

Need

The combined area of the two Greenford Wards and of the Northolt Ward of the Borough of Ealing is 4,700 acres. This area now contains approximately 11,200 houses, and an estimated population of 40,000 people. The elementary schools in the area now contain 4,576 junior and infant children, and 1,416 senior children ... A conservative estimate of the population of the area, when fully developed, is 66,000, a figure which may be reached in about 7 years from the present.

Thirty-three children, declared qualified at the examination for Secondary Schools last year, did not enter such Schools, and others went to schools elsewhere in Middlesex and in London - some at considerable distance. It will thus be seen that there is at present a deficiency of secondary school accommodation available for Greenford and Northolt. It must be remembered, however, that the area is still growing: the number of children between 11 and 12 years old in Greenford and Northolt is now about 640 as compared with 563 last year, and in seven years' time it is estimated that this number will be over 1000. Furthermore, the adjacent areas of North Hanwell, Southall, Harrow and Wembley are also growing and their increasing demand for Secondary Education will restrict the accommodation available for Greenford and Northolt so long as these areas have to rely on schools in other districts.

Plot For Sale

The above plea for further facilities for Higher Education was written in May of 1936 but two years earlier in the summer of 1934 negotiations were already underway for the purchase of land for a proposed Secondary School for Greenford in the Urban District of Southall/Norwood between Middlesex County Council and Mr J Green of the North West London Estates Co. Ltd. (This company was already in the process of planning the development of the surrounding land, especially on the Allenby Road end, for housing estates.)

The land under negotiation was a site 'situated at Ruislip Road, Greenford, to which it has a frontage of 300 ft., and near Allenby Road. Except for the Ruislip Road frontage the site consists of back land but, apart from the drainage, it could have been developed without difficulty in conjunction with the owner's remaining land. The greater part of the turf has already been stripped from the surface.'

A letter by the District Valuer (of Harrow) of 7th August 1934 shows how fast development was taking place in the area as he warns Middlesex C.C. Education Committee that 'in the event of delay there will be a risk of losing the site or there will be extreme difficulty in finding a possible alternative'.

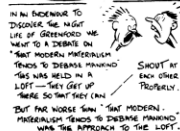
The Committee did act quickly and on 29th October, 1934, made application to the Board of Education for permission to acquire the sum of £9185 required to purchase the 13.333 acre site.

By 15th November 1934, the Board had approved the Authority's proposals and handed its request for a loan to the Ministry of Health which body, on December 14th, gave 'consent to the borrowing by the Middlesex County Council of the sum of £8,710 for the purchase of land for the proposed Greenford Secondary School (Loan period 60 years). By the 3rd of May 1935 the purchase was concluded and the Deed of Conveyance drawn up.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY TIMES, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1935

Touring Greenford: No. 1

By Harlequin



Plans

It was not until over a year later that the Middlesex County Council Education Committee submitted preliminary plans for the proposed school (Greenford Secondary School No. S 6295) to the Board of Education. Mr Walton, secretary to the Committee wrote on 20th October 1936 expressing concern for the 'considerable additional expenditure both to the Authority and to the parents for travelling expenses for the rapidly increasing number of children who had to be sent to schools far afield. He warned, 'Strong local pressure is being brought to bear on the Authority to treat this as a matter of urgency, and the Authority's statistical information leads it to feel that this pressure is warranted.'



COUNTY COUNCIL OF MIDDLESEX EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Office: 10, GREAT GEORGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

H. M. WALTON M.A.
Secretary

The Secretary,
Board of Education,
Whitehall, S. W. 1.

By order: NR/PT.

20th October, 1936.

1. Middlesex.
2. Greenford Secondary School (proposed).

S.6295 B/5.

Sir,

Fifth reference to the Board's letter of 15th November, 1934, approving the purchase of a site for the erection of the above-named School, I enclose preliminary plans of the proposed school together with an explanatory memorandum from the County Architect.

This area is very rapidly being built over and the number of qualified candidates in the Authority's General Entrance Examination increases rapidly year by year.

At present the qualified candidates from the Greenford area have to be accommodated in secondary schools in Ealing, Southall, Wembley and as far afield as schools belonging to the London County Council, thus involving considerable additional expenditure both to the Authority and to the parents for travelling expenses. Strong local pressure is being brought to bear on the Authority to treat this as a matter of urgency, and the Authority's statistical information leads it to feel that this pressure is warranted.

I shall be glad if the Board will give their early approval to these plans.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

Secretary

On 26th November, 1936 the Board of Education suggested a few minor changes to the plans (e.g. giving the Biology Lab a Prep Room) and then:-

At a Meeting of the County Council held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on Thursday, the 27th day of January, 1938, it was resolved that application be made to the Minister of Health for consent to the borrowing by the County Council of the amounts for the erection of the Ruislip Road Secondary School, Greenford, including wages of Clerk of Works (£390), £54453 for a term of 50 years. . . and for the provision of furniture and equipment in the School, £4475 for a term of 15 years.

By 8th March 1938 formal consent to borrowing the sum was granted by the Ministry of Health and building could get under way and by 3rd February, 1939 the school had a name.

RECEIVED
MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Office: 10, GREAT GEORGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1.
H. M. WALTON M.A.
Secretary
By order: NR/4.

The Secretary,
Board of Education,
Whitehall,
S.W. 1.

3 FEB 1939

Sir,

1. Middlesex.
2. Greenford County School. S.6295.
Ruislip Road, Greenford.

I have to inform you that it has been decided that the new secondary school which will be opened in September, 1939, shall be named the Greenford County School.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me the necessary copies of Form 1 S., in order that application may be made for the recognition of this new secondary school.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
H. M. Walton
Secretary to the Education Committee.

