

Random Extracts and Quotes



1. This term began on September 15th., 1937 when **we welcomed our new Head**, Mr. R.W. Hamilton, who comes to us from Bishop Auckland. We would offer to him our best wishes for his happiness here with us, and we hope his reign may be marked by years of successful progress in all the real things for which our School stands.

From the School Magazine



2. My **last memory of RWH** was seeing him at the top of the stairs by room 10. It was the last day of the Christmas term 1967 and everyone had gone home. I think I may have been the last person to see him looking down over what had been his pride and joy for 30 years. I suspect he was thinking how it had been and not how it was at that time.

Terry McCroakam, HGS 1949-57 and Staff member of HGS.



3. When war started the Metalwork Room was taken over for the **manufacture of munitions**, and we were not allowed into it. Certain ladies came each day to work on munitions as part of the war effort.

Stuart Walker, HGS 1935-40



4. A room upstairs was set aside for **PE and country dancing**. One day, as we were in the middle of 'Gathering Peascods', an urgent knocking could be heard on the door, the floor rocked with our dancing and the messenger said that the ceiling was in danger of collapsing on to the floor below. This put an end to dancing upstairs.

Marion Finch, HGS 1921-25



5. In the February of 1922 the Governors decided to adopt **the white rose as the emblem** of the school (perhaps as a result of the lack of progress about the requested coat of arms from Barnsley?) and plans had appeared for the building of the Headmaster's house which the Governors decided to recommend to the County Authority for approval, with the suggestion that a reasonable rent should be fixed. A sum of £1,530 was allocated for the erection of the house.

From the School History Section



6. In April 1923 Hetty Littlewood and Barker E.J. successfully produced the **first issue of the School Magazine**. It contained "a comprehensive survey of the history and various activities of the school." Miss D.L. Prince (photo left), one of the teachers, designed the artistic cover, and a featured article was "Scout's Corner". Mr. Sydney Clift, also a member of staff, submitted some very smart sketches, and there were many original contributions by the scholars, including an amusing description in blank verse of the final rehearsal of the school play. It was felt that a high standard had been set by this first issue, an example of which would have great rarity value today!

From the School History Section



7. The children from South Elmsall came by train to Hemsworth Station and entered the school grounds from the Station Road end. They also stayed for dinner. The local pupils went home for their midday meal. **This new school was a God-send for the district.** It provided opportunities for children who would have otherwise been denied. The cost for fee paying pupils was 2 guineas per term, rising later to 3 guineas. This enabled my parents to send more of the family as soon as they were old enough. At one time, I think there were five sisters, including me, from our family attending the Hemsworth Secondary School.

Marion Finch, HGS 1921-25



8. At **my interview** Mr. Hamilton took me through my particulars and when it came to where I was going to live, the answer being some 19 to 20 miles away, travelling to and fro by car, one of the gentlemen behind me jumped in with, **"Tha mun not forget to put plenty or oil in thi engine!"**, at which the whole room fell about with laughter. Mr. Hamilton apologised for any embarrassment caused by a private joke, and the meeting quickly decided, in the absence of anybody else, I suppose, to give me the job.

Mr. Hodson, Staff member from 1956 for 33 years



9. Mr. Hamilton (and his Family) treated me with a sensitivity and kindness that I have never forgotten and organised my journey home (from Camp) immediately. I was treated as though I was his own son, and it wasn't until many years later that it dawned on me that **we were his Family** and were treated accordingly. A truly remarkable man.

Geoff Booth, HGS 1939-45



10. I want to bring to your attention **the meticulous coverage by RWH** of events, incidents, Staff, games, pupils, and games results that he had tabulated for each year of his 'reign' in the exercise books of the day. I know he did that as I went to him about a subsidy to take the Lower Sixth to Malham Tarn which of course he granted, and waiting for him to enter the Saturday results in one of his games books for the year. This is why he was able to churn out a wondrous mass of data at the annual Speech Day where school prizes were distributed by 'famous' personalities at the time. He returned the book to a cupboard behind his desk to the right of the chair where I was sitting to discuss with him. There on various shelves he had amassed a mighty archive of information. What would be interesting is to inquire if such books are still around on a dusty shelf somewhere in the school. It is only a thought but he knew, believe it or not, all his pupils individually, where they lived, their parents, addresses, when they entered the school, their individual successes and achievements - including the Staff, and external examinations. He had an enormous database even before computers all written by hand. For me he was an object lesson which I never forgot. No pupil was allowed to be anonymous. To permit him to perform the enormous admin role that he had, people like Les Collette and Cyril Owen constructed the mighty tasks of timetable admin after being instructed by him of the criteria that were to be followed.

Ken Sale, HGS Staff 1955-61



11. I wonder how many remember the very **last end-of-term Grammar School Assembly** in July 1968, held in the new Sports Hall? Mr. Hamilton had retired in 1967 and the new Head showed scant regard for the Grammar School and its traditions in his preparations for September 1968. History is littered with tales of spontaneous uprisings: there was a mini one at HGS on that last afternoon of the Grammar School's life. The Headmaster cut short the final Assembly and walked out, leaving Staff and pupils to follow. No-one moved. The whole school stayed put and sang the School Song with an enthusiasm and intensity I guess had never been experienced before. Mr. Hamilton would have been very proud at the sincerity of that final rendering.

Mr. Hodson, Staff member from 1956 for 33 years



12. **RWH** was a terrific Head. To parody Louis XIV, his leadership was a case of 'L'ecole, c'est moi'. He worked at it 'morning, noon and night'. The school was his life. Commenting on his retirement, Mr. Collette (Senior Master) told us, "The first thing Russell will have to do is learn to live with his wife again!". He was great to work for. If you needed help professionally or personally, it was always an encouraging "come in, sit down. How can I help?" Whatever was going on in school, he made a point of being there, if only for a short time if he was busy. It mattered to him that the Staff knew that he knew what they were doing or not doing, and that he appreciated their efforts and offered them thanks and encouragement. It mattered to him that the pupils knew who he was and that he cared. This dedication did not prevent him from friendly circulation: up in the Staffroom having a friendly chat and a joke over a cup of coffee, or on the touchline, at a Music Concert or whatever.

How different it became in the new regime where you had to make an appointment to see the Head, where a parent complained his daughter had been at the school for five years and did not know who the Head was, and where I was reprimanded for producing Orders of Merit which "served no useful purpose". I have a great respect for Mr. Hamilton. He retired at the right time.

Mr. Hodson, Staff member from 1956 for 33 years



13. "I did not teach **Geoffrey Boycott**. I admired his prowess from the umpire's stance at various House and School matches. Mr. Hassall (RE) and I enjoyed a collection of apocryphal stories of his run-scoring ability. Try this one:

Mr Hassall - "Right then lads. We've got to stop now. My bus goes in 10 mins. It's a DRAW!"

Boycott - "But Sir. We only need 50 to win. Give us another 5 minutes. "

Mr. Hassall – "Another 5 minutes? Fifty? You'll have to be quick."

Boycott – "Bang! Bang! Bang! etc

Shouts from the boundary: "Hurrah! We've won! Well done Geoff! Well done Mr. Hassall. He caught his bus!"

Mr. Hodson, Staff member from 1956 for 33 years