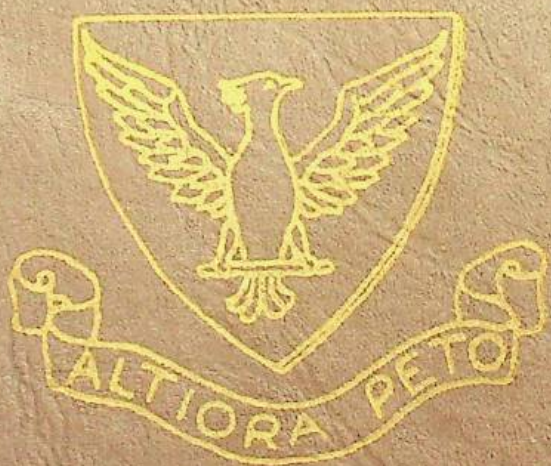


WIGAN HIGH SCHOOL



1887—1947



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1887—1947

ALTIORA PETO

FOREWORD

IT is a pleasure to me to be asked to write the foreword to this History of Wigan High School.

During the sixty years of its life the School has seen many changes : it has grown from a handful of girls to the large community it is today; it has passed from private to public ownership; it has lived in several different buildings and it has now outgrown the present one.

Since its foundation many generations of girls have gone out from the School to take their places in the homes and business houses and schools of Wigan and many other parts of the country. The influence of the School has been felt far and wide through its Old Girls and I have no doubt that those with whom they have lived and worked are grateful for what the School has made them. It is sometimes forgotten how much the town owes directly or indirectly to the influence of a corporate body in which so many of its womenfolk have been brought up. This aspect of the School's life is surely no less important than its academic achievement.

Through the years a spirit of loyalty and service has animated the School—Governors, Head Mistresses, Staff, girls and all who have worked in it. Helped by the aspirations and ideals of the past, it is the hope of all concerned with the School today that it may go forward to even higher and better things.

J. L. HARLEY.

HEAD MISTRESSES OF WIGAN HIGH SCHOOL.

1887—1898 MISS A. CHEETHAM.

1898—1904 MISS M. F. SYSON.

1904—1907 MISS M. E. WIGG.

1907—1912 MISS W. M. KIDD.

1912—1931 MISS C. S. BANKS.

1931—1937 MISS D. M. SACKETT.

1938—1945 MISS M. D. NICOLSON.

1945— MISS J. L. HARLEY.

SCHOOL CHRONICLE

1887—1947

IN the struggle for women's education which took place towards the end of the nineteenth century two great companies were established to provide well equipped day schools for the daughters of middle class families who had hitherto been denied the advantages of a sound and comprehensive education. These two companies were the Girls' Public Day School Trust Company founded in 1872, and the Church Schools' Company established in 1883. It is a matter for much pride and rejoicing that within four years of its inception the Church Schools' Company had opened a Church High School for Girls in Wigan, one of the first schools of its kind to be opened in the large towns of England, so that every girl might have the opportunity of 'learning as much as she wanted to know, of learning that as thoroughly as she could in a foundation conducted on the principles of Christian teaching.'

On March 5th, 1887, the first public announcement concerning the future school appeared in 'The Wigan Observer' :

***Proposed Wigan Church High School for Girls.**

A movement is on foot for the establishment of a Church High School in Wigan in connection with the London School Company Limited. Such an institution has been long felt to be much needed in the town and district, and the matter was considered at a recent meeting of the Ruridecanal Chapter. A committee consisting of the Rev. Canon the Hon. G. T. O. Bridgeman, Rev. Canon T. F. Fergie, the Revs. J. Croushaw, R. G. Matthew, W. Berridge, Mr. F. S. Powell, M.P., Mr. T. R. Ellis, Mr. W. C. Barnish, Mr. J. Browne was appointed to consider how such a scheme could be provided and they decided that the object could be best attained by inducing the Church Schools' Company Limited to establish one of their branch schools in Wigan.

Another six months elapsed before any further reference to the School appeared and then on September 10th, 1887, this advertisement was inserted :

Church Schools' Company Limited.

Patrons : His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.
His Grace the Archbishop of York

Wigan High School for Girls. 19, New Market Street.

Fees : for pupils under 12 years of age 2 guineas per term; for pupils over 12 years of age 3 guineas per term.

The School will be opened on September 27th, 1887.

On Tuesday, September 27th, 1887, 19, New Market Street

was formally opened for the reception of pupils in the presence of the Committee and many friends.

In his address to the gathering the Rector said that the inauguration of a Church High School for Girls marked a distinct stage of progress in the work of higher education for ladies in Wigan. He did not wish to see women attempting to occupy the position of men because he thought they would lose a great deal more than they would gain by it. He believed that the object of all true education was to make men and women good and useful citizens. He believed that religion was the true basis of all sound education and he was very glad the Church was taking up this work in Wigan. It was only of late years that the need for good schools for girls had been recognised and he looked forward to the time when such a building as the Wigan Grammar School would have to be provided for the higher education of girls. Addressing the girls he told them that the future success of the School would depend on them as much as on the teachers. Canon Bridgeman hoped that all those who had taken part in the foundation of the School might later look back with pride and pleasure on having been instrumental in starting so useful an institution.

The Rev. Canon Fergie expressed his appreciation of the effort being put forward by the Church of England for the higher education of women. It was surprising that a nation so pre-eminently religious as England was, had for so long neglected its duty to women, accepting the view that the most elementary instruction would suffice to render a woman equal to the discharge of her particular duties. He would never wish to withdraw woman from her proper sphere yet at the same time he recognised the necessity of providing her with a good, sound, general education. It was not the desire of the Committee of the High School, nor of the Church Schools' Company, to hold out any inducement to the girls of the district to enter upon a course of academical study as might, in the opinion of some, unfit them for the gentler, and more domestic duties of life. It was very gratifying that Wigan was to have a school which he trusted might benefit the girls, and do the efficient work for them which grammar schools had so long been doing for the boys. The School had within itself every element of success, and he urged all present to make the aims and advantages of the School as well known as they possibly could.

The Rev. R. G. Matthew and the Rev. J. Cronshaw also spoke, and 'then the ladies and gentlemen present inspected the building, with which they expressed great satisfaction.'

The first name on the original register of the Church High School is that of Emily Betley, aged thirteen years, whose

application for admission was made on September 20, 1887, but the first entries, according to the records, came six days earlier from Mary Susan Harriet aged fourteen, and Elizabeth aged twelve, the daughters of the Reverend W. Walker, Curate of Pemberton. When the School was opened it had only four pupils; by December it had six, and during the first twelve months eighteen girls, whose ages ranged from six years to nineteen years. Their homes were in Wigau, Hindley, Ince, Latchford, Parbold and Newton-le-Willows, but some of them came from the familiar addresses of Swinley Road, Bridgeman Terrace, Upper Dicconson Street and Park Road.

The first Head Mistress of the Church High School for Girls was Miss Agnes Cheetham, who had been Second Mistress at the Church High School, Sunderland. To begin with she had one Assistant Mistress, Miss A. C. Hebblethwaite, and between them they taught Holy Scripture and Catechism, English Grammar and Literature, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, French, German, Painting, Drawing, Class Singing and Music, but a Visiting Mistress gave help with Dancing.

At first there was only one class but in the Summer Term the girls were divided into two groups. Only the ground floor of 19 New Market Street was used at that time. On the left of the entrance hall was the room used for Assembly and on the right was Miss Cheetham's study. The kitchen was presided over by Ann who prepared the school lunches and alternately spoiled and scolded the girls.

The first Prize Distribution was held at the School on the morning of July 26, 1888, when the Committee and Head Mistress received Mrs. Eckersley as their chief guest. As the School was still so small no examiner had been sent down by the Church Schools' Company, and for this year only, Miss Cheetham examined and reported on the work of her own school. She said that 'the Algebra papers were good, especially those of the beginners, and though the Euclid was not so satisfactory, some allowance might be made for the difficulty of the subject and the fact that we had not much time to spare for it'.

The conduct of the girls had been good throughout, Miss Cheetham said. The rule of silence, which was so necessary a part of discipline and order, presented, at first, some difficulties. She thought the girls themselves would now acknowledge the advantages derived from it.

Miss Cheetham explained that it was not her aim to make the girls 'intellectual machines' but to fit them for the state of life to which they might be called; to give them an education

which would make them intelligent, pleasant companions in their own homes or fit them for the great work of educating others.

The School grew steadily. At the end of its second year it had thirty two pupils; at the end of its third year fifty eight and by 1891 more than eighty. It added Drilling to its curriculum, and the Rector, at the fourth Speech Day, spoke admiringly of the 'martial bearing of the girls and their prompt obedience to orders. Botany and Book-Keeping also became part of the ordinary school course, and in both subjects the girls took great interest and made good progress. In May 1892 a Kindergarten was opened as part of the Church High School, but owing to the restricted accommodation at New Market Street the class had to be held in the Grammar School building which was conveniently near. In this year also the School entered its first candidate for the Cambridge Higher Local Examination for Women, and she distinguished herself and the School by securing a place among the five women in England who obtained a First Class in the Divinity Group. As this group required full knowledge of seven books of the Bible as well as such theological works as Hooker's 'Ecclesiastical Polity' and Paley's 'Horæ Paulinæ' this was an outstanding achievement.

The earliest records in the School Log Book include a Description of the Church High School Speech Day of 1893 when 'a large company of pupils and their parents and friends assembled in the Lecture Hall of the Wigan Grammar School by kind permission of the Head Master, the Rev. G. C. Chambres.' In her report Miss Cheetham announced with pride, 'we find now that the standard of work is sufficiently high to form a Sixth Form, the members of which will have certain privileges and be exempt from certain restrictions'.

Earlier that year the girls had dressed dolls for the sewing examination instead of submitting plain sewing only, and the report of the examiner declares, 'I find the judgment of the sewing by the girls of the Church High School much more difficult this year than before, as the dolls all looked so very nice, and some of their clothes were beautifully made and finished off.' (The year before the finishing of the cambric aprons and handkerchiefs had been criticized for not being quite as neat as the very good hemming and seaming deserved, and the buttonholes of Form IIA had been defective !)

The first account of a School entertainment occurs in the report for the Spring Term 1893 when the girls gave an Exhibition of Musical Drill in the Lecture Hall of the Grammar School. Miss Cheetham mentioned that the girls had made 'great progress during the last twelve months, and the ball and club exercises were



MISS A. CHEETHAM.



MISS W. M. KIDD.

much admired'. Tennis was the only game played by the School in those early days and the girls much appreciated the kindness of Canon Bridgeman who allowed them the use of a tennis lawn in the Hall garden. In 1898 the first School concert appears to have been given and the programme still exists. The items included pianoforte solos and duets, songs, recitations, a performance of Act V of 'The Merchant of Venice', and ended with the unfamiliar words, 'God Save the Queen'.

All the early records of the life of the School reveal the firm insistence on religious teaching for those who desired it. The School was founded as a Church School in which a distinctive Church education could be given but not all the girls in the School were members of the Church of England, and those who were not had the right to withdraw from specifically doctrinal subjects such as the Prayer Book and the Catechism. The Rev. R. G. Matthew who had become Honorary Secretary to the School gave the Upper School instruction in the Prayer Book and lectures on the Gospels and the Epistles, and the yearly reports of the Examiners of the Church Schools' Company indicate complete satisfaction with the progress of the pupils in Divinity.

The Church High School suffered a great loss in 1898 when the death of Miss Cheetham closed the first chapter in its history. The many tributes to her paid at the first Prize Distribution after her death all recognised the substantial part she had played in placing the School on a firm foundation. She had established traditions which long outlived her personal influence, and she bequeathed to her successor a school not of four girls but of ninety. To the devotion, steadfastness and high ideals of Miss Cheetham the girls of her time and succeeding generations owe a great debt of gratitude. She and her contemporaries, the Head Mistresses of the new High Schools all over England, were the pioneers in women's education and we remember their work with gratitude. In the Parish Church there is a faldstool given by Miss Cheetham's former pupils in affectionate memory of their Head Mistress.

In 1898 Miss M. F. Syson succeeded Miss Cheetham, and within the same year Miss G. M. Graham who had been Second Mistress for seven years, left to take charge of the Church Company's High School in Brighton. Her place as Second Mistress was taken by Miss L. B. Watmough.

Under Miss Syson's wise guidance the Church High School steadily progressed and its Sixth Form girls left to continue their studies at Owen's College; the Manchester School of Art and the Liverpool Gymnasium, evidence that a high standard of work was being maintained at all ages in the School.

In July 1903 Miss Syson gave up her appointment for a post in the South of England and she was succeeded by Miss Wigg who was to witness a momentous change in the School's life. In 1902, by the passing of the Education Act, secondary education became the charge of local corporations, and it became their duty either to provide schools for pupils up to the age of eighteen or else to supervise existing schools. It had been evident for some time that the premises in New Market Street were inadequate to the needs of a growing school, and in his report at the Prize Distribution in 1905 the Rector announced that the building had been condemned, not unjustly, and that as the Church Schools' Company did not see its way to erect a new one the eighteen year old Church High School would have to pass into the hands of the Local Education Authority. In May 1905 the Wigan Education Authority assumed complete responsibility for the Girls' High School and its seventy pupils.

Immediately great changes followed. Within a year another hundred girls, many of them student teachers, crowded into the already full rooms, and even with the help of the Head Master of the Grammar School, who loaned the girls two of his class rooms, new accommodation had to be found for the High School. In October 1906 the School moved to Standishgate, into a tall Georgian house which stood on the present site of Mab's Cross and had been until then the home of Mr. Henry Brierley, Chairman of the Higher Education Sub-Committee. Even in the new surroundings the same problems and anxieties over accommodation recurred. How familiar are the conditions Miss Wigg described in her report in November 1906. 'We are much hampered by lack of space. There are not enough cloakrooms; there is no Assembly Hall and no room big enough for our large singing and drilling classes . . . But we hope and understand that this is a very temporary arrangement, and that the new buildings will be ready for us before long.' Already the Education Committee had increased the staffing of the school, widened the curriculum and begun to plan a temporary building where the School could grow while awaiting its permanent premises.

Before the next Prize Distribution in 1907 Miss Wigg had resigned and Miss W. M. Kidd had been appointed in her place. Miss Kidd's first task was to guide the School through the awkward transition period which inevitably accompanies any change of buildings. Early in the autumn of 1907 the School moved into 'The Tin Tabernacle', a temporary structure which had been built at the rear of the School House, and which is more graciously described in 'The Wigan Observer' as 'a building planned on the corridor system to accommodate three hundred secondary school pupils in ten classrooms. In addition it has a well arranged Art

Room and a Science Laboratory that is equally well adapted for the practical teaching of Chemistry, Physics or Botany. The walls are of galvanised corrugated iron sheeting and varnished white pipe boarding with an inner lining of felt.

In 1908 the School had its first full inspection by His Majesty's Inspectors and the following extracts have been taken from their report :

'The temporary iron building in which the School is housed, was planned for use as a secondary school, and in many respects serves its purpose very well . . . There is no doubt that since her appointment the Head Mistress's energetic and forceful personality has made a marked impression on the efficiency and the tone of the School . . . In qualifications and training the Staff is unusually strong . . . It is also strong as a whole in teaching capacity'.

In the same year the School gained its first University Scholarship. A year later it had what Miss Kidd claimed as a record year in academic achievement in winning the Silver Medal given by the Royal Geographical Society to the best candidate in the Junior Oxford Examination, and in gaining the first place in History of all the Senior candidates in England and the Colonies. Successes such as these confirm the high opinion of the teaching staff recorded by the Inspectors in their report.

Miss Kidd remained as Head Mistress until July 1912 when she became Head Mistress of Maidstone Girls' Grammar School. During the five years that she had charge of the School she strove to convince girls and parents of the value of secondary education as the foundation of true knowledge and sound judgment. Her vision, her practical ideals and her love of scholarship were of inestimable value to the girls of her time. The significance of her work is to be seen in the tribute paid to her in the first report of her successor, who recorded her 'appreciation of Miss Kidd's splendid gift for organisation, of the thoroughness which revealed itself in the smallest detail, and of the unstinted energy which she devoted to the best interests of the School'.

Miss Kidd was succeeded as Head Mistress by Miss Charlotte S. Banks who had been Assistant Mistress at Bradford Girls' Grammar School, and Senior Mistress at Sowerby Bridge Secondary School. Shortly after Miss Banks's appointment an architect was given the task of preparing plans for the permanent building which was to replace 'The Tin Tabernacle'. The urgency of the need was emphasised in the report which Miss Banks submitted to the Governing Body in October 1913, recording the gradual increase in the number of girls attending the School which brought the total to over two hundred.