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY TIMES, SATURDAY JULY 27, 1938

The Scapegoat

By Harlequin

THE MEDICAL OFFICERS' REPORT PUBLISHED THIS WEEK TELLS US THAT THE YEAR NINETEEN AND TWENTY-FOUR WAS A BUMPER YEAR FOR THE BIRTHDATE OF EALING. THE ADDED AGES ARE BLAMED FOR THIS AND IT IS STRONGLY SUBMITTED THAT GREENFORD IS THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE.



GETTING ALL STATISTICAL, JACK SAYS THAT IF ALL THE BABIES IN GREENFORD WERE PUT TOGETHER -

THEY WOULD STRUT FROM THE POND LION TO WESTERN AVENUE AND PROBABLY -

ALONG WESTERN AVENUE TO SHEPHERDS BUSH.

WITNESSED YESTERDAY - A GREENFORD RESIDENT SAID HE STRONGLY REGRETTED THE FACT THAT WHITEHEAT HAPPENED IN THE BOROUGH -

POOR OLD GREENFORD ALWAYS GOT THE BLAME.



The Roof's On

An Inspector's Report of July 14, 1939 recommended that the Board of Education give the new school recognition and an Architect's Certificate dated 11th March 1940 stated:-

I hereby certify that I have personally inspected the buildings of this School and that the erection of the premises for which plans and specifications were approved by the Board of Education on the 28th February 1938 was, in all respects, completed in accordance therewith on the 12th August 1939.

First Appointments

The building contractors, in fact, handed over the building to the Authority on the contract date, i.e. 28th March, 1939. The very first member of staff at Greenford County School was Mr T. Williams of Hillingdon who was employed as full-time groundsman. He was also engaged for evening and week-end work in order to carry out the necessary stoking duties and supervision of the premises. He was also permitted by the County Authority to withdraw from his groundsman's duties as and when required to attend to delivery of goods.

Because of the fact that Secondary and Elementary School children were to be using the School and in addition the Greenford Evening Institute would occupy the premises on four evenings each week from September, both a Caretaker (Mr W J Dossett of Ealing) at 70/- a week and a full time Assistant Caretaker (Mr W F Betts of West Hampstead) at 48/- were appointed at the end of June. (Mr Dossett was to find that by December the staff arranged that one of his many duties was to ring out the blackboard dusters every night in a weak solution of disinfectant.)

The Governors tried to get a house near the School for the Caretaker but the County Committee were 'of the opinion that the renting of a house opposite the school would be too expensive and in the circumstances the question of a house for the caretaker will be deferred until houses are erected on the site east of the front of the school when arrangements can be made for one to be purchased.' (The question didn't seem to become urgent again — although plans for building a house on the premises exist — until 1977 when the Authority began another search for a house and finally, in May of 1978, Ealing purchased number 282 Ruislip Road.)

Teacher Requirements

In April the Ealing Higher Education Committee started its quest for teaching staff by issuing information about its plans for the school:

Greenford County School will open in September with three forms of age range 11-12 years and two forms of age range 12-13 years.

It is hoped that English, Geography and History may be taught as a unified group of subjects, at least in the lower school, and teachers are looked for who are willing to equip themselves, if they are not already fully equipped, to develop such a course. Similar co-operation between members of the staff will be desired in Science and Mathematics.

The Senior Mistress will be expected to undertake considerable responsibilities in the General Organisation of the School, and will deputise for the Head Master in his absence. She will advise the Head Master in all matters relating to the welfare of the girls of the school. (She was to receive £50 a year extra for these duties.)

The Head

In June it was announced to the Ealing H E Committee that:-

The Middlesex Authority have appointed Mr J W Withrington (of Orpington, Kent) as Headmaster from 1st September 1939. Mr Withrington attended Victoria University, Manchester, obtained BSc 1st Class Honours Mathematics in 1925 and MSc for Research in Mathematics in 1928. He attended London University Institute of Education part-time from 1933-36 and obtained MA by Research in Education in 1936. He at present holds the

post of Senior Mathematics Master at the Addey and Stanhope School, New Cross. The salary payable will be £750 per annum rising by increments of £25 to a maximum of £1000 per annum. (In 1939 the average income was about £235 per annum — today it is about £10500; a 3 bedroom house which today would cost £76000, in 1939 cost £750)



Mr J. W. Withrington

The Original Five

Five full-time assistants will be employed in the school from September 1939. . . The candidate provisionally appointed to the post of Senior Mistress failed to pass the medical examination (as did the first offered the Mathematics post) and the Appointments Sub-Committee reviewed the position. They decided that a further advertisement should be published inviting applications for the post of English Mistress and authorised the inclusion in the advertisement of a statement that at a later date, after satisfactory service, the candidate appointed may be offered the post of Senior Mistress.

Miss M L Vale BA was appointed to the English post on 29 June 1939. The total number of staff were five. The others appointed were:-

Miss L M Stonebridge BA (French) transfer from Ealing County School for Girls

Miss M H Drayton BA (Geography and History) from Brackley, Northamptonshire

Mr L James MA BSc (Science and Art) from Upminster, Essex

Mr G L Beach BA (Mathematics, Music and Games) from Blandford, Dorset

Miss Lynda E Bateman of Harrow was appointed as Secretary and commenced duties on Monday 12th June 1939 so that she could assist with the clerical duties arising during the summer term.

And so, buildings, staff — all was ready to welcome the first pupils of Greenford County School on September 14th, 1939.

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& BABIES' WEAR***

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THE BEST LAID PLANS. . .

At 11:15 on September 3rd 1939 the people of Greenford, gathered round their wirelesses, heard their Prime Minister broadcast to the anxious nation:-

I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street. This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that, unless we heard from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.

That announcement and its consequences meant that Greenford County School was to have all the problems experienced by any school during the war but made infinitely worse by the fact that it was born at the outset of the Second World War — indeed its birth was delayed.

