

# Secondary Education

The biggest shake-up of education led to the change from the tripartite system of grammar, secondary modern and technical schools to comprehensive secondary schools. Some comprehensive schools were established before 1960 and in 1964 about 7% of the secondary school population went to them. 1963 Robin Pedley's book "The Comprehensive School" was published. It was very influential and was reprinted many times.

In 1965 The Secretary of State in the Labour government, Anthony Crosland, issued Circular 10/65 "The Organisation of Secondary Education", which requested LEAs to submit plans for establishing comprehensive schools.

By 1968 about 20% of children were in comprehensives. It took until the mid 1970s for the system to be fully implemented but the 60s saw a big push along the road.

Sheffield: In 1960 Myers Grove the first comprehensive school. By 1969 Sheffield went fully comprehensive. The last 11+ exam was in February 1968.

**The following is from an interview with a Chief Education Officer who was responsible for implementing the change to the comprehensive system in the North Riding of Yorkshire:**

Reflections on his time as Chief Education Officer for the North Riding of Yorkshire by Geoffrey Winter

Geoffrey Winter (GW) was Chief Education Officer (CEO) for the North Riding of Yorkshire from 1965 to 1974. At 96 he still has very clear memories of his time there, not least the introduction of secondary comprehensive schools in the region.

The North Riding was mainly a rural and coastal area. It was regarded as a county in its own right and was one of the largest in England in area though not in population. Scarborough was the biggest town. There were 39 secondary schools.

An early point that GW made was that as far as education was concerned, the North Riding did not take a political stance. So, in a predominantly Conservative area, there was little opposition to the introduction of

comprehension. To quote GW those involved in the changes asked, “how not why”. When the rural and urban councils were asked to draw up plans all agreed. Education officers and councillors were cooperative.

In 1965, Anthony Crosland, Minister for Education in the Wilson Government issued 10/65 requesting that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) should start planning for the introduction of comprehension. This was a statute not a government bill and was a directive not compulsion. Most LEAs agreed, including the North Riding. This was the year that GW started as CEO. His predecessor had started to draw up plans which GW developed and implemented. Although he had the cooperation of LEAs, this was no easy task. He attended many public meetings where he explained clearly what was involved and did much to reassure parents, governing bodies and teachers. Teacher morale was always a high priority.

Some schools in the North Riding were 11-16 (the school leaving age was raised to 16 till 1972). and some 11-18. There were 6th form colleges. Pupils from the 11-16 schools went to the nearest 6<sup>th</sup> form college if they wished to continue their education. It was made clear to the heads of the colleges that they must consult with the heads of the feeder schools to make sure that all subjects the pupils had been studying were on offer.

GW's plan was published in 1968. Although he is a modest man, he did say that the feedback was that it was professionally exemplary.

Implementing the plan wasn't easy. How were existing schools to be used? How much new building would be required? As CEO, GW had to forecast future pupil numbers and during his time the school leaving age was raised to 16 in 1972. Looking at just one page of the plan some of the local problems became apparent. For Richmond and Catterick, the present situation was outlined. This included the grammar and secondary modern schools with the number of pupils in each, the area covered and plans for the future. One school in Richmond was voluntary aided and for it to come into the system the county council had to buy the land. As Catterick is an army base forecasting was difficult.

Once a school became comprehensive the head teacher continued to be in charge of the curriculum and all internal matters, including whether to have mixed ability classes or streaming. This was protected by legal documents; articles of government.

Two Roman catholic schools applied to be changed to comprehensives. As they had a about 180 pupils each, GW was concerned about their viability. However, the minister for Education approved the application and they had the final word. In the event several non-Catholic parents chose the schools because of their small size.

GW believed that it was time for the Eleven Plus to be abolished. The strong argument against it at the time was that it was unfair to select children at 11. GW also pointed out that the percentage of those getting through varied between different authorities. In the North Riding it was 17% and elsewhere it could vary from 10% to just over 30%. Also, it wasn't a standardised test for the whole of England and Wales and LEAs had different versions to choose from.

There were some comprehensive schools before 1960. By the end of the 1970s most authorities had implemented the change though a few still retain their grammar schools. 1965-69 saw a major shift in these changes and those outlined in these reflections mark a pivotal time in educational provision.

### **A major change in education was unlikely to go smoothly as Richard's memories show.**

#### Richard

I attended Abbey Lane Junior and Infant schools from 1962 to 1968. All the way through 1968 our lessons were geared to sitting the 11-plus exam. However, we never took the exam because, in 1969, we became the first year to attend Rowlinson school as comprehensive pupils as the system changed. This in turn brought about many problems because most of the teaching staff at Rowlinson, which the previous year had been a technical school, were used to teaching pupils with a very different educational background. I was also in the last all-boys class to go through the school which was strange. All the girls from Abbey Lane went to Abbeydale Grange School for Girls.

### **Dick and Anita give an interesting contrast between a grammar school education and one in a new comprehensive.**

Despite being much of an age our educational experience in the 60's couldn't be more different. We had both already left Primary School when the decade began and had gone through University by the end.

Anita, in Sheffield, went to a Direct Grant. Single Sex, Grammar School followed by University in another large city. Dick, in Crawley, went to a mixed Comprehensive followed by a college in London which became a new campus style University in Guildford, totally divorced from the Town.

### Anita

My secondary school was a real culture shock. Going from a cosy Primary, no uniform, no homework, one class per year of all abilities to a rigid, formal, establishment stuck in the 30's was the strangest experience of my life. The uniform was prescribed down to the smallest detail (your knickers had to be bottle green) and had not changed since my sister was there 10 years earlier. We were streamed after exams at the end of our first term and stayed with the same girls for the next seven years. We followed a totally academic curriculum, our head informing us at one point that as professional women we had no need of learning how to cook as we would employ somebody for such mundane domestic tasks (I wish). For some of us this provided a fine education leading to a career and a fulfilled life, for those less academic or with different skills it failed. Girls who were judged among the brightest at 11 left school at 16 with nothing much to show for it except a lifelong distaste for bottle green. University, in contrast, was the swinging 60's on steroids.