Before the foundation stone of the new building was laid the country had become involved in war with Germany, and delays were inevitable. It was on March 3rd 1915 that representatives of various public bodies and scholastic institutions attended the laying of the foundation stone at Mab's Cross by Alderman J. T. Grimshaw, the Mayor of Wigan. The School and its guests stood on a raised platform on the site of Mr. Brierley's old house and watched the grey plaque placed in position on the west wall of what was to become the School Hall. In the account of the ceremony this description of the future School was given: 'the building in red pressed brick with stone dressings is designed in the modern Renaissance style of architecture. It is planned to give the maximum amount of light in the classrooms which are to be placed at the back in order to be removed from the noise of the traffic on the main road. The first floor will be approached by two stone staircases, one at each end of the building and each leading from a large entrance hall. On the first floor there will be several classrooms, a large Art Room with good north light, a Music Room with two practising cubicles, and a Library. To keep the building as clean as possible the walls are to be tiled to a height of four feet and washable distemper will surmount the tiles.'

At the informal opening of the new building on September 23rd 1916, Miss Banks compared her position during the past three years with that of the old woman who lived in a shoe: she too had so many children she did not know what to do. She had always believed that when they occupied their new building they would have all the room they wanted, but already those ideas were vanishing because she now had two hundred and fifty children and she did not know where to put them even in the new School. Proud as she was of 'her School' Miss Banks reminded everyone present that it was not just her School, but the School of the Governors past and present, of the past and present members of the Committee who had worked for it; it was the School of all who had taught and of those who were teaching there now, and it was the School of all the girls who were teaching there now, and of all who were in it now. They were the people who in the truest sense could say: 'This is our School'.

Within two years of the opening of the new buildings the number of girls in the School had become more than three hundred and again some drastic measure had to be taken if the ever-increasing demand for secondary education was to be met. The Wigan Education Authority decided to buy the commodious house and grounds known as Woodfield in Wigan Lane, and to transfer the younger children there in order to accommodate at Mab's Cross the girls of eleven years and over who were awaiting

admission. On January 12th, 1920 Woodfield was formally opened by Mr. Henry Brierley as the Kindergarten and Preparatory Department for Girls and Boys.

In the press cuttings for March 1919 two interesting and notable events are recorded. The first was the decision to re-erect Mab's Cross just within the School boundary, immediately opposite the place where it once stood. The widening of Wigan Lane was being planned and it had been found necessary to have the Cross moved to the other side of the road.

The second event reflected the generosity of Mr. Henry Brierley, the Chairman of the Governing Body of the School, who presented to the School Reference Library the whole of his Musical Library, the collection of a lifetime, which comprised nearly five hundred volumes of classical works and included every item played at the Hallé Concerts between the years 1857 and 1914. This rare and exceedingly valuable collection contains the symphonies and piano concertos of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Chopin, Tchaikowsky, and Elgar, as well as Wagner's Operas, Handel's choral works and compositions by Richard Strauss. This outstanding gift was most gratefully received by the school, who appreciated to the full the affection and generosity that prompted this act.

In the reports of the Prize Distributions for the years 1920 to 1930 there are clear indications that the industrial depression was affecting the numbers at the School. In her Speech Day addresses Miss Banks now recorded not an increase, but a falling off, in the numbers of girls, and regretted that many were leaving at an earlier age and that there were fewer girls in the upper part of the School. Despite this sad reflection of national difficulties the activities of the School multiplied, and as Miss Banks said in 1924, 'it had been borne in upon her very much in the last year or two that school life was extremely full because there were so many sides, and the standard set was very high, and was becoming increasingly higher'. At this Speech Day which may be quoted as characteristic of this stage of the School's development, the successes of the present pupils and Old Girls illustrate this point. Nine Old Girls were mentioned as having completed some stage of a University degree course; one was part way through her medical training, and twenty were at two year Training Colleges. One Old Girl had completed her training at Chelsea Physical Training College and another had obtained her diploma at the Manchester School of Domestic Economy. Twenty girls were awarded the School Certificate of the Joint Matriculation Board, and one Higher School Certificate with three distinctions had been gained by a Sixth Form girl who had won a Borough

University Scholarship and an Open Scholarship at Manchester University.

In 1925 a special honour was conferred on the School when Miss Banks was chosen as one of a representative party of ten Head Mistresses of English Secondary Schools for Girls, to visit Paris at the invitation of the French Minister of Education in order to become personally acquainted with the working of Secondary Schools for Girls. As Miss Banks said later in referring to her visit, 'it was an intensely interesting and stimulating experience from a personal point of view', and the School was proud that its Head Mistress had been privileged to share this unique opportunity.

The Report for Speech Day 1929 is one of particular interest because it records the findings of seven of His Majesty's Inspectors after their recent full inspection, and it also includes Miss Banks's review of the School's development during her seventeen years as Head Mistress. This Prize Distribution took place in the Queen's Hall, and it is stated that 'the pupils presented a striking picture in their white dresses'. Speaking of the Inspectors' report Miss Banks said, 'its general tenor was commendatory, even to an unusual extent, and warm praise was given to certain parts of the work and general organisation. I speak for my colleagues and for myself when I say the report has been a source of great encouragement, stimulating us to persevere in our efforts to raise the work, and all that appertains to the School's life, to that level which in our most ambitious moments we would like to see them attain.'

Looking back over her years at the School Miss Banks recalled how she had seen the numbers of pupils fluctuate, and she said she welcomed the steady rise which had begun again in 1928 as an augury of hope, but there were other indications of satisfactory growth that touched something more vital in the life of the School. 'I have seen the disintegrating forces of the years immediately following the Great War with their unsettling influence upon the adolescent, recede and fade. Another generation of schoolgirls has arisen, and with it has grown the tradition of responsibility and of concern for the welfare of the School as a whole among the senior pupils. The individuals change from year to year, the spirit remains. I believe that the present moment is full of hope. Much may remain to be achieved, but it seems to me certain that the measure of success already attained will be consolidated and enlarged with the passage of time.'

In 1931 Miss Banks retired from her post as Head Mistress and a long and richly varied phase in the School's history closed.

No other Head Mistress had taken charge of the School for as long as nineteen years, and Miss Banks had the pleasure of seeing her work prosper and her ideals accepted and woven into the life of the School. To the hundreds of girls who had passed through the School during her tenure of office Miss Banks had given an inspiring example of service, devotion to duty and a love of culture in its truest and widest sense.

In September 1931 Miss D. M. Sackett became the sixth Head Mistress of Wigan High School. Miss Sackett had been Science Mistress first at Cheltenham Ladies' College, then at the King's High School for Girls, Warwick.

It is interesting to record that at this point the School's history and progress can be traced from its own Magazines. The first School Magazine appeared in March 1930, and for many of the facts relating to the later development of the School we are indebted to its records.

Each succeeding report given at Speech Day by Miss Sackett comments on the ever-increasing number of girls at the School, and the consequent need for extensions. In 1932 a cloakroom was adapted to provide a Biology Laboratory, and a well-appointed Library, so long the dream of all connected with the School, replaced the limited accommodation of the old one. This pleasant room with its attractive bays was furnished with light oak tables and chairs which were bought by the School with money it had raised by its own efforts. On September 21st 1932 Dr. Brierley came from his retirement at Rochdale to open it formally in the presence of Miss Sackett and Miss Banks.

In her Speech Day report for 1932 Miss Sackett paid a great tribute to the influence of the Preparatory Department at Woodfield on the life of the High School. That year the Senior Prefect and half the Form Leaders, girls chosen by their Forms for their gifts of leadership and sense of responsibility, were former Woodfield pupils. At that time one in eight girls in the Main School had come up from Woodfield, and in that year's Prize List one of every three prizewinners was an Old Woodfielder.

Miss Sackett introduced many new activities that have since become essential parts of the School's existence. In 1931 she invited the parents to form an Association to promote better understanding and closer co-operation between home and school, and staff and parents. In 1933 she initiated a form of self-government through Form and School Councils, and by this means strove to inculcate a sense of service to the community which would help the girls to realise their responsibilities as citizens.

A year later Miss Sackett created a Loan Fund to give help to girls who were in need of financial assistance at the beginning of their training or the start of their College careers.

In 1935 the first step was taken to provide the School with much needed extensions. A garage on the north side of the School was purchased and the building of temporary classrooms began as soon as the site was cleared. A full inspection of the School by His Majesty's Inspectors the year before had stressed the fact that the School was being used to capacity and that the need for extra classrooms was urgent.

In July 1937 the School celebrated its Golden Jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. A Service of Thanksgiving at the Parish Church was attended by the whole School and many Old Girls and friends. The Rector of Wigan took the service and the Bishop of Warrington gave the address. Nearly two hundred Old Girls and past and present members of the Staff met at a Jubilee Dinner in the School Hall. In honour of the occasion the Old Girls presented the School with a gift of fifty pounds which was later used to buy the oak table, chairs and lectern which stand on the platform in the School Hall.

In 1937 Miss Sackett was appointed Head Mistress of the County School for Girls, Chislehurst, and Miss M. D. Nicolson, Senior French Mistress at Bath High School, was chosen as her successor. In her first Speech Day report after her appointment Miss Nicolson said that she was in a position to know what infinite care and steady idealism had for many years been fashioning the School into the fine thing it was. She, with the detachment of a newcomer, could pay tribute to her predecessor and express her genuine appreciation of the sound work the School was doing, of the breadth and diversity of its interests and of the eager spirit that was alive in it.

At this time there were more than four hundred and seventy in the School including Woodfield, and to accommodate all the forms two classes had to be taught at St. Paul's Schoolroom. The journeying up and down Standishgate involved much waste of valuable time and energy, and it was a great relief to everyone when the North Pavilion with its two formrooms came into use in the spring of 1938.

For years the School had been in great need of permanent playing fields and some land belonging to Ashfield House, Standish, was purchased by the Wigan Education Authority in 1938. Despite the obvious disadvantages of having a ground so far from Mab's Cross the School was delighted at the prospect of playing games on its own field. On October 11th 1939 the



MISS C. S. BANKS.



MISS D. M. SACKETT.

Ashfield netball courts were used for the first time while the two hockey pitches were still under construction. Three years later, on March 12th 1942, the School assembled at Ashfield to watch the planting of trees round the field, and in imagination many looked forward to the time when girls would rest from their exertions in the shade of the sturdy limes and chestnuts.

To the High School, as to all schools in the country, the declaration of war in September 1939 brought inevitable changes. In the uncertainty of the first weeks drastic modifications of working hours became essential. Until air-raid shelters were built not more than twelve people were allowed in School at a time and lessons had to be temporarily suspended. The Fifth and Sixth Forms worked at home and the rest of the School was given an extra month's holiday. By the end of October three air-raid shelters had been completed and a double shift system of lessons was evolved: the junior forms came to School in the mornings and the seniors in the afternoons. Lessons were frequently interrupted by air-raid practices and the girls carried their gas masks everywhere. In time, adequate shelter accommodation was provided for everyone and the School settled down to its wartime life. Black-out conditions restricted some of the normal out-of-school activities, and Speech Day had to be held in the School Hall, but on the whole the war years affected the common life of the School very slightly. In recognition of their own undisturbed routine the girls worked hard in different ways to alleviate the distress and hardships of other people. As soon as possible after the invasion of Europe many parcels of clothing and medical supplies were despatched to Holland, Norway, Yugo Slavia, Czecho Slovakia and other European countries as well as North Africa. In the summer of 1945 a Bring and Buy Sale raised a substantial sum for the children of occupied Europe. Girls gave their time and energies to postal work at Christmas and to harvest work in August, and in term they made steady contributions to National Savings and the Red Cross Penny-a-Week Fund.

From 1939 onwards the School's numbers increased steadily and a second pavilion was built to provide two more classrooms. The Domestic Science Room was converted into a Physics Laboratory and the first floor of The Elms in Wigan Lane became the School's Domestic Science Department.

During these years the number of girls staying to school dinner far outgrew the kitchen and dining room facilities at the School and temporary accommodation for as many as a hundred and sixty girls was found in St. Paul's Schoolrooms.

In April 1945, by the implementing of the new Education Act, fees were abolished and all girls entering the School had to

pass a common qualifying examination. The Act also involved the disappearance of the Second Form which had always been part of the Main School, and separation from the Preparatory Department which from then on became a Primary School. This seemed all the more regretful as only a month before Woodfield had celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its occupation of the lovely old house and gardens, but in fact the Preparatory Department of the High School was fifty-three years old, and no one liked to think that the familiar brown uniforms could no longer be worn by the younger children.

In July 1945 Miss Nicolson left Wigan to become Head Mistress of George Watson's Ladies' College, Edinburgh, her own old school, and Miss J. L. Harley, Senior French Mistress at Liverpool Institute High School for Girls, was appointed as her successor. Miss Nicolson's years in Wigan had been made more difficult by the restrictions of war-time, but her energy and determination to remain undaunted by circumstances helped the School to adapt itself to changing conditions and to continue to develop along its own lines in spite of the limitation of opportunity.

With Miss Nicolson's departure there closed another progressive stage in the life of the School. The changes envisaged in the recent Education Act have opened a new chapter in its history, and Miss Harley has entered upon a task, the same, and yet vastly different from the one that confronted her predecessor. The last two years, years of transition, are too close to be seen in perspective, but the School looks forward with confidence to a future in which it can build on the traditions of its past and embrace the opportunities of the years to come.

RECOLLECTIONS.

*From MISS W. M. KIDD,
1907—1912.*

WHEN I took over the Wigan Girls' High School in 1907 it was housed in a large old red brick house standing on the main road half way between London and Edin-burgh. Mr. Henry Brierley, Chairman of the Governors, was the most outstanding figure connected with the School. His enthusiasm for and interest in the School were unbounded and he was full of regrets at the inadequacy of the building, and of high hopes that it would soon be replaced by one worthy of the traditions of the School that had recently been taken over by the Wigan Education Committee. The rooms were very dreary and over-crowded and in a bad state of repair. The playground at the back was equally unattractive. To brighten up the latter we started school gardens, but as each girl who wanted one, had her own little patch, that site soon looked like a cemetery.

Miss Watmough who had grown up with the school was the very popular Second Mistress : other outstanding members of the Staff in my day were Miss Folkard (now Mrs. Elliott), Miss Malim (who passed away last year after a long struggle with bad health) and Miss Mitchell who married Miss Watmough's brother. We had two visiting masters — Mr. Moss for Singing and Mr. Green for Art.

There were then one hundred and fifty pupils in the School ranging from Kindergarten to the VI Form. Hockey and tennis were played and soon netball was added : a few outside matches took place. It was rather an event if any girl passed on to a University — one or two went to Manchester and obtained their degrees, but the average achievement of those in the VI Form was a Senior Local Certificate. We once had the Silver Medal for Geography in the Junior Oxford and the top place in History in the Senior Oxford Local Examination.

After a year or two the School was housed in temporary iron premises built on the playground. Although they were

bitterly cold in the winter and up to 80° or more in the summer, they were a great improvement on the old building. There were six large classrooms, an Art Room, a Science Laboratory and quite an adequate Hall for our numbers. Our annual Prize Givings were held in the Hall of the Grammar School as our own Hall would not hold parents and pupils.

The school hat was compulsory and the girls were very proud of the brown and green drill dress that was introduced.

After nearly six years I was appointed to the Maidstone Girls' Grammar School. I am looking forward to reading the reminiscences of my three successors and wish my own were more adequate, but after nearly thirty-five years one's memories have become somewhat vague.

*From MISS C. S. BANKS,
1912—1931.*

It is spring in the years 1912, and a newcomer to Wigan approaches the entrance to the High School premises. A high brick wall confronts her in alignment with the front of an old, roomy residence on her left, and in the wall is a door. Does this admit to the School or playground? Yes, for attached to the wall on the left hand is a brass plate bearing the legend: High School for Girls, and on opening the door a corrugated iron building becomes visible across the intervening space.

Such was the home of the School in those days: there were about 180 pupils when I first knew it, and, though the numbers grew, that remained its home for the next four and a half years approximately. In the old house fronting on to Wigan Lane Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright lived; there the school dinners were served, and music lessons given. Plans were, however, afoot for replacing the temporary building by a permanent, more dignified one, and in August 1914 a beginning was made in digging the foundations of the latter on the site of what had been playground space. Younger readers of this record may miss the significance of that date, but older ones will appreciate the anxiety of those who were deeply concerned for the welfare of the School as they asked themselves to what extent the outbreak of war would affect the building plans. The work, however, continued; the old house,

which had stood where the front garden is now, was demolished, and Staff and pupils picked their way over a now chaotic playground to pursue their daily occupations in the temporary structure as usual. The caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright, had been transferred to a house in Acton Terrace, and there dispensed the school dinners, but under difficult conditions. On March 3rd, 1915, the foundation stone was ceremoniously laid by the then Mayor, Alderman Grimshaw, and in spite of difficulties the work progressed. In September 1916 it was ready for occupation and was formally opened on the 23rd of that month. Unfortunately, owing to the war, costs had risen while the work was in progress, with the result that some modification of the plans was made on the score of economy: thus the Assembly Hall, Cloak Room space and accommodation for Head Mistress and Staff suffered curtailment. The Art Room with its communicating storeroom, as designed in accordance with the wishes of a sub-committee of the Governors, was one of the best features of the building. Unfortunately it had to lose some of its amenities sixteen years later in the interests of another department of school life. The exterior of the building was thus described in technical language: "In red pressed brick with stone dressings, and designed in the modern Renaissance style of Architecture." I may remind readers that Mab's Cross at that time stood on the opposite side of the road: it was moved to a recess in the School railings in March 1919.