Birth

The school did not open on September 14th as planned. For a while the appointed staff were not sure that the school would open at all as there were rumours that the building was to be used as a barrack or hospital! If they did open would they have any pupils? As Mr Withrington put it, '...enquiry soon showed that there was no panic rush of children away from the area. Over 80% of the parents indicated that they still wished their children to attend after the outbreak of hostilities, and the school was opened, on a basis of voluntary attendance, on 2nd October 1939.' (The official opening by Lord Elton, which had been planned to take place on the 12th October, was indefinitely postponed at this stage.)

The school opened with 208 pupils (not 145 as originally planned for) of whom over one third were evacuees from 28 other secondary schools.

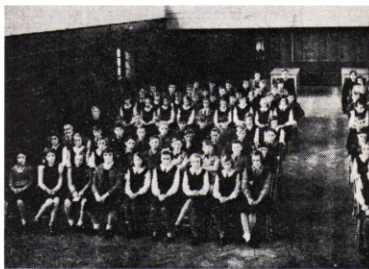
There were four normal age first forms, two over-age first forms, and two second forms. All second formers were from other schools. These pupils formed the 'top' of the school as it grew up and provided the problem of developing a loyalty in a compact group of pupils who did not think of themselves as ours. The problem of temporarily absorbing staff seconded from other schools (such as Ealing County Girls' and Ealing County Boys' and schools in Hornsey and Chiswick) began and stayed with us for the next six years.

Day One

The first day is recalled in the first edition of the school magazine *Prospect* published in 1947:-

When the Headmaster walks into the hall for morning prayers, and the solid mass of 569 pupils rise to their feet, close-packed from the First-formers on the floor to the lofty Sixth-formers on their chairs by the kitchen hatch, and the even loftier section on their unstable benches in the gallery, those of us who were present on 2nd October 1939 sometimes see again in memory those rows of 150 awed First-formers dangling their short legs from brand new chairs, while the Headmaster held before us, very simply, the idea of THE SCHOOL as it had taken shape in his mind. Some of us can even remember the days before that First Day, when, with shadows of war growing ever darker, we used to meet, by twos and threes, as we

could, to make plans and exchange ideas, seeing the empty rooms and echoing corridors peopled by the shades, not of the past, but of the future. When we did begin, the simple organisation and the uncomplicated time-table did nothing to cloud our aim — to do all that we undertook in the best way we knew. That that aim is still so clearly seen as a part of the school's life, complex and involved as it now is, is the greatest proof and tribute any of us can pay to Mr Withrington's work here.



The First Assembly

Logistics

What seemed 'the simple organisation and the uncomplicated timetable' to the pupils was quite the opposite for the Head and staff:-

To make the most of limited shelter accommodation the school attends in two sections. By running longer morning and afternoon sessions than usual, and by requiring attendance on Saturday mornings, all pupils have had a minimum of 24 periods per week of 35 minutes each. (Two forms attend two mornings and three afternoons and two for three mornings and two afternoons). Times of beginning and ending school have varied because of the change from summer-time to standard time, and because of black-out regulations. At the moment school starts at 8.40 and ends at 3.30, with an interval of 35 minutes for the staff to have lunch.

Those entering from the evacuated Ealing schools are being kept together as a unit as far as possible. The majority of the pupils transferred, entered under the redistribution scheme carried out at the Middlesex County Council Education Offices with the help of teachers representing the schools concerned. The pupils transferred to Greenford are all either first or second year pupils. The majority of them entered school on 24th October. Throughout the first year there was little change in the total numbers of the School, but there was a fairly steady movement of pupils on and off the School register.

'The fluctuating school population has involved a frequent change of organisation, and we have had four different timetables for the whole school, with minor adjustments in addition, from time to time' — this by December! and it was to continue this way throughout the war.

A Full Day

Except for a short period at the beginning of term when Mr James, the Science Master, was required by the Middlesex County Council Education Department for special work in connection with the re-distribution of secondary school pupils, no subject has been omitted from the school curriculum. (Scripture has one period, English 3, French 4, History and/or Geography 3, Mathematics 4, Woodwork or Needlework 2, Art 2, Music 2, Games or Gym 2.) With the help of extra homework, the pupils have had very nearly a complete secondary school education since they have been in attendance.

Plans that the Head had laid for giving rather more attention to handicraft than is usual in secondary schools, did not mature owing to shortage of time, Staff, and materials.

Mr Withrington seems to be showing the strain a little when 'The County Authorities found it necessary to terminate Miss Walker's appointment. Miss Walker was employed as a County teacher on a temporary part-time basis, and her appointment has been terminated in favour of a whole time Domestic Subjects Mistress from an evacuated school, who was not employable in the reception area. Miss Walker was giving very capable and loyal service here and I regret losing her services on these grounds, and because frequent changes of staff do not make it easy to weld the staff into a working unit.

There came a stage when it was obvious the Head needed the assistance of a Senior Mistress so in January he presented the following case to the Governors:-

I wish to recommend that Miss Stonebridge BA should be appointed to the position of Senior Mistress here, with the appropriate addition of salary in accordance with the County's scale. In view of the fact that we have a considerable number of girls here who are older than those we expected to have, I should be glad if the appointment of Senior Mistress could be confirmed with the least possible delay.

According to the terms of the advertisement under which Miss Vale was appointed it would have been possible to have appointed her as Senior Mistress, although Miss Vale was junior to Miss Stonebridge at Ealing County School for Girls before she came to us, Miss Stonebridge being 7 years senior in age to Miss Vale. Although both of them are excellent members of the Staff, in my judgment the best general policy would be to appoint Miss Stonebridge.

When the Head informed the Staff that Miss Stonebridge was to be appointed as Senior Mistress to the School, it raised the question of where the rest of the women were to be accommodated 'as they are at present using the Senior Mistress Room as a Staff Room'. It was decided that they should move into the Medical Inspection Room — they were obviously not using the room originally intended as the female staff room! (The Head later arranged for staff teas to be available in this room at break as a way to get all the staff to meet together whenever possible.)

By June the Head asked that Mr James be made Senior Master.