### Dick

Crawley was a rapidly expanding New Town. My newly built school started with a single year intake and by the time I left had well over 2000 pupils. I only ever had one year above me. Unlike most schools we had no traditions, they developed as we grew up. It was also a permanent building site.

Its large size allowed for a diverse curriculum; for example, you could choose from five modern languages if you were so inclined. We were streamed but in groups of subjects rather than as a class so people who were good at English but not Maths were catered for, as were those with few academic skills. There was also a wide range of out of school clubs and activities. Unlike Anita school uniform was dropped very quickly as the sixties started to swing. It taught me how to learn and gave me some enduring friendships.

University seemed very small to me when I arrived and as an Engineering student there was little time for revolution.

**Although educational changes were gathering pace, many children still went to grammar schools and secondary moderns in the 1960s**

**We have several memories of the grammar school from Brian, Denise, Sue, Stephanie and Margaret**

Brian

For a lad from Woodseats Junior School, going to High Storrs Grammar was something of an achievement. Out of two mixed classes of 30 plus pupils, only four boys were selected to attend. Our parents were sent a 'welcome' letter which included details of school uniform, all of it mandatory.

Out of the four first year grades of IA, 1 B, IC & 1 D; one Woodseats lad was in the A Grade; one in the B Grade ('twas I) and two in the C Grade.

From the off, the whole experience was something way beyond what we had found at junior school. We were 'fags' and the older boys waited outside the school gates for us to arrive, whipped the brand-new school caps from off of our heads and threw them into the road!

We were herded into the school yard to be picked off by our new form masters. With increasing trepidation, we shuffled into the building sensing strange odours wafting from the chemistry labs!

In that first year I 'got on with it' and did well making some new 'acquaintances'. The masters, as befitting, a grammar school, flitted about with long, black gowns flowing out behind them. Some were very strict, some slightly less so. It would be later that those who were on the receiving end, once we had sussed out the 'weakest of the bunch', gave them 'some' in return!

For now, we endured lines for throwing snowballs: "Neanderthal vociferation vitiates all attempts to instil into us a modicum of intellectual and cultural intelligence." Guess who got that one a few times!

But worse than that were the — few if I'm honest — masters who proactively favoured corporal punishment. One particular guy — a mathematics master — would have the unfortunate pupil bend over the edge of the desk. He would open the classroom door so that he could take a run at his target much like a fast bowler at cricket. "I'm going to thrash you boy, within an inch of your life," was the war cry.

Did we deserve all this? In all honesty most of what we were punished for — at this stage at least — was nothing more than boyish high spirits.

It was in year two that I started to feel more 'at home'. I made it into 2B and found myself amongst several other boys who were intelligent enough to 'know the score' but not of the 'snooty swat' kind of person.

But 3B was the one! We were beginning to feel like 'old lags' by now. We'd skip lunch and save the cash to buy records. We began to become more adventurous in 'baiting' the masters. We saw nothing wrong in this — their early mistreatment of us and their place in what was rapidly becoming a stale and antiquated establishment made them fair game. Of course, by now, we were also noticing the girls in the school next door.

To explain, High Storrs Grammar housed both boys and girls in the same building.

Halfway along the corridors were doors — frequently locked, that were the 'Checkpoint Charlie's of the building. Any boy finding the doors unlocked and daring to venture through, was tracked down and sent to the Headmaster for rigorous caning! 3B form room was next to the one of the doors!

A word or two now about the Head and his Deputy. The first Headmaster possessed a special caning chair, which, with the pupil bent over - presented the optimum sweet spot for thrashing. Although this person died during my second year there, his successor — labelled a 'moderate' by many — kept the chair! The Deputy Head was a different story. He was an ex-army man who seemed to regard anything to do with a more 'modern world' as anathema. I will draw a veil over his often-brutal activities.

Anyway, I played football for the school, ran cross country and was a rather good high jumper; and in all of this let me say that the education I received was first class.

4B was more of the same, and then came the 'witching time' — O Level Exams on the horizon. By 5B the sixties 'revolution' was in full swing and the enlightened amongst us were listening to Dylan, Lennon and Zappa and reading the International Times. Our hair grew longer — not excessively — but enough to antagonise the more conservative masters. I suppose we offered open defiance to many of the established principles of the school.

One particular incident that stays with me was when I went in to sit one of the O Level exams. We had been told the previous day by our form master that it would not be necessary to wear a tie to the exam, if we felt more comfortable. Turning up 'tieless' I was immediately man-handled out of the exam room by the Deputy Headmaster and told not to come back without a tie. I find it hard to forgive this person for adding to the stress of an already stressful day. I was 'saved' by a 6th Former who loaned me his tie.

The whole 'rebel' attitude increased, and we would be berated in the corridors to 'get yer 'air cut, you scruffy urchin'. As that term drew to a close I was summoned into the headmaster's office and told not to bother coming back in September unless I had my hair cut to what he thought was a 'reasonable' length. Many people did get a haircut, some didn't. Maybe I was the fool for holding fast to my principles! However, the biggest irony of all was that — over that summer — High Storrs ceased to be a grammar school. It became a comprehensive and the clothing and general department requirements for 6th formers were substantially relaxed. Why they were even given a form room with a record player to play Bob Dylan on!

In closing (let me say that I regret nothing of it! I made some very good friends. I received an excellent education in the subjects that mattered to me, and the lessons in how to stand fast in the face of adversity have served me well. I have nothing but fond memories of my time at High Storrs and I wouldn't change a thing.

### Denise

I grew up in Crookes. I had a happy childhood though books and learning didn't feature much. I was the only one in our primary school to pass the 11+

and some of the other pupils took against me. In 1956 I started at High Storrs Grammar school which was a frightening experience since I knew nobody, but during the two years I was there I made three good girl friends.