During the war years the pupils were active in raising money for charitable purposes connected with the struggle just as their successors during the 1939-45 war have been. One method of cheering men at the front was for a group to "adopt" a soldier, and make him the recipient of gifts and letters, and this was done by one or two forms. One day in school hours a man in uniform knocked at my door, and asked if he might speak to such and such a form, as they had sent him parcels. I readily agreed, and as we walked towards the classroom I said: "There'll be thirty girls about twelve or thirteen years of age. Do you feel equal to it?" He passed a capable-looking hand over a hefty jaw, and remarked: "Well, I'm used to facing the cannon's mouth!" Whereupon I ushered him into the classroom, and withdrew.

The war of 1914 to 1918 ended on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, and was duly celebrated before the end of the term by some school parties, including one in fancy dress. There followed a period in which the School prospered and numbers increased to such an extent that in order to provide more places for the ten year and eleven year old girls who sought admission the Education Committee purchased the Woodfield house and

grounds to which the youngest classes could be transferred after necessary alterations in the house and some additions had been made. In January 1920 at an interesting gathering, Woodfield was formally declared open as a school by Mr. Henry Brierley, and from that time the Preparatory Department, though still technically a part of the High School, began to function independently under the Headship of Miss Wainnough, who had long been chief Assistant on the High School Staff. This was certainly a noteworthy development in the history of the School, and the young pupils were fortunate to gain such attractive surroundings.

Perhaps at this point I may be permitted to interrupt the record of events to speak in some detail of that devoted friend of the School, Henry Brierley, B.A., LL.D. He had been Chairman of the Governing Body before the beginning of the period covered by this article, and continued to hold office till 1919, when, in order to reduce the number of his responsibilities, he resigned, and surely few, if any, schools can have had as guide in their affairs a friend so wise, so sympathetic, so enthusiastic in the cause of education, and so generous as Dr. Brierley. The School Library is the richer for the gift of a number of volumes of music and of other books from his own shelves, and it was through his influence that a handsome donation for the purchase of expensive volumes was received from his friend, Mr. George Bradshaw.

When the old house that had stood on the site was pulled down in the course of building operations, and an old foundation stone was discovered it was again Dr. Brierley who rescued it and had it framed so that it could be displayed in the School. It was a happy day for those few of us who had the privilege in July 1920 of attending at Manchester University the ceremony of the Conferment of Honorary Degrees, at which our friend was presented for the Degree of Doctor of Laws, and I cannot end this paragraph more fitly than by quoting from the speech of the Professor who presented him for the honour. "A University must be judged by the spirit and work of the men and women whom it sends out into the world. This University is content to be judged by the spirit and the work of Henry Brierley."

Mr. Arthur Smith, B.A., LL.B. succeeded Dr. Brierley as Chairman of the Governing Body, and filled the office with distinction for many years, though it often meant for him a sacrifice of personal convenience. I would like also to recall the names of two ladies who served as Governors in the past, viz. Miss Elizabeth Bryham and Mrs. Prosser White. The former, though of a very retiring disposition, was constant in the fulfilment of her duties and was much missed after her resignation. Turning one's thoughts to Staff the names of Mr. Moss and Mr. Green, once visiting

teachers, suggest themselves, with that of Dr. Read, who succeeded Mr. Moss as Singing Master when the latter, who had almost been regarded as a Wigan institution, deserted the town. Of others who were on the Staff in the summer of 1931, the following, in order of appointment, are still members of it : Misses Renwick, Taberner, Hegarty, Smith, Allen, Benson, Mrs. Rogers (née Engledow), and Miss Knaggs. Miss Gould and Miss Forrest are still working at Woodfield though not as members of the High School Staff. Others who served the school for long but have now retired are Miss McClay, Miss Booth and Miss Illingworth. Another department of work for the School calls for honourable mention here, that of the domestic staff, and in connection with it the names of Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright, who brought loyalty and devotion to bear on their tasks year after year.

School life is complex, and while the academic side must of necessity play a large part in the daily routine, there is also the development of the physical activities in Drill and outdoor Games, and thirdly, a social side. Under this head come entertainments, whether parties for the pupils, or money-raising affairs on a larger scale. One such, a Sale, took place in 1928 with the result that funds were sufficient to purchase the beautiful honours boards which hang in the corridor, as well as an epidiascope, and one or two other articles. It was always wonderful the way the parents backed up such efforts. Simpler affairs were the Sing-Songs and Debates the pupils arranged sometimes after School. A Guide Company was formed in 1922 and sponsored by Miss Smith and Miss McClay. Physical Training as far as Drill was concerned was better provided for after 1912 as time went on, but what of outdoor Games ? I had learnt on arrival that hockey had been played on land where now stand the various roads that comprise Monument Park, but this had ceased to be available. When the new building was erected the ground behind it was laid out as asphalt courts for tennis, but it was some time before the surface was in fairly good condition. With regard to a field, one became available at the upper end of Gidlow Lane, and thither we betook ourselves on certain afternoons : there was no pavilion, and no 'bus route helped us, but we continued to avail ourselves of the open space until, without any warning, builders appeared on the scene to dig foundations of houses, and we were gradually edged off the ground ! The affair remained mysterious to me, but the result was we had now no field at all. And at that point the curtain fell for me on the story of the High School field. I rejoice to think that the present-day pupils have fared better.

The closing years of the period under review present several interesting innovations or variations which I will merely enumerate.

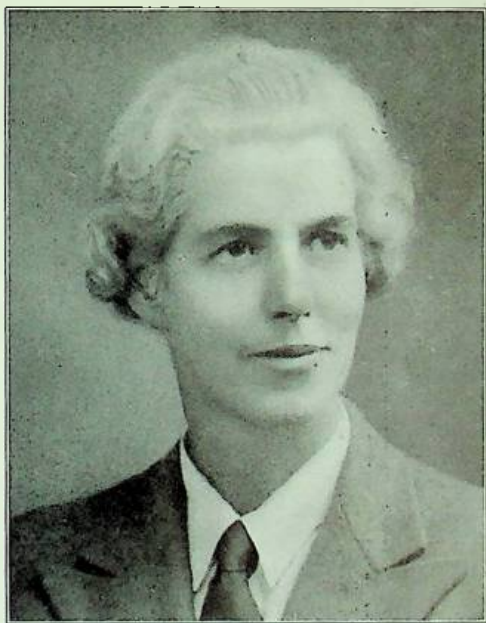
Thus, in 1928, Speech Day was held for the first time in the Queen's Hall; in 1929 to 1930 an exchange of teachers between Wigan and Australia took effect, Miss Hegarty going to a post in New South Wales while Miss Tuckerman of Sydney University took her place here; in 1929 after an interval of eight years, a full Inspection of the School by representatives of the Board of Education was held; in 1930 the first issue of the School Magazine appeared; in the Summer Term of 1929 there was a specially enjoyable expedition to Chester, noteworthy only as being perhaps a little more enterprising than previous occasions of the kind; and concurrently with these events the usual life of the School went on in its various aspects, intellectual and recreative, physical and moral, just a little fuller with the passing of the years, the pace a little more rapid than of yore: and thus we come in the summer of 1931 to the end of a chapter of the School's history, and to the conclusion of this particular section of its record.

*From MISS D. M. SACKETT,
1931—1937.*

At the annual Prize Giving in 1937 the following report was made: "Fifty years ago the first Head Mistress, Miss Cheetham, opened the Wigan High School, with four girls on the roll. Today at the beginning of another era in its history, the number of pupils is four hundred and seventy three, of which number seventy seven are housed at Woodfield". Another ten years have passed since that was written, ten years of difficulty and danger as well as progress and achievement, but of these years others will write: the memories recalled here are of people and events of the years 1931 to 1937.

The chief and abiding impression of Wigan — town people as well as those connected with the School — is one of friendliness, helpfulness and interest: the town proud of its School and the School striving to be worthy of its trust.

In 1931 Miss Banks left the School after nineteen years as Head Mistress. Under her wise direction learning had flourished and the School was set well on the road to further advance and greater effort. Miss Watmough had been in charge at Woodfield for twelve years and left, at Christmas 1931, a legacy of a happy and



MISS M. D. NICOLSON.



MISS J. L. HARLEY.

hard-working school. Mr. Arthur Smith was then the Chairman of Governors. His support could always be counted on in difficulty and his appreciation valued in times of success. To him and to some others the school owes the reversal of the decision of the Higher Education Sub-Committee, which had been made in the autumn of 1931, to close Woodfield. This decision and the controversy concerning it caused a reduction in numbers at Woodfield and an anxious period of re-building until stability and a full house could be recorded once more.

The School and town were fortunate in having as Director of Education, Mr. L. R. Missen under whose liberal and enlightened leadership it was a privilege to serve. Administration by its fetters or freedom can mar, or make possible, educational advance. Mr. Missen as Director showed himself to be a man of wisdom and foresight and the School owes him much that is of permanent value.

Of the Staff many happy memories come to mind, too many to mention — Miss McClay, surely one of the most loyal and cheerful of Senior Mistresses that ever served a school, and the early morning discussions of the daily round — Miss Smith and her efficiency as a Guide Captain and chief of "savings" and as a philosopher and friend too.

In 1932 alterations to the small room called the Library were carried out. Miss Booth for the common good, moved her material out of the Art Room cupboard which, with part of the corridor, were enclosed to form the new Library. Oak tables and chairs were bought with money raised by the School. A second change at the same time was the formation of a Biology Laboratory from one of the cloak-rooms. This was intended to be only a temporary alteration.

Early in the same year the Parents' Association was formed and gave continuing support to the School by the interest and co-operation of its members. Another innovation was the formation of School and Form councils.

Those who remember the Gidlow field used at one time for growing potatoes, will understand the reason for the abandonment of this ground after the winter of 1931-2, because of its condition and the difficulty of access to it. Netball took the place of hockey and it was not until 1936 that the Ashfield ground was considered, and later bought, for playing fields. Tennis was played on the Park courts for the first time in 1932 and half the school went to the Baths for swimming lessons. Interest in swimming continued unabated. At one time, spurred on by Miss Barr's enthusiasm, keen swimmers met her at seven o'clock for an early morning practice.

In 1933 Mrs. Matheson became Chairman of the Governors. Her interest in every activity of the girls and Staff, her charm and sense of humour as well as her wisdom and knowledge of the details of educational organisation made her a Chairman in a thousand. Her strength and support helped to win many battles for both girls and mistresses.

During the year 1934 there was a full inspection by the Board of Education, mention being made in the report of good work being done in many directions and of the desirability of expansion of Sixth Form work. The urgency of the need for extension to the School building and of the acquisition of a playing field was stressed.

In 1935 and 1936 congestion in the School building consequent on increasing numbers led to the erection in the grounds of a hut to be used as a cloakroom and the use of St. Paul's schoolroom. Detailed plans were drawn up for extension to the present building and consideration was also given to the possibility of the erection of a new building on another site. Examination results showed increasing success: General Science was introduced as an examination subject at the School Certificate stage and German added as a possible alternative to Latin.

Some of the most pleasant memories remain — of expeditions by train to Ingleton, Windermere, Bolton Abbey; of Prize Givings in the Queen's Hall with excellence of singing and of deportment notwithstanding the squeakiness of the chairs; of Sports Days when the sun shone and of Sports Days when tennis shoes floated away on the floods of rain; of the end-of-the-year "weeks" when competitions, lectures, excursions, visits to factories and other activities took the place of normal routine. All these happy times of corporate life and endeavour formed a frame to the picture of the day by day work and exercise.

May the aims that have guided founders, governors, parents remain to lead those to whom the future is committed, that each succeeding generation of pupils may have better conditions, improved facilities, wiser treatment than ever before, so that they may be fitted more fully to live as responsible upright citizens in a world of ever increasing complexity.

*From MISS M. D. NICOLSON,
1938—1945.*

Recurrent crises in Europe, suspense mounting intolerably, and at last the final horror of war — such must remain the

background to all memories of the years 1938 to 1945. It is true that, in the end, few schools suffered less than Wigan High School during the war years, but the autumn months of 1939 must be among the strangest in its history. Attendance was at first voluntary for small groups of the Fifth and Sixth Forms and forbidden for the rest of the school. Preparatory children were given lessons in each others' homes by visiting mistresses, then, gradually, shelters were built. Woodfield re-opened at the end of November. By October 23rd the High School was running a four-shift system, followed in November by a two-shift one and very rapidly Staff and children adapted themselves to a new routine in which gas-mask inspection and shelter drill figured prominently. As the months passed Salvage Weeks and Savings Weeks. Fire Watching and form filling were accepted patriotically or at least philosophically. The business of education went steadily on.

Nor did general activities languish. Visits to the Continent such as the Dutch tour of 1938 could no longer be contemplated. Long railway journeys were inadvisable; matches with distant schools had to be cancelled and excursions like the memorable one to Conway in 1939 or the exchange with pupils from a Somerset school in the same year were out of the question. War-time Prize Givings had to take place in the School Hall and the Parents' Association and Old Girls' Club were at first obliged to hold their meetings at unaccustomed hours. None the less a glance at the school calendar for the war years would show that sports and swimming sports, concerts, dramatic festivals, lectures, Society meetings and exhibitions, such as the ambitious Science Exhibition of 1942, were as characteristic a feature of school life as they had ever been. Guides and many other girls were quick to find new opportunities for service in knitting comforts, collecting books and periodicals for the forces, assisting in salvage drives, washing-up at the Infirmary or distributing Christmas mail. The most strenuous and certainly the most enjoyable of the School's war-time activities were the summer holiday pea-picking camps organised and conducted with great efficiency and success by Miss Smith with much willing assistance from members of the Staff. The first of these at Bickerstaffe in August 1940 remains a vivid memory. There was little encouragement so early in the war from farmers or agricultural committees and the School took the initiative in making its own arrangements. Hired tents, which might not be camouflaged, seemed uncomfortably conspicuous on the night when bombers roared over the Mersey and the guns opened fire: but, if one or two of the grown-ups wandered about uneasily, younger pea-pickers, tired after a hard day's work, slept soundly and the camp was undisturbed.

In 1938 there were high hopes that the School would acquire either a new building or, at least, generous extensions within two or three years. With the outbreak of the war it became clear that such hopes could not be realised. The pavilion, erected in 1938 and intended eventually for removal to the games field, provided accommodation for the two forms which had previously been housed in rooms belonging to St. Paul's Church. It proved inadequate to the School's needs as numbers increased and a second pavilion was built in 1940.

At Ashfield the netball courts were ready for play in the autumn of 1939 and the first hockey pitch two years later. It was on a rather chilly spring day in March 1942 that the whole School assembled for a tree-planting ceremony at which Mr. Rushton officiated. Some of the limes and flowering chestnuts planted hopefully five years ago may not have survived but other generations of High School girls will be no less eager to add to the beauty and amenities of Ashfield than were their war-time predecessors.

In 1940 the Domestic Science Department acquired its premises at the Elms and the old Domestic Science room was converted into a much-needed Physics Laboratory. Such acquisitions and alterations were, in the main, makeshift arrangements, but they were the best that could be devised during the war years by a sympathetic Governing Body and an energetic Director of Education. Familiarity with post-war austerity may make it appear a little surprising that in July 1940 beautiful platform furniture was presented to the School by Miss Banks on behalf of the Old Girls' Club. Other notable war-time acquisitions were the Grotrian Steinweg grand piano, part of the cost of which was raised at a School Concert held in April 1942, and handsome stage curtains for which neither docketts nor coupons had to be produced.

It is doubtful whether to the generation passing through the School in these tragic years school-day memories will be less happy than they would have been in more normal times. Then as always Wigan High School had a Staff who could 'turn necessity to glorious gain' and who made it their business to maintain a rich and varied programme of work and play in spite of all obstacles. Many of them are still happily at work in the School. Staff absences at times made work harder for all, but one of the pleasantest recollections of the war years was the cheerful and gallant way in which members of the Parents' Association rallied to the help of the School whenever the need for supply or temporary staff became desperate. Some valued mistresses who left during the war after many years of devoted service will always be remembered with affection and gratitude. Outstanding among these was Miss

Halsall whose grievous breakdown in the summer of 1942 cast a shadow over the School. Her buoyant spirit, rich sense of humour and her many gifts generously spent in the School's service will always be an inspiration to those who were once her colleagues or her pupils. In the following year the School said a very regretful goodbye to Miss McClay and was only half-consolated by the knowledge that she would be a frequent visitor to Wigan in the more leisurely years ahead. An efficient organiser, she was interested first and foremost in human beings. With her infectious cheerfulness, consideration for others and kindly wisdom she brought the grace of sweet reasonableness into all the "wild concerns of ordinary life" in Wigan High School.