Throughout that first year the Head had difficulty in holding on to teaching and non-teaching staff. Several male staff were called up. The Assistant Caretaker, Mr W. F. Betts, was transferred temporarily to the Ealing Technical College on the 11th December, and three of the Cleaners were engaged in his place. The five cleaners at the school, by the way, earned 1/- an hour. The Cook and Kitchen Helper of Ealing County Girls' School were temporarily transferred to Greenford but by June the Head had to report that it had been found necessary to

dispense with their services. They removed food from the kitchen without authority after having been told that all food must be used up for School purposes. Mr Williams, the school groundsman, was required by the County for A.R.P. work from the beginning of September.

Beg, Borrow. . .

Furnishings and apparatus were gradually being delivered. Various parts of the school were still without furniture in December; but the staff did not consider that they were put to any serious inconvenience. They were instructed to borrow from other County Schools books and apparatus which they were unable to use. Science equipment, pianos, text books, and sundry other items were borrowed from the Girls' County School and the Boys' County School. In 1960, Mr James recalled, 'As the then only science master on the staff my greatest problem was the lack of science equipment. So I had to go to the Ealing County Schools to borrow everything — even simple equipment like test tubes and beakers.'

The bareness of the school even by the summer seems poignantly obvious by a suggestion made by the staff that children might be asked 'to subscribe, voluntarily, small amounts for the purchase of articles such as pictures, vases, etc. for the School. The articles being the sort of items that would not be provided by the Middlesex County Council. It was suggested that the first item to be subscribed for should be a nice vase for the hall.'

The Head complained that the cycle shed accommodation was already insufficient for those who wished to use bicycles. In view of the fact that there were very poor transport services to the west of the school, he considered that further cycle accommodation would be necessary.

Discipline

Early on, the Staff discussed the discipline policy they should adopt: 'Headmaster suggested that for most classroom purposes the question of discipline was a personal one to be dealt with by each individual member of the Staff. . . It was also suggested that any punishments that were given should be small ones, in order that they might be easily increased if that were necessary. The Headmaster asked that there should be three stages for dealing with disciplinary cases — most cases could be dealt with without reference to the Headmaster at all; in certain cases e.g. when rather heavy fines were involved or it was thought that there might be any difficulties with parents — the members of the Staff were asked to consult the Headmaster on the form of punishment, and the Staff to be responsible for seeing that the punishment was carried out, themselves. Only in cases where this failed or in cases of delinquency, such as stealing, was the Headmaster to deal directly with the disciplinary measures to be carried out.'

One case the Head most certainly dealt with personally was one which occurred towards the end of that first year. He reported that 'it has been found desirable, with the concurrence of the Chairman of the Governors, to transfer one boy to Horsenden Senior School. He was unable to keep his hands off other people's property after having been caught and given a second chance. His parents agreed that he would only steal again if he returned. I regret to say that, since leaving us, he has been charged at Harrow Weald with larceny of cash outside School, and has been put on probation for a year.'

Rules — Sanctions

At the very first staff meeting held on 29th September (before the pupils arrived!) the staff came up with a set of school rules which vary only slightly from those in force today:-

No running in corridors

No cycling on school premises. Care to be taken to ensure that bicycle sheds are not damaged by the cycles.

Nothing is to be brought on to school premises except for personal or school use.

Every article to be clearly marked with owner's name.

Silence in North corridor always, and in the Hall during Assembly time, and in the Library at all times (including Staff).

They thought up a few more once the pupils had actually started at the school:-

Lost property should be handed in to Miss Bateman and returned to the owner on payment of a 1/2d fine for each article.

All money must be kept on the person, and not left in the Cloakrooms or desks.

Incidents occurred occasionally which acquired further sanctions such as:-

It was reported that children had been snowballing in the lobby, (much larger than it is today, remember!) the girls being the worst offenders in this respect. Children were also making a slide on the terrace to the Gymnasium and the Head agreed to give out a notice forbidding both this, and the snowballing in the lobby. Also a reminder to keep windows closed to help keep the temperature of the building up.

Or:-

The question of gas masks arose, and it was decided that the member of Staff who happens to be on Cloakroom duty should see that all the children have brought masks. Any child who forgets to bring a mask will be sent home to fetch it. Special cases of missed work through going home for gas masks to be dealt with by the teacher responsible for that subject.

The Head did not wish the children to stand when he entered a classroom (unless he had a visitor with him), and the children were to understand that whoever was teaching them was still in charge of them when the Head was in the room. He did suggest that some children should be appointed to be responsible for opening and closing the doors for visitors.

Could Do Better

In a staff meeting which took place on 12th February 1940 the staff discussed the progress of their pupils and noted down comments about some. I wonder if Mr Butcher's pupils over the years would appreciate what staff had to say about him in his first year — his talent for drama seems to have been evident from the very beginning:-

Butcher. Is regarded as a clown. Seems to be trying to do his best. Seems to be a decent lad and takes the other children's teasing in a very good spirit. (Forgive me for quoting it, Mr Butcher! — and for those of you who don't know him, he did go on to become a Head!)

Much better comments than some others received: slack; aloof; handwriting and spelling horrible; supercilious and stupid; lazy; likes throwing her weight about, but not in the right direction; considered best to ignore her at the moment; goes to pictures instead of doing his

homework — next time this happens he is to be sent to the Headmaster who will see that he comes to school on a Saturday morning to do his homework — wants washing; very lazy, gives work in late, has a long journey to school, looks as if she might be anaemic — has flopped out in Assembly twice. Form 1d (Miss Drayton's form of normal age pupils) were not 'swans' by a long way, but may certainly be called hard working 'ducks'.

A month earlier in a discussion of 'Special Cases' it was felt that a boy under discussion was merely naughty and silly, and the Head informed the Staff that after meeting the boy's mother, he had formed the opinion that the boy would get no home training, and that the school would, in fact, provide the only training that the boy was likely to have.