1957-58 was the year that the post-war 'bulge' hit secondary schools. Extra places were having to be found across the city. In my second year at High Storrs the girls were asked if anyone would like to transfer at 13 to a new all-girls grammar on Union Road, Nether Edge. Nether Edge Grammar, which had occupied the building since the 1920s had moved out in July 1957 to their new premises at Abbeydale. The Union Road school reopened in September of the same year with a new name - Brincliffe Grammar School.

My friends decided to transfer, and I wanted to be with them and so, despite the prospect of either an hour-long journey with two buses or a long walk and the circular bus, I enrolled that September in Year 3 (now called year 9). The entrance was right opposite the gates of Nether Edge hospital. Year 3 was the only intake that year - around 50 girls in all, drawn mainly from the south-west of the city and divided into two classes according to age. I was born in July so I was put in 3B with Mrs Dixon. I never got to know her very well since she never taught me.

I hated the uniform which was a bulky grey pinafore over either a pullover or a tee-shirt in house colours. We had dark green blazers, berets and gabardine macks. In summer we wore green and white check dresses. The punishment was severe if we were spotted en route to and from school without our berets on.

The following year, 1958, there was a larger, mixed intake at age 11. So, we were always three years older than the class below and of course we had no-one older than ourselves to look up to. I can't remember any out of school activities, and there was no mixing with other schools or the local community. I suppose I accepted it at the time but looking back it was a very narrow experience.

It was a strange time - despite the school having only about 50 pupils in 1957 we were allocated a prefabricated classroom by the side of the main school. This was because renovation work was taking place in the main building. It was a traditional school - large teaching rooms with high ceilings opening off a central hall, on two floors. We also used two buildings over the road by the bus stop. But in our first year the staff came to our classroom rather than us



doing the moving around. We had desks in which we kept our books. The school opened straight onto Union Road, so we just had a yard at the back which we walked around at break-time. There was a gym with all the usual equipment, including hula hoops, but for other sports we needed to get the bus up to High Storrs. School dinners were provided in the hall but in fine weather my friends and I were permitted to take our packed lunches up to Chelsea Park. We had milk at morning break time. With the bus-stop being just outside I never got to explore Nether Edge, but I do recall there was a printing company in the old chapel next door to the school and a sweet shop on the corner.

The school was run on traditional lines. There were four houses named after forests - Arden, Dean, Epping and Sherwood- with captains and vice-captains, and there was a prefect system. The staff comprised seven men and about 13 women. Those who were graduates wore their gowns. The headteacher, Mr Hill, Mr Spinks (Maths) and maybe some others had previously taught boys on the same site, other teachers transferred in and yet others were straight from teacher training. The deputy head was Mrs Potter who taught English. I was good at English so she never bothered me, but other girls were regularly reduced to tears. I regretted the absence of drama which I had enjoyed at High Storrs. Miss Bingham taught languages but only Spanish was offered and later Italian. Mr Boole who taught science was OK but I grew to dislike the Maths teacher which largely resulted in my failing the O level. Those who taught me were nearly all disciplinarians who made frequent use of sarcasm. I don't remember any beatings but girls were publicly humiliated, 'lines' were handed out and there were frequent detentions. I generally stayed out of trouble and learned to keep a low profile, with the result that the staff never really got to know me properly. One school report led my father to ask me if I was actually going to Geography lessons because the teacher had written that he didn't know who I was!

After the first year we were streamed and I was careful to stay in the B stream since I did not want to be labelled a 'swot'. We chose our options - I discontinued applied subjects and concentrated for my O levels on English, Maths, three sciences, Geography, History and Spanish. I recall that homework was often affected by a shortage of books.

Despite doing 'hard' subjects the teachers made very little effort to disguise their low expectations of me. I was told that I would never pass my O-levels

so the staff must have got quite a shock when I passed in eight subjects, achieving top grades in English Language and Literature. Maybe the staff thought that pupils who got in to grammar school at 13+ were academically inferior, or maybe they chose to treat girls differently from the boys they were used to - I will never know, but the general understanding seemed to be that we would not cope with higher education and therefore there was no point in going on to sixth-form.

Having been thus labelled as 'non-academic' I left school at 16 and went to work, first in a laboratory and then in the personnel department at the Yorkshire Electricity Board. By the time I was 20 I was married and soon after that I was expecting a baby which meant I had to give up my job. It was around then that I realised that I was actually pretty bright and that there should be more to life than domesticity. I wanted to train as a teacher. So, I went to study A level English and Geography at Sheffield College where for the first time someone took an interest in me and encouraged me to apply for University. After getting a good degree I travelled to Huddersfield daily to do teacher training, followed by several teaching posts in Sheffield schools and colleges.

Looking back, I feel I made the wrong decision to transfer to Brincliffe. I have no happy memories of that school because it did not help me to develop as an individual. The school closed when the Comprehensive system came in and the building was used by the local education authority as a resource centre. But I am still in touch with the three friends who transferred with me.

### Sue

When I passed the 11+ at the beginning of the 1960's I went to Grange Grammar School for Girls on Abbeydale Road. Our uniform was brown with a gold checked shirt for winter & gingham cotton dresses for summer: I remember going to the Sheffield & Ecclesall Co-op department shop for my uniform. It was a rather grand shop, all faced in white stone with a very beautiful curved sweeping staircase to the second floor. My Mum took me at the end of the school holidays to buy my uniform, which was quite expensive so everything was bought so 'I'd grow into it'. The blazer arms came down nearly to the end of my fingers & the skirt was a very unfashionable length nearly down to my ankles. In the first year you were only allowed to wear socks and what I thought were very heavy totally unfashionable shoes. We also had to wear a brown beret with the school badge at the front which had a red

squirrel & a green oak leaf on. If you were seen without your beret when in uniform, you were in trouble, but most of the girls hated been seen wearing them. The badge with the red squirrel was because we still had many red squirrels living in the woods which surrounded the school.