Two years later, early in March 1945, the Head Mistress and Staff received with dismay the news that their greatly loved Chairman of Governors, Mrs. Matheson, was resigning from the office she had held with charm and distinction for so many years. Her fund of stories, her recitals or her annual "Chairman's Remarks", delivered in dancing verse or homely prose, remained in the memory to be chuckled over at leisure or treasured for their flashes of insight. Every child in School regarded Mrs. Matheson as a personal friend and a visit from her was greeted with delight. Her great qualities of heart and head and the courage and forthrightness with which she upheld the best interests of education made her chairmanship a vital and creative power in the School's life and showed what the art of school government can be at its finest.

The close of the spring term of 1945 was a turning point in the history of most English schools. Wigan High School and its Preparatory Department at Woodfield were no exception. Earlier in the term Woodfield celebrated its Silver Jubilee and welcomed its former Head Mistress, Miss Watmough, as its guest of honour. On the first of April its long and happy connection with the High School was severed, and it became a fully-fledged Primary School under the charge of Miss Gould to whose energy and devotion throughout the twenty-five years of its existence its success was so largely due. On the same date the High School became a "County Grammar School" and fees were abolished. V.E. day, long and impatiently awaited, was at last announced in the Summer Term. The war-time chapter in the School's annals had ended and with the coming into operation of a great Education Act and the appointment of a new Head Mistress the School looked forward with happy confidence to a vigorous and progressive future.

*From MISS L. B. WATMOUGH,
1890—1931.*

The Girls' High School was opened in 1887 by the Church Schools' Company Limited, London. Two big houses in Market Street, overlooking the very large open Market Square, were adapted to its use.

Its first Head Mistress—Miss Cheetham—was selected from the Company's School in Sunderland. She was very small of stature, had a strong personality, was the personification of dignity, and an excellent disciplinarian. In fact it was almost enough for her to raise an eye-brow to reduce the whole School to order. She was admired, respected and loved by all. She started off with four pupils, but so rapid was the growth of the School that there were soon four forms; and that was considered enough to justify the appointment of a recognised Second Mistress—Miss Heron. She, too, was a woman of a remarkably outstanding character, and had, in a very quiet way, a wonderful, far-reaching influence on the unruly members of the School. She was later appointed to the Headship of the Wyggeston School in Leicester.

The aforesaid Market Square provided much entertainment for the School. Nearly all the windows overlooked it, and when there were various demonstrations there, one had, literally, to suspend lessons for a time and allow the pupils to look on. The greatest excitement experienced was when Squal, the American Indian tooth extractor, took up his quarters for a week, and had a band to drown the squeals of his victims who went up for free extractions.

The School, at this period, was remarkable for the large number of girls from the same families. It was no uncommon thing to have three, four, five and on one occasion six girls from one household in attendance at the same time. It now became evident that the building could not longer accommodate its numbers, so three rooms were rented from the Grammar School, a few hundred yards away. This interchange of classes and constant change of shoes, involved much excitement and loss of time.

It was then discovered that the School was being run at a great loss, and had to be subsidised by the successful Schools belonging to the Company. It was decided to raise the fees and reduce the Staff, and those members who remained had to be ready to turn their brains and even their hands to the teaching of anything and everything: for example the Geography Mistress had to teach Book Keeping and Gymnastics.

At last the Church Schools' Company decided to hand over the Wigan School to the municipal authorities. To the consternation of the Head and Staff this was followed immediately by an influx of pupil-teachers (as they were then called) and free scholars, for whom, literally, there was neither cloakroom peg, seat nor desk. They had to be housed in the big Assembly Hall, and place their out-door garments at the end.

This curtailed the activities of the School to such an extent that the local authority rented a building opposite Mab's Cross in Wigan Lane, and at once began at the rear, the erection of a corrugated iron structure.

This was known to the Staff as "The Tin Tabernacle", but H.M. Inspectors have been heard to refer to it as "The Refrigerator." The old building in front of this iron one was retained for dinners, and various School activities. It was left in the charge of the old original caretaker and house-keeper "Ann", a woman who dearly loved a joke and was a great favourite with the pupils. All this sounds somewhat frivolous but the School did really achieve some good, solid work. Twice it won the first place in all England in History in the School Certificate, and once in Geography, and obtained the Silver Medal of the Royal Geographical Society.

Some of its pupils now figure as dentists, doctors, many as teachers and certainly one member of Staff was appointed to the Staff of H.M.I. Meanwhile the original Head Mistress had been succeeded by two others—Miss Syson and Miss Wigg—but they resigned their posts after a comparatively short tenure of office.

The present building was erected during the first World War, but the original plans were so much cut down that, again, the premises proved too small to house the increased number. It was now decided to purchase Woodfield in Wigan Lane, about three-quarters of a mile from the old School, and it was well fitted up and adapted to school purposes. The Junior School children from five to ten years were turned out of the High School and sent to permanent quarters there.

I was then Second Mistress at the High School and took charge of this Junior School with three Members of the High School Staff. I remained in charge until my retirement in December 1931.

From *EMILY BETLEY*,
1887—1890.

The Church High School, as it was then called, commenced with about ten pupils who were divided into two forms.

The school building was situated at the corner of New Market Street, opposite the Rectory, and Canon Bridgeman who was then Rector, very kindly offered one of his tennis lawns for the use of the girls. At that time, tennis was the only sport for girls.

Miss Agnes Cheetham was the first Head Mistress, and she was much loved by the girls, and was a most capable teacher. Her outstanding subjects were Scripture, Prayer Book, Church Catechism and Arithmetic. Two or three times a week we had visits from various clergy to give Divinity lessons. We had a French Master (whom we shared with Wigan Grammar School) who came two or three times a week to instruct us. Miss Game was the Music Mistress at that time and gave us Drill lessons. Occasionally we had a Drill Display when we borrowed the Lecture Hall of the Old Grammar School, as our Assembly Room was too small to hold all the parents.

We used to sit for the Cambridge Local Examinations in those days, and sat at the Cambridge Hall, Southport, and quite enjoyed our few days there. Every afternoon from 2-30 to 4 o'clock, we spent preparing our lessons for the next day, which left us very little homework to do in the evening except when preparing for the examinations.

I have very happy recollections of the Old School.

From *MURIEL B ELLIOTT*
(née Folkard),

1889—1900.

When at the age of seven I went to the Church High School with my elder sister in 1880, there were about sixty pupils and Miss Cheetham was the Head Mistress. She was small, with terribly fierce eyebrows, but kind twinkling blue eyes.

Many loved names come back to me as I think of those days: Miss Heron who gave Object lessons, Miss Withers and Miss Game, and later Miss Graham, Miss Wand and Miss Bull. Miss Watmough was, I believe, a Student-Mistress when I first went.

In those days we had practically the whole of Mattins before lessons, including all the Psalms for the day while we stood or knelt in the Assembly Room, and it was no uncommon thing for a girl to faint. The Rector came on Wednesday mornings to give us Divinity lessons. The chief difference from the modern school curriculum was the absence of practical Science, except Botany, and the preponderance of Scripture, Prayer Book and Catechism.

On the death of Miss Cheetham the girls subscribed for the litany desk which stands in her name in the Parish Church.

When Miss Syson became the second Head Mistress I was old enough to appreciate her, and she did wonders for the School and was kindness itself to me. She told us in her letter at the School's Jubilee in 1937 how she had to stipulate that for hockey skirts must be at least five inches off the ground. When we acted scenes from Shakespeare none of the male sex was allowed to attend—not even fathers—because some of us were dressed up as men!

Every Ascension Day we used to go to the Parish Church in crocodile, dodging under the heads of the horses lining the kerb, for there was always a Horse Fair on that day, and our School at the corner of New Market Street adjoined the big open Market Square. When the Pleasure Fair was on it must have been distracting to give lessons, but as a pupil I cannot remember being bothered by it. I liked the merry din muffled by the closed windows. These windows were painted white to prevent our looking out, but we used to scratch peepholes.

There was a competition for a School Song in 1900, and I was fortunate enough to win the prize for it. It was set to the tune of 'The Men of Harlech' and copies were actually printed.

I returned to the High School in 1906, after I had taken my degree at Manchester University, to work as English Mistress under Miss Kidd, the fourth Head Mistress. In that year the School moved to Mab's Cross, Mr. Brierley's old house, and formerly the home of Mr. Craston's private school. There we stayed while a temporary building was put up for us across the cinder playground. Never shall I forget the School Sports on a blazing day on that dirty cinder playground.

When I left the School with Miss Kidd in 1912, it felt like leaving home for I had spent seventeen years of my life in the School and loved it:

From *MABEL MAWER*
(née Bennett),

1889—1896.

I have recollections of going to a school, called at that time the High School, which stood on the site now occupied by the present School—a large house at the top of Standishgate, opposite Mab's Cross and afterwards the residence of Mr. Brierley, the Recorder.

After this I went to the Church High School for Girls. I am pleased to state a few facts of my very happy schooldays spent there, as far as my memory permits.

The School was a building converted from two large houses at the corner of the Market Square. The lower portion was used as a residence for the Head Mistress. She was a petite but very dignified lady called Miss Agnes Cheetham, and was very great in our estimation.

She was assisted by a staff of teachers. As far as I remember they were Miss Graham, Miss Wand, Miss Henry and Miss Watnough.

There was a dear old housekeeper called Ann who was nearly as stately as her mistress. She made rock buns for lunch each day—and how delicious they were. If we wanted one our names had to be written on a slate hung in the hall before ten o'clock. We could also have a glass of milk if we chose.

Dinner was served each day in the Assembly Room for girls who came in from the country. It was presided over by the Head Mistress or her deputy. This room was on the ground floor and was used each day for Prayers. It was also used for Drill which consisted of dumb-bell, bar-bell and Indian club exercises. There was no opportunity for sport. There were no playing fields, but I do remember that we went to the Rectory garden to play tennis. The Rector gave us Scripture lessons and

on the days he came to school he also took Prayers. If I rightly remember, our Prize Distribution was held in the Grammar School Hall, as our Assembly Room was too small for so great an occasion.

I was a very proud girl when I managed to win two prizes two years in succession, and I now have pleasure in presenting them to the School Library.

Wigan Fair was held in those days, as now, on the Market Square. The noise certainly distracted us from our lessons and it was our delight to scratch tiny holes in the paint on the lower panes of the windows, so that we could see what was going on at the Fair.

From **ETHEL SAYER,**
1896—1906.

In 1896, when I first went to school, the Kindergarten was housed in a single square room on the ground floor of the Wigan Grammar School building, the disappearance of whose Waterhouse Gothic has caused pangs to many of our ageing generation. Our association with the Wigan Girls' High School, our parent, was naturally close. That school was then the building at the corner of Market Street and New Market Street, part of the property of the Rector, Canon Bridgeman, who can truly be regarded as the real founder of the School. Miss Cheetham, who made upon me a great impression (I can see her now standing on the rug in her study) was then Head Mistress. The building itself consisted of two dwelling houses, adapted as well as might be to the purposes of a school, and I remember that one of the maids' bedrooms on the top floor was turned into our first Science Room.

One of our great distractions was the Wigan Fair's half-yearly visit to Market Square. It was a larger and even noisier nuisance in those days than it is at present and it made work in school during its visits almost an impossibility. We were forbidden to cross its confines.

From Market Street we migrated to a large Georgian house at Mab's Cross, when we came under the sway of the Local

Education Authority. This building was on the site where the Cross now stands. In those days the Cross itself was on the other side of Standishgate, surrounded by its own protecting square of iron railings. Our stay in the large house was fitful and brief. Soon a corrugated iron structure was put up behind the large cliff of a house, and we went into occupation of it. Our numbers largely increased and in 1915 the foundation stone of the present school was laid. I had then left school, but I have clear recollections of that memorable day and of the long orations which are customarily delivered on such occasions. Mr. Henry Brierley who was the Chairman of the Governing Body, took the keenest interest in the School and all its doings and claimed, perhaps with some justification, that he was personally acquainted with every girl in the School.

From ESTHER CHALLENGER

(née Yates),

1907—1912.

During the whole of my time at Wigan High School, from the humble Third Form to the prouder Sixth, the School was housed in temporary buildings set as far back as possible from the road, from which they were separated by the old house in which school dinners were served, and a cindery expanse on which we played netball and rounders.

The corrugated iron building, shaped like a shallow E without the middle bar, with a door and cloakroom at each end, was irreverently known as 'The Tin Tabernacle,' but its classrooms were light and sunny. It had a good laboratory and a hall which served many purposes. Restricted space prevented the school from being self-contained: Prize Givings were often held in the Hall of the Grammar School, and we played hockey on a field which I suppose is now part of Monument Park.

With brown tunics, we wore, in winter, green blouses and the most appalling, large, flat-brimmed green felt hats. It was the age of the flapper bow! Eight or nine inches across and three or four inches deep, secured to the hair with a safety-pin in each outspread wing, it added considerably, we felt, to the dignity of the seniors.

Red-letter days were the occasions on which the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Brierley enabled large numbers of us to attend concerts and recitals in the Pavilion, which was then a public hall. I feel sure that the sight of so many happy and excited faces must have repaid them for their kindness. I am always glad to remember that a friendship begun on the daily tram ride to school, when Mr. Brierley lived at Boar's Head, continued for many years, and that, after I was married, my husband and I had the pleasure of entertaining him at our house in Manchester.

I have a vivid recollection of the pleasant, friendly smile of the caretaker, Mrs. Cartwright. Both she and her husband must, I think, have been ideally suited for their posts, and I am glad to know that their daughter, Mrs. Lawrenson, is carrying on the tradition.

In my mind's eye, I see quite plainly the little piles of biscuits and the glasses of milk over which Mrs. Cartwright presided at break. She showed no trace of impatience when the buyer hesitated between four thin biscuits, sparkling with sugar, and three fat ginger nuts. *L'embarras du choix, mais nous avons changé tout cela!*

I must, in conclusion, pay my personal tribute to Miss Kidd. Her energetic, forthright manner will always remain clearly in the minds of her pupils, and few could have failed to be stimulated by it. Her vital personality must have been a tower of strength in those days of transition. Miss Kidd possessed a somewhat rare quality which children value immensely. She talked to them in such a way that they felt she regarded them as individuals with their own points of view and interests, and as she obviously expected an intelligent outlook, I am certain that she often evoked it. It was a bracing atmosphere in which to live and grow up. To her wise and far-seeing advice I owe much.

I can wish no better fortune to Wigan High School than that succeeding generations should remember it with equal affection and gratitude.

From *KATHLEEN GOLDIE*

(née Fidler),

1911-1918.

It must have been 1911 when I first became a pupil at the Girls' High School under the august and compelling, if

somewhat terrific rule of Miss Kidd. Can one ever forget her tall spare figure, her brisk manner . . . "No nonsense, please" . . . those flashing discerning eyes behind her spectacles, her crown of jet-black hair? No wonder we girls always stood a little in awe of her. She had a disconcerting habit of darting upon a "dreamer" with pointing forefinger and rapping out a sudden question.

"Now, you! Are you having a little siesta? What is a siesta?" . . . and while one still struggled with the answer . . . "It's an elegant term for forty winks." Woe betide the slacker! If there was one failing Miss Kidd would not condone, it was slackness. Like a robust gale she blew through the school building: mischief and ordinary "wickedness" might even cause a momentary sympathetic gleam behind those spectacles, but upon laziness she poured the vials of her wrath. Not to live fully was the unforgivable sin.

In those days the School was temporarily housed in a long iron building with a corrugated iron roof. It stood at the foot of the present school playground. It was cold in winter and hot in summer, though I doubt if we noticed it much, and upon its roof the rain beat a tattoo as of many drums. At playtime we would dart like hares across the gravel playground to the old Georgian house which had once been the school. Here, in the sunny dining-room, stout motherly Mrs. Cartwright dispensed milk and biscuits to an impatient queue. Half a glass of milk cost a halfpenny and if one was "flush" one could get three coconut biscuits for a halfpenny too. Imagine getting thirty-six biscuits for sixpence nowadays!

Many of us will remember kindly Richard Moss, "Daddy Moss" to us, our teacher of Music and Singing. He had a wonderful way of imparting his own love and enthusiasm for music to his pupils. Like Miss Kidd, he had a gift for debunking girlish nonsense. One music lesson he appeared wearing a neat brown wig for the first time. In the silly fashion of young lasses we giggled and nudged each other. Daddy Moss, however, completely took the wind out of our sails. "Girls," he said, coming forward to the edge of the platform and raising his wig, "You will doubtless have observed that I am wearing a wig. My poor bald head feels the cold very much in draughty schools, hence this wig. Now you know *all* about it." There was no more giggling.

I do remember the occasion, however, when Daddy Moss almost lost his temper with us. We were learning a group of Grieg songs, among them the Song of the Trolls, which, you may recall, ended in a number of "Ha! Ha!" notes from the dwarfs. These had to be delivered with hammer-like precision, and, at

our very last rehearsal before the prize-giving concert, some of us came in with a weak "Ha!" in the wrong place after the final beat. Daddy Moss got up from the piano, stalked out of the room and along the corridor, in at another door, strode to the piano again, struck a chord, and in a voice of thunder, said "Now!" at which we broke into the opening line of the song,

"Look at him with wond'ring eyes,

Look at him with surprise . . ."

and then all, including Daddy Moss, broke into laughter.