In December staff agreed to insist upon reasonable handwriting, even if this meant that a little less work was done. But by January more drastic measures seemed in order:- It was decided that something must be done about the writing, setting out and general appearance of the children's work. It was felt desirable to impress continually upon the children the fact that the Staff expected presentable work and would not tolerate any slackness in this respect.

Miss Stonebridge agreed to undertake to run a special handwriting class on one day a week after school — this being so, the Staff agreed that Miss Stonebridge should be released from the normal cloakroom duties carried out by the rest of the Staff. Mr Naylor and Mr Hartley agreed that a certain standard of writing must be set and agreed upon. Mr Hartley suggested that he and Mr Naylor should teach the children the correct formation of all letters in the alphabet, and the Staff should know exactly what form the letters were to take so that there should be no difference of opinion over the matter. Children to practise whenever opportunities presented themselves. Miss Stonebridge and Mr Hartley were to co-operate over this matter. Children were not to be released from this class until Miss Stonebridge had inspected their exercise books, and felt that the handwriting had considerably improved.

NOT ALL WORK — OR WAS IT?

Gardening by Rotation

Even before Christmas the school gardens and school field were providing work 'for a gardening squad, and when a rough part of the field is ploughed up, we shall have work and to spare for all who can use gardening tools.'

By the spring, it was decided that the cultivation of the school garden 'is a pretty big job, and, if it is to be done thoroughly, everybody who can do so must help. The first big job will be the sowing of seeds for vegetables, etc. Mr James is to draw up plans and to organize the work. It was suggested that a School Labour Corps be formed, and an essential part of the training will be the training of the children to handle and clean the tools.'

If it is decided that the garden will have to be worked to a certain extent in school hours, the children will have to be taken in rotation from various subjects, and for this purpose some sort of register will have to be kept. This will have to be done in forms. If certain children are selected and trained they will be able to assist the staff in

helping the other children. There cannot very easily be times during the week set aside for gardening owing to the uncertainty of the weather, but opportunities will have to be taken when the soil is in the best condition.'

By the summer they were hoping to cultivate a school garden of roughly 3/4 acre. In addition to this garden, the children of the school were keeping the lawns and flower beds in order.

Amen!

The pupils, of course, had more conventional extra-curricular activities. Very shortly after the opening of the school they made a beginning with a school choir and a school orchestra. The Head wanted the children to take as much part in Assembly as possible and expressed this wish in a staff meeting on 6th October, whereupon Mr Beach suggested that 'as a start the children could join in the Amens. This was agreed to. The Headmaster also suggested that members of the Staff should sometimes take the readings at Assembly, and choose their own form of service. Mr Beach stated that the singing is not yet good enough for the children to sing hymns, but that it may be so by the end of next week.'

By December the Headmaster congratulated the Staff on the manner in which they had conducted Assemblies but again he requested that wherever possible the Staff should incorporate children in their Assemblies. Mr James suggested that music of various kinds should be used in Assembly and that the gramophone should also be used for this purpose.

Task Force

Mr Withrington also felt that the children should have some responsibilities in running the school and made a number of suggestions:

Monitors i/c the cloakrooms

Form captains — amongst other things responsible for seeing that mud and litter is not left in classrooms/ leaders of their forms

Games monitors

Monitors i/c collecting up books — homework, etc.

Lost property helper

Monitors i/c selling milk

Librarians

Finally, although the Head thought that probably the children would have to be taught manners and cleanliness as an important part of their training when they started school dinners in January, he considered that certain children might have to help with the serving of the dinners.

He set up a Silence Room for the children, especially for those whose parents did not get home until late in the afternoon, and where the children could get on with their homework, etc.

In December, the Head put forward his plan for having, as soon as possible, say three periods a week, which would be free periods when children could do whatever subjects they liked, or indulge in hobbies such as woodwork, or take up an extra language, or have coaching in a weak subject. The matter was discussed freely by the Staff... The scheme in theory was approved by them and in January it started with one period a week, at a different time every week. In fact the Head believed that activities which are of the nature of hobbies, or of doing specific jobs for the School, were more important than subjects' societies.

The Head was concerned to provide for outdoor games in the summer but there were obstacles: 'In view of the fact that we are not to have cricket tables provided, I have asked that concrete wickets be laid down. These will be much cheaper in original cost and upkeep, and will serve for practice and for matches while the school is still young.'

'I regret to say that the position in regard to girls' games is likely to be very difficult. There are no tennis courts available, and the playgrounds are hardly suitable for tennis in their present condition. I am suggesting to the County that, in the long run, it would be an economy to give the playgrounds a fine surface dressing.'



FIRST FORMER SERVING

Shared Accommodation. . .

In January 1940, 'Hospitality was given to a temporary Junior Mixed and Infants' School, and this lasted for three years.' In other words, because Greenford had shelter accommodation, the juniors and infants were moved in — to the south corridor (the present Modern Languages Department).

This of course caused a few problems and at a staff meeting shortly after, 'in discussing the behaviour of children in the corridors the Headmaster mentioned that children should be well away from the south corridor in order to avoid disturbing the junior school. (Silent in the north corridor and away from the south corridor!) The Headmaster pointed out that things are now very different from the time when we had only half the children in the building at one time. Cleaners hours have been increased. Part of this increase is due to the heavy work which has fallen on the Caretaker since the Assistant Caretaker was transferred, but part is due to the increased use of the premises by the Junior School, which is receiving hospitality here, as well as by the County School.' By April they were discussing the question of the overlapping of breaks with the Junior School and establishing regulations for getting books from the Library without disturbing the Junior School. (N.B. The Library at that time was in the same corridor.)

