down

TREASURER Fred Richardson handed in his resignation from the post at the annual meeting of the Old Wirksworthian Association, held on March 16, 1999.

Fred has been a reliable treasurer for more than 20 years and his resignation was received with regret. He was warmly thanked for his services and will continue as a member of the committee.

The new treasurer is Brenda Brown.

The meeting was chaired by Dennis Rowland in the unavoidable absence of Martin Beresford.

O.W. OFFICERS, 1999-2000

President:
The Headmaster, Rod Leach

Chairman:
Martin Beresford
Hardhurst Cottage
Ashleyhay
Matlock DE4 4AF
01629-822807

Vice-chairman:
Dennis Rowland

Secretary:
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Wirksworth DE4 4BL
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Assistant secretary:
Agnes Rooney

Treasurer:
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13 Summer Drive
Wirksworth DE4 4EL
01629-823222

Assistant treasurer:
Bill Mather

Press officer:
Dorothy Wigley
Kowloon, 5 Derby Road
Wirksworth DE4 4AS
01629-822798

Committee:
The officers, plus: Roy Bratby, Joan Brown, Anne Smith, Brian Moore, John Linthwaite, Nancy Slaney, Ian Coates, Fred Richardson, Les Kirk.



□ The school choir, who sang at Founder's Day in 1998

SPONTANEOUS applause rippled through the tiny church of St Margaret's, Carsington, on July 16, 1998, in sincere appreciation of the Anthony Gell School choir's performance during a service to commemorate the founding of the school in 1576.

The choir's first item was an unaccompanied spiritual song, followed by a piece composed by the children especially for the occasion — the

School song makes bow

Anthony Gell School Song, 1998.

The Old Wirksworthian Association welcomed the eager participation of the present pupils — future Old Wirksworthians.

In The 1999 service, held on July 14, at Wirksworth Parish Church, was attended by about 80 OWs and a choir of 30 children.

Adrian Gell, a descendant of the founder, read a lesson and took part in the laying of a wreath on the founder's tomb.

As in previous years, lunch followed at the Miner's Arms, Carsington.

Our president, head ROD LEACH, describes the focus of the school as it nears the millennium.

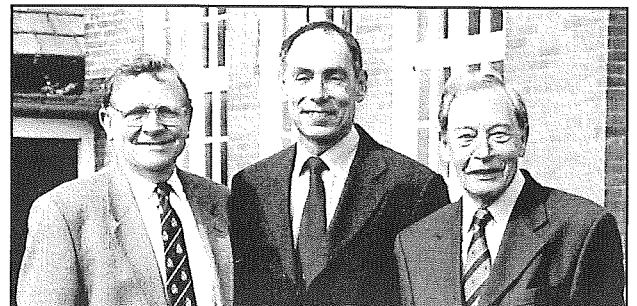
ITHINK I would want to focus first on continuity, The school has an unusually strong philosophical outlook. It is deeply committed to a broad curriculum accessible to all.

It stands for liberal educational values; that is, it believes education is far more than providing skills necessary to do a particular job. It believes that all have real potential and expects all students to achieve success, be it measured in traditional academic manner or through performance in the arts, sport or work-related practical tasks.

It places less emphasis on age division than some schools, retaining mixed-age teams, clubs, tutor groups and so on. Through this it hopes to foster a more tolerant perspective where differences as well as similarities are welcomed. The school also sees itself as servant of its community. It therefore welcomes adult and youth provision on site, works closely with community groups and politicians at county, district and local level and welcomes the current seven-day-a-week use of its facilities.

None of this is new and the philosophy outlined above would have been well understood by previous heads of the comprehensive school and its governors. It is because the school knows what it stands for that it has been able to defend what is valuable in a time of unparalleled change (not all of it well thought out in education).

In this context, the changes and achievements of the last eight years are not particularly remarkable because they generally build on or refine what was already happening. Academically, the school is successful in raising overall standards. Results run ahead of national and county averages off an intake that performs slightly below national averages — in current jargon, we are adding value, but in



□ Three headmasters get together for a *Reflections* photo-call. From left: Roy Pearce (1971-91), Rod Leach, the current head, and Frank Bottomley (1966-71).

Education is definitely for all

real terms we are building self-esteem, opening wider opportunities and nurturing the skills and flexibility that will be needed into the next century.

The Honours Board may have been discontinued, but there are recent Gell students around the world in the most prestigious higher education institutions and playing a vital part in an immensely wide range of employment. More important still is the fact that *all* students achieve public exam passes now and that about 50% of them choose to continue their studies within the school beyond 16. Education is definitely for all.

Continued on page 32

JOE GOULD, a pupil from 1939 to 1946, returned as a teacher, becoming deputy headmaster until his retirement in 1984. Here, he traces milestones in the school's history up to the start of the 20th century.

1574: Agnes Fearne, widow of a successful local lead merchant and smelter, demises a house and certain lands towards the maintenance of a free school when one should be established.

1575: Anthony Gell, of Hopton Hall, endows a school with lands at Wirksworth, Kirk Ireton and Kniveton. He leaves instructions to Thomas Gell to obtain "letters patent".

1584: Queen Elizabeth issues "letters patent" and gives Thomas Gell power to appoint a headmaster who is "able to speak and teach Latin freely enough to boys in the school".

The land donated by the Fearne and Gell families to be let to provide income for the school. Six "discreet and honest men" to be appointed as governors.



JOE GOULD — on his retirement

1645: Headmaster Mr Topham sends the school's first boy to Cambridge University — Thomas Buxton, son of a local farmer.

1669: Two more boys are sent to Cambridge by headmaster Mr Crosdale.

1685: Sir John Gell invites Samuel Ogden, a distinguished academic, to become headmaster. School flourishes during his reign; two more boys sent to Cambridge during this period.

***Eighteenth Century:** School begins to decline; the headship is said to have become a sinecure.*

1780s: The Rev. Abraham Bennett, Fellow of the Royal Society and one of the foremost scientists of his day, is headmaster.

1799: The Rev. Nathan Hubbersty appointed headmaster at a salary of £50 pa; attempts to run school at same time as running his own private school.

1826: Old school in churchyard found to be in a state of physical decay; new school built on same site in 1827.

Decline and fall — to the very brink of extinction

1828: School said to be little better than an elementary school. Local parents dissatisfied, many send their sons away from Wirksworth to be educated.

1829: Charity Commissioners carry out thorough inspection of school's finances and issue devastating report condemning Mr Philip Gell, his agent and some governors for mishandling the funds of the endowment.

1863: Mr Harris is headmaster, but breakaway school in Coldwell Street started by his assistant, Mr Beeson, after a dispute between the two. Mr Beeson's academy well supported by parents, who take their sons away from Grammar School.

1869: Grammar School receives very unsatisfactory report after inspection by Mr Wright on behalf of School Enquiry Committee.

The school has sunk as low as it can — William Webb

1882: Public meeting in town voices discontent with state of affairs at school. Several leading members of the public in attendance. More than 80 people sign memorandum to governors requesting adoption of new scheme of government. Deputation to governors led by local doctor William Webb, who tells them that "school has sunk as low as it can".

1887: Efforts of deputation and townspeople bear fruit. New scheme adopted. Dr Webb becomes member of governing body.

1906: Inspection of school by Professor Sadler on behalf of County Council. Notes improvement since 1869 inspection, but feels school has no future in Wirksworth and recommends it be transferred to Duffield and that the County Council should not spend any more resources on it.

Governors think otherwise and proceed with plans to build new school on its present site. Old school to be converted for use as craft centre. County Council give financial support; school to take girls as well as boys.

1907: Foundation stone of new school laid by the Rt. Hon. Victor Cavendish, MP. Celebrations in Town Hall. School is saved.

THE beginning actually came eight years before the first Anthony Gell Grammar School was built.

A royal charter was granted in 1576, but it was not until 1584 that Thomas Gell, Anthony's brother and his sole executor, received Letters Patent for a free grammar school — and almshouses — to be built overlooking the churchyard.

Time left its mark on the building and it was replaced between 1827 and 1828.

In 1902 the governors were told that improvements were

The school that grew and grew

needed — and that it should start to admit girls.

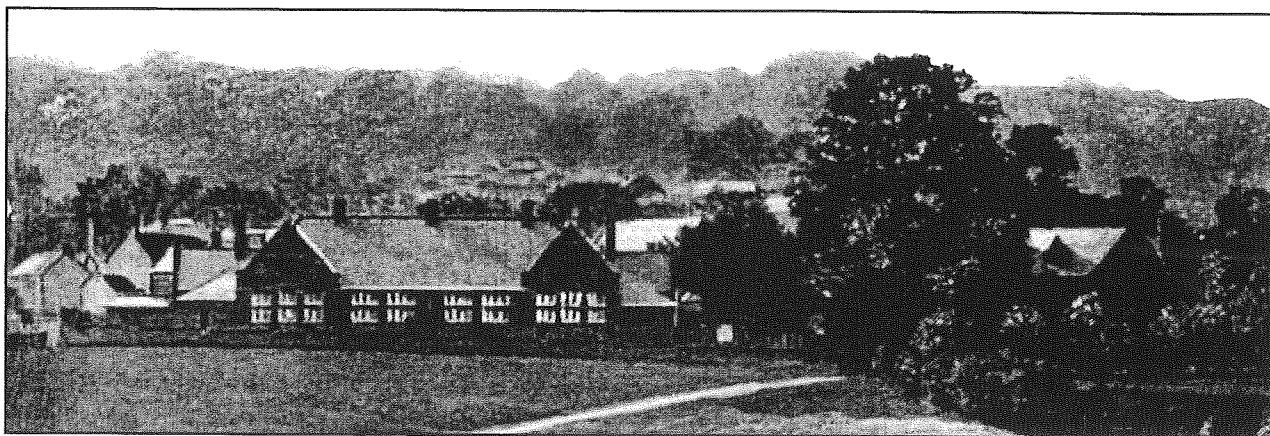
The school already owned a site in Wood Street and plans were drawn up by the county architect. The estimated cost was £4,000, raised by mortgaging school lands and via public subscription.

Foundation stones were laid by the Hon. V C W Cavendish, MP, on November 13, 1907.

The next year pupils moved into the new building, although the former school continued to be used for domestic science and woodwork for many years.

Extensions were opened in 1939 and when the school became a comprehensive in 1965 considerably more buildings were added.

Since then, further improvements have been made, including a new maths block in 1973.



■ A postcard showing the original building in Wood Street, before extensions were added shortly before the Second World War.

The greyhound, the shield and the seal

THE familiar greyhound that has appeared on countless school uniforms down the years was the crest of Gell family. The school colours of azure and gold are the original ones of Anthony Gell.

D Hool, a sixth-former contributing to the 1954 issue of the school magazine, writes that the shield of the founders (reproduced on the front page of *Reflections*) was naturally adopted by the school.

It is "diagonally divided from the top left-hand corner with the upper right-hand portion painted azure and the lower left, gold.

"The single diagonal divides three six-pointed stars into two equal halves, each of which is coloured azure or gold opposite in colour to the segment in which it is situated."

D Hool states that Anthony Gell's scholarly motto, *Diligentia et Studio*, was rejected by the governors and the more patriotic one of the Lytton family, *Ung Dieu Ung Roy*, was adopted.



■ A representation of the founder on the school seal.

These arms were adopted in 1584. However, when the school received a charter of incorporation from Elizabeth I in 1576 the governors needed to have a common seal to impress upon documents.

D Hool writes that this oval seal "measures 2½ inches by 1¼ inches and shows a full-length figure of the founder in a flowing legal gown, ruffle and square cap.

"His right hand is raised and in his left he holds what appears to be a pair of gloves. He wears the characteristic gentleman's beard and moustache of Tudor times and if, as the wording round the edge tells us, it is meant to be his portrait, Anthony Gell must have been a short, stout man.

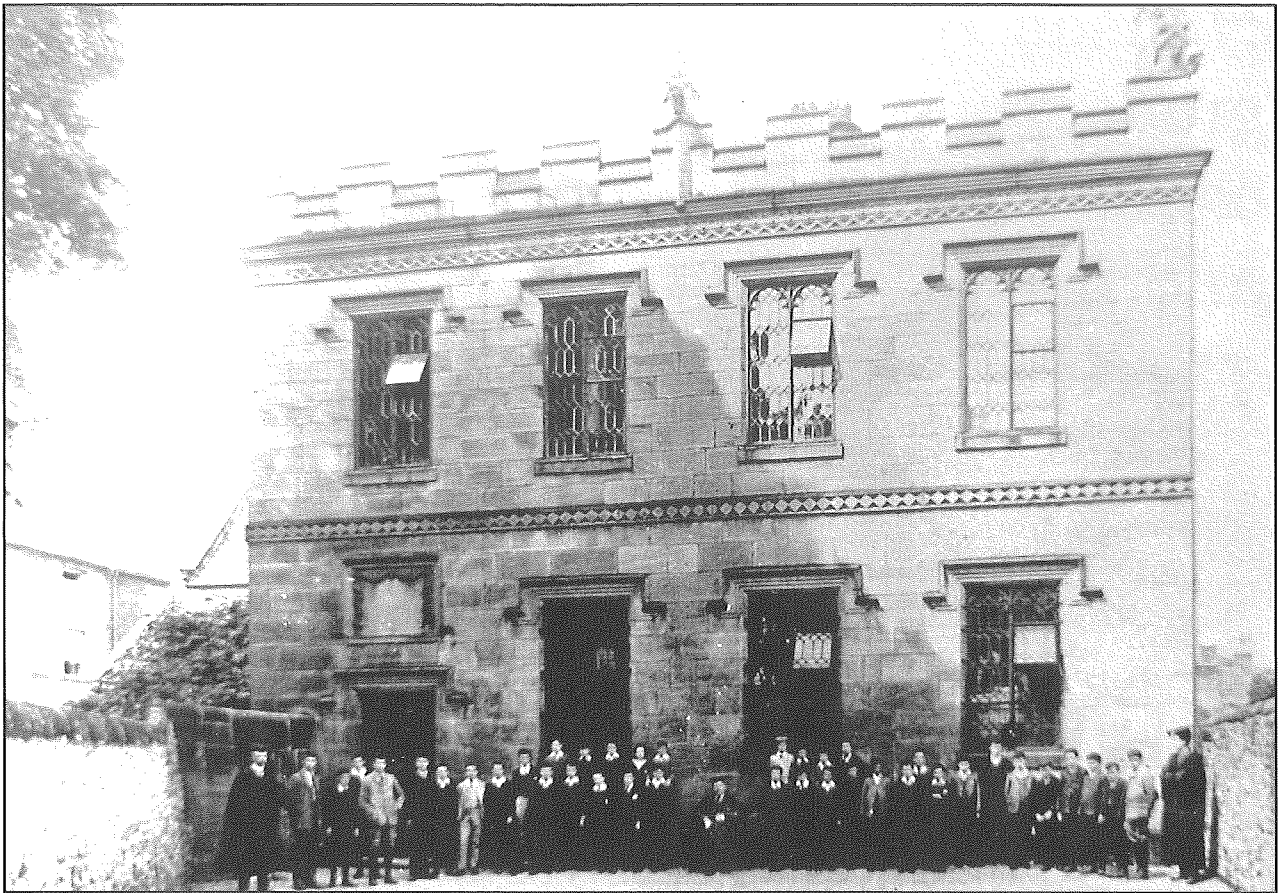
"The motto round the seals runs *Imago-Anthonii-Gelli-de-Hopton-Armigeri*."

Why did the school adopt the name and arms of Anthony Gell, and not those of Agnes Fearn or any other of its numerous later benefactors as well?

D Hool explains: "It must be remembered that the school was founded in 1584 by order of Anthony Gell's will, which also left land and money for its upkeep and preservation.

"Agnes Fearn only played a minor role in it for she, knowing Gell's intention, left money and land in her will of 1574 for the upkeep of a future school.

"Since the foundation of the school many have bequeathed land and money to Gell's foundation trust . . ."



■ An undated picture, lent by Tom Jones, of the original grammar school off the churchyard, with a group of masters and pupils. The school moved to Wood Street in 1908, although the original building continued to be used for domestic science and woodwork for many more years.

Tom Jones — master woodworker

THE end of 1998 saw the retirement of Tom Jones, who spent the last 29 of his 56 years' working in wood in the Old Grammar School in the churchyard. He is pictured (right) in 1989.

He moved there with his wife Constance and their daughters in 1969 after the late Col. Gell and the late Charles Brown, school governors, encouraged him to move from Derby.

The building was used for woodwork and domestic science until 1963.

Tom's first task was to convert the old school into a home and workshop. He recalls: "We had to replace 1,260 panes of glass — and not one pane was identical."

Tom and his wife are staying on at the Old Grammar School. His fellow-craftsman, Tony Martin, with colleague Ross Malloy, are finding alternative premises.

□ The stone above the gateway bearing the legend *Anno Domini 1576* often misleads people.

The foundation of the actual school trust did not take place until 1584. The stone is believed to come from a school house built in anticipation of the school's intended foundation.

When the house and the original school were demolished in 1827 the stone was probably removed, being reinstated when the courtyard wall for the replacement school was built in 1828.



Hansen Bay: guide, counsellor and friend

THE school magazine for 1929 began on a "somewhat sorrowful note" — saying farewell to a long-serving headmaster, the Rev. L. Hansen Bay, and his wife, Celia.

The head had taken up his appointment 21 years previously and the magazine commented:

"None of us at present can imagine what school will be like without them, for ever since the present buildings were erected — all the time that our school has been a mixed one — it has only known one headmaster."

Mr Bay's interest in his pupils never ended. "In work at school or after we have left school, he has always been our guide, counsellor and friend."

The magazine also paid tribute to the head's wife.

"Mrs Bay's place will never be filled in quite the same way and our sorrow at losing her is deepened when we remember that she has worn herself out in our service."

The head and his wife, in a farewell message, referred to many happy memories during 21 years of "strenuous work together". They concluded:



■ L. Hansen Bay, his wife, Celia, and a group of pupils in the mid-1920s.

Goodbye, Boys and Girls of the School;

Goodbye, OWs (so often a source of pride and thankfulness)

Goodbye, our most friendly Colleagues;

Goodbye, dear School! May God bless and keep you.

Mr Bay, who was succeeded by Cecil Round, died, after an operation, within two years of his retirement.

In the 1932 magazine, the school thanked the Old Wirksworthian Association "for the gift of a beautiful clock, which has been placed in the corridor as part of the OW memorial to the late Rev. L. Hansen Bay".

SINGING IN THE NEW-LOOK SCHOOL

THE OPENING of the pre-war extensions to the school was marked by due ceremonial, including songs and drama, at speech day on May 26, 1939.

From a programme saved by former head girl Eveline Fullwood (nee Stamp), of Cromford, we learn that the the extensions, which included a gymnasium, kitchen and dining room as well as classrooms and changing facilities, were officially opened by the Hon. Mrs Gell, of Hopton Hall.