Do you remember kindly Doctor Henry Brierley who was for so many years one of our School Governors, and how he used frequently to slip into School Prayers in the morning and have a cheery word with us? What very funny lectures he used to give us periodically on the meaning of our surnames! When the High School came to Standishgate we had dispossessed him of his home in that old Georgian house, but in spite of . . . or because of . . . that, he took us all to his heart and we became his family. What Prize Giving would have been complete without his humorous remarks? In some heaven rich in philology! imagine him peering kindly behind his thick glasses and patting the heads of the very youngest cherubs. It was a great day for him when we moved into the new school, built on the site of his old house, the accomplishment of his ambitions for us for many years.

The new school was like a fairy tale come true for many of us, too, for we had watched it grow from the foundations. There was the flat little roof where we delighted to sit in the sun; the little library, so cosy for private study periods; the corridor archways which gave us vistas from above of other classes' activities in the School Hall. It was all novel and a delight. Lovely days they were, gay chattering days full of laughter and golden song. It is hard to believe they are now over thirty years ago.

From *GRACE LENNON*
(née Dawson).

1922—1934.

One of the earliest pictures that emerges out of a general cloud of awe at the vastness of the School, compared with the cosy smallness of Woodfield Preparatory School to which I was

accustomed, is my first Prize Distribution. It was held in the Hall of the Wigan Mining and Technical College. I presented a bouquet to the lady speaker, whose name is long since forgotten, but, I can still see the large dark forms of the governors on the platform as I made my way forward, and then the sea of white in front of me formed by the rows of white-trooped schoolgirls.

Another much later Prize Distribution stands out clearly in my memory. It was held in the Queen's Hall and the guest was Mrs. C. F. Mott. Her address included the simple story of the frog which fell into a bowl of cream. It seemed inevitable that it would die—but the frog did not give up hope of survival and continued swimming round and round until it was able to climb out on to a pat of butter in the middle. I'm sure the moral of this story was apparent to us all and coloured our work in the School and play on the games field.

I have often thought how fortunate my form-mates and I were in beginning our school life at the High School just at the time of a change in the Physical Training curriculum instituted by Miss Barr. We remained in her charge until we passed out from the Sixth Form. We all turned out healthy specimens; our physical development was good. We had straight backs, because like hundreds of girls at School in those years we benefited by shoulder-flattening exercises.

I remember a few short seasons of hockey at Beech Hill until we lost our field as the land was required for building. Rounders on the same field leave the most vivid impressions of hot days, summer frocks and tremendous excitement. We loved rounders.

Then we had dozens of wonderful games of netball on the macadam tennis courts at the back of the School—form matches, house matches, and School matches against Liverpool Schools' teams. How important they were, especially the League Matches for the cherished shield. But not only on the games field did we learn the team spirit but also at Guides. The meetings really were tremendous fun. There were games, songs, badges to work for and summer camps.

Sports Day at Springfield Football Ground was a great occasion for House enthusiasm. I remember we wore coloured wool flowers to show our side. I spent hours fashioning violets for my House was Mauve. Later the Houses were redistributed and mine became Red and only a small straight ribbon was then allowed on the tunic.

The brown gym. tunic was most comfortable to wear. When I first went to school it was worn with a green Viyella blouse

in winter and a shantung one in summer. After some years this was changed to buff coloured Viverra in winter and shantung for summer, both blouses having square necks. Then the day came and we were electrified by the order to "do" gym. without tunics wearing blouse and brown woollen knickers. This started the quest for black stockings that were really long. How fussy we became about our gym. shoes. They had to be Fleet-Foot.

As a youngster I loved the nature walks in the Haigh Plantations and when in the Middle and Upper School I enjoyed outings with the Art Club, painting the River Douglas.

Music was fostered by Dr. Read. He encouraged those of us who could play the piano to sight-read and entertain the class with short concerts. The introduction of the new Hymn Book gave us scope for imagination and vigorous singing of such rousing tunes and words as 'Jerusalem' and Pilgrim's Hymn.

The School Magazine was started in my time. I remember the competition for the cover design. The winning scheme was black relieved with gold lettering and a central golden eagle motif taken from the School badge. We seemed to fill the pages with interesting matter. I liked the fine line-ino-cut illustrations provided by the girls and the sports pages including the annual criticism of the School Netball team.

Miss Halsall spent hours rehearsing Shakespearean plays with us so that we might entertain our friends, but how paltry our efforts seemed when compared with the fine performance of "Comus" given by the Liverpool Playgoers' Club under Miss Halsall's direction in the School Hall.

I was fortunate in having the opportunity of going to the League of Nations Summer School at Geneva with another member of my class. It was a wonderful holiday and most instructive. The new League of Nations building was still unfinished and our study of the international situation confirmed our hope that its destiny would be fulfilled.

In the Sixth Form I remember the Current Events period designed to make us read the newspapers intelligently. Three other Science students and I were given every opportunity to study Physics, hitherto not included in the curriculum. I spent many interesting hours in the small room off the laboratory dissecting rabbits and dogfish.

At the end of one year in the Sixth Form I passed on to the University and retained lasting memories of good friendships made and good times experienced whilst at School.

From MABEL TRICKETT,
1934—1942.

I am, perhaps, not yet far enough from my school days to see them in a true perspective, and if my recollections of the High School are prejudiced I must plead that as my excuse. My impressions are purely personal ones, and I cannot pretend that they give anything like a comprehensive picture of the School's life during the years that I attended, from 1934 to 1942. My first few years, for example are an unpleasant confusion in my mind, of the things I liked least. I found myself, fortunately as I realised later, in a form with an exceptionally high general standard, but as I was never an "all rounder" it took me some time to adapt myself to my surroundings. It is probably for this reason that my memories of the Lower School are, for the most part, of fruitless attempts to master the principles of Algebra and the unrelieved gloom of long periods of compulsory P.T.

Those school events that do stand out in my mind in this period, are, I think, significant. The first performance of Shakespeare that I ever saw was the School production of "The Merchant of Venice", and it left with me a strong impression of the liveliness, colour and movement of Elizabethan drama. I remember it more for the beautifully painted back-cloths, and the silver and purple costumes, than for the acting, and it says much for the production that the décor remains in one's mind quite clearly, in spite of the many more brilliant and ambitious performances seen since then.

About this time too, the pavilions were built to accommodate the increasing numbers, and I do not think I am the only person who remembers the gradual stages in their construction with peculiar vividness through Miss Booth's care that we should look for aesthetic beauty in the most unpromising materials. The skeleton facade of a wooden building hardly seems a likely subject for an Art Class, but I remember lino-cuts and sketches produced by the Art Club that must have been some reward to Miss Booth for her efforts.

My recollections of the years 1937 onwards are much clearer and more definite, but again they are tinged by a personal bias, which is, perhaps, unavoidable. I must leave it to others to record the School's triumphs on the sports field. One Sports Day however I do remember, very clearly, held at Bull Hey field; it was lit up by the most spectacular storm of my school career. A sky of copper and indigo weighed over the ground and a salvo of thunder sent us scuttling to shelter. To one, at least of those

present it was a very splendid if somewhat melodramatic interruption.

The merit of any school rests finally upon the value of the education it gives its pupils, and the wideness of the cultural background with which it provides them. From this point of view I cannot but be proud of my old school. I never remember any undue insistence upon "leadership," "the team spirit," "playing the game," those meaningless clichés so often used to cover the poverty of inspiration in some schools. I do remember with pleasure and gratitude the sense of values which the teaching and the intellectual background encouraged, the societies with their frequent meetings, the lectures and concerts we attended, the very full Sixth Form syllabus, the valuable experience throughout the School of Form Councils and School Councils. It is in connection with this aspect of School life that I should like to pay a tribute to the Staff and the way in which they taught. I remember how well my own subject, English, was taught throughout the school, and it is here that I should like to express that appreciation and gratitude which I myself, and everyone who was taught by her, owe to Miss Halsall. It would be impossible to conceive of a more scholarly and original teacher than she was. Always inspiring, whether she were recounting the history of the Brent's to one or two members of the Sixth, or brilliantly evoking the historical background of a set book, or enlivening the too limited syllabus of School Certificate with her splendid powers of association, she was perhaps at her best interpreting Shakespeare. It was here that her great love of the drama and her understanding of poetry combined to overcome the difficulties of that most prosaic way of studying a play, scene by scene and line by line. Those of us who face the same difficulty now must envy her gift; we never felt with her that we were "doing" Shakespeare, but that we were realising his greatness for the first time.

Miss Halsall made no intellectual compromise; it was left to her pupils to accept what they could understand and to keep the rest in their minds until they could come to it with a more mature appreciation. Nor was it only her teaching that was so important a part of the School life. It was almost entirely due to her efforts that the dramatic society was so active. Public productions of Shakespeare, always polished and original, were not the limit of her activities. School performances of little known plays and modern classics—my contemporaries will probably remember "Riders to the Sea," and scenes from "Hassan"—play readings, debates, mock trials and elections—past numbers of the School Magazine are full of accounts of the events she promoted. We who were Miss Halsall's pupils will not forget the generosity

with which she gave a fine and powerful intellect to the task of educating, in the highest sense of the word, those whom she taught.

The splendid collection of pictures in the School is an important addition to its cultural background. Very few schools are so strong in their fine art department; although it is surely an essential part of education to give some idea of the development of artistic vision. There was always very good material at hand in the High School from the Dutch landscape paintings to the Impressionists in the Lower Sixth form room, and including the exhibitions that Miss Booth so carefully arranged in and outside the Art Room.

The School was fortunate from this point of view in having Miss Nicolson's encouragement. Her interest in the Arts was un-failing, and most important, she encouraged creative ability in every branch. Her lessons, whether in French, where she insisted on our acquiring some background of literature outside the set period, or in Religious Instruction in the Sixth, were always lessons in thinking for oneself. She was sympathetic to ideas of any kind that might be valuable, however unusual they might seem, and her influence was always exerted towards keeping a high intellectual level in the School.

I should not like it to be thought, from this very partial survey, that I feel it possible to ignore the Science side of the School in any way. It played quite as vital and important a part as the other; but I did nothing scientific myself after the Lower Fourth, and I cannot speak of it with any competence. I should like to say, however, that I remember with great pleasure the excitement of Biology lessons, and the continual interest of the little lab., with its small aquarium, and mysterious dissections.

There is so much that I have not mentioned, the playing fields at Ashfield, the many prize-days and our solemn preparations for them, School expeditions, and trips to places of interest; but these form a pleasant, slightly blurred picture in the mind that it is difficult to define.

Looking back, after almost five years, I find that the things that have remained clearly, and I think always will remain, are those aspects that I have tried to recall in this short account. They seem to me to be examples of the true values which a school can give, and of which it may be justly proud.

*From MARY BUTTERWORTH,
1933—1946.*

To a Second Former coming up from Woodfield in 1937 the High School building seemed enormous and complicated. The relative positions of the Art Room and our form room remained a mystery for many weeks. I realised later how simple was the plan of the building, although hidden by the mixture of tiles, red cement and mosaic inside, and outside by scrolls and gables.

The addition of first the north and then the south pavilion showed that School was, far from being enormous, inadequate to house all its pupils. As a result the High School sphere expanded to include part of The Elms, Ashfield and Canteen. We were further scattered at different times by lack of staff; the Grammar School and the Technical College both saw our uniform. When the Baths and the Park tennis courts, which were used before Ashfield came into existence, are added to the list it can be seen how varied and widespread are the places which have helped the High School and have been influenced by it.

Going through the School and adding fresh subjects each year we came to know all these outskirts of the School, and to meet more members of staff. The course of thirteen years of School life was punctuated by the unobtrusive arrival of new mistresses and by their departure, which could not pass unnoticed after they had been our form mistresses, taught us, helped us with plays and sales, run societies and taken us on outings.

There are certain mistresses who are always identified in our minds with the High School because we cannot remember a time when they were not part of it, and, having managed to survive successive years of unruly infuriating children, they remain still, so that when Old Girls go back School does not seem completely strange. They give the whole life of the School a coherence which it would otherwise lack: Miss Allen, Miss Benson, Miss Booth, Miss Hegarty, Miss Illingworth, Miss McClay, Miss Smith, Miss Taberner, and Miss Forrest and Miss Gould at Woodfield. Although Miss Illingworth, Miss Booth and Miss McClay are not actually at School they have not left in the sense of going to another school — they still belong to the High School. Miss McClay and Miss Smith we appreciated most in the Upper School, when we began to realise how much work they did to keep the School going. We understood their task and admired their uncomplaining fulfilment of it when we ourselves had each a small share in everyday humdrum duties as prefects. They remained also through changes of headship.

Miss Sackett we remember as reserved and dignified and Miss Nicolson as full of ideas and suggestions. Miss Harley we only knew for one year, but that was more than enough to give us the benefit of her energy, determination and encouragement.

Behind the Head was always Miss Wright, efficient and business like, or Miss Overton, later Mrs. Seed, energetic and helpful.

For those who stayed to school dinner the excellent cooking of Mrs. Lawrenson and the kitchen staff was a delight, while their work in the building after we left it and before we entered it in the morning was an equal, if less obvious help. Mr. Lawrenson we could always call on in an emergency, especially when a ladder was needed.

The everyday life of School was interrupted periodically by lectures of every description, geographical, scientific, musical, historical; we were always glad when someone whom we had enjoyed came again, and still more delighted when Miss Eley played for us. Ends of term were rounded off pleasantly by festivals, tournaments and form plays. One particular form will always remember four days of intensive rehearsal for the production of "The Man who wouldn't go to Heaven". Among the House Festivals, Blue House's "In Town To-night" marked the peak.

School and Form outings also marked the end of terms—Santus's Toffee Factory, Conway, the Plantations, Chester, Ingleton, coal-mines, mills, biscuit factories, the gas-works.

Sports Days are always remembered for the finish of the House Relays when we yelled ourselves hoarse. The wet days have somehow been forgotten, while impressions of heat and wind remain.

Speech Days are divided into two in our memories—the impressive Queen's Hall ceremony, with the Staff strangely garbed in evening dresses and fur-trimmed gowns, and the more intimate assembly in the School Hall. For both we practised long and hard, taking our places in forms, going up for prizes, and rehearsing the songs. It seems strange to an Old Girl to go back to take part in a Speech Day without having seen the preparations—there is less interest and excitement.

On these rare occasions we saw our Governors as a body, and we looked forward particularly to seeing Mrs. Matheson. Her interest in us and her unfailing humour and cheerfulness were among the brightest parts of Speech Day.

Memories of Choir, Form and School Councils, Prefects' Meetings, School plays and Concerts, competitions, the collection of books, clothes and money and Savings Weeks are all jumbled up to form an impression of placid routine and comparatively happy years at School.

*From HAROLD LOWE,
1903—1907.*

It may sound strange—but nevertheless it is a fact—that I was once a pupil at the Girls' High School. My first schooling started in September 1903. The School was housed in a building which is now occupied by Messrs. Battye and Son.

I have in my possession my school reports from the age of six and a half to eight and a half years.

My eldest sister used to take me to school—always running along Park Road to get there on time. Later it was I who took my youngest sister.

The Head Mistress at that time was Miss Wigg. We youngsters were terrified of her! My form mistress to start with was Miss E. Glen Bott—then later it was Miss Easton. It seemed to be a case of one mistress teaching all subjects to a form. In contrast to the present day form of thirty or so pupils, our largest was eleven, and the smallest seven. Even at that tender age the reports mention progress in Geometry and Science.

I cannot remember the exact date of the removal, but towards the end of my stay the High School was moved to a corrugated building which was on the site of the present School. There we all had a little garden which we had to look after.

In those days the fees were one pound ten shillings a term, plus half a crown for stationery. These fees were paid to the Westminster Bank.

There seemed to be no shortage of paper at that time, for I well remember having to write out one hundred times—'I must not talk in class'—more than once!

We had a small tuck shop where we could buy milk and biscuits for one halfpenny.

At the age of eight and a half I left the High School and went on to the Grammar School to have as my Head Master that grand old man, the Rev. G. C. Chambres.

From ARTHUR LEA,

1892—1894.

When someone said a few days ago, "Did you go to the Girls' High School?" my first thought was, what a ridiculous question. But when assured that my name was on the list of prize winners for 1893—I began to think.

Then it all came back in a flash. The Kindergarten to which about twenty of us went, was a large room of the old Grammar School. Our going and coming was so arranged that we did not meet any of the older boys. Miss Smith, with the assistance of Miss Dunsford, managed to keep us under control. My four sisters were at the High School and I remember so well the friendly atmosphere which prevailed when any of the mistresses came to tea or called to see my mother. On one occasion when Miss Smith called, I showed her a model colliery, which I had sunk in the back garden, complete with winding drum and head gear. As she watched the little cage, a cocoa tin, disappear into the bowels of the earth, she remarked that there was a great future for me. She passed away at an early age, and was so saved the disappointment!