PAPER CHASE

War brought severe problems, not least the question of the rationing of paper which had already begun by December '39 when the Head urged the staff to practise every possible economy. By January economy of paper was the main topic of a staff meeting:-

It was suggested that children should collect odd pieces of paper for general notebook work; that they should be issued with paper clips, and should endeavour to keep a stock of such paper for all rough work. Miss Hampson suggested that general notebooks should be expected to last for four months, and, if children did not manage this they should then be expected to supply their own paper. Mr Potts commented on the serious lack of decent paper there appeared to be in the children's homes, judging from the paper that parents used for sending notes to school. Mr James thought that the children should be given suggestions as to the sort of paper they could bring to school, i.e. envelopes cut open, backs of handbills, etc. Mr Beach said that he thought lines (written during detentions) should not be written in general notebooks or any other school books, as he thought this was a case where these odd scraps of paper could be usefully employed.

It was generally agreed that this scheme for collecting oddments of paper should be adopted, but that it could not be enforced as in some cases it seemed quite possible that children would not be in a position to collect this kind of paper. Miss Jones said that she could bring some odd paper, and it was also generally agreed that all the Staff would have to co-operate as it was unreasonable to expect children to go to the trouble of collecting paper, if the Staff were not prepared to do so, added to which, if the Staff collected paper, it would set a good example to the children.

It was decided that this rough paper could be used for Maths and French, at least, and probably for other subjects. It must, of course, be made clear to the children that dirty paper is of no use whatever; size does not matter, but it must be clean. The whole matter to be at the discretion of the Staff, but it was to be clearly understood that the Staff should use this paper whenever possible. As a further economy, Miss Stonebridge suggested that children should be encouraged to underline headings instead of leaving several blank lines under them. The Staff were asked to consider whether a measure of oral work could be used instead of written work, but it was unanimously agreed that we could not economize in this way.

Mr Potts suggested that, as a further economy, the Maths people should go back to the use of narrow lined books, but the Headmaster said that it was most important that the children's handwriting should not be allowed to suffer for this reason:-

Paper Economy was again mentioned in a staff meeting in April when the Head impressed upon the Staff that they would have to make more and more use of odd pieces of paper that the children brought in. In May the Headmaster again asked for strict economy with regard to the use of stationery. When children left the School, all their old exercise books were to be given in to Miss Bateman for possible future use. They thought they might have to use books with narrower rulings, or possibly fold pages down the middle.

The staff had legislated that the pupils cover all textbooks and even Library books when in use but the shortage of paper soon forced them to abandon the practice.

The Headmaster said that any misuse of school property (this included wasting school paper) should be punished by imposing a fine of 1/2d upwards. . . . Mr Naylor said that he thought boxes should be provided in which children should put their fines, as he did not think it wise that the Staff should be seen pocketing the money — it might lead to misunderstandings on the part of the children. The headmaster agreed with this suggestion, and asked Mr Naylor to see about the providing of these boxes in various parts of the building. The children should also be informed that the fines were to be used to provide useful or decorative articles for the school.

I assume they did not have the problem with litter that we have!

Those used to staff meetings might be amused to hear that the Headmaster closed the meeting at which the economy of paper was discussed by saying that, although he welcomed constructive ideas and discussion, he felt that the Staff must make an effort to keep strictly to the point at Staff Meetings, otherwise it would be impossible to get through the amount of business that was waiting to be settled.

Under Shelter

During the autumn term five surface shelters had been provided on a part of the school field. In view of the fact that an elementary school was sharing the premises, Mr Withrington was concerned that these would be insufficient for the school if it were to grow much further. At that stage it was planned that further protection would be provided inside the school.

By June the staff were sorting out their roles should the shelters have to be used:

The women members of the Staff are to be responsible for the first aid in each shelter. Cotton wool has been provided to provide ear plugs for each child in the School. The male members of the Staff, on receipt of the alarm, are to be responsible for collecting the pail full of drinking water, and the mugs and jugs from the kitchen. It was advised that children should be given as little to drink as possible. Sawdust impregnated with disinfectant will be available in the shelters in case the children are sick, and a bottle of disinfectant will also be available for use in the lavatories.

You Set the Standards

The formal opening of the school in October had been abandoned but the staff were determined to have some kind of formal ceremony or service of welcome which was finally held on March 16 1940 — planning for which had to include procedures in case it was interrupted by an air raid.

Alderman Col R R Kimmitt, OBE, chairman of the Ealing Higher Education Committee and Chairman of Governors, presided, and was supported by the Mayor and Mayoress of Ealing (Cler and Mrs Garner) and the Headmaster, Mr J W Withrington. Three schoolgirls presented bouquets to the Mayoress, Mrs Kimmitt, and Mrs Fuller.

The proceedings were begun with a short service, in the course of which the Rev F C Minard Perkins read a lesson and the Vicar of Ealing (the Rev H Greatbatch) said prayers and gave the benediction.



GREENFORD COUNTY SCHOOL

A Meeting of Welcome to Parents

To be held on

SATURDAY, 16th MARCH, 1940

at 3 p.m.

The School will be open for inspection from 2 p.m.

A short display will be given in the gymnasium at 2.20 p.m.

The main address was given by Alderman J.C. Fuller, chairman of the Middlesex Education Committee. He began by saying that his committee welcomed the establishment of the school, which in building and equipment was as fine as anything of its kind in the country. It was one of the first major public institutions to be provided for the large new community of Greenford, and it should enrich the whole corporate life of the place.

He reminded the boys and girls that as the first pupils of the school their task was not to carry on traditions but to create them. 'It is your privilege to lay the foundations of good traditions in this new Greenford School and to set a high standard of conduct and service for future generations of Greenfordians. Standard depends on each individual among you.'

In encouraging the parents to co-operate with the Headmaster and Staff of the school he advised them not to let the demand for juvenile labour resulting from the war sacrifice their children's careers for easy money. He also advised that a high-powered radio set in full blast is not the best accompaniment to effective homework. Further, growing boys and girls need for their physical and mental development plenty of sleep. The cinema may be pleasant and even useful as dessert occasionally, but as a daily diet it is likely to be enervating and harmful.