She also presented the prizes.

After the singing of the school hymn and a report by

the head, Cecil Round, there were two songs and an address by W G Briggs.

Then came a play by the juniors, "Circe's Palace" and scenes from "Macbeth" by the seniors, in which the title role was taken by Fred Britland, later to return to the school as a member of staff.

He also was awarded the Form IV prize — Dorothy Cappendell, also to teach at the school in later years, won the Form Va prize.

The head's prizes went to Mary Slater (head girl) and D G Harrison (head boy).

Mrs Fullwood also has kept copies of "Duties of Prefects" and "School Rules (Girls)".

Under the latter, girls were

"expected always to be on their guard lest any action of theirs give rise to adverse criticism".

Possibly to drive home this point, Mr Round also ruled that "girls and boys are not permitted to proceed to or from school together".

Smoking was forbidden — a slovenly habit and most harmful to growing children, said the head.

Prefects were empowered to "inflict punishment by way of detention to offenders".

They were expected to "put a stop to any form of bullying at once and to deal summarily with any case of improper language".



CLASSES OF 1920s

These photographs, lent by Miss Mary Fritchley, were taken in the 1920s.

They show (from top) Form II, with Miss Whittaker, Form III, with Mr Young, and Form IV, with Mr Robinson.



■ Friendships forged during schooldays tend to be bound with a cement far stronger than bonds made later in life. Here, EDITH SPENCER (nee Keeling) writes about her unbreakable comradeship with Phyllis Bratby, one of five sisters of a

Wirksworth family.

The others were Hilda, Laura, Connie and Beryl; they had one brother, Roy, the youngest in the family.

Phyllis, who was born in 1912, married John Littlewood. She died in 1976.

I HAD started at Wirksworth Grammar School in 1925 and the following September entered the Lower Fourth. There, Phyllis and I became a twosome. Form masters likened us to Weary Willie and Tired Tim, for we were always together.

I was more than two years her junior and almost certainly I went where she led, but it was a meeting of minds. Long walks over the hills, especially to Pitty Wood and Primrose Hill, writing, dancing — a pair of romantics.

It is hard to imagine today how reverently we stood in the wood at bluebell time. I must have been at least 12 and she 14, talking in whispers,

D'you think there really are fairies?

Suppose they are watching us now!

Phyllis found a small notepad and scribbled a message. We were friends, it said. We wouldn't hurt them and we would come back.

We hid it and marked the place and the next weekend we returned, but we didn't find it.

Later, we found we shared a love of acting. I heard about "Jan of the Windmill Land", which was being staged in the Town Hall. Phyllis had to attend rehearsals and I sensed the excitement.

I begged to be allowed to go to her chapel (St John Street Methodist). This was granted provided I went regularly. Thereafter I sat with the Bratbys, all but Hilda and Laura, who went to the Baptist Chapel.

When Mr and Mrs Bratby bought the newsagent's business I often went to fold evening papers. I was not allowed to sell, though Phyllis and Connie could, of course. Connie was my age.

Phyllis was allowed to take a shilling from the till as a reward for helping in the shop. This was for Connie, too. Somehow we started buying Robin cigarettes, with peppermints to disguise the smell.

We would smoke them in the derelict garden Mr Bratby rented. It had been the great kitchen garden for Wirksworth Hall, down Coldwell Street. The hall had collapsed through tunnelling and the gardens were idle.

The formal garden lay through a high wall and we were warned that we must never go in. Hence it became "The



Edith (left) and Phyllis — they shared long walks to Pitty Wood and Primrose Hill.

The inseparable pair of romantics

Forbidden Garden (or Land)". We did venture in once, finding the door unlocked. The great lawn was mown. A weeping willow drooped like a tent over sprinklings of daffodils. There was a raised terrace and a pagoda. We raised our arms and danced for joy.

The Methodist Chapel was a full and lively congregation at this time. Anniversaries, Christmasses, harvest festivals, all sorts of special events — we were in the thick of them. Phyllis taught Sunday School and I helped.

Increasingly, Phyllis took more important parts in concerts and operettas. Sometimes Beryl had good parts. In "The Gypsy Princess" Beryl was the princess and Phyllis the prince who rescued here.

We also danced in something where I needed a top hat and trousers. A boy at school smuggled a pair of trousers out for me and Mother, greatly disapproving, refused to let me even try them on until she had washed them. Fortunately, I don't think they shrank.

It was dancing that brought our only quarrel. I was outgrowing Phyllis, who at first took the gentleman's role. When I became taller she refused. Being younger,

I thought I ought to be the lady. Phyllis was adamant and after anguished tears in the school cloakroom I gave in. So much for shooting up like a beanstalk.

Phyllis's family moved again, probably in 1928 or early 1929. She, Connie and I wandered round this large derelict house that had once been the Cottage Hospital (Babington House). To us it was so old, so romantic!

When Phyllis and Connie stained their bedroom floor — the room above the sundial — we painted ourselves into the window-seat and had to sit there until it dried.

That next month was the beginning of an awfully cold winter. The mill dam froze and skates sold like hot cakes. I borrowed a pair of Victorian skates and Mr Bratby found me a pair of old boots. I must have looked a fright, but I learned to skate.

Lovely memories — too many to record.

Swotting on top of a haystack down which we slid far more than we swotted. The farmer, his labourer and his dog pursued us. We ran through the Meadows, down to Miller's Green, across Derby Road and up Forty Steps to Wirksworth Moor. They turned back before Forty Steps, but we approached Wirksworth weary and scared.

I never went near a haystack again!

Meeting in the Hannages at seven in the morning before the School Cert. geography exam.

The first crack in our friendship came when she went as a VCA and had to board. Still, whenever we met she was my Phyllis. She always will be.

■ The late Lesley Northrop joined the school in 1925, when the number of staff totalled five. When she retired in 1967 there were more than 30.

At that time a tribute was paid in the school magazine to her tireless efforts, the breadth of her scholarship and her versatility; she taught history and religious education, organised games, accompanied music, raised funds and for many years was captain of two Girl Guide companies — one for the school and one for the town.

In that same issue of the magazine, Miss Northrop, who was also noted for “her exquisite grooming and delightful dress sense”, penned her memories of her time at Anthony Gell, where she worked under five headmasters, the first being the noted L. Hansen Bay.

Below we reproduce extracts from Miss Northrop’s article.



A family school

□ The most abiding first memory I have of Anthony Gell’s School is of its family nature.

This was partly due to the fact that the Rev. L. Hansen Bay was headmaster, his wife, senior mistress, and the various members of their family had been or were pupils.

It was obviously also due to the small number of the staff and of the school itself; everybody knew everybody else and all ages mixed on social occasions, the school being sufficiently compact to make its own amusements and to enjoy them.

Founder’s Day

□ When the celebration of Founder’s Day was revived, the whole school walked up to Carsington Church. There was no organ then and I had to play a harmonium for which I proved too strong. As I played it got further and further away and I had to pursue it around the gallery.

After the service the school was entertained most generously to tea at Hopton Hall by the Hon. Mrs Gell. One boy, being asked if he would have another cup of tea, said, “Yes, please”.

As this was his seventh, the butler blanched visibly and muttered, “My God”.

The train . . .

□ The life of the school at this time was governed by THE TRAIN. One came up from Derby in time for school, collecting children at Duffield, Hazelwood, Shottle and Idridgehay.

Those who came from Matlock Bath, Cromford, Kirk Ireton, Carsington and Brassington had to walk or cycle and they did, regardless of weather.

Unfortunately, there was no train back to Derby until about 6 pm, so members of staff had to superintend “prep” until it was time for the train.

Wartime sharing

□ New buildings were completed by the outbreak of war in 1939 and in time to be used by us and part of Burnage High School for Boys, who were evacuated from Manchester.

Anthony Gell’s used the buildings in the morning and played games or explored the countryside, had Guide or Cadet meetings in the afternoon, leaving school free for Burnage in the afternoon.

Fortunately, this situation lasted for only three months. By this time the Manchester school had built its own air-raid shelters and returned to Manchester.

. . . and the bus

□ Later, there was a bus service of a kind; we journeyed perilously to Cromford and Matlock in a machine known as the “monkey box” — it had a roof, but no sides and passengers sat on two long seats which faced each other.

The service was sometimes uncertain, the proprietor being addicted, particularly in the evening, to coming out, surveying the hopeful passengers, deciding they were not worth bothering about and saying, “It won’t run tonight!”

Midnight invasion

□ At one Guide camp near Lake Windermere I had to deal with a midnight invasion on the part of three inebriated young “gentlemen”.

I armed the Guides with mallets and addressed the invaders sternly and eventually they departed. I must say they came back the next morning and apologised!

■ Founder's Day at Hopton Hall in July, 1936.

Back: Doreen Spencer, Muriel Hall, Ina Oulsnam, Angela Hawkins, Gwen Moore, Gwen Merrill, Dorothy Cappendell.

Front: Kitty Taylor, Jeanne Woodward, Alwyn Greatorex, Gwen Merrill's pen-friend, Genevieve.



Horror — that girl's wearing fawn socks!

■ Two former pupils recall Founder's Day at Carsington in the Thirties, which included a visit to Hopton Hall and tea with the lady of the house.

BY JEAN HOWSLEY (nee Swift) (1932-37)

MISS BRIGGS lectured the girls to be correctly dressed — down to the white ankle socks. No colours were permitted, apart from a discreet blue or yellow line around the tops.

Great was the horror when one girl was found to have *fawn* socks!

Best behaviour was expected, particularly when having tea with the Hon. Mrs Gell and at the church. (*I noticed a stained-glass window of St Philip had her husband's face.*)

We were told not to touch the strawberry beds; anyway, they had been denuded for teas.

At the head of the table was "the Hon.", who sang in a loud untuneful voice. We had to stifle giggles, especially when we noticed Miss Northrop's face had also gone bright-red.

There was a lake in the grounds, complete with punt,

and, of course, one of the boys had to fall in . . . further disgrace. We all had to line up to shake hands on leaving, when I was firmly ordered by Mrs Gell to put my hat on straight.

I think that at that tender age we did not realise the significance of Founder's Day. To me, at least, it was a day away from the schoolroom and a chance to explore the Hall grounds.

BY ANNIE SMITH (nee Webster) (1929-35)

WE WERE transported to Carsington Church in one of the Watts Bros. small buses, either Dinah Morris, Adam Bede or Seth Bede. The girls wore blue tobralco* dresses with blazers and panama hats; the boys wore white cricket flannels with blazers.

After the service we trooped down to Hopton Hall, where we were allowed to wander round the gardens and grounds until a small bell was rung.

This was the signal to assemble on the lawn in front of the house, to be shepherded into two rooms for a sit-down "plain" tea.

After tea we wandered in the grounds again — until the small bell rang again.

We once more assembled on the lawn to listen to "words of wisdom" from the Hon. Mrs Gell. Then it was back to school again and home.

* A hard-wearing ridged cotton material.



■ Another group of pupils at Hopton Hall on Founder's Day in 1936. From left: Marjorie Rains, Monica Hargreaves, Mary Doxey, Dorothy Bowyer, Kathleen Pearson.

How we learned discipline and respect for others



CECIL ROUND

— the head presided over morning prayers in the corridor of the original part of the school.

TUESDAY, early September, 1932, was my first day as a pupil of Wirksworth Grammar School, as it was then known.

I was one of a number of 11-plus entrants from the surrounding village schools and well remember morning prayers held in the corridor of the original part of the school and presided over by the headmaster, Mr C Round.

The deputy head was Mr Young and Miss Briggs and Miss Northrop were senior mistress and deputy respectively.

Discipline and respect for others was of utmost importance and there was more emphasis on

DENNIS ROWLAND (1932-1940) looks back on school outings, other special days — and the cane! He, and his wife, Cynthia (nee Hargreaves) have been members of the OWA committee for many years.

academic success than on sports and recreation.

Sport and athletic facilities were very limited until the extension was built in the late Thirties, when the new gymnasium was incorporated and a gym-master appointed.

Senior team members played matches against grammar schools from the surrounding area at soccer and cricket and house matches were played after school.

School uniform was compulsory in term time and consisted, for the boys, of grey flannel trousers, blue blazers and the school cap.

The cane was occasionally used and it was a deterrent — a few of us experienced it when caught smoking in the toilet house.

School outings or trips were very few compared with the foreign exchange schemes or ski-ing holidays enjoyed by present-day schools.

A day trip to Stratford-on-Avon or a visit to Port Sunlight to witness the manufacture of soap — the latter on a scorching hot day in July — were days that spring to mind.

Other special days were Founder's Day, Sports Day and Speech Day.

Founder's Day meant a service at church followed by a visit to Hopton Hall and being entertained to tea by the Hon. Mrs Gell, a member of the family who founded the school.

Sports Day was a happy occasion; being held at the end of the summer term it heralded the start of the summer holidays.

Competition was very keen — my own success was limited to long-distance events, viz. the steeplechase and the mile.

Speech Day could be rather a dull affair unless you were the recipient of a form prize or a special prize. My prizes were restricted to Headmaster's Prize for Head Boy and the OWA prize for football captain in my last year at school.

My wife and I have attended most of the OWA reunions and various other functions since they were revived in the 1950s and have enjoyed keeping in touch with pupils of our era.



■ Speech day at Wirksworth Town Hall on March 28, 1934.

The head, Cecil Round, is on the left, next to an unidentified lady.

Also in the picture are Miss Dorothy Briggs, Les Houghton, Renee Dyer, Frank Doxey and Ruth Buckland.

A trudge
through
the snow:
Why are
you late?
asked
the head

THESE two photographs, taken in the Thirties, come from the album of Jean Howsley (nee Swift).

She has vivid memories of sports days, particularly that of 1937 when she won the Victrix Ludorum Cup — “it was the only thing I ever did win”.

Jean still has a writing case and salad bowl and servers, which were among the prizes she proudly carried home to Cromford.

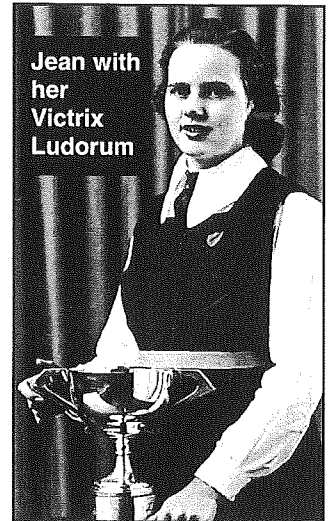
She received them from

the Hon. Mrs Gell.

Jean also recalls walking to school most days — “what a climb it was up a hill, either coming or going, in all weathers.

“We had very heavy snow one day, but about eight of us still struggled on, arriving wet and cold with no drying facilities or hot drinks — and Mr Round wanted to know why we were late!

“He said we should have left home earlier.”



■ LEFT: Some of Jean's form-mates in 1936.

Back: Bob Morse, Dorothy Bowyer, Mary Doxey, Derek Wheeldon, Margery Rains, Jean Woodward, Richard Smith.

Front: Dennis Rowland, Jean Swift, Mr Harold Beynon, Hazel Britland, Kenneth Round.

Sports day — with really useful prizes

By ANNIE SMITH (nee Webster)

SCHOOL trips in the 1930s were mostly unheard of. I remember just two in my time at school.

1. To the picture house at Matlock Bath to see the epic film “Ben Hur” with Ramon Navarro.

2. Mr Young (who taught French) took us to a school in Derby to see some film with French dialogue, presented by the French Circle.

SWIMMING: There was just a small thermal bath on the front at Matlock Bath (up some stairs). We were allocated half-an-hour each week.

Miss Northrop put a canvass harness on a non-swimmer and, holding this, walked along the edge of the bath while the learner did her strokes.

SPEECH DAY and certificate presentation was held in Wirksworth Cinema on its first year of opening.

I was in Form V and felt very proud to be chosen to play the only female part in a play that was to be presented (I've forgotten the title).

Sadly, I was unable to fulfil the part as my Mum became quite ill and I had to be off school for several weeks to care for her and the home. The staff gave my part to Mary Oldfield, my understudy as they felt I would not be able to take the part due to my having to be off school.



ANNIE
— tennis champion

SPORTS DAY: This was a great yearly event, with keen inter-house competition. The whole school turned out on to the Hannages fields and many chairs were laid out, for there was always a good attendance of governors and parents.

In those days, through (I believe) the Gell Foundation, very good and useful prizes were presented for each race — 1st, 2nd and 3rd. There was a stipulation that a competitor must accept the first three prizes won by him/her and no choosing was allowed.

The “old” cricket pavilion was the headquarters from where the presentations were made. After the sports finished everyone assembled in front of the pavilion to cheer the prizewinners.

As to sport generally, one looked on it as a great honour to play in any of the school teams.

HOCKEY matches were held on Saturday afternoons and I always remember we had to pay our own travel expenses to away matches. For a home match our team had to pay a shilling each towards the visitors' teas.

TENNIS: We had three tarmac courts in front of the school — the bottom one was a terror, being quite cracked.

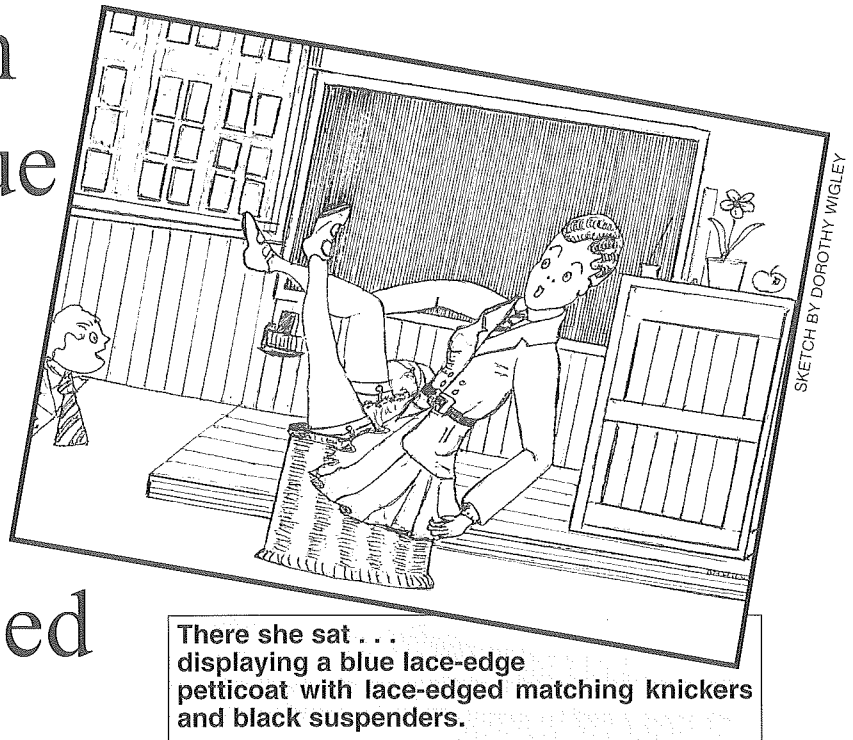
The courts were surrounded by railings and borders containing laurel bushes. Junior school members were selected on match days to be “ball boys” and collect the tennis balls from the laurel bushes for the playing teams.