In class we were arranged on tall stools round two long tables. These were marked in squares like a draughts board, in front of each pupil. Why I never knew, for we never made use of them. Most of our short day was occupied in drawing, making very simple paper models, singing, dancing and once each week, clay modelling. For this we were given a lump of wet clay about the size of a grapefruit and a piece of board to put it on. Various tools were provided to assist in shaping the clay into articles or animals. Some got on to the floor, other bits came to rest on the wall, having missed their objective! To keep the beastly stuff from our clothes, our mothers had to provide large blue print "pinnies", and we needed them as you can well imagine.

One bright sunny morning I remember seeing Miss Dunsford coming from the cupboard, carrying a tray of newly sharpened pencils, and crayons. Spring may have been in the air, but before anything could dissuade me, I had taken a flying kick under the tray and the pencils shot up into the air and cascaded down again like a fountain!

We of course had to take part in the Prize Giving of the Girls' High School. This usually filled the large Assembly Hall at the Grammar School. Miss Smith had heard that I could play a tin whistle, so together with tin instruments of all kinds,

I headed the procession, (probably because my whistle had a range of at least one octave) and we marched round the platform. Never before did my efforts sound so weak and flat! I cannot recall at the moment what instrument Sir Thomas Ainscough played!

By the way glancing through my one and only prize (see first paragraph) the Red Fairy Book—a more blood curdling and gruesome collection of illustrations it would be impossible to imagine in a book for a boy of eight! It was banished from the bookcase a good many years ago, when I discovered my very young daughter, gazing with fascinated horror, at an ogre extracting for consumption children's bodies from an underground pit! It has only emerged this last week for consultation in honour of the Diamond Jubilee.

From MRS. KIRK
(née Hindshaw).

1912—1926.

Among my collection of photographs is a box labelled G.H.S.W. To open this is to renew a host of memories. Most of the contents are snapshots (happy and unhappy); but some are professionally taken. Among these is one labelled on the back "The Laying of the Foundation Stone of the new School, March 3rd, 1915." I can recognise quite a number of the little figures on it.

When I joined the Staff in 1912 we were housed in what most people called 'The Tin Tabernacle'—a large one-storeyed corrugated iron building on the land behind the Georgian house at Mab's Cross that stood in what is now the front garden of the present School. That house, which the School had outgrown, was still standing, and still in partial use. The kitchen, sternly ruled by Mrs. Cartwright, was there, and Miss Betley gave music lessons in one of its rooms. Lunch and school dinners were also served there. You entered the school premises by a gate in the wall to the right of the big house; on this gate was a brass plate announcing modestly "Wigan High School for Girls." Passing the house on the left, one crossed to the temporary erection about fifty yards away, between which and the house was a shale

yard where we played netball. 'The Tin Tabernacle' was quite comfortable, though there were complaints of excessive heat in summer and cold in winter; it was lined with pitch pine panelling and the rooms were large and airy. You entered by a vestibuled door. On the right was the Head Mistress's room; then you turned left into a fairly wide central corridor, with classrooms leading off on both sides. The corridor was lit from above and there were also windows into the classrooms. On the right were the laboratory, a few class rooms, the kindergarten and finally the hall; their windows commanded a wide view over Aspall and Haigh. The mistresses' room and library were on the left, together with other classrooms, and at the end of the corridor, were the cloakrooms. These overlooked the space between the old building and the School. Each day those staying at midday—as yet only a few—trooped across to the old building for lunch and school dinner. Taking charge at the latter was not onerous in those days; small boys were the greatest problem.

When I think of the hall, I seem to remember best our early debates—one in particular on the Daylight Saving Scheme—long before it came into use—and I think the diehards won!

In those days our Speech Days were held at the Technical College; great was the excitement of going down in a crocodile for the dress rehearsals.

Soon after I joined the Staff, the new School was begun, and there was great interest as the building took shape. The outbreak of war in 1914 slowed things down, but the building was continued and we went across to the new School in 1916.

In our larger premises we expanded our activities. So long as the war lasted we knitted and took an interest in our local V.A.D. hospital at Woodlands, where at least three of us served on the weekend staff. Afterwards we had our debates, our musical afternoons, our visiting lecturers, our visits from Dr. Brierley, the Chairman of our Governors, beloved of all small girls. When he visited us, the School was often summoned to the hall to hear a very characteristic, whimsical and often humorous talk. His great interest was music, and when he left Wigan he presented the School with a wonderful musical library which he had collected over a long lifetime. His other great interest, on which he was an authority, was parish registers. I remember once he came and gave us a talk on surnames; whenever he mentioned a name, the child (or mistress) bearing it had to wave a handkerchief. He boasted that he had included *all* the names on the School register, and great was the excitement.

All the time I was at School, our games were hampered because the school field was so far away. It took half an hour

to walk there—with our equipment! (there was no hut!) and yet we had some grand teams, both hockey and rounders. I expect the site of that field has long been built over.

For most of my time Mr. Richard Moss was our very able and efficient music-master. He was a real musician and a very inspiring teacher. His musical afternoons will be well remembered. I must not omit to mention John Cartwright, who was caretaker all the time I was at School. Both he and Mrs. Cartwright took a parental interest in us all, both pupils and Staff, and gave us of their best.

I look through my photograph box again and see many well known figures—some taken professionally and shyly presented—others snapped—not always happily—but all interesting to me. Some are in character as they appeared in School plays—the Fifth Form in "Twelfth Night" (with an excellent Malvolio I remember)—the Staff in "She Stoops to Conquer" (1922!) with a particularly impish Tony Lumpkin. Then there were snaps of numerous Staff groups—at the wedding of one—at the playing field; (did we really do our hair like that?)—in uniform, and out of it.

I thoroughly enjoyed the fourteen years I was at School. During that time Miss Banks was Head Mistress, and the School maintained a steady growth. Miss Watmough was second in command until 1920 when she left the main building to take charge of our new preparatory department at Woodfield, because we had outgrown even our new premises. I meet many Staff, pupils and governors, whose friendship I am still proud to possess. There are many to whom I should like to pay tribute for devotion to duty, courage, unselfishness, as well as for crudition, ability and wisdom, but the warmth of recollection is chiefly stirred by those who gave themselves without stint to whatever they thought was best for the good of mankind in general and the School in particular.

*From MISS E. McCLAY,
1917—1943.*

I came to the High School in the spring of 1917, in the middle of the first Great War. The School had moved into the present building at the beginning of the preceding Autumn Term

and by Easter, when I arrived, everyone was feeling more at home in the new quarters. The old 'Tin Tabernacle' was still standing at the far side of the playground but orders had arrived that it was to be removed, so lessons during a large part of that Summer Term had a constant accompaniment of knocking and hammering.

For some years the part of the playground now occupied by the two tennis courts and air-raid shelters was rendered unusable in wet weather by thick mud. The Staff and girls decided to try to raise enough money to have tennis courts made and we had some efforts with this object in view. When the Governors heard of what we were doing they took the matter into their hands and the result was our two tennis courts which are also used for netball.

During my first two years at the High School we had the Kindergarten Forms in the building with the rest of the School. Room 5, now the Lower VI Form Room, was the home of the tinies of the Kindergarten, the Transition and Form I occupied Rooms 3 and 4, Form II had Room 7 on the upper corridor. There were two Lower III's that year, but the rest of the School was one-stream. The Staff numbered about fifteen; there were two visiting masters, Mr. Moss for Singing and Mr. Green for Art. The mistress for Drill and Games was also part-time; before I left we had two full-time Physical Training mistresses.

When the war came to an end in 1918, there was such a long list of girls of between eleven and twelve waiting to enter the School that the Governors decided to procure other premises for the Preparatory Forms and to move them out of the main building so as to make room for more of these older girls. Woodfield was purchased in 1919. Miss Gould and Miss Forrest said goodbye to the building at Mab's Cross. The following Easter Miss Watnough, who had been Second Mistress at the High School for many years, left our part of the School to take charge of Woodfield and all its activities.

The Domestic Science Department was also in the main building in those days. The room beyond the kitchen, now the Physics Laboratory, was the Domestic Science room. Room 12, now the Form Room of Upper VI, was the Dining Room, in which all the Staff and girls who took school dinner and also those who brought their lunch with them had their midday meal. There was only one laboratory, the big one now used for Chemistry: the present Biology Laboratory was then a cloakroom, similar to the one at the south end. The Library was a very small room. It was Miss Sackett who saw that two or three adjacent small rooms and a portion of the landing added to this

small room would make a Library more worthy of the name. When completed it was opened by the late Dr. Brierley.

When Miss Betley used to come to the School to give piano lessons she and her pupils used one of the little rooms off the Stationery room. The other little room was the Sick room, so girls were often 'entertained' by the music lesson next door as they lay on their sick bed. The stationery for the School was stored then as now in the room out of which these two little rooms opened. I was in charge of the stationery for years and great was my satisfaction when three large cupboards were fixed along one side of this room. I felt that I had at last enough space for my stores.

Three afternoons a week different forms went to the playing field which was situated at the top of Gidlow Lane, near the spot where the Beech Hill School now stands. Just before three o'clock the forms due to have Games filed off towards the field. We turned down Walkden Avenue, at the end of which was a gateway with a chain across it leading into a field. We went over or under the chain, across the field and so to the railway bridge where we reached the road leading to Gidlow Lane. After a few years this field was required for the new Gidlow building estate. Another field was found a little farther out. One of its disadvantages was the fact that a public pathway ran across the middle of it. It was soon given up, and for ten years the School had no playing field. At every Prize Giving we were assured that we should have a field in the course of the year, but it was not until the beginning of the War that we came into possession of our fine field at Ashfield. During those field-less years the only games played were netball and tennis in the playground and tennis on the Park courts. As these courts were needed for the public in the afternoons, the School tennis times were during the first periods in the morning. Arrangements were also made with the Public Baths Authorities and for many years all the Junior Forms have had the opportunity of learning to swim during school hours.

As our numbers increased we needed more classrooms and laboratories. Miss Sackett had the north cloakroom made into a laboratory, and the Dining Room was requisitioned as a form-room. Then at the south end of the building, the adjoining field was purchased and in it was erected the hut now known as the south pavilion. This hut contains two classrooms and a cloakroom. Still we had not enough room as numbers went on increasing, so a second hut, the north pavilion, was put up at the north end. Its chief disadvantage is its proximity to the noise of the road. The last change in my time was the removal of the Domestic Science Department to the Elms.

Plays were given from time to time by the girls trained by Miss Halsall. The storing of the increased amount of properties and costumes for these performances was a difficulty until the Head Mistress offered the storeroom opening out of her study. A new door was built in the corridor and a storeroom for dramatic properties became a reality.

When I first came to the School, the examination taken by the top form was the Senior Oxford, but very shortly afterwards the School Certificate Examination of the Northern Universities Board was introduced. Our School was not at first an examination centre and our candidates went to the Grammar School to sit for their examination. This happened for a year or two and then School became a centre. The Higher School Certificate was introduced a year or so later. I remember well my first candidate for French; she did not disappoint my hopes. Miss Sackett introduced the teaching of Physics, and also the system of self government. Gradually the responsibilities and duties of the Head Girl and of the Prefects have become more important and of great value to the School.

The number and diversity of the School societies have increased during the years since 1917, especially in the later years. In 1922 Miss Smith formed a Guide Company in the School, and I was her Lieutenant. Our weekly meetings on Friday after four o'clock were well attended, but the camp in the summer holidays was what the Guides looked forward to the most. Our first two camps were at Benllech Bay in Anglesey; other places where we camped were Yealand, Weston, Bristol, Bideford, between Warwick and Kenilworth, Allonby on the Solway Firth, and back again to Anglesey for our last two camps. Miss Smith and I handed over the Company to other members of the Staff in 1934. There were two flourishing Companies when I retired from the School in 1943.

For many years Miss Halsall took a party of girls to the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-on-Avon the first week of the summer holidays. Miss Benson used to take small week-end parties for Botany excursions during the Summer Term and Miss Smith conducted girls to places of historical interest in near-by towns. Miss Banks instituted School picnics. In motor coaches as many as two hundred girls were taken one year to Chester, another year to Liverpool, where we visited the Gladstone Dock, before it was formally opened. We went over one of the big liners and finally were shown over the Cathedral by one of the Canons. After Miss Sackett came our picnics were to places of interest like Windermere and Ingleton. On the day of the eclipse of the sun, a large number of Staff and girls set off in motor coaches

from the School at about four o'clock in the morning. We had an excellent view of the eclipse from somewhere on the Lancashire coast.

Some of our excursions took us further afield. In 1924 a party spent a few days in London to visit the Exhibition at Wembley. Another year some mistresses took several girls to Paris, where they stayed in a lycée and visited the sights of the city. At Easter 1938 a number of girls and mistresses went over to Haarlem and stayed in Dutch homes. Later in the year we had a return visit to Wigan of a party of Dutch boys and girls.

Miss Banks was my first Head Mistress until her retirement in 1931. Miss Sackett succeeded her, but left us in 1937; Miss Nicolson was Head Mistress when I retired in 1943. There were many changes on the Staff during my years. Sometimes we began a new term with no change, at other times with several. I remember at the beginning of my first or second Autumn Term there were eight new mistresses and only seven old ones to carry on. Mr. Cartwright was our popular caretaker for many years, while Mrs. Cartwright ruled over the kitchen. Her dinners were always attractive and well-cooked. Mr. and Mrs. Lawrenson are nobly upholding the traditions of their predecessors.

These are a few of my remembrances of the many happy years I spent at the Wigan High School. My last four years were darkened by the shadow of the War, but we had no bombs dropped on the School, never anything more serious to undergo than a very occasional half-hour retreat to our air-raid shelters in the daytime and our fire-watching at night.

APPRECIATIONS

MISS M. W. KIDD.

IT was my privilege to be a pupil at the High School during the whole of the time that Miss Kidd was its Head Mistress. Many years have gone by, and very much has happened since then—she left us in 1912—but I still retain very clear memories of her—of her deep, rather husky voice, and her tall commanding form.

She was a very forthright person. There was nothing vague, or misty about the edges with Miss Kidd. Her ideas and opinions were clear cut, and always expressed in the clearest and most straight-forward manner and appropriate action.

Her teaching too had this same clarity. Scripture seemed to be her favourite subject and there must be many who remember how she made the Acts of the Apostles live.

During a visit to Wigan a few years ago she told us of her tour of Palestine, and irresistibly carried us back to the Form Room. While fully understanding the importance of examinations to most of the girls in her charge, she fought hard against their limiting influence, and tried to give us a broad education and lay the foundations of lasting interests and wider culture.

Most outstanding of all was, I think, her jealousy for the reputation of the School! She it was who adopted the "Soaring Eagle" as the School badge and I still remember the gist of her earnest and inspiring talk on the high endeavour of which it was to be the symbol.

SYBIL MARSH (*née Richardson*).
1906—1911.



DR. H. BRIERLEY.

very grateful to Miss Sackett for the making of our beautiful Library and for its equipment, for our present Sixth Form Room, and the very recent Prefects' Room.

Faced with limited resources for organised games she secured extension of swimming facilities and the use of the tennis courts in the Park. No amount of difficulty in organisation or equipment was allowed to defeat a project which would be ultimately for the good of the School.

MISS M. D. NICOLSON.

In the School Magazine for 1945 the following appreciation appeared :

'The Wigan Girls' High School has owed much throughout its almost sixty years of existence to the great abilities and constant devotion of its Head Mistresses, and not least to those of Miss M. D. Nicolson who left in July last year to take up the great responsibilities of the Headship of George Watson's Ladies' College, Edinburgh. In every way she proved abundantly capable of carrying forward the traditions already established by her predecessors without in the least being their mere imitator.

Great Head Mistresses must of necessity have much in common—an interest in education both deep and wide, an awareness and appreciation of the changing needs of their time, an understanding of the infinite variety of personality that may display itself among the members of the School, both pupils and Staff, a lively consideration for the welfare of all those who serve the School in their various capacities and a grasp of the part the School should play in the life of the community in and for which it has developed; Miss Nicolson shared all these.

Her administrative ability in all that concerned the School was marked by wise judgment and prompt decisions : there was no room in her organisation for dilatoriness or a waiting on events: she foresaw the School's needs and took immediate steps to meet them and so secured the smooth running of affairs which seems effortless but which is the outcome of wise precaution, skilful planning and able guidance.

Her personal contacts with the members of the School were of the happiest. Always easy to approach and willing to hear, she was sympathetic and considerate in dealing with individual problems. She took great pains to know the scope of careers open to girls and was always deeply concerned that the right course should be followed by the right individual.

MISS L. B. WATMOUGH.

The School has owed much in its sixty years to the devotion and inspiration of its Staff. Of the many who have given generously to promote its growth and development there is, unfortunately, no room to speak in detail, but it is fitting that tribute should be paid to Miss Watmough who was a member of Staff for forty one years and was Senior Mistress of the High School before she took charge of the Preparatory Department after it moved to Woodfield.

We have taken the following extracts from an appreciation written of her by a former colleague in the School Magazine for 1932.

'Miss Watmough's influence on her pupils was wonderful, but it was not only to her pupils that she was an inspiration; to the Staff over whom she wielded authority, she was an example of what a teacher could and should be. With her the School and its interests were always first. No task was too much trouble, no effort too great if the good of the School demanded it.