On my first day my father dropped me off on his way to work, which meant I must have been one of the first girls to arrive: I do remember being very scared and walking through the gates up paths between old Yew trees until I was pointed in the direction of what looked like Nissen huts. There were a number of these which were the classrooms for the first year, which was divided into 3 classes G, A & Alpha. There were also huts which were science classrooms, an art room, cookery & home economics. The two main houses were Grange House & Holt House, both of which had been the homes of Sheffield industrialists until used as a school. We also had a new brick-built hall & gym and a very large Nissen hut which was the kitchen & dining room, the grounds were lovely as it was still mostly lawned garden with tennis courts & playing fields.

I found after I settled down that the school was very good & being only quite small, about 500 girls including the form, it was usually a friendly place to work. There were of course teachers we were scared of but generally all of us were well behaved and worked hard. The school was entirely run by women teachers who all encouraged us to do well.

### Stephanie

I had a private, convent education from the age of 5 (1952) until 16 (1963) in north west London. Sadly, it wasn't particularly good. My infant years were lovely, and I have generally happy memories and moved to the juniors a competent pupil, if a little strong willed. It all went downhill in Junior one when one piece of my work was described as "utter rubbish" by the teacher and my self-esteem plummeted. From then on, I seemed to struggle and despite encouragement from some of the other teachers failed to pass the 11 plus for that particular school. My parents wished me to stay there and continued therefore to pay for my secondary education.

School wasn't a happy place and I was very anxious, hiding in the toilets to avoid going to school mass in the chapel and assemblies until I was caught. I would play up two teachers (maths and particularly the German teacher) — consequently I didn't do very well. By the age of about 14 after a big telling-off

from my father, my behaviour improved and I found I did enjoy the science lessons and had some respect for the teacher, who was probably the best in the school and also quite strict. We had nuns teach us for some of the lessons and hard as they tried some were quite inept. My reports were not good, as you can imagine, except for music, when there was always great praise but this apparent talent was never nurtured, something I do remain sad about. To say I struggled in some subjects — especially French and German is an understatement!

Uniform was very strict, expensive and only available at a particular shop in London. We had to wear our hats out of school and were warned that people knew which school we were from and we would be reported if seen without them on. I can remember school fees going up to twenty guineas (£450 approx today) per term and my parents wondering if they could still afford to send me there. Other memories include, inevitably, the long-legged navy-blue knickers we had to wear. Because of the colour my mother was worried the dye would come out so I had to wear a white pair underneath.

I survived and sat my 'O' Levels, only passing four but then went to a secretarial college for one year, mainly to satisfy my mother who wanted me to learn shorthand and typing despite me wanting to be a nurse. I quite enjoyed that year as I was generally in the top few pupils in the year rather than floundering near the bottom, at the convent. I managed to pass three more 'O' levels plus various secretarial exams, which actually have proved quite useful in life — I was not good at shorthand but typing skills remain useful to this day!

## **Paul went to King Edwards School in Sheffield**

King Edward VII School was founded in 1905 by Sheffield City Council. The councillors wanted to establish a high performing school that would give a very good education to all its pupils and also send many of them to Sheffield, Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

**He sent these pictures of sports day and of a typical school play of the 1960s.**



# ANDROCLES AND THE LION

BY

**BERNARD SHAW**

**THE FOURTH FORM PLAY, AUTUMN 1959**

l/r John Bows, Gerard Nosowski, John Pressley, Roger Harrison (hidden), David Cook, Bob Hollands, Ian Johnson (hidden), Simon Mattam, Peter Grimsditch (front), Neil Struthers (the Lion), Paul Whyman, Nicholas Jowett (back), Bernard [Argent](#), Martin Hall, Howard Culley (Sheffield Wednesday FC!).



L to r David Cook, John Pressley, Ian Johnson (all at the back), Nicholas Jowett, Simon Mattam, Bernard [Argent](#) (hiding Bob Hollands and Roger Harrison), Ian Barrow.

Producer Mr. R.B.Chalmers, Photos Philip Hetherington.

## PROGRAMME

# THE FOURTH FORM

## PRESENTS

### "ANDROCLES AND THE LION"

Christians, Soldiers, Servants, Gladiators, Slaves

P. G. WELLS, I. M. JOHNSON, J. S. PRESSLEY, D. B. COOK, R. A. HOLLANDS, P. S. MATTAM,  
(Names, programme and photos courtesy of David Cook)

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KES Magazine, January 1960:

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAYS.

*Androcles and the Lion* is a play of lucidity, genuine humour, and interesting ideas, with a typically Shavian mixture of the comic and the serious. The performance opened triumphantly with Grimsditch and Mingay losing no opportunity in an admirably produced prologue. Androcles here, and throughout the play, contributed a most sympathetic performance, with an intelligent mixture of pathos and brightness; Grimsditch is to be congratulated. Mingay, adding to his range, revealed an impressive potential gift for comedy. Another praiseworthy contribution came from Hall as Ferrovius. His zealous determination and energy exploited the comic possibilities of the part without ever sacrificing the audience's sympathy for his sincerity. In contrast to Ferrovius is the character of Spintho, and here Gunn, if less in control of his part than Hall, nevertheless aroused the right measure of contempt and pity in the audience.

To claim that these characters overshadowed Lavinia and the Captain is only to say that Jowett and Argent had more difficult parts, and that it is a weakness of the play rather than of the production that we were conscious of static moments between these two. Jowett's weakness is a certain monotony of voice, but he looked admirably patrician, and did well in the part, and Argent made an agreeably resolute and reasonable soldier. Whyman is to be commended for his interpretation of the various sides of Caesar's character, another performance which was all the better for being intelligently controlled. We shall also remember Barrow's harassed Centurion, Struthers' magnificent Lion, and an enthusiastic though rather unequally clad) band of soldiers, the gladiators and the Christians, all of whom contributed to a most entertaining production.