The girls' singles championship for the Challenge Cup was a great yearly event. Knock-out matches were held throughout the season until the end of summer term when the final match was held. The whole staff and school turned out to watch.

When I was 15, I was proud to become the winner and have my name inscribed on the cup after beating Renee Dyer in the final.

I've wondered what became of that cup, which bore quite a few names, before mine, of previous winners.

Errol Flynn to the rescue the day Miss Janus was compromised



There she sat . . . displaying a blue lace-edge petticoat with lace-edged matching knickers and black suspenders.

By ROY BRATBY (1931-1937)

MISS NORTHROP was earnestly explaining the effect of Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentary revival. I was day-dreaming about a film seen the previous evening, Errol Flynn in "Dawn Patrol".

Noting my inattention, Miss Northrop said: "Bratby — go into the Third Form and ask Miss Janus for the long ruler."

The long ruler, four feet in length with a brass handle in the centre, was used for drawing straight lines across the blackboard.

Turning the solid steel knob on the Third Form door I entered the room.

In front of every blackboard was a rectangular dais about ten inches high. These enabled the

teachers to observe the activities of all the pupils in their care.

On this particular dais, Miss Janus was standing with her back to me. As I closed the door she spun round, slipped off the dais and fell heavily, bottom-first, into a large waste-paper basket.

There she sat — legs in the air displaying a blue lace-edge petticoat with lace-edged matching knickers and black suspenders.

A huge roar of delight erupted from the class. I stood absolutely transfixed at this fancy washing.

You didn't see much of it about in my day. In fact, you didn't see any of it about.

Of course, we'd all seen Marlene Dirttrack in suspenders and fishnet stockings when she was involved in a bar-room brawl with a wench in similar attire. That was in black and white, of course — it stirred my hackles a bit to see it in full colour.

The voice of Miss Janus broke into my reverie.

"Don't just stand there, you great oaf. Help me up!"

I sprang forward and lifted up Miss Janus; she didn't weigh more than twopenn'orth o' toffee. The basket remained firmly attached to her posterior. I was perplexed, trying to decide how to remove it without a hint of indecorum.

I wondered how Errol Flynn would have handled it. He'd have swept her up in his arms, kicked the basket away, given her a kiss and said: "I'll pick you up at seven for dinner, Vivienne. We'll have candlelight and sweet music."



MISS JANUS — "Bratby, are you hurt?" she asked.

Continued on next page

From previous page

But I wasn't him, was I?

Young Smedley was sitting in the front row, his mouth agape. Everyone called him Smoddy. He had reddish-brown hair and wore large brass-rimmed spectacles, which gave him an owl-like expression.

Miss Janus had been observing a shocked silence. Suddenly she said: "Bratby, for goodness sake do something."

Quickly moving over to Smoddy I said: "Now Smod, pull this basket off." Smoddy looked at me as if I'd asked him to jump over the moon. He also knew that the one thing you didn't do was to lay your hands on a teacher.

"Come on, Smod, come on." Very gingerly he slid his hands over the edges of the basket and pulled it off.

Standing Miss Janus back on the dais I backed quickly away. "Thank you," she said coldly. "Now what was the purpose of your visit?"

I couldn't think for the life of me what the purpose of my visit was. I had to admit that I had forgotten. "May I suggest," she said cuttingly, "that you leave the room until your memory returns."

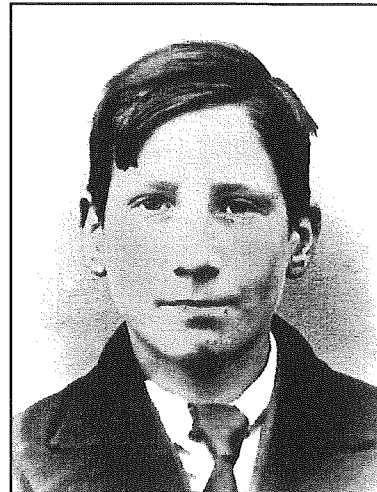
I returned to the Fifth Form and admitted to Miss Northrop I had forgotten her request. "I am not in the least surprised. By the noise emanating from Form Three I thought you were bringing out the piano."

"Oh, was that what you wanted, Miss Northrop?"

"No it wasn't. The long ruler, Bratby, the long ruler."

When I re-entered Form Three Miss Janus was holding the pointer, a beech wand shaped like a billiard cue and about 30 inches long.

I said very quickly: "Miss Northrop wishes to borrow the long ruler, Miss Janus."



**ROY BRATBY —
in his
school days**

"Very well, Bratby, there it is."

Sidling up to the blackboard and facing Miss Janus, I carefully slid the ruler from its shelf and backed away out of range of the dreaded stick, whose weight I had felt on several occasions.

I fell from the dais and went over, clutching the ruler like a dying man.

The kids howled; Miss Janus was dumbstruck.

I was stunned to find her leaning over me, assisting me to my feet and brushing chalk dust from my blazer. "Bratby, are you hurt?"

The kids were making hay of it. I realised I was going to have trouble living this down.

"There you are, Bratby. Now, off you go."

I took a deep breath. "Thank you, Vivienne," I said. "I'll pick you up at seven; we'll have dinner by candlelight with sweet music."

I let out a deep breath. No, I didn't have the nerve to say it . . .

AN advertisement in the July, 1868, issue of Wirksworth's parish magazine stated that the headmaster of Wirksworth Grammar School, the Rev. C H Collyns, MA, "receives into his house boarders, weekly boarders and day boarders".

We do not know the fees for the terms were on application.

The second master, Mr Baxter, "certificated under Her Majesty's Committee of Council for Education", also received boarders.

Turning the pages we find that the "midsummer breaking up feast" was held on June 17th.

"The School Room was decorated on the outside with flags in honour of the occasion

RIVALS FOR PUPILS

and the boys assembled in both schools were addressed previously to their separating for the holidays by the Head Master, who likewise distributed the prizes to the successful competitors."

The account adds: "Readers will be pleased to learn that the number of boys in the Upper School has more than doubled in the last 12 months" — but no figures were given.

□ Another establishment in Wirksworth was advertising for pupils in the 1868 church

magazine.

The Excelsior Boarding and Day Schools in Coldwell Street were "conducted by Mr James W Beeson, member of the Royal College of Preceptors".

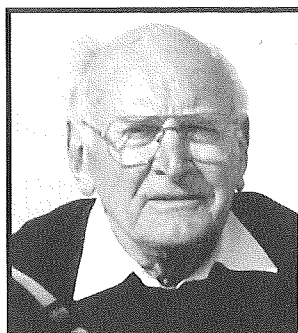
Mr Beeson was formerly an assistant at the grammar school, but after a dispute with a previous head, Mr Harris, he formed a breakaway school and attracted pupils from Anthony Gell.

He assured "those gentlemen who entrust the education of their sons to his care, that he spares no pains to ground them thoroughly in the several branches of their studies, and prepares them carefully for the various spheres of life which they are intended to occupy."

By GEORGE EVANS (1929-35)

WHEN I first went to Wirksworth Grammar School there were no such things as school buses. In fact, in this area, buses were few and far between.

Cars were not much in evidence either, so those pupils who did not possess a bike had to walk — and those who had a bike were obliged to walk coming home, because the surrounding villages were up on the hills and Wirksworth was down in a hollow.



THE WRITER TODAY:
'We tackled the deepest drifts on the assumption that the wetter we became the longer it would take to dry out our clothes when we arrived at school.'

I did not have a bike, so, along with the rest of the Middleton Brigade, I had to walk both ways, no matter what the weather. Rain, hail or shine, we tramped the 1½ miles each way.

A heavy snowfall had its reward, however, and a blizzard with 6ft drifts was treated as a challenge. Under these conditions it was our policy to tackle the deepest drifts on the assumption that the wetter we became the longer it would take to dry out our clothes when we arrived at school.

Here, we leisurely changed into PE kit in front of a roaring coal fire in the staffroom before resuming lessons. Lunch-break was taken up with a snowball fight with no quarter given and evening saw us trudging home, but this time avoiding the deep drifts so as not to incur the wrath of our parents.

Edgar Jepson had a bike so he accomplished the trip from Middleton to Wirksworth in about five minutes.

If any boy happened to be running late — literally — he might be offered a lift on Edgar's crossbar. Sitting on a crossbar and going hell for leather down the Middleton road, with two pairs of hands on the handlebars — one pair gripping for dear life and the other pair trying to steer — was a hair-raising experience, but at least we arrived on time.

Beth lived on Cromford Road and occasionally went to school on her bike. On the return journey she took the same route as us to the bottom of the Middleton road and, being of a courteous nature, one of the gang

Going hell for leather on Edgar's crossbar

would offer to ride her bike, which left her free to talk to the boys.

You can't chat up the boys satisfactorily — or vice versa — if one party is riding and the other walking.

This practice of Beth's came to the attention of the powers-that-be, and from thenceforth such fraternisation was forbidden. Decorum had to be observed while passing through the town — caps must be worn at all times — and no chatting up the girls on the way home!

Frank lived on a farm at Carsington. He had a bike, but didn't appreciate pushing it up West End every night. Frank also had a pony and as it is not necessary to push ponies up hills, or even dismount, the sensible thing to do was to substitute the pony for the bike. I don't even know where he stabled it during the daytime, but on occasions before going home he would bring it to school and canter round the boys' playground.

That was not strictly legal either, but as long as the pony did not leave its trademark all was well.

How times have changed! Today's sixth formers drive themselves to school in cars, giving lifts to their friends — of either sex. Many parents of younger students provide transport either way in the family car, and a fleet of buses is employed to bring hundreds of pupils from outlying districts.

Some who live almost on the doorstep do actually walk — or saunter — to school. Cycles are practically extinct, as are gaberdine raincoats!

Slowest of them all!

JIMMY WALKER had a bike — a racing model with dropped handlebars. He also had the ability to travel a short distance in a very long time. In fact, he was the champion in the Slow Bicycle Race, an event which appeared annually on the programme on Sports Day.

The winner was the competitor who took the longest time to cover a distance of ten yards without losing balance and without actually standing still; competitors had to keep moving forward all the time — balancing on the spot brought disqualification.

So good was Walker's technique that the judges had to get down on their hands and knees to make sure that his wheels were continuing to turn. In spite of their scrutiny, Walker always won.

IT WAS commonplace for all new male pupils to be given the customary initiation treatment: a ducking, a slipping and being bundled into the cricket pavilion lockers where bats, stumps or any other suitable article would beat a noisy, prolonged and penetrating tattoo on the lids by senior boys.

However, we all survived this "barbarism" and thereafter settled down to make appropriate contributions to school life generally.

Without any doubts whatsoever, my school time, as a pupil, was an extremely happy and fulfilling period of my life. It soon became evident that there was a friendly, caring and disciplined air.

The scholar who coupled this feeling of well-being to the qualities of commonsense, attention, application and perseverance invariably gained high achievements at school and much success in the world outside.

The pursuit of these qualities was not confined to the classroom, however, for the three houses — Arkwright, Wright and Gell — were all vehicles for intense competition in games, but it was probably more so on Sports Day when the last relay race invariably determined the overall winner.

The social side also prevailed — Speech Day, for example, when our distinguished guest speaker always urged us "to put our noses to the grindstone" or as an alternative "our shoulders to the wheel".

Founder's Day was another annual event which found the school being marched to the Parish Church in the morning for the thanksgiving service and being bussed to Hopton Hall in the afternoon. At a predetermined time the Hon. Mrs Gell would appear at the front entrance and we would lustily sing "God Save the King".

I remember, too, the lake where there was a rowing boat. This invariably hypnotised some of the seniors to clamber aboard and cast off, only to find that, of a crew of three, two would be required to bale out furiously in order to stay afloat.

I recall the steeplechase with dismay for I found this tor-

My life on both sides of the classroom

On a pleasant September morning in 1936, FRED BRITLAND first set foot in Anthony Gell School, quite unaware that for the next 45 years this would be his workplace, as a pupil and later as a teacher.

ture in the extreme, eased only by a "breather" at each of the recording stations. The School v. Old Students matches also spring to mind where probably pride was the most important thing at stake.

Then there were the Science Club, the Chess Club, the Debating Society and a theatre trip to Stratford-upon-Avon. Lastly, in this brief selection of memories, there was the excitement at seeing the new buildings going up in the late 1930s, which gave us more classrooms, changing rooms with showers, an excellent library, a spacious dining room and a well-equipped gymnasium which was also used as the assembly hall.

Then the war came and the pattern of life we knew so well suddenly changed, for we had to share our school with one from Manchester — we attended in the morning and our new friends during the afternoon.

My life, too, was altered, for in the early 1940s I volunteered for the RAF and for the next 4 1/2 years my service was split equally between the UK and India.

It is with much sadness that I recall the loss of two of my classmates in the conflict — Peter Frobisher and Reg Ward.

AFTER being discharged from the RAF and on completion of my teacher-training at Leeds, I had the good fortune to come back to Anthony Gell's as the handicraft teacher in the Old Grammar School by the churchyard. I also taught mathematics, English and Scripture to complete my timetable.

My appointment coincided with the arrival of a host of young people from Chaddesden. They were excellent young people, friendly and hard-working, and contributed academically and socially to the school 100 per cent.

The small group from the local catchment area who made up that year's intake were equally commendable in all ways — it was a happy mix of different personalities.

A short time ago this intake celebrated their 60th birthdays and held a reunion to which I was kindly invited.

During the 1950s, Mr Round retired; Mr Draycott came as headmaster and

when he left for a Nottinghamshire school Mr Slater took his place. It was during Mr Slater's reign that I was asked to introduce technical drawing at O-level.

After a "find-our-feet" first year, the course really took off and attracted many students who revelled in precision drawing and in the problem-solving aspect of the subject. Subsequently, many produced work of the highest calibre and excellent examination grades.

Beyond the classroom, I remember well the visit to the 1951 Exhibition on London's South Bank, the numerous journeys to Wembley Stadium for the boys' and girls' soccer and hockey internationals and the evenings of wonderful entertainment at Nottingham Playhouse.

On the "home front" I recall the "professional" annual school play and with it the immense pleasure obtained by pupils and teachers in producing first-class sets. I remember, too, the successful fund-raising annual fete on the

headmaster's lawn and many other events.

At this time I also had the privilege of being the Old Wirksworthians' secretary — the annual dinner and dance were but two of the major successful events offered by the committee.

During the early 1960s Anthony Gell and Newbridge schools joined forces and buildings to accommodate the combined capacity were built on the Gell site. Facilities and equipment were second to none and none more so than in the craft department where everything was brand new. The quality of our woodwork and metalwork was highly commended and received much public praise.

I left the teaching profession in 1981. I occasionally return to the school where, for the most part, I derived a great deal of pleasure, happiness and fulfilment.

SOON after leaving school the war began and many of us rushed to join the RAF. I failed to get in and joined the Army.

Brooker, son of a garage owner at Cromford, well known for his habit of scorching around in a supercharged Alvis before he left school, became a tail-gunner and fell to the guns of an ME109 in the spring of 1940.

At his funeral, planes flew a salute over the cortege, the only such instance I heard of.

Soon afterwards, Johnny Warren (known as Johnny Wodge), of Idridgehay, also died in the air. It was a sad time for all.

At school, Mr Beynon, who taught us English, was an outdoor enthusiast. He formed a Scout group, of which I was the first member.

At weekends, teachers took us in cars and left us with our tents at various farms and woods, where we were taught the art of self-sufficiency.

We cooked our food over open fires — cleaned and cooked rabbits and birds given to us by farmers. We built bridges over streams, made shelters and learned woodcraft.

We visited Hopton Hall, Callow Park Farm, Hartington, Pitty Wood and had a marvellous fortnight at Ironbridge, in Shropshire.



■ Charlie Marsden (left), killed in the Middle East, and John (Jaybow) Bowmer, who died in a motor-cycle crash.

We were also taught to swim, visiting the baths at Matlock Bath.

Four years later I was a prisoner of the Japanese in the jungles of Malaya. We were given nothing but rice and vegetables in very small quantities. We had to scavenge for extra food where we could — I had



ROY BRATBY, pictured in 1946 soon after his release from a prisoner-of-war camp, describes how the lessons he learned during out-of-school activities helped him to survive while he was captive of the Japanese.

Survival — thanks to the Scout group

had a good training.

When we reached Thailand I was with Harold Atkins; he died of malnutrition, malaria and dysentery. His name is inscribed on the town war memorial. Thousands more died.

I learned later that another classmate, Charles Marsden, brother of Jack, of the long-established ironmongery family, was killed in the Middle East.

John Bowmer, known as Jaybow, died in a motor-cycle accident in thick fog on Windley Straight. He was in a reserved occupation at Rolls-Royce.

When the Haruku Maru was sunk by an American submarine I was able to swim to the safety of a Carley float. Those that couldn't swim drowned.

I shall always believe those early lessons in life were something to do with my survival.

A strange coincidence occurred in Malaya. Captured with us were members of the Malay States Volunteer Force, comprising most of the Europeans working in Malaya at that time.

I was astonished to discover that many of them knew my old headmaster, Cecil Round.

I had to answer many questions as to his health and about his children.

When I returned in 1946 Mr Round sent for me to inquire about his friends. It was unfortunate that I had to say that most of them had passed on.

For 50 years, Joan Brown, of Carsington, kept a treasured collection of letters in a small grey case.

They were written by her wartime sweetheart, Reg Ward, while he was serving with the Seaforth Highlanders at home and abroad.

They begin in March, 1940, and end in January, 1944, when he was killed in Italy, attacking strong German positions overlooking the

River Garigliano near the small town of Pontefiume.

In 1993 Joan, the long-serving and hard-working secretary of the Old Wirksworthian Association, decided to publish the collection herself, in a limited-edition form.

The letters, in her own words, "represent a history of both personal and village life, which illustrates the concern and problems of two young people from

Derbyshire caught up in World War Two".

This is the story of a romance that flourished despite constant separation and the privations of wartime, a love affair that was to end in tragedy, but which nevertheless is a moving tribute to the way indomitable human spirit can flourish in adversity.

No tears now, sweetheart

IT BEGAN with laughter. Reg Ward, from Rock Cottage, Carsington, the eldest of three sons of the gardener at Hopton Hall, was exactly five years older than dark-haired Joan Stevenson, who lived at nearby Thornhill House.

Both went to Anthony Gell School, but he had recently left when Joan began classes there.

It was soon after Reg started work with Geo. Marsden and Son, auctioneers and estate agents, at their offices in Wirksworth Market Place that they first really got to know one another.

In the mornings, Reg, tall, slim and good-looking, cycled down from Carsington with a friend, Fred Wilson, at the same time that Joan biked to school.