The standards she set were high—sometimes too high for her weaker colleagues. The great devotion to duty, the careful attention to detail, the thoroughness of all she did, the courage which did not shrink either from giving the necessary rebuke or supporting an unpopular cause, the dignity which never failed her on even the most trying occasions—those all were an inspiration to her colleagues; but in addition there was that about Miss Watmough which made them love her. Her dignified reserve could, on proper occasions, melt into affectionate and understanding sympathy, and reveal a large humanity and unflinching kindness, the fruits of a nature as deep as it was sincere.'

Of Miss Watmough's unflinching daily application to duty an Old Girl said 'her meticulousness in her own work was a great

inspiration and an example to the most slapdash of pupils. She possessed a quality rare and precious, that of respecting other people's personalities. She never let anyone down, and her old pupils rejoiced in the firm but courteous way in which she handled them.

HENRY BRIERLEY, **1847—1933.**

No history of the Wigan Girls' High School would be complete without an appreciation of one who was, for many years, truly the "Father" of the School. In 1902 Mr. (later Dr.) Brierley was elected Chairman of the Higher Education Sub-Committee, and when in 1905 the School was transferred from the ownership of the Church Schools' Company to the control of the Wigan Education Authority, he became Chairman of the Governing Body, an office he held until his resignation in September 1919. The end of his official connection did not, however, mean the end of his interest in the School, for he was a frequent visitor, and even during his retirement at Ullswater, then at Rochdale, he came, at intervals, to see us, so that he has been known and loved by many generations of High School girls.

Of Dr. Brierley's work as Chairman of the Governing Body, others are more competent to speak. To the girls, his Chairmanship meant his presence on the platform as director of ceremonies on Speech Days, an office he performed with dignity and with obvious pleasure. On two memorable occasions in the hall of the Technical College, personal friends of his were the principal speakers, Sir Alfred Hopkinson, and the Rev. F. W. Macdonald, uncle of Rudyard Kipling. Dignified as the ceremonies might be, Dr. Brierley could always be counted on to liven the proceedings by one or more of his fund of anecdotes, for he was a great raconteur, especially of Lancashire stories.

On less formal occasions he was present on the platform, both during his Chairmanship and at intervals afterwards, to talk about the local dialect and to explain the origin and meaning of place names and surnames. The first occasion I remember vividly: he had made a study of all the names of girls then in School, and as each name was explained the owner had to wave her handkerchief! As his sole companion on the platform to see that

all girls *did* respond in the way suggested, I felt it little became my exalted position to have to wave my handkerchief as "a dweller in a tavern."

On another memorable occasion he stood before the School in his robes as Doctor of Laws. At his special wish several of the Staff and girls had been invited to the ceremony at Manchester University when the Honorary Degree was conferred upon him, but he wanted all his "children" to share his great pleasure and pride in this honour.

Dr. Brierley was a great lover of music and took a keen interest in the Philharmonic Concerts which were once an important feature of Wigan's musical life. In 1930 he wrote in a letter "To one incident of 'the good old days' I must refer. John Coates, who was the Faust in Berlioz' great work says the Wigan rendering of it was the finest in which he ever took part. Good old Wigan!" He was so anxious for us to share his pleasure in music that for several years parties of fifty or a hundred girls were his guests at the Philharmonic Concerts and were thus given an opportunity of hearing good musicians and singers, and classical music played and sung under the baton of fine conductors. These were great occasions for us, and helped to lay the foundations for many of a love of music, as he had hoped. During his lifetime he built up a fine collection of music, nearly five hundred volumes, and this he presented to the School in 1919—an amazing act of generosity from a great lover of music.

Many of the books in the Reference Library bear the label, "Presented by Henry Brierley." Not only was he generous himself, but he persuaded several of his friends to help to build up the Library by making valuable contributions such as the Oxford Dictionary. The School was able to show, in a small measure, its appreciation of Dr. Brierley's long and keen interest in the Library by asking him to open the new extension in 1932—his last visit to the School.

His love of outdoor pleasures, too, he wanted us to share, for example, his love of walking. He used to tell us proudly that he had visited every Cathedral town in England on foot. The Lake District he knew well, especially Ullswater where he had a country house. He would invite us playfully to "drop in" whenever we were in the vicinity. When over seventy years old he told us of walking from Windermere to Ullswater one evening, and as late as 1929, at the age of eighty-two, he wrote, "It may interest you to know that on Saturday last I climbed from Windermere to the top of Kirkstone Pass and quite enjoyed the climb and subsequent descent to Ambleside."

Dr. Brierley had a capacity for making friends with young people without any apparent effort of coming down to their level. In 1932 he wrote, "I wonder if you meet any G.H.S's who remember how I used to stop them in Standishgate, if they were not walking in step,"—a ruse he used to adopt to claim a few minutes' conversation with them on their way to School. He had a remarkable faculty, too, for remembering the girls, either personally, or by little incidents connected with their names and was delighted to be remembered by them in turn, especially on his birthday.

We honour his memory for long years of service and warm-hearted devotion to the School from its infancy, a devotion best expressed in his own words, written two years before his death in 1933, "The G.H.S. I am conceited enough to regard as *my* creation and I love you all who are associated with it."

ETHEL TABERNER,

1907—1973.

WOODFIELD 1920-1945

UNTIL July 1919 the Preparatory Department was an integral part of Wigan High School. On returning after the summer holidays imagine the surprise caused by the announcement that, owing to shortage of space, Woodfield had been bought by the Education Authority to house the Preparatory Department. The contents of two rooms had already been transported there.

Many alterations were needed to make it suitable for a school and it was not until the afternoon of Monday January 12th, 1920 that the Department was officially opened by the Chairman of the Governors, Dr. Brierley. Miss Watmough was appointed Head. School began the following morning with seventy-two pupils and there was a dinner cooked on the premises for many of them.

Even then there was no central heating and no cloakroom. However, the beautiful garden compensated for all the difficulties. That first spring it was a great joy to see the crocuses and daffodils springing up and the lovely trees showing promise of summer. On looking back it seems that in those early days at Woodfield the summers were longer and hotter, and lessons out of doors the rule rather than the exception, and of course one's voice was not drowned by the roar of traffic!

One has vivid recollections of the garden sports held in the Summer Term—the excitement of the children, the tea tables under the trees, the table with prizes, for in those days books and toys were the reward for winning. In later years they were replaced by coloured ribbons eagerly contested for, but scarcely so satisfying, at any rate to the infant mind.

The great event of the Winter Term was the Christmas party, with Father Christmas, crackers, jelly and a Christmas cake. One cake we remember was decorated with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, sugar hills and little fir trees.

Every Summer Term we lost the senior girls and boys, who went to the High School and Grammar School respectively, but many of them kept in touch with their first school and it is very pleasant to hear from old pupils how happy they were at Woodfield.

In December 1931 the School regretfully said farewell to Miss Watmough on her retirement. She had been at Woodfield since the beginning, and both Staff and pupils had been very happy under her guidance.

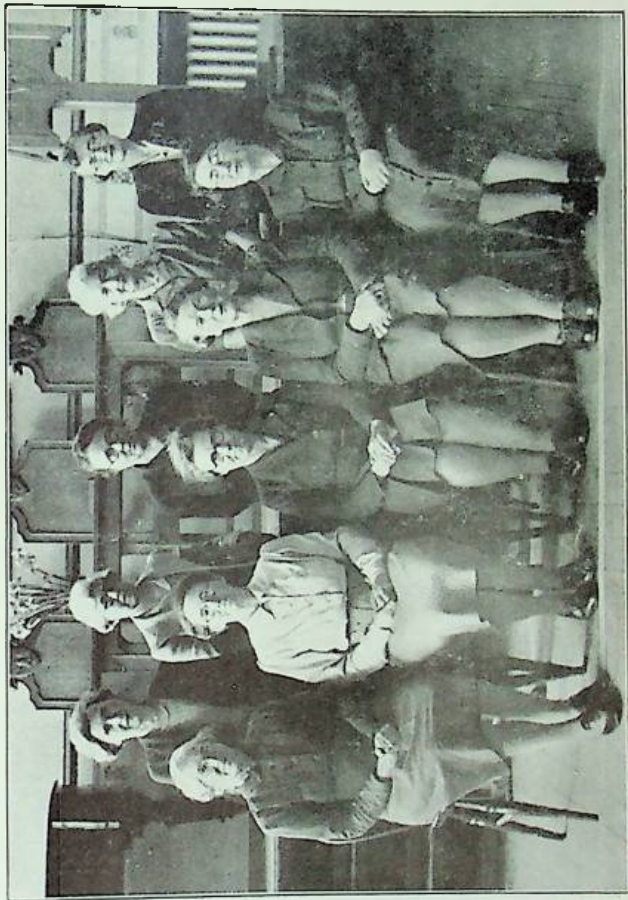
With the outbreak of the second World War, Woodfield was closed until an air raid shelter was built. However lessons did not stop, for classes for groups of children were held in various parents' houses. This proved very pleasant and some of us were quite sorry when the shelter was finished. In 1940 when the raids on Liverpool began the sirens seemed to sound at the most inconvenient times: once they wailed when the children were starting their dinner. How disgusted they were to have to leave it to go cold.

In January 1945 we should have celebrated our Silver Jubilee but as the war was not over and many old pupils were away with the Forces no celebration was then possible. It was hoped to have it later but the Education Act saw the end of Woodfield as part of the High School. Many of us were sad at the severance of the tie and still find it hard to remember that we have no official connection, but we are happy to think we still have friends at Wigan Girls' High School.

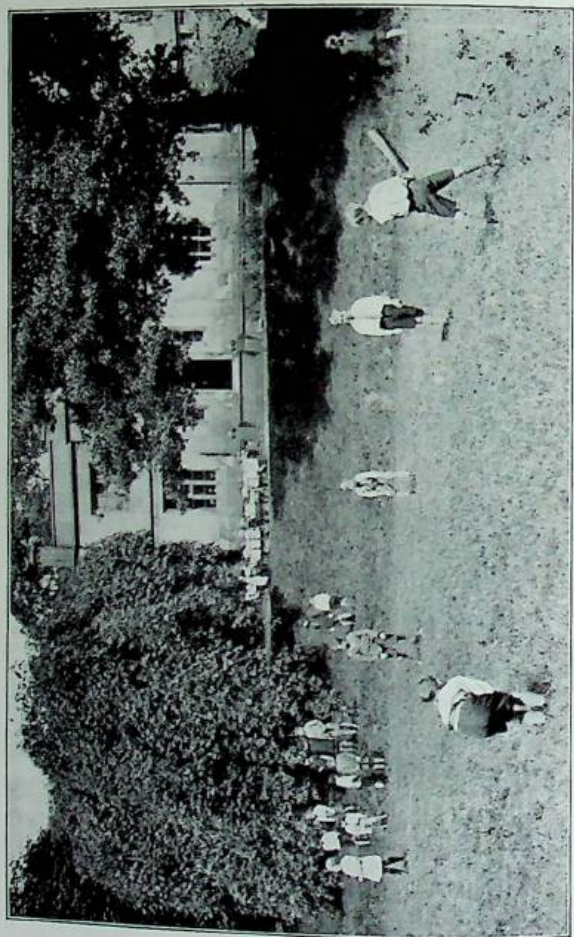
Woodfield Preparatory School lives on as Woodfield County Primary School. We salute all old Woodfield pupils and wish them every success. We are especially proud of all those who so willingly served Britain in her hour of need, many of them making the supreme sacrifice.

M. E. GOOLD. 1913—1945.

H. FORREST. 1917—1945.



THE OLD BRIGADE.



WOODFIELD.

THE HISTORY OF THE OLD GIRLS' CLUB.

THE date of the earliest record of a meeting of an Old Girls' Club is March 8th, 1808, when Miss Syson, the Head Mistress, was President and Edith Bryham was Secretary of The Old Girls' Guild. At this meeting, it was decided to set up an Old Girls' Memorial to Miss Agnes Cheetham, and later a carved Litany Stool was dedicated by the Rector, Canon Bridgeman, and placed in Wigan Parish Church where it is still in use.

The early activities of The Guild were varied and included expeditions and lectures, and during the Presidency of Miss Wigg, which began in November 1903, there were similar meetings and excursions.

It was in March 1907 that Miss W. M. Kidd became President and the following October Edith Lea was appointed Secretary, and the Old Girls' Club grew considerably. In the summer of the same year members climbed Rivington Pike and had photographs taken on top to testify to the fact. The following year a trip to Arley by canal barge was a most enjoyable experience. Debates were often of a lively nature and at one on Women's Suffrage, the "anti-suffragettes won by dozens." There were dramatic performances at various times and 'Peter Grief', a Morality Play, was performed in aid of The League of Pity.

1912 saw the beginning of the long and stimulating leadership of Miss Banks as President of the Club. For the most part three meetings a year were held. The Autumn Term meeting was of a social nature, the Spring Term meeting was of a more serious kind and the Summer reunion was usually held out of doors. Sometimes attendance at Old Girls' meetings was disappointingly small, but the At Home given at the opening of the new School in 1916, and the Rally sponsored by Miss Banks in 1925, saw a reawakening of interest in Old Girls' activities. A new venture began in February 1921 when the Grammar School Old Boys' Association and the High School Old Girls' Club gave a Fancy Dress Dance in the Empress Hall. This proved so successful that it was repeated in the three following years.

From January 1930 it became the custom to hold an Annual Dinner. One of the most memorable of these was the occasion

when the Old Girls made a presentation to Miss Walmough on her retirement, after her long and faithful service to the School, and her devotion to the Old Girls' Club. In July 1981 the Old Girls met to honour Miss Banks on her retirement: tributes were paid by members representing successive generations of girls to Miss Banks's unfailing interest in the Club and its members.

While Miss Sackett was President, the Winter reunions took the form of Dinners, when among the Guests of Honour were Mrs. Matheson, Chairman of the Governing Body, and Mabel Stedeford (née Fortune), an Old Girl who had recently returned from a mission station in China. In 1937 when the School celebrated its Golden Jubilee a large gathering of past Head Mistresses, past and present members of the Staff and Old Girls met at a dinner in the School Hall. On the following day a Service of Thanksgiving was held in Wigan Parish Church, after which the Old Girls returned for tea to the School Hall.

In spite of war-time difficulties which existed during most of Miss Nicolson's time as President, the Old Girls' Club continued its activities with the usual reunions.

From time to time throughout the history of the Club, there have been waves of enthusiasm for sport; once there was a flourishing Hockey Club, which won every match it played, and a well supported Badminton Club. Tennis has always been popular and Old Girls have played at Mariebonne, through Mrs. ffarington's generosity, at School and at Ashfield.

For many years the Club supported the Temperance and Rescue Mission, until it came to an end in 1982. Since then it has made an annual contribution to St. Margaret's Home. Gifts have been made to the School at various times, and since 1915 the Club has given an annual prize for helpfulness.

It is of interest to record that some of the Club's officials have served for long periods of time. Since 1907 there have been four Secretaries: Edith Lea, Ethel Taberner, Beatrice Wilford and Edna Parkinson, who each had ten years in office, while Edith Taberner has been Treasurer for twenty four years.

The Head Mistresses in their reports on Speech Days and at Reunions have always stressed the importance of the Old Girls' Club as an integral part of the School. By their loyalty Old Girls can be a source of great strength to it and forge the essential link between the past and the present.

B. WILFORD. 1906—1910.

E. TABERNER. 1907—1913.

THE WIGAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS PARENTS' ASSOCIATION.

WHILST the Parents' Association of the High School cannot yet celebrate its Diamond Jubilee it has grown steadily since its inception almost sixteen years ago into a very healthy body and has become an integral part of the School.

The Association was formed in December 1931 when an Open Day was held at the School. A large number of parents availed themselves of the invitation of the Head Mistress to visit the School and see it at work. At the close of the afternoon session the parents met in the School Hall where Miss Sackett expressed both her pleasure at seeing so many parents present and a wish that a Parents' Union or Association might be formed. After she had outlined the benefits which could be derived from such an Association, the parents present were unanimously in favour of the formation of such a body.

The Association's first committee was chosen with Mrs. Chambres as President, Mrs. Warburton as Secretary, Mrs. Hallet as Treasurer, and Mrs. Fairclough, Mrs. Lathom and Mrs. Kenyon as the first three committee members.

Early meetings of the Association discussed parents' views on school uniform and homework, and then it was decided to draw up subjects for lectures to be given by members of the Staff or other educational experts. At one meeting an invitation was extended to other Parents' Associations in the Borough to hear Miss Macaulay give an address on "The Value of Co-operation between Home and School".

On the evening of December 7th, 1937 the parents gathered in the School to say farewell and to pay tribute to Miss Sackett for her unstinted service to the School and the great interest she had taken in the girls. At the meeting Mrs. Warburton, the first Secretary of the Association, said that the Association which Miss Sackett had been so largely instrumental in forming about six years previously, had fully justified itself in the increased co-operation and understanding between home and School—an understanding that was so necessary to effective education. In reply Miss Sackett thanked the parents for their tributes and said that she had valued the contacts with parents which the Association had made possible.