### Fleetwood Grammar School - Margaret

From 1960 to 1964 I was in the fourth form to Upper 6<sup>th</sup> form at Fleetwood Grammar School in Lancashire. The school was opened in 1921, was built of wood and was meant to be a temporary structure. It wasn't big enough and the first years were in a church hall that was about a five-minute walk away. In our third year we were in portacabins. The school served a wide catchment area. Some of us, myself included, lived closer to Blackpool but Blackpool was a borough and wouldn't take pupils beyond its boundaries. Fleetwood was in the county authority and therefore took Grammar school pupils in between. I had one of the longest bus journeys, of about half an hour but some pupils

came from villages over the River Wyre estuary. They came by the Knott End ferry and were sometimes unable to come to school because of bad weather or the boat was stuck on a sandbank.

Relatively unusually in the 60s, Fleetwood Grammar was co-educational. Even so the ratio was about 20% boys to 80% girls. This was because there was a county boys Grammar School in the same catchment area.

In each year there were four classes with about twenty to thirty pupils in each. In the first year they were mixed ability. In the second and third years we were streamed after end of year exams. Class 1 being the top and class 4 the bottom. The top two classes were reorganised again at the beginning of the fourth year. One was for languages and the other for science. That was the only choice to be made. There was no choice within either class. In the language class we did French, German, Latin, History, Geography and Physics as well as English and Maths. We did physics for time-table convenience rather for choice. We dropped Art. Domestic Science (girls) and Woodwork (boys). We had a music lesson, RE, PE and games once a week.

Discipline was fairly strict. In our case it was definitely enhanced by a dragon of a deputy head. I think even the staff were wary of her. We stood up and said good morning/afternoon to the teacher at the beginning of each lesson. Discipline was fine in most lessons. A few teachers struggled but even then, the disruption was quite low level. Before the morning assembly in the main hall we had to sit in silence in our cloakrooms for about five minutes and not speak again until assembly was over. Unless the weather was bad we had to go outside at break and lunch times. Boys and girls were kept separate. In the sixth form we had our own study where we were trusted to come together. The uniform was not the most becoming. For first- and second-year girls it was a tunic over a blouse, replaced in third year by a pleated skirt. Over this we wore a gaberdine coat, again not very shapely. Summer dresses and blazers were an improvement. We had to wear hats and we were expected to wear them all the way home. Probably to do with the good image of the school to outsiders. For those who had a beehive hairstyle the hat could be perched on the back.

Boys wore shorts in first and third years and grey long trousers after that. They were expected to wear their caps. All of us wore ties.



Boys and girls were treated differently in some ways. Boys were called by their surnames and girls by their first names. Boys did Woodwork and girls Domestic Science.

Only the boys could be caned. For all of us punishments came in the form of lines and detentions. Some teachers used sarcasm and the occasional piece of chalk or board duster was thrown.

The teaching was mostly chalk and talk. Notes were dictated. Books and plays were read in turn around the class. A main memory of language classes is that we were given sentences to translate, orally, in turn. We spent time in some lessons, such as Maths, doing exercises in our books. Any experiments in Science were done by the teacher at the front. This sounds dull but much depended in the personality of the teacher. Our maths teacher was funny. The French teacher introduced us to the songs of Edith Piaf. Biology was maybe more hands on as I remember a boy enjoying our reactions when showing us the sheep's eye he had brought in for a lesson. We probably accepted that school was the way it was. People formed friendship groups and did their own things in their own time. The Beatles burst onto the music scene when we were in the 6th Form and life was changing.

Some changes in teaching methods were beginning to come in in the late 60s. A group of young teachers straight from university came in. I had a recently appointed English teacher in the Upper 6<sup>th</sup> who encouraged discussion and reading around the set texts. There were still a lot of dictated notes and we were not taught the study skills to help read the solid History books or volumes of literary criticism. Because we were all expected to take a General Studies exam at A level, a member of staff would visit the 6<sup>th</sup> form to engage in discussion. One was whether we should join the European Common Market. Most of the staff had been to university and wore gowns for teaching. I think they were a bit remote and, on the whole, treated with respect. Some of the younger ones, especially treated us as being more grown up in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. We saw a different side of them when some took part in the Christmas concert given by the 6<sup>th</sup> Form for the whole school. The Physics master's recital of "Albert and the Lion" was a treat. A group of male teachers made up a song to sing each year. In 1960 Roy Orbison had recorded a song, 'Only the Lonely'. By chance we had a new young and attractive English teacher called Miss Loney. Unfortunately, I can't remember the words of their rendition of 'Only Miss Loney'!

School dinners were fairly horrible. There was no choice. The food was brought to tables, each seating about eight pupils. The food arrived in tins to be shared out. A typical meal was stew (hard meat and a lot of gristle,) mashed potato and carrots. The tin of rice pudding could be turned upside down with none falling out. Fortunately, a friend went home for lunch to her Dad's bakery and brought bread buns called barm cakes back for us. Once a group of us decided to cook sausages behind the old air raid shelter in the playing field. They were inedible. I can't remember what we used for heat, but we were probably lucky that we didn't set fire to the grass.

## **Sarah went to a boarding school**

### Boarding School in the 60s

I went to boarding school in 1962 when I was ten. My family lived in Halifax, but I was sent to a school on the Malvern Hills, where my mother had been a pupil. My three brothers followed in my father's footsteps to Haileybury. This was normal practice in what I suppose you could call the upper middle classes. I can't say I enjoyed it. I was, of course, dreadfully homesick at first, and begged my parents to let me go home. Well, they didn't, and I believe that affected our relationship permanently in a subtle way. (It is interesting to reflect that my mother, whose parents lived abroad and who spent holidays with cousins, loved boarding school and could never understand why I didn't.)