Reg had a gift for painting powerful word pictures

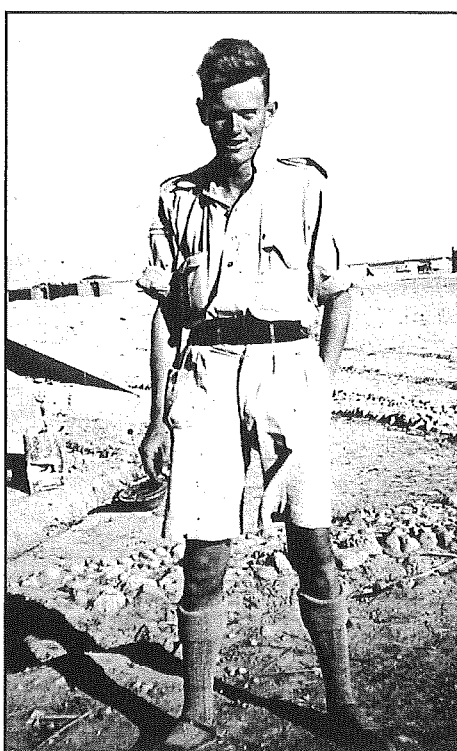
Joan recalls: "I had long hair in those days, done up in plaits. Reg and Fred used to grab hold of a plait each and pull me along."

Their friendship grew and, by a twist of fate, three months after Reg was called up in March, 1940, Joan began working at Marsdens, having previously had a job in Derby.

Also in the office was Ron Brown, who had succeeded Reg. And it was Ron that Joan was to marry in 1951, a union that was to last until 1988, when Ron died, leaving two daughters, Lesley and Caroline.

His grave at Carsington lies only a few feet from the gateway to Garden House, where Joan lives today.

In his letters, Reg frequently apologised for what he perceived to be a lack of writing ability. But he had nothing to apologise for.



REG WARD — a sergeant in the Seaforth Highlanders

He had a gift for powerful description, painting vivid word pictures of his surroundings, whether shivering among the bleak bogs of Northern Ireland or sweltering in the arid wastes of the Middle East.

He frequently contrasted his locations with his beloved "Carson", as he called it.

Writing from Aberdeenshire in the summer of 1940 he says: "The colours here would delight you, Joanna (his pet name for his sweetheart) . . . Scotch heather is in bud, the broom looks lovely, but it cannot come up to Carson."

A few days later he lyrically describes the mountains — "they seem to rise to the sky" — and the heather, but then a yearning for home surfaces. "What's

Carson like now? I expect the gardens are a show and everyone is busy in the hay."

In 1943, from the Middle East, the longing for home becomes even more acute. "Spring at home sounds good this year. I suppose the chestnuts are in full flower and the birches pale green again now. . . It's not hard to imagine the old chestnut behind the house or the damson blossom in the pub orchard."

But Reg could be outspoken, too. After a Home Guard accident with a faulty rifle at Wirksworth he asks: "What mug was it who shot Harold Pearson and Mr Gandy? . . . It's quite possible that he was a Wirksworth councillor — it's the kind of thing any one of them is capable of."

And when Joan tells him she is thinking of joining one of the women's Services, he bluntly cautions her against it. Earlier he had voiced an uncomplimentary opinion about the girls in uniform.

"Whilst I realise that I have no right to dictate to you I definitely repeat that if you do (join up) or have to without making any effort to get out of it, that we finish."

In fact, Joan's firm did ask for her call-up to be deferred because of her work. But the application was unsuccessful and Joan was enlisted in the ATS.

Reg accepted the inevitable and there was no further talk of ending their relationship.

Because of strict censorship, he never mentioned the fighting and could give only the vaguest of hints where he was.

Only later did it emerge that the Seaforths were engaged in some of the fiercest fighting in Italy. Previously, the

Continued on next page

'Goodbye darling'

Did Reg have a premonition that he would not see his 'Carson' again?

From previous page

regiment fought with distinction in Madagascar, Sicily and in North Africa.

Censorship was so tight that even the names of certain plants were blue-pencilled from Reg's letters in case they gave a clue to the location.

And so Reg's war progressed — without ever a mention of the hostilities.

He began to look forward to peacetime and made tentative plans for a life together with his beloved "Joanna".

On January 2, 1944, he wrote: "I reckon that this year will see the end of the war and also see me back in Blichty."

But on January 12, in what was to be his last letter, there was a distinct change of mood. He had only six days to live.

Unusually, he signed off with "Goodbye darling". Previously he had used such endearments as "Goodnight sweetheart" and "All my love".

So did Reg have a premonition? Joan believes so. "He knew, didn't he?"

She added: "He realised they were about to face some crack German troops in heavily defended positions. In the event, his company was surrounded and



JOAN in ATS uniform. She was based at Kedleston Hall.

nearly all of them were wiped out."

It seems that Joan too had a premonition, although she did not realise it at the time.

No. 4805498 Sgt. William Reginald Ward, of D Company, the 6th Seaforth Highlanders, fell on January 18, 1944, but Joan did not hear the news until nearly a month later.

During that interval she had arranged to have a studio portrait taken — at Reg's insistence, for he did not care for the latest picture of her in uniform. Then she suddenly cancelled the appointment — for no apparent reason she could think of at the time.

Additionally, she was due for leave from her base at Kedleston Hall, usually a time of keen anticipation and excitement.

But this time she was not looking forward to her leave. "I was very upset."

Joan received the terrible news by sheer chance. Because she had switched shifts and worked on Saturday night, when the girls came off duty on Sunday morning she decided to go home.

She set off at 9am to cycle to Carsington and on the way met Enoch Redfern, from Wirksworth, in his lorry.

He was carrying a letter from Reg's father. "I didn't really need to ask what was in it — I knew."

She was able to attend a memorial service at Carsington that evening; it had originally been arranged for Sam Matkin, a Home Guard sergeant. When the news of Reg's death came through it became a joint service. Afterwards, Joan cycled back to Kedleston to join her night shift.

Today, Reg lies in a military cemetery at Minturno, only a few miles from where he fell, but a long way from his "Carson".

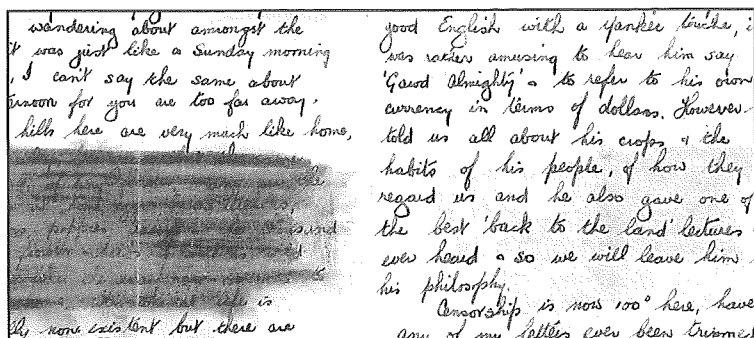
Joan did receive one more letter from Reg. He had written it as a precaution and left it with his aunt at Eyam.

He wrote:

"All I want to say is that you are to forget all about me as soon as possible. Dearest, don't worry, keep that chin up and don't forget to keep smiling. No tears now sweetheart. — Reg"

Troops in the front line were issued with Field Service Postcards, enabling them to keep in touch with home when it was impracticable, if not impossible, to write more fully. This one, addressed to Joan, was dated September 18, 1943.

Below: A heavily censored letter Reg wrote in April, 1943. Usually the censor deleted references to the landscape, particularly descriptions of the flora, presumably in case they help to identify the location.



NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]

I am quite well.

~~I have been admitted into hospital~~

{ ~~sick~~ } and am going on well.

{ ~~wounded~~ } and hope to be discharged soon.

I am being sent down to the base.

I have received your { letter dated 31 Aug }
 { telegram " }
 { parcel " }

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received no letter from you

{ lately }
 { for a long time. }

Signature only

Date

Forms/A2042/7. 51-4907.

*The Wirksworth
Grammar School Magazine.*

Expressions of views and accounts of experiences constitute the personality of the magazine.

So wrote Mr E H B Young, editor of the 1949 issue.

Put another way, a school magazine parades the triumphs — and the disappointments — of

pupils, from first-year tiddlers to giants of the Sixth.

Here are the results of a random trawl through two magazines published in the 1940s.

Some Old Wirksworthians will recognise themselves with pride; others may well have different emotions!

But there is no doubting the fascination of re-reading accounts of all our yesterdays.

1946 THE changing face of the school in the immediate post-war years brought wistful comment from Harold Beynon, editor of the issue published at Christmas, 1946.

He had returned after five years' war service and was immediately struck by a great increase in numbers — even school dinners had to have two shifts.

But Mr Beynon hoped that despite growing numbers it would be possible "to retain the atmosphere of friendliness".

He put up a stout defence for the retention of the School Certificate examination.

This had "enabled the grammar schools to maintain a wide curriculum and a tradition of scholarship." He wrote approvingly of "a training that seeks to instil wide experience and a lively intelligence".

In fact, the School Certificate was to continue for only four more years.

The form notes present a mixed bag — from the intriguing to the mundane.

The Sixth had swelled its numbers to 18 while the embryonic sixth-formers then in Va spoke fearfully of the "fateful ordeal" of the School Certificate examinations.

But at least they did have cheerful surroundings; narcissi, tulips and daffodils, paid for and grown by the form.

1949 THE magazine went into hibernation for three years, re-emerging in 1949 under the editorship of Mr E H B Young, who referred to the departure, for Grimsby, of Mr Beynon, after 15 years on the staff.

Another "old inhabitant" who had left was Roger Hargreaves, "one of the few remaining members of old preparatory form".

Mr Young congratulated the head's two sons. Kenneth Round, who had been Wirksworth town clerk, had been appointed prosecuting solicitor to Essex County Council, and Percy had gained the Bowman Prize at Birmingham University medical faculty.

The Compass Players had visited the school twice, working from 9am until after midnight. Groups had visited Lincoln and Holland.

Under Form Notes we learn that Form II was housed in the art room in the head's house, with the benefit of two fires during winter.

The 37-strong Form IV lauded those who had done well in the South Peak sports and mused upon the ability of prefect Roger Crabtree to "bellow like a bull".

A remark by the contributor from Vb illustrates how much attitudes have changed. Barbara Holtam had moved to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). "We hope she will be happy with the little darkies." Ouch!

In IIIb an unnamed pupil was casually reported to have found a number of gold sovereigns, which had been claimed as treasure trove.

Exam results are fully reported, covering both 1945 and 1946. In the latter year Barbara Else had five distinctions in the School Certificate.

An ode in the style of Alexander Pope, contributed by Mr Beynon, described a day at school, lamenting those in his English classes who "tedious pages fill, with words in plenty though the sense is nil".

At the day's end . . .

All bid adieu to culture and to cram,

And leave the School to silence and to Sam.

On the sports field in 1945-46, the football team managed only two victories in seven games.

There are some fairly candid assessments of strengths and weaknesses. A certain M Beresford is described as "a utility player of great promise" while his partner at full-back, J. Gould, "made up in endeavour what he lacked in ability".

Contributors from Forms Va Lower and Higher hinted at the benefits of an "exclusive society" for girls known as PSS — apparently launched with the sole purpose of obtaining food, but which had spread its wings and also aimed to improve knowledge of the arts.

The VIth Form had only eight members — the new science section had just one pupil! Prizes for head boy and head girl went to N. Deas and Barbara Else respectively.

Chris Young reviewed a concert staged at Easter, comprising two one-act plays, scenes from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and songs. "Mr Grassby officiated at the radio-gramophone during the interval."

The 1948-49 season was a disappointing one for the senior football team "due to the small number of boys over 15". Four senior boys, Heathcote (captain), Steeples, Crabtree and Hargreaves, formed the nucleus. The playing record is not given — was it so bad?

However, the junior side won both the league and the cup, losing only two matches all season.

As for the cricket team . . . "at least it cannot be said that they were bad losers. Certainly,

Hopkinson "needs to be able to use both feet" and likewise, J Doxey, on the left wing, "needs experience in the use of his left foot".

On the cricket field, things were better (but not much) with the school losing three matches and winning two.

Cooper took five wickets at a personal cost of seven runs in a victory over Ernest Bailey GS. Three days later he took 7-35 against Derby Central, but the school still went down to defeat, being summarily dismissed for 27.

The girls' hockey team won four and lost five of their matches, weak shooting letting them down.

Barbara Spencer (left-back) was "a stalwart in defence" and Monica Gell (right-wing) was described as "a speedy player".

The senior cross-country run was won by J Wright. R Crabtree set a record in the middle school event and the winner of the junior race was J Buckley.

Sports day in July was notable for five new records being set and two equalled.

Joe Gould not only captained the winning house (Wright), but was also victor ludorum. Margaret Greasley was victrix ludorum.

The OW Association welcomed back Roy Bratby, a prisoner of the Japanese for many years. "Much anxiety had been felt as to his safety."

they had practice enough."

In fact, they did win one of their eight matches.

However, the girls gave the school something to cheer, winning ten of their 13 hockey matches. Ernest Bailey's were thrashed 10-0 and 7-1. They also beat the OWs, something almost unheard of.

Similarly on the tennis courts — the girls lost only one of their nine matches.

At sports day eight records were established and two equalled. A "brilliant personal performance" by Roger Crabtree included five firsts — he had also won the cross-country earlier in the term.

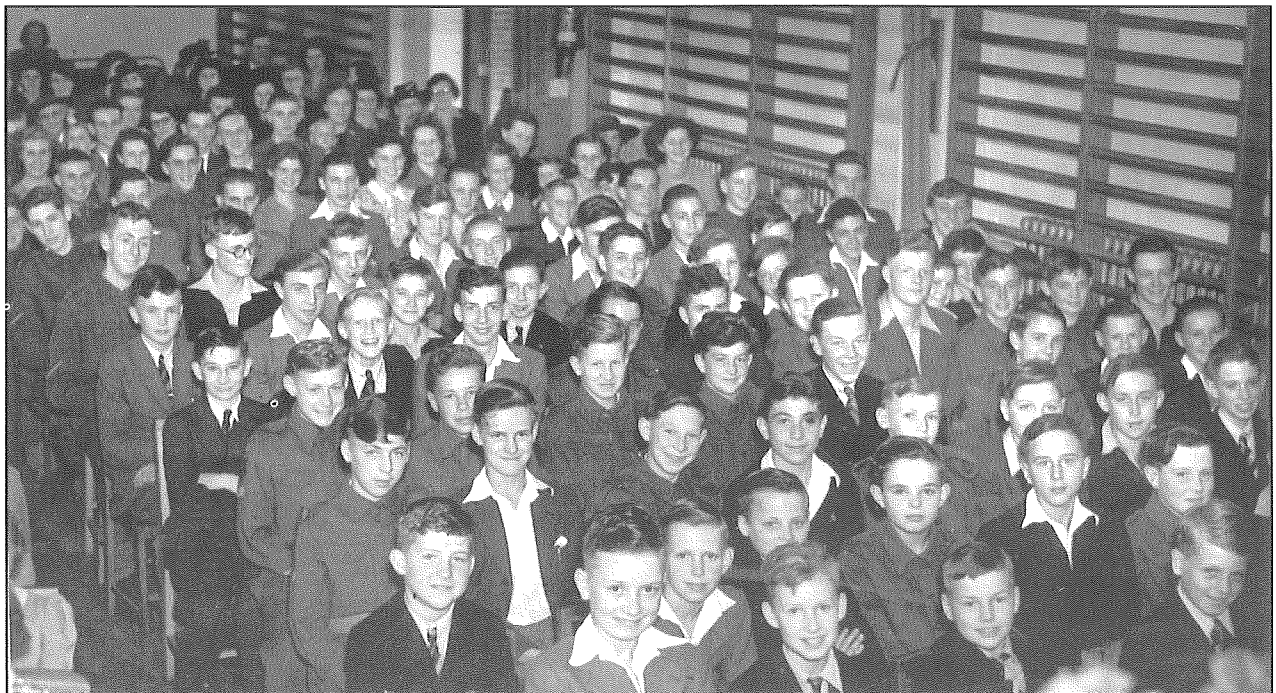
He set a high-jump record and, not surprisingly, was victor ludorum. Monica Gell was girls' champion and the house trophy went to Arkwright's.

The Guides had their usual picnic at Black Rocks and during the summer camped at Breadsall Priory.

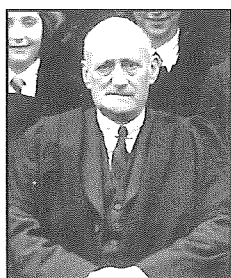
The Army Cadets had become the best company in the battalion and also won the football cup, beating Mickleover 8-1 in the final. The annual camp was in Ayrshire.



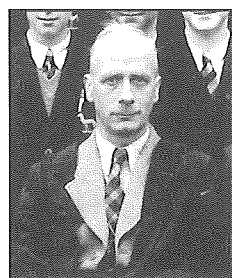
■ Standing room only in the school hall for speech day in 1947.



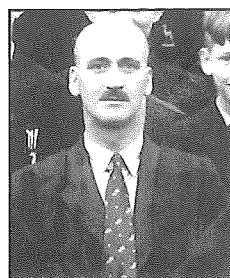
. . . AND FIVE OF THE STAFF OF 1949



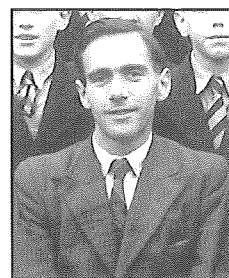
CECIL ROUND
— headmaster



E. H. B. YOUNG
— senior master



ALF ROWBOTTOM
— maths



RON WATERHOUSE
— geography



JACK RODGERS
— sport

□ A group of competitors at sports day in 1956.



By **BRENDA BROWN** (nee Beaumont) 1951-56

IN 1950 the first intake from Chaddesden arrived at Anthony Gell School, the reason being that all the grammar schools in Derby were full.

So from 1950 until 1952 those who passed the 11 plus were bussed out to Wirksworth. This amounted to some 80 children all squashed on to one double-decker bus, sitting three — and sometimes four — to a seat.

As you can imagine, it was very noisy. Boys on one deck and girls on the other . . . and never the twain should meet.

Homework was done on the bus in both directions, but mostly in the mornings.

The Chaddo lot — all squashed on a double-decker

To start with I suppose we viewed the locals with some trepidation, but in a very short time we had all made friends — and many of these friendships remain to this day.

At a reunion held in 1991 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of my year, former pupils and their spouses came from as far away as America, South Africa and all points in the UK, bringing many fond memories with them.

This must speak well of our time at Anthony Gell's and of the way that the pupils from Chaddesden soon became an integral part of the school.



LEFT: Toughing it out at Whitehall in 1955 — Brenda Beaumont, Barbara Kerry and Jean Peat.