Miss Nicolson was welcomed to the Association in February 1939 and gave her first address to the Parents' Association when she spoke on "Towards a Saner Society". During the next few years the Association continued to flourish largely owing to the unstinted help and guidance of Miss Nicolson and the encouragement and help of the Staff.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association in 1941 a resolution was unanimously supported by the meeting that the Association should provide annually an Exhibition of £10 to be awarded to a girl to assist her to proceed to a University or College, the award of the Exhibition to be left to the discretion of the Head Mistress. The flourishing state of the membership of the Association made the provision of this annual expenditure in addition to the provision of Form Leader prizes, a matter of certainty for at least several years.

At the Summer Meeting of the Association in 1945 we said good-bye with real regret to Miss Nicolson; and at the Annual General Meeting in October of the same year we were delighted to welcome our new President, Miss Harley. At this meeting Miss Harley outlined "The Aims of Secondary Grammar School Education", and this was followed in December by a most informative and interesting address by Mr. Bennett, Director of Education for the Borough, on "Secondary Education Provision under the new Education Act". Mr. Bennett explained very clearly the salient features of the new Act and answered a number of questions on matters which were puzzling or worrying many parents.

During the present year the Association has been privileged to hear two outstandingly interesting and helpful lectures on "Adolescent Girls" by Miss Macwhirter, Head Mistress of Manchester Central High School, and Doctor Mary Burbury, Director of the Manchester Child Guidance Clinic.

In order to mark their appreciation of all that the High School means to them and their daughters, the Parents' Association has set itself to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee by making a present of £150 to the School. It is hoped to present the cheque at the last meeting of the year when Doctor Arscott, Head Mistress of Whalley Range High School, is to give an address on "The History of Women's Education".

Looking back over these sixty years of the High School's history, we realise how greatly the world in which our children are growing up, has changed, and is still changing, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the new spirit of co-operation between parents and teachers for the better education of our children.

M. NAYLOR. *Secretary.*

From MRS. W. A. MELLING, J.P.

MISS Harley has asked me to write something of my recollections of the High School as a parent and Governor. 1936 then is the start of these notes for in that year I became not only the parent of a High School girl but also a Governor of the School, and I begin with a small daughter looking strangely grown up in her new uniform rushing home and excitedly speaking of "a never ending stream of girls". Thereafter I became a vicarious High School girl with Miss Allen making the Minoans live again before my eyes, and Miss Taberner learning the ways of my home through essays and giving licence to my love of reading by her injunction "to read something every day". Later Miss Smith was to take me through the Feudal System and Miss North to introduce me to the Tudors.

In 1937 there were two other important events—the founding of the Parents' Association and the Jubilee of 1937. It seems strange to think the Parents' Association is so young. I remember the exciting debate on "Homework" to which the fathers flocked all eager for the fray, and the revealing debate, "Should all Education be vocational". Then there was the Parents' Association 'Keep Fit' class where mothers looking a strange mixture of ancient and modern lay solemnly on the floor of the Hall and waggled their toes, legs and arms in strange contortions. Some of the braver mothers even gave an exhibition of their skill at the farwell social we gave to Miss Sackett. The Jubilee was a satisfying experience with a day of brilliant sunshine for our procession to the Parish Church.

In those days too we, like Falstaff "babbled of green fields." for Ashfield was still a dream, but though we were compelled to seek hospitality for our Sports Day we had thrills. I remember Ruth Walkden making a tremendous spurt to win the Relay Race and the cup for Mauve House literally on the post.

1938 saw us at St. Paul's as an overflow but though conditions were not ideal we had our compensations, especially so when the foot of one of the Trade School pupils appeared through the ceiling to the delight of the Lower Thirds but slightly to the consternation of the Staff. A memory of 1938 is Miss Halsall's admirable production of "Much Ado about Nothing" in the Grammar School Hall.

A special feature of our School picnic to Conway in 1939 was the serving of ice cream on the train as a gift from the Governors. The war overshadowed our Autumn Term that year, but we remember the cheerfulness, and even gaiety, with which

the Staff and girls faced the macabre time-table when we dined when we should have been at school and were at school in the dinner hour.

What shall I say of Prize Givings? I shall always remember our pre-war ones when ex-Woodfielders spent the afternoon with Miss Goold in sometimes embarrassing numbers, as well as our homely war time ones, enjoyable but shorn of their full pleasure by division, and our inability to house all our parents. So to our post-war return to the Queen's Hall which I should need the superlatives of the films to describe, as I should for High School teas and those delectable sardine sandwiches.

I am sure others will have spoken of what the new Education Act has meant to the School, but I want to conclude by saying that through it I have achieved the grand position of the first Vice-Chairman of the Governors, and as such I like to think of the "never ending stream of girls" surging forward, holding fast to the traditions of the past but reaching out to the best of the future.

RANDOM REMINISCENCES.

I have heard Miss Harley calling
Telephoning from the High School
That Academy of Culture
In the ancient town of Wigan—
Saying, "Will you write and bring back
Something of the days departed?
Reminiscing as you fancy
Give us Mathesoniana
Circling round the Wigan High School."

Memories come thronging,
Of much going into Wigan,
Travelling in trams and buses
In all seasons and all weathers
(Five and twenty years I travelled!)
To attend Committee Meetings,
To deliberate in Council,
Round a table in the Town Hall,
Things concerning Education
In the "ancient loyal borough."

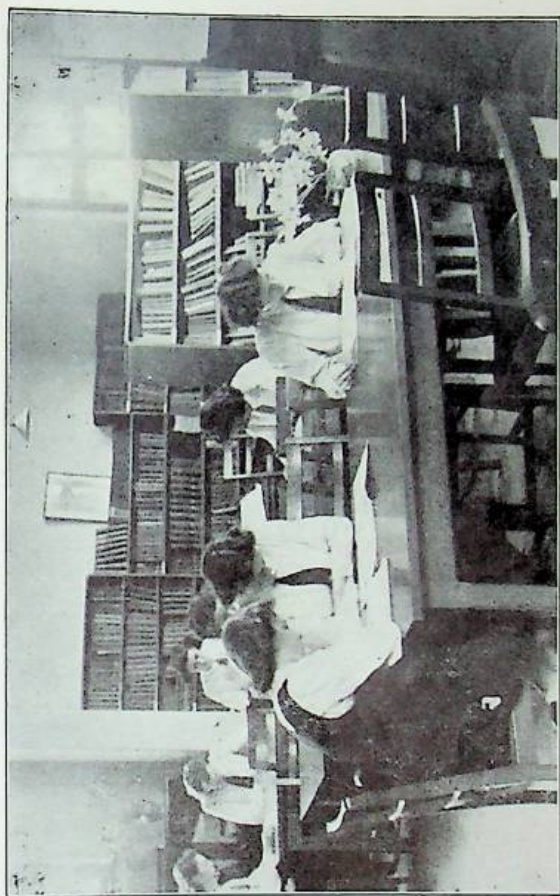
And the many schools of Wigan
All had place in our agenda,
But there is no need to tell you
How the Wigan Girls' High School
Had first place in my affection,
How my heart leapt up with pleasure,
With a quite peculiar pleasure,
When each uniformed maiden
In her brown and golden costume
Flashed a happy smiling greeting
As she passed me on the highway
—Sweet reward for any chairman—
How my visits to the High School
Were a source of vivid interest,
For I loved those Wigan maidens
And enjoyed their zest and gusto,
And admired their grand achievements
And their many gifts and graces,
For the things they did were legion,
They were full of bright ideas,
Fresh original ideas.

Special memories come thronging
—Cinematographic "flashbacks"—
Picnics, plays and competitions,

Posters, puppets and pea-picking,
 Sports and games in summer weather
 On the playing fields at Ashfield,
 Garden sports and garden parties
 On the pleasant lawn at Woodfield.
 Memories of many speech days,
 Memories of many speakers,
 Memories of many speeches.
 Academic dress was worn
 On this annual grand occasion,
 So my gown received an airing
 With its hood of silk and purple,
 And the "small informal dinner,"
 Elegant delicious dinner,
 Cooked and served by High School maidens
 Was a masterpiece and triumph.
 And I thrilled with pride and pleasure
 In the stately chair of honour
 As I sat among the mighty
 —Governors, Co-opted members,
 Mayors, Councillors, Directors,
 Speakers et hoc genus omne—
 Thrilled to see the School assembled
 Lovely as the flowers in spring-time,
 Thrilled to hear their charming singing
 For their music was delightful,
 Thrilled to hear their girlish laughter
 When their sense of fun was tickled,
 Noted how the proud prize-parents
 Beamed upon their comely daughters,
 Noted how the proud prize-winners
 Gracefully received their laurels
 Noted how the non-prize-winners
 Most good-naturedly applauded.

Special memories delight me
 Circling round beloved teachers,
 Round a galaxy of teachers,
 Loyal conscientious teachers,
 Circling round each fine Head Mistress
 I have known and loved and worked with,
 Gracious, gifted, cultured women
 Tackling a great job with wisdom
 Handling it with tact and wisdom,
 Just to share their task and purpose
 Was a privilege and pleasure,
 Was a "liberal education."

Now I send congratulations



THE LIBRARY.



A DANCING LESSON IN THE HALL.

Warm, heart-felt congratulations
To Miss Harley, Staff and pupils
For the standing of the High School,
Its prestige and reputation
In this year of celebration
And of fresh re-dedication
Are a thing we all are proud of,
And a matter for rejoicing.

Thanking God for many mercies,
Blessings more than can be numbered
In those sixty years of progress,
Years of courage, faith and progress,
May the School go forth and prosper
In her good and great adventure,
Bear aloft the torch of learning,
Foster culture, wisdom, goodness,
And remain the Alma Mater
Of the countless hosts of students
In the High School of the future.
May God's grace be ever with her
May God's blessing rest upon her !

M. M. MATHESON.

From *HILDA RITSON*
(née Higham),

1911—1916.

Chairman of the Governors.

ON reading through a book entitled "Wigan: Town and Country Rambles", published in 1914, I find no mention of the Girls' High School although historical reference is made to the Grammar School, the Technical College, the Market, the Infirmary and even one or two public houses, because they presented an imposing appearance. This sad omission can only be explained by the fact that when the publication appeared, and for several years before, the School was housed in the corrugated iron building which stood on a site at the bottom of the present play-ground, and which was affectionately known as 'The Tin Tabernacle.' It was hidden from the road by a big sombre house which at one time served as school premises after the removal from New Market Street. The only indication of the School's presence was the sign over the narrow doorway in the wooden hoardings forming the school boundary. This bore the words Wigan Girls' High School, surely a misnomer when we recall that the School attracted pupils from far beyond the borough boundary.

In those days, the girls numbered about two hundred, but although small in numbers we were bursting with enthusiasm for any project which might strengthen the School's claim to be counted as one of the institutions that played a notable part in the life of our town. Our great Head Mistress, Miss Banks, encouraged this spirit, strongly supported and aided by the Chairman of the Governing Body, the late Dr. Brierley.

Dr. Brierley's name brings back some happy memories. He made a practice of inviting High School girls to the Philharmonic Concerts which used to be held in the town. How these were enjoyed and appreciated. If, as we were assured was the case, the visiting musicians went away with an impression of Wigan as a town of culture, it was due in no small measure to the enthusiasm and appreciation shown by the High School girls. My contemporaries will never forget the instructive yet

entertaining lectures which Dr. Brierley used to give in School from time to time. After being told one morning to bring a "large, clean white handkerchief" the following morning, the rest of the day was spent in wonder and conjecture as to the purpose of the request. Next morning the whole School was marshalled into the Hall, each girl carefully carrying her large, clean, white handkerchief, and Dr. Brierley appeared on the platform. Now what? He announced that he was going to talk about surnames, and whenever a girl heard her surname mentioned she was to stand up and wave her handkerchief "with all her might and main." What a flutter of white there was when the Smiths and Joneses were mentioned!

Another memory crosses my mind of a set of girls who, encouraged and organised by Miss Watmough, gave up time after school to make garments for needy people. We were called the Dorcas Society, and when the first World War started our energies were turned to producing comforts for soldiers and sailors. Then our enthusiasm knew no bounds, and we worked with a will to provide parcels of simple luxuries for serving men overseas, or funds to help the local military hospitals set up in the town and district.

During the years of which I write we were keenly enthusiastic over our games, and many a battle royal was fought on the hockey field or the rounders pitch against such keen and formidable rivals as Aigburth Vale, Birkenhead, Chester, and Cowley Hill. Although we only nearly won the Regional Tournaments held in those days, the team from Wigan High School was always held in respect.

Another activity over which we enthused in my time at school was our gardening. Part of the ground was divided into small plots, each one tended by two or more girls working together. This work was voluntary and done out of school hours, but such keenness and interest were shown that a grand flower show was held at School and school gardeners competed for prizes. What a brave exhibition was made with our virginia stock borders, our candytuft, canterbury bells and all the various assortments found in penny packets of seeds. This might have become an annual event had the first Great War not intervened and turned our energies in other directions.

The activities I have mentioned together with Speech Days and School Concerts, belonged to the lighter side of school life, the pleasant experiences one remembers when school days are left behind, but they all served to bring the School into direct contact with the general public.

In our academic work we "went to it" with a will, and many women holding posts of responsibility in many parts of the world, owe their success to the excellent training they received at the High School. Two Old Girls are members of the Governing Body of Wigan Girls' Secondary Schools, and are thus privileged to work for the fulfilment of any project which might enable the School to play an even more notable part in the life of the town. Service to the community has always been one of the ideals of the School, and I feel sure that such service will always be given by those who have been fortunate enough to belong to Wigan High School.

Governors of Wigan High School, June 1947.

Chairman : Councillor Mrs. H. Ritson.

Vice-Chairman : Mrs. W. A. Melling, J.P.

Alderman Mrs. E. Ashhurst.

Rev. H. Ellis.

Alderman H. Farr, J.P.

Lt. Col. R. A. France.

Alderman J. McCurdy, J.P.

Dr. J. F. S. Ross.

Councillor H. Dowling.

W. H. Rushton, Esq.

Councillor E. Maloney.

Mrs. G. Latimer.

Councillor S. Taylor.

Mrs. J. Noble.

Councillor Mrs. Thorley Smith.

Staff of Wigan High School, June 1947.

Head Mistress : Miss J. L. Harley.

Second Mistress : Miss A. Smith.

(in order of appointment)

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Miss F. E. Renwick. | Miss M. F. Carroll. |
| Miss E. Taberner. | Miss H. P. Chambers. |
| Miss L. Hegarty. | Miss M. L. Cutland. |
| Miss K. Allen. | Miss E. M. Newsome. |
| Miss M. Benson. | Miss C. M. Parr. |
| Mrs. A. E. Rogers. | Miss I. J. Martin. |
| Miss E. M. Knaggs. | Miss D. Derbyshire. |
| Miss P. M. Eley. | Miss M. Finch. |
| Miss M. Gordon. | Mrs. E. A. Woffenden. |
| Miss H. Israel. | Miss R. Procter. |
| Miss D. M. Aspinall. | Mrs. J. M. Pasquill. |
| Miss M. G. Brooks. | |

Accompanist : Miss E. E. Horne.

School Secretary : Miss M. Hague.

Head Girls of the School from 1906.

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1906 ... Rachel Morris. | 1927 ... Annie Glover. |
| 1907 ... Ethel Sayer. | 1928 ... Olive Causey. |
| 1908 ... Florence Fairhurst. | 1929 ... Doris Derbyshire. |
| 1909 ... Clara Harmer. | 1930 ... Lucy Chambres. |
| 1910 ... Sybil Marsh. | 1931 ... Letty Myerscough. |
| 1911 ... Nancy Knox. | 1932 ... Moira Stephenson. |
| 1912 ... Ethel Taberner. | 1933 ... Marion Warburton. |
| 1913 ... Lillie Johnson. | 1934 ... Hilda Lyon. |
| 1914 ... Mabel Fortune. | 1935 ... Joan Wiltshire. |
| 1915 ... Janet Smith. | 1936 ... Joan Wiltshire. |
| 1916 ... Doris Peacock. | 1937 ... Mary Heathcote. |
| 1917 ... Agnes Almond. | 1938 ... Jean Smith. |
| 1918 ... Annie Taylor. | 1939 ... Jean Wilson. |
| 1919 ... Alice Causey. | 1940 ... Margaret Hood. |
| 1920 ... Annie King. | 1941 ... Mabel Trickett. |
| 1921 ... Edna Parkinson. | 1942 ... Olwen Groom. |
| 1922 ... Nancy Causey. | 1943 ... Margaret Smale. |
| 1923 ... Marjorie Fidler. | 1944 ... Marian Green. |
| 1924 ... Marion Gill. | 1945 ... Joyce Park. |
| 1925 ... Margaret Alty. | 1946 ... Brenda Barker. |
| 1926 ... Dora Meadows, Gladys Holmes, Ena Burton. | |

Editor : M. Gordon.

Old Girls' Representative : E. Taberner.



THE CHEMISTRY LABORATORY.

1947

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