The school was a lovely building in beautiful surroundings, and I can remember appreciating that. What I did not appreciate was the lack of solitude. I wasn't used to sharing a bedroom or spending all day in a crowd. I used to long for bedtime because then I could escape into an imaginary world of my own. The other downside was that I lost touch with all my friends from first school. To be fair, this was no Lowfield, and I was no Jane Eyre. I found the academic work easy enough, although I was lazy. But I didn't have a big circle of friends and I wasn't in with the "in crowd".

The school was on the side of the Malvern Hills – a large main building with satellite buildings which acted as dormitories, or music rooms. The two youngest classes had their own building, which was a gentler introduction to school life. The school was small – only 200 pupils at that time. We didn't sleep in the "dorms" of fiction but shared three four or five to a bedroom. I was delighted when I reached sixth form and a study bedroom of my own.

It wasn't terribly academic – we had half holidays when someone got into university! But I did learn to curtsey and to dance the Lancers. I loathed organised sports, and was hopeless at them, but I did enjoy walking in the Malvern Hills.

We have a half term weekend each term, so I travelled back to Yorkshire on Friday and returned to school on Monday. I really envied fellow pupils whose homes were only an hour or so away by car! And they had more visits during the term.

We had cinema showings several times a term. I remember the entire school sobbing through the ending of *Carve her Name with Pride*. And missing Northwest Frontier because I had to go and visit a really boring factory as part of physics A level.

According to seniority, we were allowed to go into the village, Malvern or even Worcester at weekends, but not to the cinema! Our village shop was run by an old woman who chain smoked, so that one side of her face was permanently wrinkled up.

I wasn't sure whether to go for English or Maths at A level, but chose Maths on the grounds that it might be more useful. I was made to do Physics, which I hated, instead of Biology, on the grounds that I would not need Biology in later life. (I subsequently trained as a nurse.)

Only three of us studied maths at A level so we were taught by scientists from the local Radar Establishment. Because we were a small group we sat round a table and one of our tutors had halitosis.....

### **Pete wrote of his experiences in primary and secondary school.**

The summer of 1954 saw the opening of a brand-new primary school on Creswick Lane, Grenoside to cater for the increasing child population on the new Parson Cross and Foxhill estates called St Thomas More with the corresponding church on Halifax Road. The nearest Catholic school at this time was St Patrick's at Sheffield Lane Top.

There were 5 classes with approximately 30 children to a class. The head teacher was Sister Mercy whose order was attached to a convent in Burngreave. She was strict but fair and I enjoyed my time there. There was a

Catholic ethos — the Catechism was taught with relish and the consequences of moral sin were emphasised. Regular visits were made to the church on Halifax Road for confession, Holy Days and May Day processions.

At the age of 11, the boys who had passed the 11-plus went to De La Salle College on Scott Road and the girls went to Notre Dame on Cavendish Street which were both grammar schools. The rest went to St Peter's Secondary school which had just opened and was local.

These days St Thomas More school still has a Catholic ethos but is open to all multidenominational children. De La Salle College was demolished many years ago as was St Peter's. Pupils went to St Paul's comprehensive which is now All Saints Academy taking boys and girls. Notre Dame's building on Cavendish Street has been replaced by a car park.

### **Jenny was educated at just one school**

At five years of age I entered the Infants at Western Road School in Crookes and left in July 1963.

All three schools, Infants, Juniors and Seniors were situated on a site between Western Road and Mona Avenue.

The headteacher of the Infants was Miss Green

The headteacher of the Juniors was Miss Exley.

The headteacher of the Seniors was Mr Burnett.

In the Infants, I can remember the member of staff who was on playground duty and put plasters on grazed knees was called Mrs Seedhouse. To commemorate the Coronation each pupil was given a small tin of chocolate and my Mum made me a dress with smocking embroidery and ribbons in red, white and blue.

In the Juniors we were placed in classes of A, B and C according to ability. A school dental clinic was sited in the basement of the Junior school. Whilst in Junior school I achieved my 25 yards, 100 yards and 440 yards swimming certificates.

In the Senior school girls and boys entered through different entrances. Carved in stone above the doorway it said Girls and at the opposite side of the school it said Boys.

The first three years were mixed classes. In the final year it was all girl or all boy classes.

With no playing field attached to the school we used to have to walk about twenty minutes up to the Bole Hills for hockey and rounders etc.

The Senior school Head used the cane to discipline the children, I can happily report I never had the cane.

On the final year I became a school Prefect, house captain and monitor, making the Headteacher coffee just before the mid-morning break. There was a tuck shop table at break time selling ginger biscuits and wagon wheels etc.

I am still in touch with three friends from the Senior school, one now living in Switzerland, one in North Yorkshire and one in Sheffield.

### **Extract from Jo's contribution – secondary school.**

I passed the 11+ for grammar school. Our LEA had a three-tier system: Secondary Modern, Technical and grammar Schools. Very few from our school passed and the percentage of girls was even lower. Out of 70 in our year, 4 went to Grammar, 3 to Technical schools and rest to the local secondary Modern or were sent to private schools. One girl was lucky enough to live over the county boundary. She passed to Grammar school, although she didn't pass our county's 11+.

The Grammar School was a big change. I remember the strong aroma of floor polish. It was all female, although later a few masters were employed. One nearby girl's school never took on any male teachers. It was predominantly a middle-class environment where teachers said, 'they are the sort of people who would have a milk bottle on the breakfast table'. Later on, during my time there I was asked to join the hockey team but said I'd be unable to get home easily after practice. The games teacher suggested I ask my father to buy me a car. I could imagine what sort of reaction that would get.

The sixties impacted on School life in terms of extremely short skirts and the usual problems of adolescence. In the third year a huge furore was caused by the trendy 'Nova' magazine featuring some of my class on the front cover in school uniform. The article detailed some of their activities, going to clubs and parties in London, and not just at the weekend!