Learning how to achieve

■ Stephen Wright receives congratulations on receiving the Dean Cup (in 1959) for outstanding achievement from Col. Philip Gell, Chairman of the Governors, Philip Slater, Headmaster, and Jack Longland, Director of Education for Derbyshire.

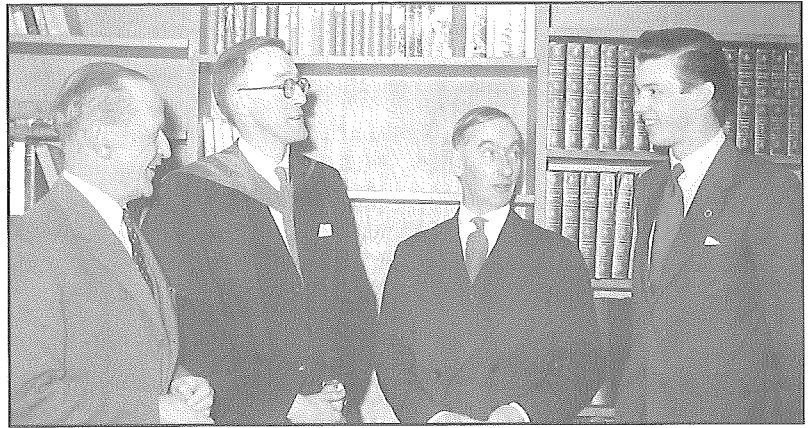
Stephen was the second recipient, Annette Hudson being the first. He is now a doctor in Sheffield.

They recently got together for *Reflections* to reminisce about their time at school (1951-58), where Stephen became head boy and Annette, head girl.

They pioneered the taking of five O-levels in the fourth year, going straight into the sixth form.

Annette (now Mrs Mortlock, a biology teacher) describes herself as a "Chaddesdenite", one of a group of pupils from the Derby suburb who were bussed to Wirksworth.

She went on to attain A-levels in biology, chemistry and physics, botany and zoology. That same year she won her Queen's Guide award and a silver medal for elocution.



Stephen was awarded a County Exhibition after A-levels and despite intensive study still found time to take part in two Arctic expeditions, drama productions and church activities.

Then they went on to university — Stephen to study medicine at Manchester, Annette to read microbiology at Reading.

Both remember, with gratitude, what they describe as the "enthusiastic teaching" they received at Wirksworth.

"The years we spent at Anthony Gell's were years that taught us how to achieve. We learned to consider work as a challenge, life as an adventure and achievement virtually as a necessity!

"Neither of us could think of any better education we could have had."



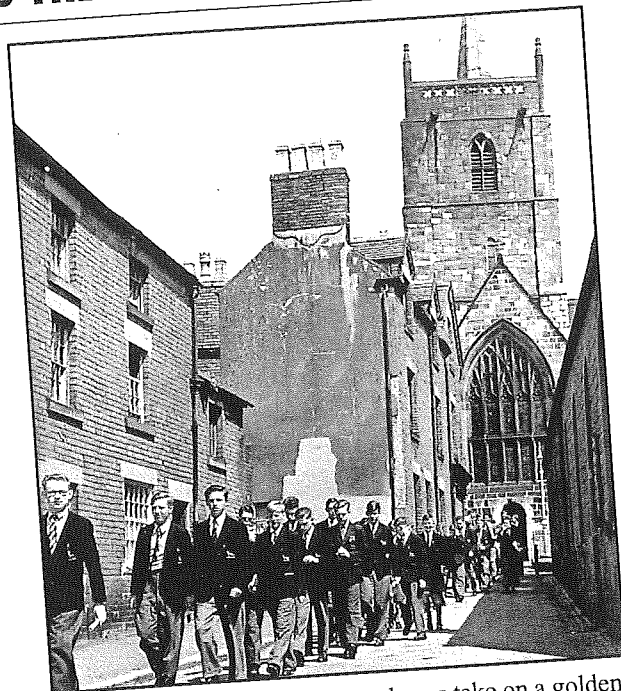
■ Above: A group of pupils pictured in the mid-Fifties. Back: Margaret Richards, Lorraine Hodnett. Front: Geoff Smedley, Leslie Birkett, John Allen, Roy Huntingdon.

■ Right: Mr Ron Waterhouse, form master, with a group of his pupils in the mid-Fifties.



A form from the Fifties

■ Boys leave Wirksworth Parish Church after the Founder's Day service in 1952. Among those at the front are Rodney Bartles, Geoff Buckley, Lance Dean, Warwick Taylor, George Turner, Peter Haworth, Cyril Birch and Gordon Ford.



Small really is beautiful

By ROBERT GOULD (1965-72)

THE Anthony Gell Experience? Well, I suppose first impressions are always the strongest.

Standing in a corner of the playground at the old Newbridge annexe on the first day, anxiously waiting for one's friends to arrive and give moral support. Watching other children from "foreign" villages like Bonsall and Cromford doing exactly the same thing!

But the clannish atmosphere soon vanished and we all gelled within a matter of weeks into a homogeneous mass of excited and excitable first-formers stepping into a much bigger world than we could all have imagined.

Other impressions are more varied; moving to the new buildings in 1966, sitting in the chemistry laboratory and watching with a mixture of horror and excitement as a train slowly fell over on the nearby branch line; taking part in school plays and, most of all, the joy of representing the school in various sports teams.

In the season 1971-72 we turned out possibly the best 1st XI soccer team the school had produced up to that date, with wins over schools with much larger sixth forms, such as Noel Baker and Tupton Hall, and the memories of these matches will always live with me.

Experiences always take on a golden glow when viewed in retrospect, but the overriding memory of Anthony Gell is belonging to a small, compact and very friendly school.

We had only 500-600 pupils during my years at Anthony Gell, in comparison with other much bigger schools, and I am more than ever convinced that in educational terms small really is beautiful.

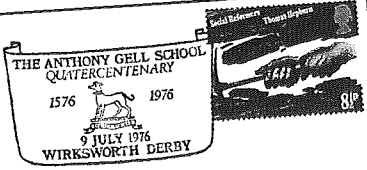
The family atmosphere of Anthony Gell School gave me a very happy start to my adult life and provided a sound basis for my career.

Remember 1976 and all that?

THE school marked its quatercentenary in 1976 with a variety of celebrations — ranging from a buffet evening (provided by the school meals service) to a "grand summer fete" and a dance, to music by the Brian Harvey Combo.

On display in the school hall were pottery made by the pupils and writing by a second-year class; in the library was a past-and-present exhibition.

The school was selling a 1576-



*The Anthony Gell School
Wirksworth Derbyshire*
1576-1976 Quatercentenary 9 July

■ The first-day cover marking the quatercentenary.

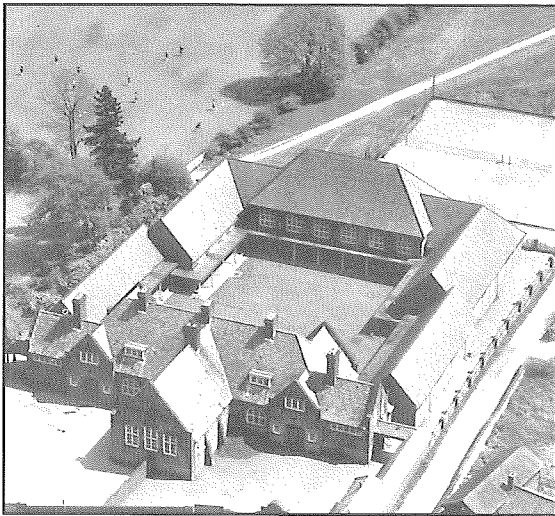
The Anthony Gell School
Wirksworth Derbyshire

1976 magazine, first-day cover Anthony Gell envelopes at 50p each (£1 for those with a complete set of stamps), quatercentenary pens and Gell ties.

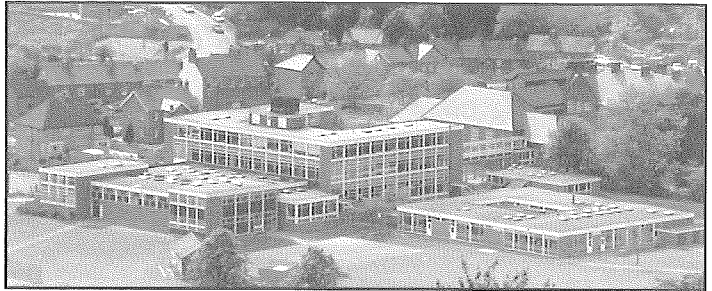
The celebrations extended to visits by many pupils and teachers to Hopton Hall.

They were welcomed by the Hon. Mrs. Gell and entertained to tea while the school band provided "music for a summer day".

Organised trails through the grounds displayed the walled gardens, woodland areas and lakeside views.



FRANK BOTTOMLEY, headmaster from January, 1966, to Easter, 1971, recalls how Wirksworth Grammar School (pictured left) merged with the secondary modern at Newbridge to form a showpiece comprehensive school (below). His aim was to steer the new school through this radical change without losing sight of 400 years of tradition.



IF EVER a school had a flying start when it changed over to being a comprehensive, it was the Anthony Gell School. The Grammar School was too small to continue indefinitely and would, sooner or later, have to close and lose its Foundation after nearly 400 years of serving the town.

Going comprehensive could prevent this. Newbridge School could benefit from incorporation into the Anthony Gell School with better equipment and facilities.

The town would benefit: a new and single school for everyone, especially if the new school could have a role in the community as a whole. There had been time for people to get used to the idea of major changes and begin to make attitude adjustments towards that change.

As the new headmaster coming in, I was struck immediately by the eagerness of the staff to make the new venture succeed. From both schools, staff who were strongly opposed to the change were able to seek jobs elsewhere.

Considerable care had been taken with the balance of promotions of staff from both schools, and I was not aware of any bitterness in the staff-rooms. Active measures had been taken for the staffs to meet and relate socially and educationally. By the time I was appointed, they were tuned up and ready to go.

One used to hear of conflict between pupils from rival schools being brought together in one new school, but at Anthony Gell this seemed not to be the case. Perhaps the wearing of a common school uniform for all secondary-age pupils in the town had an integrating and pacific influence.

Another great advantage at Anthony Gell School was the predominantly new buildings on a single site. Everyone seemed to have a sense of pride in the luxury of the new buildings and behaved responsibly in them.

The cleaning staff worked hard to keep up high standards of care and cleanliness. But we had to wait some time before getting them. I used to look out of the windows of school house and watch the new buildings grow, tantalisingly slowly, and I used to watch the redgra pitch rise up out of a muddy swamp.

I remember, at the end of double periods, staff dashing in their cars between Gell School and Newbridge for their next lesson. I remember rushing round the Hannages footpath on my old bike to take an assembly or catch up with teachers (*who were always in other buildings when I wanted them*).

Time for change

The craft block was the first area to be ready for use and I shall never forget the wonder in the eyes of the pupils entering what must have seemed like a palace of opportunity.

My predecessor, Mr Slater, had come from a purpose-built comprehensive school and he had brought with him many ideas which influenced the planning of the new buildings. He brought the idea of independent house blocks, not strictly practical on the Wirksworth site, but which spurred on the idea of integrated house areas. This enabled us to build up the house system as a focal point of pastoral care.

It was a wonderful time to be involved in comprehensive schooling. This was a time when staff in the comprehensive schools were there freely, wanting to develop equality of opportunity for all their pupils; they wanted to make it work and were willing to put in the time and effort to do so.

The late Sixties and early Seventies were a special period in English education: the politicians were not yet trying to tell the teachers what they should teach or how they should teach it. There was scope for experimentation and there was money to back ideas.

Derbyshire Education Authority understood that the economies associated with large schools could not be obtained from small rural comprehensives like Anthony Gell School. They were very generous to us in staffing and equipment, and for a time we were Derbyshire's most recent showpiece.

I felt privileged to have been the head of Anthony Gell School at a time of significant change. I tried to steer it through that change without losing sight of 400 years of tradition, and to set a course from which my successors will have been able to explore and discover.

I enjoyed my time at Anthony Gell School and at Wirksworth and am glad to have returned to see both school and town develop.

TV fame knocks for band

FORTY-TWO boys and 12 girls from Anthony Gell School descended on London in November, 1972, for a few minutes of nationwide fame.

They were members of the school band, who took part in the Thames TV talent-spotting show, Opportunity Knocks, hosted by Hughie Green.

They came joint third with 66 points, as the scoreboard picture shows.

Mr Keith Blood, head of the music department, conducted the band, which was formed in early 1969, when it consisted of a cornet, two horns and a euphonium.

At the time of the TV competition, 35 members of the band had their own instruments.



■ A section of the band during the TV recording session of Opportunity Knocks. Below: Quiz-master Hughie Green alongside the scoreboard.

1971 line-up of talent

THE school band in 1971 is shown below. Some of those in the picture (not in any particular order) are:

Ken Taylor, history teacher (far left), Gary Hudson, Paul Holmes, Philip Rice, Philip Harris, Michael Winkler, Alex Winkler, Kevin Bacon, Philip Killer, Mark Rowland, Gordon Truman, John Truman, Sean

Ennis, Barry Brough, Simon Waterhouse, ? Shaw, Alison Lytle, Sally Boden.

Ian Howard, Steven Hickman, Neil France, Adrian Smythe, Duncan Beresford, Stephen Taylor, Barry Mart, Roger Jepson, David Page, Malcolm Smith, Michael Hastem, David Watson, Jaqueline Lowe, Keith Blood, head of music department (far right).



The sounds of Toucan

By GARY SPENCER (1979-84)

IN 1984, a group of friends from Anthony Gell School got together and formed a band, which we called Toucan.

They were Eddie Davenport, Paul Griffiths, Dave Brown, David Bateman and myself.

This came about, partly, because I was playing the drums in the school hall one day when Mr Hannan, the deputy head, overheard this and felt my talent should be nurtured (even though I should have been elsewhere at the time!).

He offered to teach me how to play and we spent some time together doing this. The five of us spent a lot of hours practising — at school and at my home (we had to warn the neighbours because it was a bit loud).

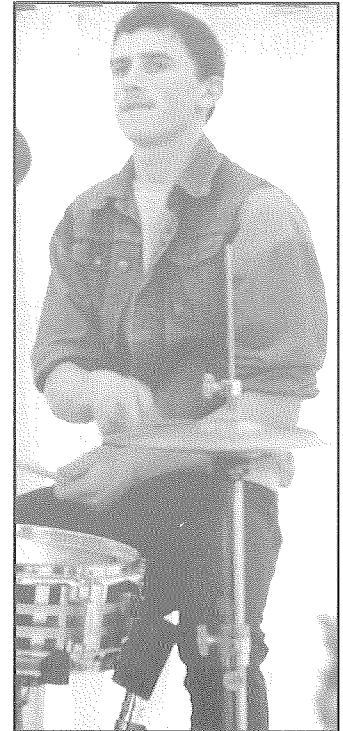
Dave Brown was the singer, Eddie, David and Paul were on guitars and I was on drums.

We played on numerous occasions to school audiences; we also played at Elvaston Castle in front of a very enthusiastic audience, as part of the Spring Bank Holiday celebrations. We also had a write-up in the Community Fayre paper.

Looking back, it was a good time; we all enjoyed ourselves and Mr Hannan was very encouraging and supportive.

Needless to say, we didn't make the big time, but it is a good and fond memory of Anthony Gell School.

My drum kit is sitting idle at the moment, waiting for my son to grow up and play . . . maybe in a band at Anthony Gell School.



GARY SPENCER
— on drums



■ Toucan on stage — Dave Bateman, Dave Brown, Eddie Davenport, Gary Spencer (obscured) and Paul Griffiths.

Dutch treat

IN AUGUST, 1949, a party of 14 boys and 12 girls, accompanied by Mr and Mrs Young and Miss Northrop, spent ten days in Amsterdam, staying at a youth hostel.

The cost was £18 2s 3d, which included £5 pocket money. Highlights included visits to the Rijksmuseum, the island of Marken and the world-famous cheese market at Alkmaar.

During an afternoon on the beach, a few daredevils boys could not resist climbing a wire fence that ran from the dunes to the sea's edge. They beat a hasty retreat when it was pointed out that the area was an uncleared minefield.

■ *Pictured aboard the ferry Prinses Beatrix en route from Harwich to the Hook of Holland are Diane Flint, Ann Croft, Bob Lobley and Nora Wibberley.*



Glorious food!

GIRLS of the PSS (Prevention of Starvation to Schoolgirls) pause between bites to have their picture taken during a picnic at Black Rocks.

The PSS was originally a "food-getting" society, according to the 1949 school magazine.

"But because funds ran low

and time hung heavily on our hands, we decided to start a magazine and to charge the small fee of twopence for reading it.

"So very popular was the magazine that it began to enlarge and now the PSS is even being recognised as a society to improve the knowledge of the arts — the art of writing especially."

Using only two matches

THE end of the summer term signalled the most awaited event in the Guide social calendar — the annual picnic. The Tenderfoots demonstrated their ability to light a fire using no more than two matches — an important part of their initiation into the company.

The whole school company (2nd Wirksworth), under Miss Northrop, made their way by bus and car to the picnic site at Black Rocks, armed with frying pans, saucepans and the ingredients for a full English breakfast.

Readily available combustible material, such as leaves and twigs, having been gathered, the Tenderfoot in each patrol built her fire. There were anxious moments while she struck the match — then ignition . . . what a relief!

Then on to cooking . . . What a glorious aroma filled the air and lots of happy laughter. Convenient boulders provided seating and table tops. Frying pans



■ Guides at Black Rocks (from left): Sheila Raison, Bessie Boden, Rhoda Gell, Jessie Parsons, Brenda Gregory, Dorothy Brewell, Joan Udale, Maureen Parsons, Jean Clay.

were "washed" in sandy material underfoot and the ferny overgrown terrain provided ideal cover for the ensuing games (sardines, stalking, etc.) which brought the day to a successful conclusion.

□ One year, when the weather was atrocious, to avoid disappointment eggs and bacon were cooked over bunsen burners in the school science laboratory.

BRENDA ROWLAND (nee Gallimore), who was at Anthony Gell from 1943 to 1951, looks back to the halcyon days of Guiding.

THE school Guides were synonymous with Miss Northrop. She *was* the Guides and how we adored her.

No-one, I am sure, will ever forget the noisy team games we played at our meetings, held after school every Wednesday, and Miss Northrop's wonderful story of "Mrs Brown's String Bag".

We all galloped noisily up and down the hall as each of the commodities in "Mrs Brown's String Bag" was mentioned.

I joined the Brownies when I was seven and it was a small transition to make when, at ten, I went up into the Guides.

Post-war Guides . . . so many things to be enjoyed: The annual picnic at Black Rocks where we fried as many things as our parents could muster — and we could carry — over open fires made from the wood we collected from nearby copses; the camp fires we had, both in the hall at weekly meetings and at the camps.