'Again I would ask you to encourage your children to read good books, an unlimited supply of which can be obtained from the school or public libraries. Part of education is to learn how to learn. Encourage them, too, to form independent opinions, and not to be ready to

accept other people's, not even yours. It may be that, if they develop this habit, they will sometimes tell you that you are hopelessly behind the times; but never mind. Most of us who are parents have been through the experience, and it has not done us much harm.

Replies to Alderman Fuller's speech were made by the Mayor and the Headmaster. In his reply, the Headmaster said: '... we need to develop the simpler virtues—honesty, love of justice, mercy, long suffering, and, above all, the faith that it was right to do right even when one did not see it leading to anything in the immediate future.' His generation, had done a grievous thing in seeking to make the world a better place instead of concentrating upon the production of better men and women. They had sought to produce a better world without real spiritual effort, but supposing such a world could be produced would it stay like that? ... He thought that whatever sort of world we had we should need citizens of integrity, willing to take risks instead of merely seeking security, we should not have a country worthy to be called free, certainly not free in spirit.

The meeting was preceded by a display in the gymnasium and after the speeches musical items were rendered by the school choir. D.S. Webb and Winifred Bassett sang solos, and a song was rendered by a trio—Betty Forest, Winifred Bassett and Muriel Martin.

The Head thanked Mr L F Potts, who had been seconded to the school from the Ealing County School for Boys, and who arranged and accompanied the musical programme.

Shortly after the Service of Welcome the Head informed the Staff that Mrs Kimmitt had kindly offered to present the School with a cup and suggested that it might be given to the most popular boy or girl in the School. The latter suggestion, however, did not meet with the approval of the Staff. Several other suggestions for the use of the cup were made, but it transpired that most of the Staff were more in favour of something in the nature of a Service Book in lieu of a cup. It was agreed that a leather book with vellum pages was the sort of thing in mind. In this book would be written the names of pupils who rendered service of any sort to the School.

Refugees

The war relentlessly continued to increase its effects on the life of the school and at the end of June a short Staff Meeting was called to discuss yet another—the matter of 500 refugees that were to be supplied with meals at the School. 'No details were to hand, and all the Headmaster wished to do was to get a decision from the Staff as to whether we should hand a portion of the building over to the refugees and relinquish control of the undertaking, or whether the Headmaster should still be the final Authority in all matters concerning the School premises and anything that might take place here.'

'After a considerable amount of discussion, it was decided by the majority of the Staff that whatever happened, the Headmaster should not, if it can be avoided, hand over control to any outside body; and that, while we cannot offer much, if anything, in the way of actual labour, we will act in an advisory capacity, and will help the refugees in whatever way lies in our power.'

The first year was over. The school had survived its infancy.

WORSE TO COME

Take Shelter!

The second year of Greenford County School opened under conditions of heavy raiding. The School was opened for all pupils except new entrants on September 4th. The new entrants joined the School on September 18th. There were then 301 pupils on the roll (157 girls and 144 boys).

Owing to enemy activity in the air, working conditions were very difficult for the first half of the term. Work was carried on as far as possible in shelters and a considerable amount was done in the indoor shelters. The County Authorities sent an instruction that school should begin at 10:30 a.m. if an 'alert' was in being between the hours of midnight and 6:0 a.m. Authority was obtained to vary the hours of opening of school if local circumstances justified it. The school was opened at 9:50 and closed at 4:15, the dinner interval was shortened to one hour, and 98% of the parents were persuaded to allow their children to remain at school for the dinner interval. By these means the school was able to work during every minute that work was possible.

The teaching and the kitchen staff carried on under trying circumstances — not the least of which involved preparing 150 hot dinners daily and serving them more often than not in shelters, the staff taking their dinners as and when they could in the short time available. Those dinner hours were remembered in the first edition of the school magazine, *Prospice* in 1947:-

... the wail of the siren haunts our dinner hours, and almost daily the Head rises from his place to say benignly as the wailing dies: 'pick up your plates, and knives and forks...' On fire-watching nights Mr Withrington added to the character we already knew as Headmaster, mathematician and philosopher, that of cook and kitchen maid, as he turned dried egg into a tempting dish, or flourished a tea-towel, talking all the while of 'cabbages and kings'. Even now, at 4 p.m., a smell of burnt toast will often guide to the common-room those who seek an interview with the Headmaster.

During the second half of the autumn term there was some slackening of day time raiding which allowed a full timetable to be worked to the evident relief of the pupils.

Sanitary Habits of the Public

Indoor shelter accommodation had been provided for the increased numbers. These would, at a pinch, accommodate 150 pupils. The outdoor shelters were used by the general public from September 10th but this caused problems for Mr Withrington: I regret to report that these shelters have been misused. Entrance doors have been taken down from one shelter, a lavatory curtain removed from its place in another and the entrance to a third has been used as a latrine on at least one occasion. On many occasions the smell inside the shelters has been such as to suggest that the sanitary habits of some members of the general public leave something to be desired.

The Ealing Higher Education Committee on 2nd September had given permission for the shelters at Greenford to be used by the general public and Mr Withrington's complaint to the Committee went the rounds of several offices until on 21st September both the Committee and the Borough Surveyor received the following from the Town Clerk: 'I have received reports that the Middlesex regulation concerning cleanliness of

the trenches has not been conformed to by the A R P Department. The regulation referred to states that the A R P Authority will be responsible for leaving the shelters in a satisfactory condition of cleanliness by the time the next school session begins. No attempt has been made to have the trenches cleaned and further the day school supply of disinfectant has been almost exhausted as a result of the school having to take the necessary action themselves before school occupation of the trenches following night use by the public. The headmaster of Greenford County School has been in touch with the A R P Officer and was referred to the Cleansing Department but no action has so far been taken to meet this regulation. Would you kindly take the necessary action.'