Careers advice was a visit to the rather formidable headmistress, probably in the 5th year. She was someone we'd probably had no contact with before. She looked at our reports and gave us ludicrous suggestions. My careers advice was to be a hotel receptionist. In spite of a large variety of jobs to date I've never done this. In the end with just two A Levels I followed the usual route and applied to teacher training college, along with a good percentage of the 6th form.

## A secondary Modern School

Julia provided this insight into a secondary modern school. The material is taken from a booklet recording the opening of the school in May 1961.

### THE SCHOOL

The official opening, in April, 1956, of the first Jordanthorpe Secondary School (now the Boys' School) marked the first stage in the educational re-organisation of this area of Sheffield envisaged in the Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education ; the completion of Jordanthorpe Secondary School for Girls and the admission of its first pupils in September, 1959, also completes the provision for the area. The necessary physical amenities have been provided ; further development is now a matter of establishing new school communities with their own corporate life and traditions, and this is in fact already well under way despite problems of staffing, and of somewhat greater numbers of pupils than could be anticipated when the Development Plan was formulated.

The first Jordanthorpe Secondary School had initially to cater for both boys and girls, and for something like double its proper complement of pupils. It did so with a remarkable measure of success so that, when the second school was completed, the re-organisation into separate schools for boys and girls at the same time as the Girls' School received its first pupils could be carried out very smoothly and efficiently. Moreover, from the outset there has been the most effective and cordial co-operation between the two schools so that in very truth it may be claimed that here the boys and girls receive benefits often claimed for co-education whilst at the same time the fullest attention is given to their special separate needs.

This co-operation goes even further and includes as well as the two Jordanthorpe Schools, the neighbouring Rowlinson Technical School. Sheffield has here something very closely akin to a " school base " or " campus " organisation of secondary education in which three schools, each with its own special tasks and its own approach to them, live and work together in complete harmony and co-operative effort.

Jordanthorpe Secondary School for Girls is the youngest member of this partnership, but already it is playing a significant part and making its own distinctive contribution to the secondary education of girls in the south of the city. It draws its pupils from the same contributory primary schools as the Boys' School—Abbey Lane, Bradway, Greenhill, Norton County, Norton Free and Woodseats Schools—and already at the beginning of 1961 there were some 700 pupils on the rolls. The school was actually planned for six hundred and the present larger

numbers arise mainly because the increased numbers of children born in the immediate post-war years are now passing through secondary schools.

The School is managing to deal with these numbers successfully both in studies and in its general corporate life and activities. It has, moreover, maintained and developed the extended courses which had been established before the pupils were transferred, and a number of girls have already been presented for the examinations for the ordinary level of the General Certificate of Education and for the School Certificates of the Royal Society of Arts. Some have moved on to a variety of senior courses whilst others have passed into their working careers. There can be no doubt either from the records which its pioneer members have already established, or from the provision which the School is making for its present pupils, that here is a new school full of promise and already taking its rightful place in the growing provision of secondary education.