The first camp we attended at Breadsall Priory was a weekend event and I remember, vividly, the fights we had with the wasps as we tried to eat our bread and marmalade for breakfast — and being awakened by cows poking their heads in our tents!

The next camp was near Monyash, and with many more Guides attending, the wood patrol was the hardest worked, trying to keep a constant supply of wood going to cook for hungry mouths.

Cocoa, served by Miss Northrop when we were in our sleeping bags, after camp fire on the hill above camp, was a treat indeed.

It was at this camp that we were introduced to latrines . . . and a pile of sand and a dustpan! I often think it was a good job we had a fine week as the "lats" were open to the elements.

We marched to the local church for Sunday service and were "shushed" by the organist for fidgeting, as we were early for the service.

We all passed numerous badges and took great delight in having our sleeves covered with the emblems relating to each badge.

The annual Remembrance Day service was another big event; we all paraded with the British Legion, Army Cadets, ATC, WVS to church and then back on Harrison Drive, to stand shivering in our uniforms (*no coats allowed unless it was raining*) while the wreaths were placed on the memorial for those who died in the two world wars.

We soon learned to put several layers of clothing under our blouses so we were as warm as the other participants in the parade, with their thick uniforms.

I am sure so many Guides all have their own memories of learning Morse code, making slings, tying bandages, what to do for choking, nose bleeds, etc. We learned so much — but had so much fun learning.

Another Guides camp I helped at, as a senior, was in Somerset, which must have been the wettest in history. The



☐ Candy-floss break for a group Guides during a camp at Monyash circa 1949-50.

Camp fires, cocoa and cows!

cook patrol, on the Sunday, spent all morning keeping the tents up whilst everyone else was at church.

They were not very pleased when they returned to find no dinner! But at least their belongings were dry.

That year we ended up cooking in the farmer's pig sty and eating and sleeping in the cow sheds because of the torrential rain and winds.

The last evening, with all our tents finally dried out and rolled carefully ready for coming home, we slept in the large farmhouse's spare rooms.

What tales we had to recount when we arrived home!

Many years later we entertained a Japanese Guide, Mayumi, for a week as a result of my two daughters attending the International Guide Camp at Chatsworth — Peak '74.

I remembered our Thinking Days when we remembered Guides in far-off lands, but never, in those days, thought we would ever meet up with any of them — but that was *Guiding!*

School stars of the cadets

MANY Anthony Gell boys played leading roles in the successes of Wirksworth Army Cadet company in the Forties and Fifties.

The unit, led by Major Bert Brooks, was part of the 3rd Derbyshire Cadet Battalion, Sherwood Foresters, and its members helped to win many trophies at rifle shooting, football and athletics.

Its outstanding record was also recognised by the award of three Certificates of Good Service over the years.

One went to current OW committee member Bill Mather, who also became regimental sergeant-major



■ RSM Bill Mather (left) receives his Certificate of Good Service. On the extreme right is Major Bert Brooks, officer commanding the Wirksworth company.

of the battalion. He won many awards at athletics, captained the Derbyshire Brigade ACF football team and, at shooting, was presented with his "Hundred Medal" by Field Marshal Lord Wilson.



Major Bert Brooks, officer commanding the Wirksworth company, is third from the right in this picture taken at camp at Mablethorpe in the early 1950s. Three Wirksworth cadets are also in the picture — Mick Rowbottom on the extreme left, seated next to Max Hodnett, and Bill Mather, on the extreme right.

Happy days in France

MEMORIES of a school trip to Carnac in France came flooding back for Helen Powell (nee Farnsworth), 1978-82, not least the experience of buying wine at 30p a bottle, only to have it confiscated and drunk by the teachers one evening.

The party was led by Frank Hartnell, John Stubbs and Phil Richards, the latter well known for his impressions of The Fonz from "Happy Days".

In the photograph Helen is second from left, with Paula Harrison (extreme left) and two French girls.



Trip to the Festival of Britain



IN THE summer term of 1951, the year of the Festival of Britain, Miss Northrop and Mr Young organised a trip to London for fifth and sixth-formers, *writes MARGARET PURDOM (nee Austin, 1944-52).*

For most of us, the highlight, apart from rides on the double Big Wheel in the Festival fairground, was a visit to the House of Commons during Question Time.

■ Pictured at the House of Commons are (from left): Roy Coles, Gordon Slack, Vivienne Brooks, Betty Hatch, Mary Buxton, Mr Young, Cynthia Walker, Margaret Austin, Eileen Brewell, Doris Gallimore, Mr E B Wakefield, MP, Glenys Morton, Brenda Holmes, Gwenda Wright, Ruth Cave, Anne Croft, Miss Northrop, David Hallows, John Gailey.

We were fortunate enough to see the great man himself, Winston Churchill. We didn't hear him speak — it wasn't Prime Minister's Question Time — but we did observe him get up and leave the Chamber, to return again about five minutes later.

We each formed our own conclusions as to the objective of this brief absence.

Afterwards we were entertained to a raspberry and cream tea on the terrace of the House by the MP for our constituency, Mr E. B. Wakefield.

Frogs' legs? We weren't impressed

SUSAN SMITH (nee Matkin, 1981-1985) remembers a school trip to Brittany in 1982.

EXCITEMENT, apprehension — just a couple of the emotions whirring around in my stomach the night two coaches left on a dark evening outside Anthony Gell School, destined to arrive in Brittany almost 24 hours later.

Two coaches full of giggly 12-16-year-olds and eight probably terrified teachers were on their way.

I was 12 years old and it was only my second time away from home — months of planning and days of packing were finally behind us. Any feelings of nervousness soon disappeared as we ran to the back of the bus to claim our seats and began our



Brittany-bound:
Back — Jenny Crossland, Jane Hirstwood, Sarah Metcalfe, Sara Wells, Linda Wheeldon.

Front: Katie Skinner, Susan Matkin, Catherine Greaves, Jane Beech.

marathon of non-stop talking and laughing!

We had so much ahead of us; for many it was the first time on a ferry, the first time in a foreign country — and six girls sharing a chalet with no parents watching over us. What bliss!

After a wonderful journey we arrived and tried the local cuisine: Frogs' legs and snails (we weren't impressed), chose our bedrooms, unpacked and got started on our holiday.

We settled in easily; we felt safe, confident and very grown-up. That was until midway through our holiday when the bombshell burst — to develop our social skills, improve our French, etc., we were to spend a day with a French family, but, worst

of all, a member of the opposite sex and his family.

We were horrified and sat up most of the night imagining all sorts of things. It turned out that he was lanky, spotty, wore braces on his teeth and had a rabbit called La Buggy!

I survived the day quite well. We communicated via a dictionary and did the local sights.

The holiday was a wonderful experience. We built friendships that are still going strong 17 years later, good teacher-pupil relationships, so much laughter and lifetime of memories.

But did it improve my understanding of the French language? Mon Oui Mange Tout!!

Seaweed for breakfast— and the ‘bombed’ chalet

By ANTHONY HAYWOOD
(1977-82)

EACH YEAR there was a school trip to Brittany, where we stayed in chalets on the coast. One in particular I will always remember . . . for it relates to April 1st.

It began with a knock at our chalet door at 7 a.m. In the dim light stood one of the teachers, Mr Phil Richards.

“Get yourself, Mark Rowlands and Michael Brown dressed immediately,” he ordered. “Why?” I asked. “Just do it and do it quickly,” came the reply.

Outside, Mr Richards explained that the chef urgently needed seaweed for breakfast as he had run out of this French speciality.

So off we went to the beach, half-a-mile away and filled two buckets with seaweed which we handed to the chef. He gave us a funny looks and started talking to us, but not understanding him we simply smiled and left.

Then the teacher in charge, Mr



□ High spirits in Brittany — with (back) Mark Rowlands, Richard Tucker, John Thorpe, Anthony Haywood and (front) Sue Pepper, Kate Wheeldon and Jane Smith.

Hartnall, called us over and said that if we did not tidy our chalet before we went out there would be serious trouble. We pleaded our innocence in vain.

Then we opened the chalet door . . . it had been completely “trashed” by someone. It looked as though a bomb had dropped on it. After a quick tidy-up we joined the rest of the party for a trip. All day long the teachers had a go at us for being so untidy.

At the end of dinner the three of us were called to the front and Mr Hartnall rose to reprimand us. Then

he stopped . . . Mr Richards stood to hand us a plastic fish full of sweets.

By this time the whole room was in uproar, all laughing their heads off at the three of us. For what we did not know was that the 1st of April in France is known as April Fish Day.

The seaweed was not, of course, for breakfast, but our mission to the beach gave Mr Richards and four others an opportunity to trash our room.

We never lived it down, but we had a great time and fine memories of a wonderful holiday.

From Page 2

16. Education is definitely for all.

A successful classroom education in itself is only half an education. It is important that all students take part in extra-curricular activity. Many will learn as much of value if not more from participation in a play, through playing for a team or from undertaking work experience or voluntary work or through travelling abroad.

AGS places a high premium on participation in any such activity. It enhances the learning relationship between student and teacher, develops cross-age friendship and understanding and teaches through doing rather than books.

I have been told that the opportunities offered by the school in this aspect of education are second to none in the county. I only hope that we come close to that goal. I should add, too, that

such provision is for all and the discreet help of the foundation governors is vital in ensuring that none is debarred through circumstance from participating. Inclusiveness also seems to engender high standards. We have an enviably and wholly surprising (in view of our size) reputation for producing talented individuals — musicians, artists, sports men and women.

All of the outstanding performers I have met place participation and loyalty to others above individual performance. We have little time for the elitism that is still found in some parts of the education. Anecdotal, I know, but I was particularly pleased when a group of four students holding in excess of 16 Grade As at A level between them point-blank rejected the idea of a photograph — in their view it would only downgrade the achievements of their friends and peers. Society in general could do with a bit more of that kind of spirit.

And for the future — I'm a historian not a fortune-teller. However, some things are clear. The school will remain relatively small — numbers will be between 600 and 650 and that is about as many as we can manage without risking changing our ethos. Facilities are improving — the leisure centre due to open before the end of the year (1999) will be a memorial to community partnership, but also a wonderful resource for all in the area.

New fashions will come and go within education and the new technologies will play a growing part in the delivery of learning. There will never be enough money to do what we want (though hopefully the gap between obvious need and actual resources will narrow). Beyond all this though, the school's philosophy is sufficiently secure to ensure that the focus will always be on personal achievement for all within a socially responsible context.

IT WAS called "Wirksworth's wedding of the year" — but it could also have been described as "Wirksworth's secret of the year".

For in August, 1963, one month after her retirement after 34 years on the staff of the then Wirksworth Grammar School, Miss Dorothy Briggs, senior mistress, married retired bank manager Mr Brian Hilditch.

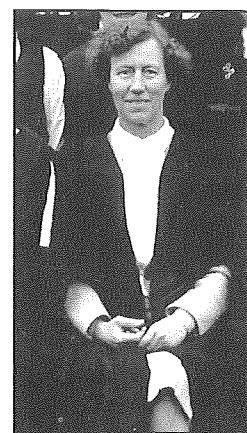
Miss Briggs, then 65, had been a friend for many years of Mr Hilditch (79) and his first wife, Constance, who had died two years previously. Although they kept their wedding plans secret, news leaked out and a crowd of about 50 well-wishers were waiting to welcome them at the parish church.

Mr Hilditch, who was manager of Lloyds Bank, a county councillor, pillar of the cricket club for 60 years, and a churchwarden, commented: "I am very proud and pleased. Even at my age there is romance in a situation like this."

Miss Briggs, who also was head of the school biology department, graduated from London University and held a diploma from London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. She played many principal roles with Wirksworth Congregational Players.

Mr Hilditch died two years later at their home in

The secret romance of Miss Dorothy Briggs



MISS BRIGGS
— pictured in 1949

Cromford Road. His widow later moved to Evercreech, Somerset, where she died in March, 1988.

Just two months previously she had written to thank the many former pupils who had entered their names in a book to congratulate her on her 90th birthday. "She wrote: "It gave me the greatest pleasure to turn the pages and think of days gone by."

Master of many talents

FOR many of his former pupils, Mr W. B. Grassby was the chemistry master. And so he was — but this role came about quite by chance.

For when he joined the school in 1936, after a period of unemployment, his role was to teach commercial subjects to those who wished to take up a business career.

On his retirement after nearly 31 years at Anthony Gell he wrote in the school magazine: "It was not until I had actually started my work in the school that I was asked to teach chemistry as my main subject.

"However, I did for some years take classes in commercial subjects and I venture to say that the work was successful."

When Mr Grassby joined the school there were about 120 pupils.

In those days, before the advent of school kitchen, "those who brought lunch ate it sitting at a long table placed in the corridor between the old laboratory doors".

Mr Grassby recalled the time when school singing in assembly was even worse than usual.

"The headmaster chided us and said he would show us how to sing. This he pro-

ceeded to do by standing up and singing two solos, Miss Northrop accompanying him on the piano.

"One item was *Van Tromp* was an *Admiral bold*, the other was a composition by Beethoven. This episode was intended as a serious lesson to us, but I'm afraid it wasn't taken that way by everybody."

Mr Grassby also recalled with obvious affection "the happy days when members of Upper VIth, wishing to do extra work, but hampered by blackout regulations, worked in the evenings at their chemistry in my cellar."

And there was the time when certain members of the VIth found they could walk, via a manhole, over the classrooms on rafters in the ceiling space.

"One now well-known citizen of Wirksworth was found hanging by his fingers from the manhole, mischievous persons having removed the ladder of escape!"

Mr Grassby was a man of many interests — astronomy, electronics, music, literature. He was a Master of Science and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.



W. B. GRASSBY
— taught wartime pupils in his cellar.

Plucky Ellen wins top yachting award

A FORMER Anthony Gell pupil who has been mad about sailing since she was very young has won the 1998 Yachtsman of the Year award for her performance in the Route du Rhum transatlantic race for single-handers.

Ellen MacArthur (22) is only the third woman to win the award in 44 years — and the youngest.

Former classmates recall that Ellen, who lives at Longway-

bank, used to listen to shipping forecasts on a portable radio in class.

Despite a broken hydraulic system and strong headwinds, her 50ft. Kingfisher finished more than 300 miles ahead of the second boat in that class — and also beat eight 60-footers.

Ellen had to make running repairs in bad weather, but grit and resourcefulness got her through this tough test of

character and sailing ability.

■ Ellen has since been filming at her old school as part of a video of her life which will be distributed to yacht clubs.

"I wanted to tell people that a kid from the middle of England can do what I did," she explained

She has now gained a £1.5 million sponsorship to enable her to take part in the Vendee Globe Race. With it she will build a 60ft. yacht.

How the bank manager's son survived Titanic disaster

THE sinking of the Titanic, the subject of James Cameron's Oscar-winning blockbuster starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet, has an indirect link with Wirksworth.

For among the survivors of the 1912 disaster was a former pupil of Anthony Gell Grammar School, Lawrence Beesley.

He told the story of those fateful hours after the "unsinkable" liner hit an iceberg on her maiden voyage in a book, "The Loss of the Titanic", published three months afterwards.

Beesley, born in Wirksworth on the last day of 1877, was the son of a bank manager and lived over what is now the NatWest Bank in the Market Place.

He became a science master at Dulwich College, London, resigning his post to tour the United States. He was also intending to visit a brother, Frank, then living in Toronto.

Beesley wrote that he was reading in his bunk on Sunday, April 14, "pleasantly lulled by the dancing motion of the mattress". Then the movement stopped.

Before long passengers were advised to put on their lifejackets and make their way on deck. The huge liner was already beginning to list when Beesley reached the upper deck. Women and children were given priority to board the inadequate number of lifeboats.

Beesley recalled that a crew member on board Lifeboat No. 13 asked if there were any more

women or children near him. There was none, so with no-one to take the last seat on the lifeboat Beesley jumped aboard.

He described two near-disasters as the lifeboat, with 64 aboard, was lowered. In one of these another lifeboat was being lowered on top of No. 13.

Beesley "reached up and touched the boat's bottom swinging above our heads, trying to push our boat from under her".

The former Wirksworth boy could only watch as the Titanic slipped beneath the surface, taking with her 1,500 passengers and crew. After more than three hours the occupants of Lifeboat No. 13 were picked up by the liner Carpathia.

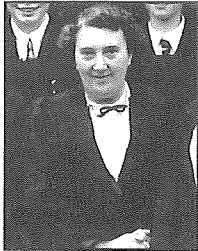
Many years later Beesley was a technical adviser on the set of "A Night to Remember", an earlier film about the disaster.



■ After nearly 20 years as secretary to the OW Association, Joan Brown received presentations at the 1997 reunion at the Cock Inn, Mugginton. Also in the picture are her successor, Brenda Rowland, and chairman Martin Beresford.

Staff of 1949

■ Here are five more of the staff in 1949, taken from a school photograph.



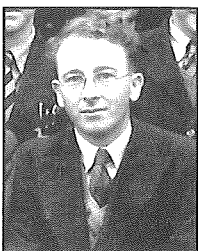
RUTH GREGORY



Miss MASON



MARJORIE MORSE



TREVOR DAVIS



MICHAEL O'SHEA

Mrs Robinson — on the M1 in her Austin 10

By JOY WOOLLISCROFT (nee FRY) 1945-50

THE art class was held in the School House where the headmaster, Mr Round, lived. It was a quick dash from the main building, especially on wet days, carrying drawing implements, paints, brushes, etc.

Mrs Robinson, our art teacher, was a small, mature, cheerful character, who unfortunately was rather deaf and wore a hearing aid. This caused difficulties at times, controlling a mixed class of pupils who misbehaved occasionally.

Mrs Robinson was a brilliant artist and produced great pictures, particularly still-life. She was a very patient person and helped us overcome any difficulties we had when producing our work.

Robert Lobley, I am sure, was encouraged to do wonderful pieces of art by her and later he went to further his artistic

talent in London. Yvonne Petts, too, was a brilliant pupil.

Mrs Robinson travelled from Mickleover in her Austin 10 several times a week to teach at Anthony Gell. She was rather an erratic driver at times and being deaf did not help.

On one occasion when travelling up the M1, after visiting her daughter, Ursula, in London, the police flagged her down to tell her that the car had lost its complete exhaust system several miles back. She had not heard a thing!

After finishing my time at school, and following a career in children's nursing in Derby, I married and eventually went to live in Mickleover. I found that we were living around the corner from Mrs Robinson.

We became friends again and she renewed my interest in the field of art.

Cut ! Cut ! The cast that couldn't remember lines

By RACHEL COOPER (1976-83)

LOOKING back now on the seven years I spent at Anthony Gell, three things remain most prominent. First, my teachers; second, the friends I made and experiences we shared and, finally, the many activities I was encouraged to participate in outside lessons.

Without the help and support of my teachers I would never have achieved academic success. However, I am also grateful for all the other opportunities they made possible.