The air raid shelters continued to worry the staff until the end of the war because as the population of the school grew they were barely sufficient to accommodate the increased numbers. Pupils and staff frequently spent half the day working in the shelters. In fact at one stage the pupils had to sit an examination in the shelters while bombs landed barely a mile away. It was June 1943 and the flying bomb attacks had begun. It was the first year that the pupils were entered for the School Certificate Examination (a forerunner of GCSE). In spite of the trying conditions under which the examination had to be taken, of the 47 entered for it, 39 obtained the General Schools Certificate and of those, 22 did very well and obtained matriculation exemption also.

Near Miss

Many bombs fell close to the school premises including two in the playing field, but only a few panes of glass were broken. On Monday 30th September, a very severe raid took place in the dinner interval. As it was reported: It happened on Monday, September 30 1940, when the Battle of Britain was at its peak. Staff at Greenford County School were taking lunch to several hundred pupils sitting in the school shelters when the distant drone of German aircraft were heard in the sky.

Minutes later the school was shaken to its foundations as more than 200 bombs fell in the area. Homes and shops were gutted, streets were littered with wreckage and rubble, gaping holes were torn in pavements. At least 200 people were killed in the area, and hundreds more were injured or made homeless.

But, miraculously, the school itself survived. Hours later, when the sirens signalled the end of the onslaught, the building was one of the few of any size remaining undamaged in the immediate bomb-scarred vicinity.

Mr James recalled in 1960: 'After the raid we had to send staff round to see if the homes — and parents — of the pupils were still in existence. Not until then did the police allow us to send the children home, and even then they had to be accompanied because many roads were full of craters.'

Several children lost their homes but no parents or children were injured.

(Ann Dawes tells me that in 1946-47, during P E periods, those without kit had to put stones into the large craters made by the bombs which had landed on the school field.)

Sadly one girl, Kathleen Barrett, lost her life that term — when the S.S. Benares, an evacuation ship, went down.



The Queen surveys bomb damage in Greenford. Photo taken by Carole Palmer's aunt.

Staff on the Move. . .

Finding and keeping staff throughout the rest of the war years was a constant headache for Mr Withrington and the governors. Many of the men were called up to join the forces; two, including Mr Beach, one of the original five, left under the regulations applying to conscientious objectors. Several went down with long-lasting illnesses such as pneumonia, and even Miss Stonebridge, another of the original five, had a long illness in 1942. Most appointments were temporary, or secondments from other schools, like Miss Hornabrook, a Gymnastics teacher from Hornsey County School for Girls. In June Mr Withrington stated the case for the Governors: The proportion of seconded and temporary Staff in relation to permanent Staff is large and this provides difficulties in the establishment of a new school. I hope it will be possible to have special consideration given to the conditions at Greenford and that a limited number of appointments on a basis which offers a prospect of permanency can be made.

In March of 1941 Mr Withrington recommended to the Governors that Miss M L Vale, who was in charge of the English teaching and the Library, 'and who is most efficient in all that she undertakes, should be granted a Special Responsibility allowance according to the recognised Middlesex scale.' And in the following September once again recommended: that Mr L James, who has been doing valuable and responsible work for some time, should be formally recognised as Senior Master, and should receive the appropriate allowance according to the County's scale. Mr James is an officer in the ATC.

The Head did get his wish for at least a few permanent appointments, of which the following were to go on to make their mark on the school: Mr H A Smith, B A, to teach French and German and Mr George H W Budge, B Mus, LRAM, as Master in charge of Music (September '42).

Mr Smith was to form a French and German Choir which sang songs in those languages. This Choir was to flourish for a considerable time and took part in all School Concerts.

Mr Budge made an immediate impact because only two months after his appointment, on 14th November 1942, the school gave its first Music Concert. It was held in aid of the library and music funds. The sum of £25.13.9. was raised. This marked the beginning of a rapid growth of musical activities, and it set the ball rolling for the development of other out-of-school activities. The school gave another musical concert later that year in April. This time the sum of £27 was raised, and of this £10 was sent to

the King Edward Memorial Hospital at Ealing. The remainder was devoted to the music funds of the school. On the 5th June the school gave a repetition of the concert at the Holy Cross Church, Greenford. The collection, amounting to £5.5.0, was in aid of the Greenford Philanthropic Society. A further sum of £28.16.0. was raised for the music fund in a Concert the following March.

These war-time Concerts under Mr Budge's direction reached their climax with a Concert by the School Choral and Orchestral Societies including a performance of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* by S Coleridge-Taylor on 23rd March 1945. It included *All Creatures of our God and King* for which G Eades of the 6th Form wrote the descant. He also arranged for clarinet and orchestra the march from *The Occasional Oratorio* by Handel. The same concert had a piece sung by the Choral Society which the present members of Gosling House might find interesting — **THE GOSLINGS** by Sir Frederick Bridge (a possible House song?). *The Pilgrim Song* by Dunhill which by then had become the school song was also part of the programme.

The School Song: The Pilgrim Song by Thomas Dunhill

- 1 Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither,
One here will constant be
Come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.
- 2 Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight,
And he will have a right
To be a Pilgrim.
- 3 Hobgoblin, nor foul fiend,
Can daunt his spirit.
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a Pilgrim.

The work of Mr Budge and Mr Smith (as well as several other members of staff who had an active interest in music e.g. Mr Sheldrake who could serve as conductor or bass) laid the foundation for a strong musical tradition in the school. Even before the war was over several pupils did very well musically: in 1943 Norman Burgess was awarded a scholarship for three years in General Musicianship and study of the trumpet at the Trinity College of Music. At the same time Robert Smith was accepted as a chorister in the Choir of St Margaret's, Westminster. The following year Margery Broom and Eileen Mellor were awarded Middlesex Scholarships in General Musicianship tenable at Trinity College of Music.

Mr Budge apparently did not confine himself to musical pursuits because in 1943 during the Easter holiday he took a party of 11 boys for a short cycling tour staying at Youth Hostels in the home counties.