A view of some of the school rooms



*Housecraft Instructional Flat*

14

*Craft Room*

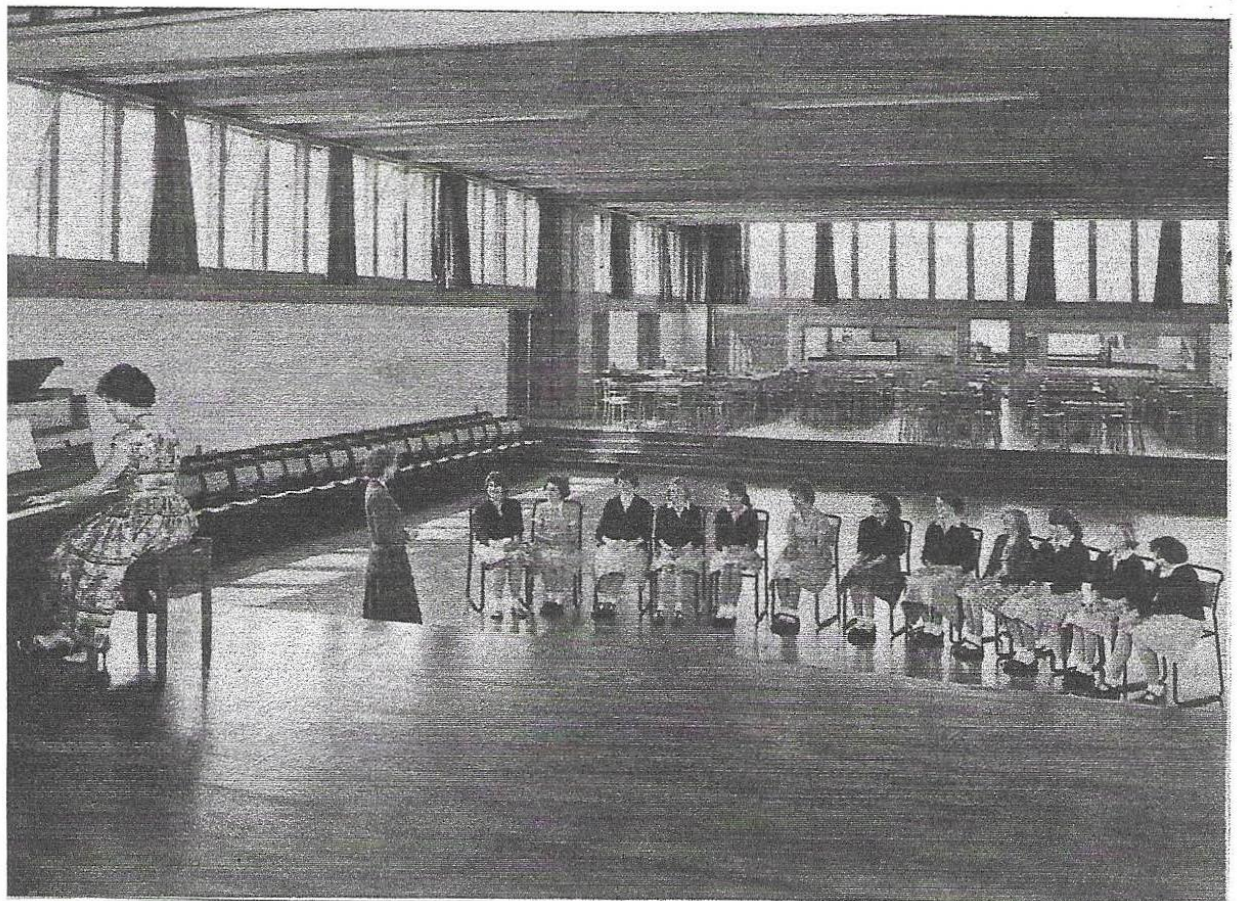


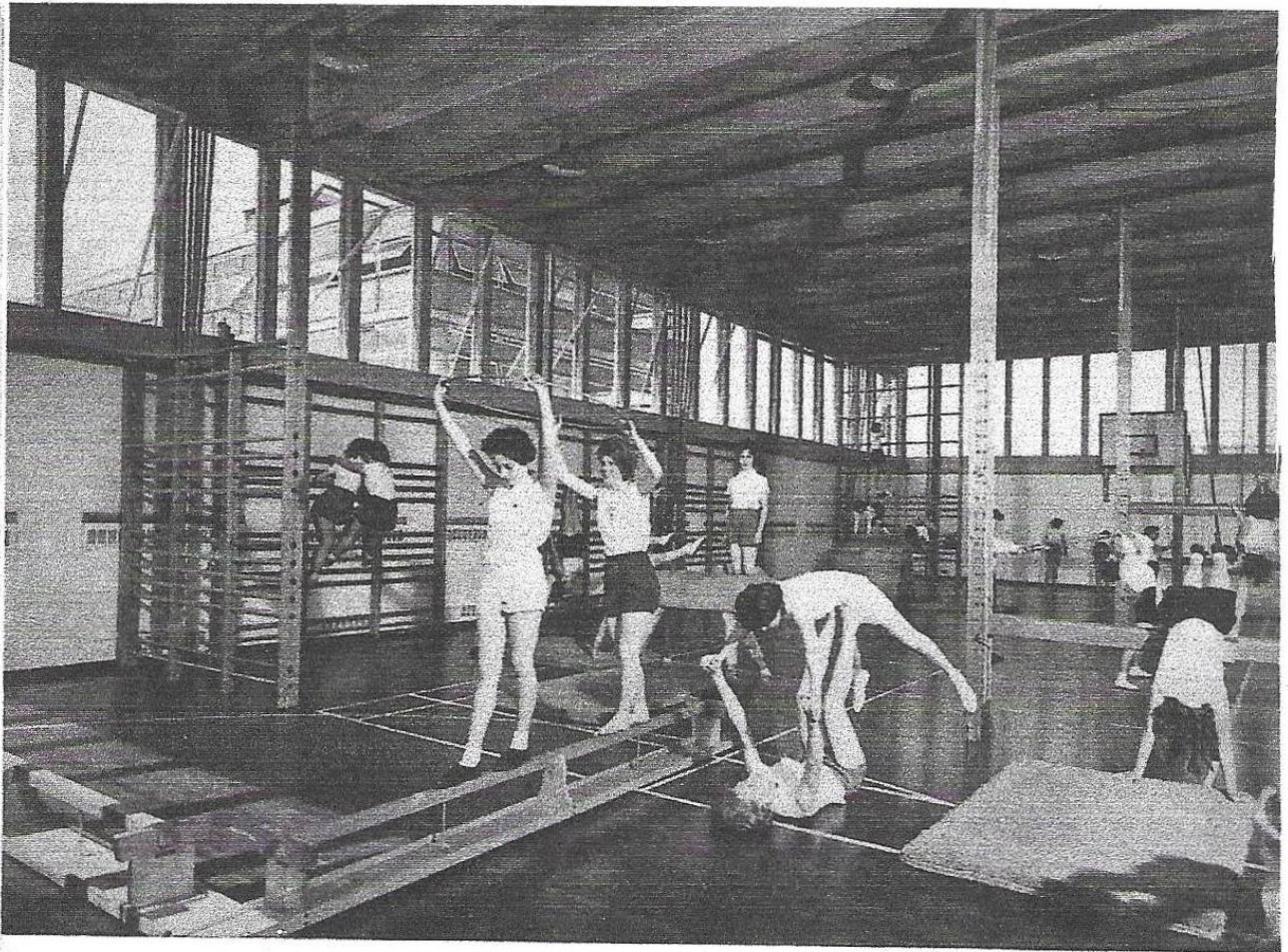


*Assembly and Dining Halls*

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*Housecraft Room*





*Library*

*Gymnasium*



### **According to Julia's school reports the subjects studied were:**

- Craftwork: Domestic Science, Metalwork, Needlework and Woodwork
- English: Composition, Construction, Reading and Spelling
- French
- Geography
- History
- Maths: Arithmetic and Algebra
- Music
- RE
- Science
- PE

### Technical schools

Secondary technical Schools were designed to train children adept in mechanical and scientific subjects. The focus of the schools was on providing high academic standards in demanding subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, advanced Mathematics and Biology to create pupils that could become scientists, engineers and technicians.

These were not established in significant numbers. They peaked in 1968 with 319 schools and by 1970 there were fewer than 100.

Very few technical schools were opened, due to the lack of money and a shortage of suitably qualified teachers. This failure to develop the technical part of the system undermined the whole structure. The tripartite system was, in effect, a two-tier system with grammar schools for the academically gifted and secondary modern schools for the others.