There was always sport — for me, tennis, netball, rounders and hockey. The latter was usually cold, the opposition hostile and, for our team, rarely successful, although at least I wasn't the goal-keeper!

There were several plays. I especially

remember our teachers announce when, after several months of rehearsal, we managed to cut most scenes from 15 or more minutes to one minute due to the entire cast forgetting their lines.

I also remember the school council, our chance to express opinions on how the school was run. I am not sure we changed very much, but at least it gave us our first experience of management and debate.

There was the school band, although my contribution to this was minimal as I seem to remember miming a good many of the notes.

These and many more opportunities gave me the enthusiasm to try anything, something I have retained to this day, and I hope will continue.

Carnival high jinks

■ The school entered a decorated horse-drawn cart in Wirksworth's carnival in 1936.

At the back are Marjorie Rains, Edith Stanley, Harold Farnsworth and Harry Matkin (driving for W. Hatfield, North End).

Centre: Derek Wheeldon (partly obscured), Aileen Williams, Mary Slater, Biddy Hatfield, Edward Pearson, Desmond Taylor, Derek Watts.

Front: Dorothy Cappendell, Cathleen Crofts, Mary Smith, Evelyn Stamp, Cynthia Hargreaves, Edmund Greasley.



General star guest at speech day

■ Lt. Gen. Sir Oliver Leese, who commanded the Eighth Army during World War II, was the speaker at Speech Day in 1954. Lady Leese presented the prizes.

Among those in the picture above are Steven Wright, Linda Wright, Peter Haworth, Doreen Measham, Diane Dunn, Patricia Humphries.

Warwick Taylor, John Grundy, Ian Buxton, Jennifer Harrison, Annette Hudson, Beryl Brough, Betty Bainbridge.

Geffrey Smedley, Alan Wigley, Barbara Billington, Judith Coley, Barbara Burgman, David Smith, Christine Ormond.



Dance time

Guests at an OWA dance in about 1950.

Back: Fred Britland, Roger Crabtree, Maitland Hilditch, Harold Bowmer, Peter Clay, Geoffrey Kirk, E. H. B. Young.

Front: Mary Whitehead, Lesley Northrop, Cecil Round, Dorothy Briggs, Hazel Kennett, Marion Spencer.



■ The OWA 1995 reunion at the Bear. From left: Bert Haworth, Dorothy Haslem, Fred Richardson, Jean Howsley, May Aves, Harold Beynon, John Linthwaite, Dennis Rowland, Renee Richardson, Jack Marsden, Cynthia Rowland, June Buckley, Joan Brown.



OWA marks its 50th

■ A get-together at Alton Manor in June, 1978, the home of Col. Hilton, OWA president at the time, to mark the 50th anniversary.

From left: Annie Smith, Fred Richardson, May Aves, Eddie Webster, Joan Brown, Elsie Shaw.

Sixth-formers of 1941

□ The VIth form in 1941. Back: Robert Macfee, Harold Farnsworth (head boy), Mr Alf Rowbottom, Des Taylor. Front: Doris Webster, Joyce Webster. Eveline Stamp (head girl).

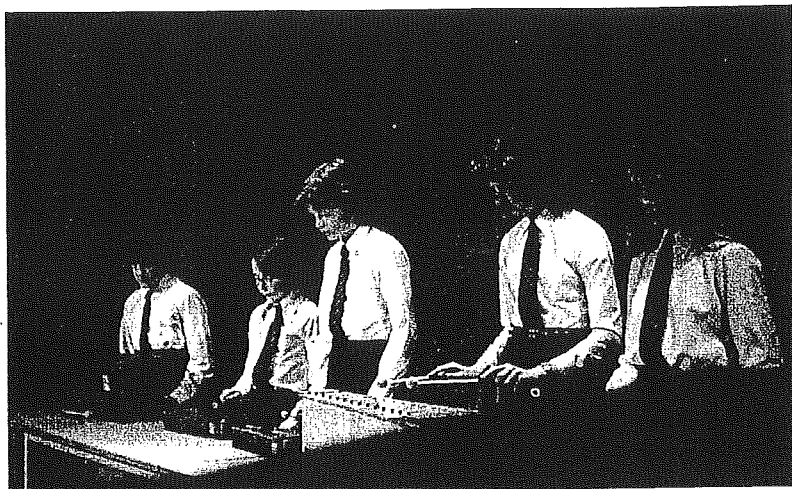
Eveline, who became a teacher, working at Cromford, says that Joyce Webster married a GI and lives in Boston.



... and of 1986

□ The growth of the sixth form over 45 years is illustrated by the photograph below, taken in 1986, with teachers John Payne, Majorie Thoday and deputy head Mrs Cashdean.





A SCENE from the play "Catastrophe" put on by pupils in 1984-85.

Helen Bennett remembers "an evening with a feline flavour, combining music, dance, drama and poetry."

"One item (pictured left) was a rendition of 'Memories' from the popular musical 'Cats', played on xylophones."

From left: Katherine Greaves, Helen Bennett, Rachel Bacon, Lisa Wilson, Liz Acons.



■ In January, 1980, sixth-formers took part in a charity bike push in relays around the tennis courts. They covered 86.4 miles in 12 hours. Among those taking part were Paul Richardson, Paul Ashworth, Simon Vaughan, Steven Williams, Andrew Perry and Richard Jackson.

On stage

□ BELOW: A concert put on by the Girl Guides in 1957-58. Back: Elizabeth Hopkinson, Mona Wilson, Sylvia Slack, Judith Wright, Christine Ormond. Front: Anne Cowley, Janet Holmes, Judy Oulianoff, Judith Cowley.



TIME FOR TEA

REFRESHMENT time in the late 1980s after tennis matches between the OWA and Anthony Gell had been played on the school courts, the players having joined the cricketers at the pavilion on the Recreation Ground in Derby Road.

Back (from left): Dorothy Wigley, Eileen Chadwick, Nancy Slaney, Annie Smith, Janet Robinson, Joan Brown, Dorothy Haslem, Cynthia Rowland.

Front: Susan Brewell, Barbara Edwards, Betty Ward, Brenda Brown, Rosemary Thompson.



Bert Haworth — OW stalwart

BERT HAWORTH, a founder of the Old Wirksworthian Association, died on April 14, 1998, at the age of 93.

He served as chairman for many years, giving up the post in 1957. *The Wirksworthian* magazine of that year commented: "He has been a staunch and active supporter for our cause for many years and we offer him our grateful thanks for his considerable efforts."

This is an extract from his obituary.

"He attended Anthony Gell Grammar School and afterwards qualified as an ophthalmic optician and a Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers.

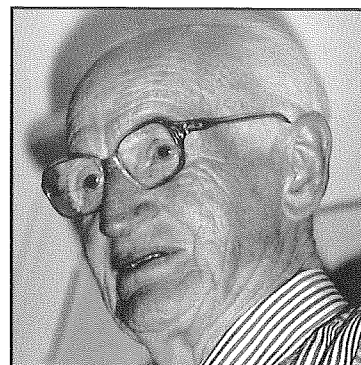
"His professional work also earned him Fellowship of the Royal Society of Health and Freedom of the City of London.

"Bert also worked until his retirement as a dispensing chemist, first in Wirksworth and then for many years in Derby.

"He was actively engaged in life in Wirksworth. He was organist at Wirksworth Ebenezer Chapel during the 1930s and 1940s and served as a special constable during the Second World War.

"Bert was a vice-president of Wirksworth Cricket Club and a member of the local Probus Club.

"His interests included gardening, music, reading and the daily crossword."



■ Bert's wife, Eleanor, died in 1990. He left two sons, Peter and Richard, both of whom attended Anthony Gell, and four grandsons.

Harold Beynon — dedicated teacher

HAROLD BEYNON, who died on August 15, 1997, was appointed English teacher at the former Anthony Gell Grammar School in 1934.

After serving in the Intelligence Corps during the Second World War, he returned to his teaching post at Wirksworth where he was a most dedicated language teacher — precise and thorough with a refreshing sense of humour.

In 1949 he relinquished his post at Wirksworth and with his wife Dorothy (nee Prince, of Bonsall) set off for promotion at Old Close Grammar School, Cleethorpes.

A headship at a secondary modern school at Sandy, Bedfordshire, followed. Later, he became headmaster of

Thirsk Grammar School, Bradford Grammar School, Stoke Grammar School and, finally, he became principal of a newly-built sixth form college at Stoke, which was officially opened by Lord Wilson, the former Prime Minister.

As a supporter of the Old Wirksworthian Association, Mr Beynon was able to sustain his interest in his former pupils. His many friends in the area will remember him with fondness.

At his funeral at Caverswell Church, Stoke, a floral tribute in the Anthony Gell School colours was sent by the Old Wirksworthian Association.

Spud and John — linchpins

Two former linchpins of the school died during 1998 — John Murphy and John Bowyer.

■ Mr Murphy (known as "Spud"), a war hero and champion sportsman, died at his home in Bournebrook Avenue in May at the age of 83. While groundsman at the school in the 1940s he coached the senior girls in cricket during lunch hours, providing a team to challenge the boys.

He was a successful veteran athlete, returning to active competition at the age of 69. He once won five gold medals in one afternoon in the Northern championships. He won further gold medals when he was in his mid-70s.

In 1989 Olympic athlete Tessa Sanderson nominated him for a "Help the Aged" golden award for his contribution to sport and later he was presented to Princess Diana at a celebrity luncheon in London.

A one-time "Desert Rat", Spud regularly served behind enemy lines. He was a great supporter of community events and put all his energy into promoting a sports centre for Wirksworth.

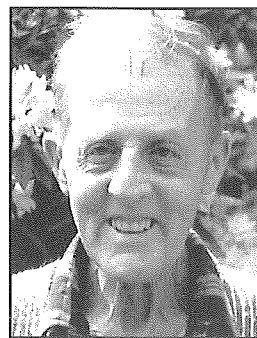
■ John Bowyer, who died in November at the age of 66, was assistant caretaker for more than 15 years. He was involved with the building of the main part of the school in the 1960s while working for a construction company.

Music was one of his main loves; he often sat in on rehearsals of Wirksworth Community Orchestra. Chris Dixon, a teacher at Anthony Gell, said John had an ability to recall a vast range of classical music. "I think one of his greatest regrets was that he was never able to learn a musical instrument."

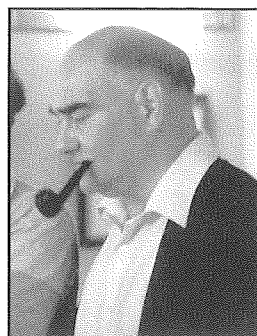
In another tribute, headteacher Rod Leach said: "He loved kids. . . You would always be able to find him around the school by his singing."

Head caretaker Mark Bonsall said many would miss John's jokes and laughter. "It was often said that a third of the people who used to go to Wirksworth Cinema had gone along for the film, and the other two-thirds to listen to John's reactions to the jokes!"

Before moving into the building trade, John worked as a cobbler.



□ Groundsman John Murphy (above) and assistant caretaker John Bowyer.



OW 'skipper' for nearly 20 years

D. J. O. (JACK) MARSDEN, who became chairman of the OWA in 1978 when the association was revived, died on July 15, 1999, at a nursing home at Darley Bridge. He was 85.

In his later years he lived at Chesterfield Road, Matlock.

Under his leadership the annual OW v. School cricket and tennis matches were organised, spectators joining with players socially after the matches.

Jack, a member of the family that ran the long-established ironmonger's business in the Market Place, retired as chairman in 1997 after a reliable innings of almost 20 years.

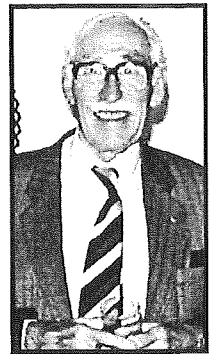
He was a stalwart of Wirksworth Cricket Club for many years.

At the funeral service at St Mary's Wirksworth, the Rector, Canon Robert Caney, paid tribute to a man who had led a full life.

At Wirksworth Grammar School he excelled at sports, particularly cricket and hockey; eventually he became a hockey umpire.

He was a life-long member of St Mary's where he had been a server for 60 years.

The Rector added that Jack's sense of humour and his ability to socialise endeared him to his many friends. Donations in memory of Jack were for church funds.



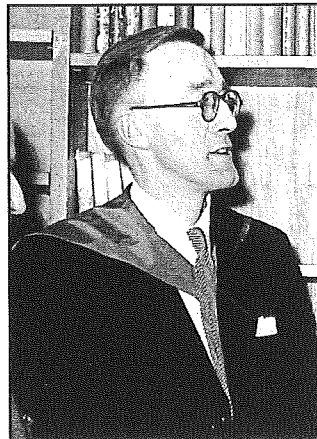
Philip Slater — man of great energy

PHILIP SLATER, Head of Wirksworth Grammar School from 1958 to 1965, died at Leamington Spa in April, 1999. He was 76.

This appreciation first appeared in *Community Fayre*, the town's free newspaper, and we are grateful for their kind permission to republish it here.

Philip was a man of great energy; his distinctive raking stride as he moved at top speed across the quad, gown flapping behind him, or ate up the ground to thrash the shuttle at badminton, or made a tackle in the staff v. school hockey match.

He was also a man of great enthusiasms, some, but not all, short-lived; his passion for bees, which when he met you he hoped would become infectious; his attempts to renovate his house and garden; his love of the oboe, which he played in the school orchestra; his keeping of



chickens, which wandered all over the school.

He, his wife and young family became very much part of the school during their seven years in School House; you heard the sounds of children making dens in the garden during English lessons; you tripped over Benji, that "Old English Hearthrug", as you handed in your dinner money.

As head, Philip worked hard to ensure the smooth amalgamation of the two town schools into one comprehensive; he introduced the house system, planned the curriculum and integrated the two staffs with sensitivity.

He was also a familiar figure around the town, often in wellington boots, but more formally at functions such as the Old Wirksworthian dinners, where he was known as a nimble ballroom dancer.

It was a shock when he left to take up a headship in Manchester and later, in Coventry. He kept in touch with Wirksworth through an old friend and colleague, Mrs Annie Smith, and we, in turn, learned that in retirement he enjoyed reading to a blind university student — and that he was still a keen poultry-keeper.

Philip Slater will be remembered for his drive, determination and his sense of humour. We are saddened to hear of his death.

Memories of a campaigning school

"A GOOD school does not *make* people behave, it makes them want to behave." With these words Mr Pearce said a farewell to his charges, some of them the children of pupils he had taught at Anthony Gell.

He added: "I have relished every day, teaching you, talking with you, helping you, seeing you at work and play, admiring your talents and confidences, your social skills, watching you grow . . ."

He had always tried hard to help pupils manage their own lives, to make their own decisions. "We have to learn from our experiences, some of which may be hurtful, but always we need to be optimistic and cheerful and confident."

ROY PEARCE served as headmaster for 20 years, retiring in 1991. In these extracts from messages to pupils and staff he recalls the continuing successes of the school.

In a message to staff, Mr Pearce described the running of a comprehensive school as "a fascinating, demanding and devouring task".

He was taking away vintage memories. "We have managed to run a school where very many children of varying backgrounds, temperaments and talents could flourish, expressing themselves confidently as individuals."

His colleagues, with their high standards, had been his greatest professional support — they had a common purpose and shared the fundamentals. "We've been a campaigning school and our example has been a powerful one."



■ Classmates from 1950 with some of their former teachers.

Photograph by courtesy of John Sumpter,
Photographers, Long Eaton

In March, 1999, classmates mainly from the entry year of 1950, and most of them originating from Chaddesden, got together for a reunion. STAN HAWKES sums up a memorable weekend.

T. W. T. R. T. W. (that was the reunion that was)

WELL, we arranged it, it came, we had a truly memorable evening and now it's gone — but not forgotten! I, like most of my other friends there on the day, have had serious withdrawal symptoms.

It was so wonderful to see all of the great people again who had played such a part in my formative years. The 44 years since we had all met just rolled away on the night and we were back in the classroom again.

Our four wonderful guests of honour — Mrs Hollingsworth, Mr Rodgers, Mr Britland and Mr Waterhouse — were the “icing on the cake” as far as we were all concerned. They all looked so vibrant and happy and, I think, they thoroughly enjoyed themselves and would like more of the same!

Indeed, Mr Rodgers has already reserved his place with us for the year 2000 . . .

They made such nice speeches, even down to Mr Rodgers reminding some of us that we still owed him some homework.

We had the essential blue-and-yellow cake and balloons and sparkling wines and photographs.

The entire evening was a great success and, yes, we are already planning the golden one for 2000 — because that will be 50 years since the first of us came to Anthony Gell.

On the Sunday after the reunion we were allowed to walk the corridors of the school, smell the chalk and remember Mrs Thompson's school dinners — what a super experience!

In the afternoon, we were taken on a four-hour ramble up Gilkin and the surrounding area by David Wright. That also was wonderful. The last time most of us were there we were running in the cross-country and cursing Mr Rodgers!

For several weeks afterwards the wonderful cards and letters continued to arrive, saying how very, very much everyone had enjoyed the weekend and asking that we carry on next year where we left off. If you didn't come this time, please join us next year.

THE YEAR OF '76

A REUNION for the year of 1976 was held in September, 1996, at the Bear Inn, Alderwasley. Twenty years on from our first days at Anthony Gell School — could anyone believe so much time had passed? Were we really that old?

The previous year had found Margaret Wood (nee Banks), Teresa Jones (nee Ford) and Helen Frost (nee Johnson) busily tracking down members of the year. Some proved to be untraceable, but the culmination of their labours saw 200 people attend the event.

The teachers who appeared to see how we had changed were Mr Thornley (physics), Mrs Gibbon (chemistry), Mr Brownlee (sport), Mr Keeling (maths) and Mr Richards (German).

The entire year was grateful for the organisers' hard work.



■ Standing (from left): Dawn Holgate, Teresa Jones (nee Ford), Julie Smith, Margaret Wood (nee Banks), Karl Else, Andrew Hawkins, Janet Gratton, Samantha Hill, Rebecca Woodruff, Moira Hunter, Jenny Bowers, Julie

Chalmers, Joan Hunt (nee Bowler), Rowena Quirk (nee Wigley).

Kneeling: Claire Vardy, Yvonne Mammatt (nee Matkin), Sally Slater, Angie Thomas, Teresa Land.

Teachers: Mrs Gibbon (far right), front; Mr Keeling, far right, back.

WE HAD just returned from a trip to somewhere or other, so I poured myself a pint of Keo and trundled into the study to interrogate the ansafone. Behold — the dulcet tones of Maxwell Hodnett, of the Upper Fifth, who was enthusing about a recent WGS reunion.

I'm not good at this sort of thing, but Max is. So enthused was he that he had offered to help put together an anthology about the old days — and perhaps I could contribute something along sporting lines.

Never in a million years, I thought.

Well! To kick off with I knew absolutely nothing about sport before entering WGS. Being born in March I was one of those oddities who started at 11½ and was the class elder. You might think I should have known something by then, so I'd better put it all in context.

We lived in the uplands about eight miles north of Wirksworth. Our house sat all on its own in glorious countryside, in the corner of one of grandfather's fields; he farmed at Aldwark, a nearby hamlet you would miss if you blinked.

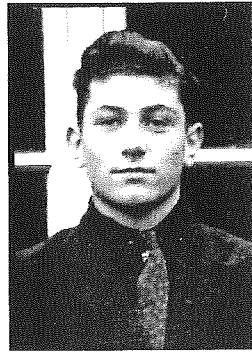
Like all grandkids I spent a deal of time with the wrinklies and before I started school at all was adept at hand-milking, muck-spreading, pitching hay and clobbering rabbits with stones — some of these activities were to serve me in good stead

My elementary school was at Brassington, some three miles distant. Being born in March I naturally went there at 4½, becoming the youngest in the class. For nigh on seven years I tramped that blasted heath and I won't bore you with the meteorological conditions most of the time — suffice to say that nine months of winter and three months of bad weather was the norm (and one of the reasons why we live in Cyprus).

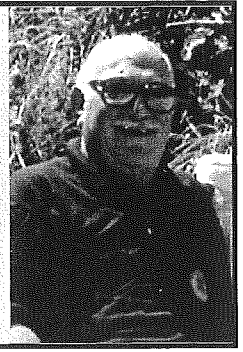
So in addition to a reliable right arm and a muscular back I could now boast strong legs.

During those said years I only remember two events of a vaguely sporting nature. The first was the School Races, a series of graded events between 30 and 50 yards. That first year our race was last so I watched carefully all the previous ones. The starter, Mr "Sweetshop" Allsop, said he would count up to three then clap as the signal to go.

I noticed that he in fact clapped *on*



IAN HORROCKS (left, at school in 1945-50) recalls his sporting memories. After a career in the RAF, during which he attained the rank of air-commodore, he now lives in retirement in Cyprus, where he was pictured (right) in 1998.



three, so when our turn came and with only 30 yards to go, I was off like a bunny late for a birthday and Robert is your father's brother. This earned me the nickname of Foxy, which I didn't like one jot, despite my penchant for clobbering rabbits.

The other event was a "sort of" football match. It didn't mean anything to me when they howled "corner" or "foul, Ref" so they stuffed me in goal out of the way. Fairly soon the ball came my way. I grabbed it as goalies do and then threw it down with the intention of kicking it upfield; whereupon an opposing forward nipped in and without ado booted it home.

I was bewildered and later even used this incident to try to get my nickname removed. Well, they weren't going to

Up for the cup against Newbridge, with young Micky Williams pushing in the winner

have that; my nickname was a four-letter word beginning with F and that was that.

It was with all this marvellous preparation that I entered WGS, the faintly proud owner of second-hand football boots ex-Frank Dakin. Frank was a big lad and I played the first term with cardboard plugging up the toe ends.

Our introduction was on a little pitch at the side of the regular Hannages slope. The only thing I remember is everyone belting the ball as far as they could and then running after it and being called a "dirty player" by Jackie Brewell, because at that time I knew nothing of his reputation and, of course, none of the rules.

Things improved as things do and eventually we produced a very good

junior side, carrying everything before us in 1949 and providing some members of the South Peak XI. This was good going because our resources were tiny. Five forms of no more than 12 per form gave us about 60 lads from which to choose.

I recall only one loss that season and that after we'd been 2-0 up at half-time. It was a friendly — I don't think we had a league — but we made sure of the Cup in a final at Matlock against the auld enemy, Newbridge. We were, of course, bitter rivals and I was a sort of hate figure for them.

It was all after an encounter with one of their stars called Peet, I think; anyway he was all twinkling feet and golden curls and I gave him what I thought was a firm but fair "Nat. Lofthouse". The Newbridge ref. thought otherwise and to their spectators I was ever after "that filthy bastard", which was one up on what Jackie ever called me.

Anyway, to the match. Newbridge scored first and half-time came and went: Quite late on I managed to pump in an equaliser; then came a Johnny Palin cross, pulled back low and fast from the right — and there was young Micky Williams pushing it home from close in, in the very best Bobby Charlton manner.

In fact, the be-knighted gentleman hadn't even invented the move then, which earned Mick a half-a-crown from his father. My Dad was not prone to such giddy offerings and whose feelings about sports were very much in line with those of his father-in-law.

I will gloss over the so-called senior side as it was merely the young set with the addition of Roger Hargreaves. Rog. was a goodish cricketer, but didn't claim much soccer expertise.

Since the secondary moderns threw out their pupils at 14 and almost all us Wirksworthians left at 16, our fate was to play the big grammar schools. The results were usually like Bemrose

□ Continued on next page

□ From previous page

4th XI wopping us 8-0. The only consolation I remember was the lovely showers at Bemrose. Showers! Another sporting first. I recall being herded into the WGS shower for the first time and wondering how the heck folk could breathe properly in such a contraption.

Then there were the so-called balmy days of cricket. You will have guessed I knew precisely nothing about cricket. Mr Young divided us into two and shepherded us to the small practice pitch. Our team was to bat and I was to open with Pete Webber.

Webber took the strike and missed the first ball which was neatly taken by John Smith, looking faintly like an armadillo in enormous pads and gloves.

He slung the ball back down the pitch towards the bowler and I promptly hit it for four! I then got a four-minute lecture from Mr Young who couldn't believe anyone of 12 had no idea about the game. I told him it was probably a result of my grandfather's attitude. Every time I asked absolutely anything about sport he would say: "*Nay, lad, that'll neither fill thee belly nor clothe thee back.*"

Mr Young muttered something like "Good Lord" and then said he thought I was right-handed. I confirmed that I was. "Well, why are you holding the blessed bat left-handed?" I'd never given it any thought previously, but, quick as ever, explained that when I was learning to spread muck, pitch hay and the like, this was always the way I held the implements.

So it was now official. When I held anything with two hands I was left-handed; those skills requiring one hand were completed with the right. It was and is the way things are.

With the secondary moderns not playing cricket we were once again up against the big grammars at senior level. Once again our team was basically the junior soccer team, plus skipper Roger Hargreaves. A veil needs to be drawn over most of our efforts. I certainly remember winning once against a team from Derby . . . no, not Bemrose — they used to wop us with their 6th XI.

I vaguely remember visiting Belper and, having been slaughtered the year before, knew what we were up against as soon as we saw the individuals changing. In particular, there was a slightish, Brian Stathamish character who projected the ball at frightening speeds and had us all out for 11 —

Ah, the ages we spent watching the glorious Monica — flashing racquet, skirt and knickers in equal measure

whereupon their sardonic skipper, all dark good looks and fancy hat, hit two sixes in the first four balls and enquired if we wanted to play on a bit "for the fun of it".

Full of humour, we laughed and told him to bugger off.

That's not to say we didn't have a few performers. Webber often got a few runs and Chuck Hallows and Johnny Buckley could shiver the timbers on occasion.

Just as we were leaving WGS a young mite called Ian Buxton was beginning to make his mark. Every lunchtime we

There was this young mite in shorts — his name was Ian Buxton

used to play in the nets and whoever held the bat at the end of the session held it at the start of the next.

This snapper in shorts used to drive us to distraction, taking the strike for days on end. Not much after that he used to open for Cromford with his father, Ray, and the locals had the effrontery to mutter about failure if they didn't put on a ton for the first wicket. And then it was not much after that that he played for Derbyshire, becoming the captain and also playing for County at soccer. Even a tiny school has its gems!

Actually, at the time I was there I was more interested in his sister; but Mary was firmly Roger's girl and eventually became Mrs Hargreaves.

Which reminds me that it was at about 14 we discovered girls and consequently also discovered tennis, which the boys weren't allowed to play. Ah, the ages we spent with our noses pressed to the wire watching our glamour-puss, the left-handed Monica Gell. Flashing racquet, skirt and knickers in equal measure, she was glorious and damned good at tennis, too.

Imagine the shock in our last year when she was beaten by Hazel Kennett in the knock-out final, Hazel having projected one power forehand after

another and reducing Monica to tears. I was friendly with Hazel, but never really forgave her that. In any case, Monica was a Gell like me, as it were.

Nor were we disappointed in the winter season, 'cos Monica was an Amazon on the hockey pitch as well. I can still see her on the wind-swept Hannages field (our cricket pitch, in fact) rain and sleet belting in horizontally from the West. And braving it all, our Monica; wet through, covered in mud and sweating profusely — absolutely gorgeous!

To conclude I must admit I tell a lie. I discovered the opposite sex (as opposed to girls) a little earlier than 14. The daft thing is I can't remember her name. It certainly wasn't Miss Briggs; one didn't mess with Miss Briggs. It wasn't Miss Northrop (too fluent), Miss Cappendell (too "athletic") or Miss Gregory (middle-aged and spoke too much in French).

But she's there in my mind's eye. Smallish, plumpish, fresh complexion and lovely dark, curly hair. T'was in the 3rd form and Maxie and I had been doing our normal mucking about during the obligatory calcium break. A weird bet was on — a copy of the Wizard or Hotspur if I would dare . . .

Miss, having set some questions on the board, was strolling the aisles. Please would she like to take a walk with me one evening? Marking apparently filled her evenings. What, every night? Well, no, not on Fridays. So Friday's OK then?

Apparently not — it was her bath night (*you remember we used to have them in those days?*) I thought maybe this was a perfect idea, but alas she didn't see it my way. Pity! What a sporting memory that would have been!

As it was I had to console myself with my prize Wizard and learned that it was Wilson the Wonder Athlete who invented the Fosbury Flop some 20 years before Dick did. He'd cleared 7ft with ease, at a time when the world record was 6ft 6in.

Not a bad sporting memory to end on . . .

1918

■ The school's 1918-19 football team.
 Back: Halstead, Sammy Johnson, Ron Hatchett, J. Hilderley, G. Hurt. Centre: Spink, H. Lees, Jenkins, Bert Haworth, Ken Harrison. Front: Eric Hooley, Warner.



1925

■ The 1925-26 football team flanked by Mr Robinson (extreme left), the referee, and Mr Hansen Bay, headmaster.
 Back: Roome, Spencer (B), Blackham, Dean, Brooks.
 Centre: Yorke, Taylor, Webster.
 Front: Spencer (J), Needham, Warner.

1930



THIS photograph, lent by George Evans of Bakewell (and formerly of Middleton) shows competitors in a cross-country race at Belper in about 1930.

Anthony Gell competed against Herbert Strutt and another school. The Wirksworth competitors are numbered 25-36.

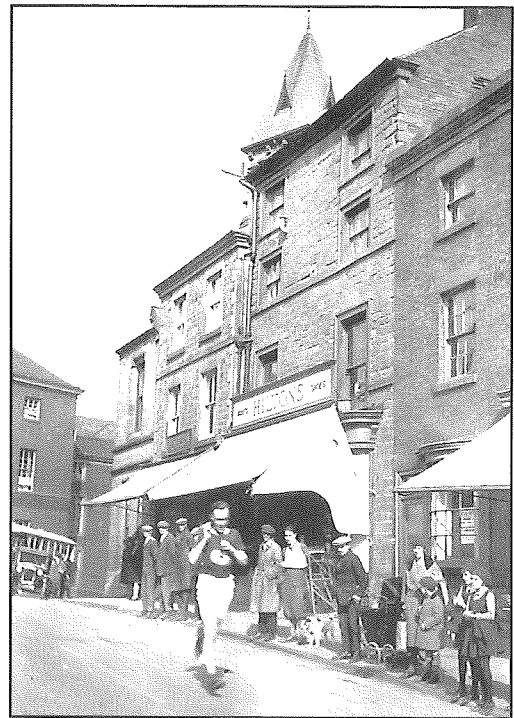
One the extreme left is John Bowmer (25) and next to him are W Mason (33), D Twigg, Edgar Jepson (27), E Moore, Geoff Warren (28), J Marsden (arms crossed).

Between 15 and 12 (from left) are ? Slater, F Marlow, G Evans (36), H Spencer. Between 12 and 1 is F Doxey.

1930

Steeplechase record that was never beaten

■ Geoffrey Warren wins the 1930 steeplechase in a record time of 28 mins. 30 secs., a time that was never bettered, although Joe Gould, who supplied the photograph, says that he and Geoff Kirk tried their best!



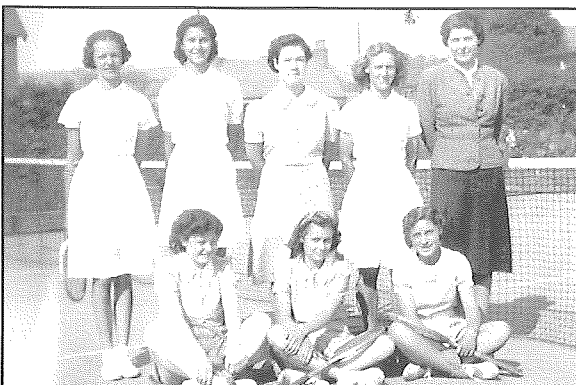
1937

■ The hockey team of 1937.

Back: Hilda Petts, Kath Pearson, Ruth Buckland, Mary Oldfield, Ina Oulsnam, Margery Rains.

Front: Mary Buxton, Jessie Oldfield, Dorothy Bowyer, Jean Swift, Joan Marsden.

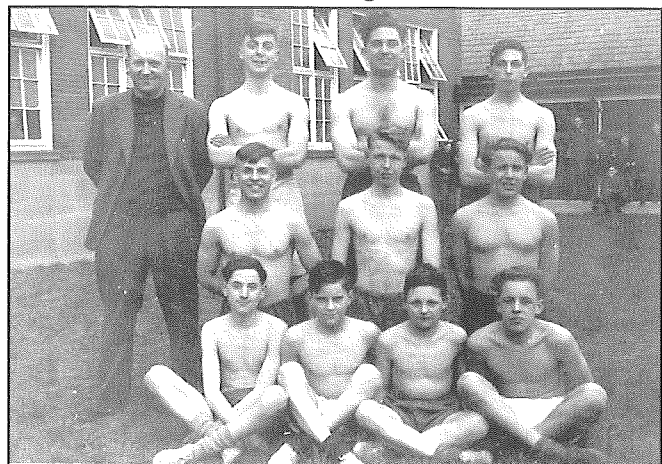
1941



■ The school tennis team in 1941. Back (from left): Jean Slater, Vivienne Westward, Eveline Stamp (captain), Joyce Webster, Miss Lesley Northrop. Front: Rachel Potts, Ruth Ferguson, Hazel Ellison.

1945

■ Below: The school gymnastic team in 1944. Back: Mr Brown, Stan Shelley, Ken Hicks, Geoff Kirk. Centre: Michael Gell, John Doxey, Will Turner. Front: Tony Coupe, John Swift, Gordon Minifie, John Wright.



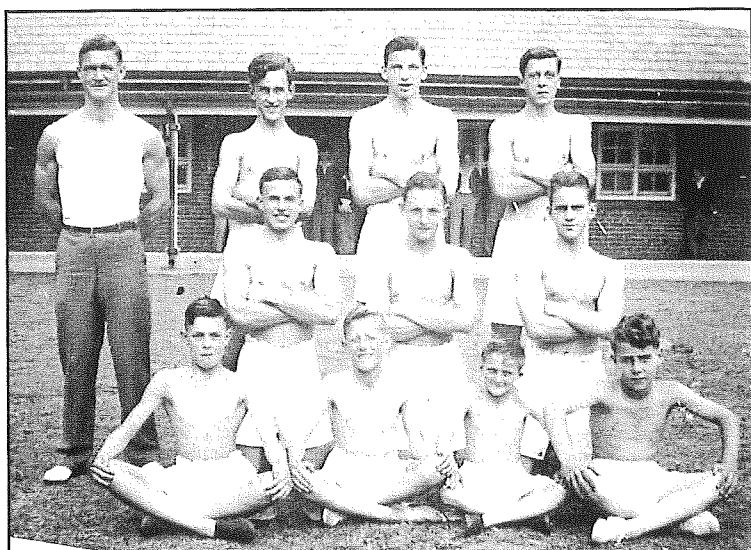
1946

■ The school gymnastics team in 1945-46.

Back: Fred Wain (PE master), Roger Hargreaves, Martin Beresford, Willie Boden.

Centre: Michael Gell, Gordon Minifie, John Swift.

Front: Keith Parker, John Buckley, Jack Brewell, Mark Hallows.



1949

■ The hockey team of 1949-50.

Back: Brenda Morley, Kath Radford, Marian Spencer, Miss Northrop, Dorothy Brewell, Margaret Austin, Valerie Hallows.

Front: Mavis Millward, Barbara Maskrey, Hazel Kennett, Mary Buxton (captain), Agnes Fidler, Jessie Parsons.

1949

■ The cricket first XI in 1949.

Back: Martin Bibby (scorer), John Palin, Roger Hargreaves, Roger Crabtree, Ian Horrocks, Chris Young (umpire).

Centre: John Buckley, Peter Webster, John Heathcote, Roy Steeples, Mark Hallows.

Front: Mick Williams, Charlie Hallows.



1949

■ The football first XI in the 1949-50 season.

Back: Jack Rodgers (sports master), Ian Horrocks, Pat Cowley, Peter Webster, Peter Brewell, Ken Harrison, Mark Hallows.

Seated: John Palin, John Buckley, John Linthwaite, Bill Mather, Mick Williams, Michael Cole.

Kneeling: Gerry Harvey, Charlie Hallows.



The team they couldn't beat

■ Some of the all-conquering Old Wirksworthian hockey team, pictured during a tournament at Long Eaton in the Fifties. Back: Gillian Brace, Nora Wibberley, Dorothy Brewell, Annie Smith (nee Webster), Pat Eastern.

Front: Ann Cowley, Joyce Mee, Eileen Brewell, Mary Hargreaves (nee Buxton).

1954



■ The senior football team of 1954. Back: Jack Rodgers (sports master), Mick Rowbottom, Mick Hall, Barry Doxey, Mick Holt, Geoff Buckley, Lance Dean. Front: Peter Bates, Norman Simpson, Ian Buxton, Ray Taylor, Peter Haworth.

**1
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The school hockey team in 1987-88. Front: David Gayles, Paul Wright, Back (from left): Matthew Smith, Alistair Anthony Bennett, Andy Pearce, Steve Puddick, Miss Body, Andrew Newton, Wright, Alex Oliver, Rodney Slater, Alex Bunting.



The rugby team in 1987-88. Back (from left): Glyn Knighton, Tristan Helliwell, Alistair Puddick, Alex Bunting, Andrew Newton. Centre: Alex Oliver, David Powlson, Mark Whittaker, Kyle Morrison, William Davies, Eddy Butlin, Dean Brown. Front: Tim Watson, Steve Wright, Ian Cantwell, Martin Kinder, Anthony Bennett, Andy Pearce, Dan Griffiths.

