

1. Miss. Griffiths, Miss. Shortridge, Miss. Prince and Miss. Smith



Miss M.A. Griffiths

Miss E. Shortridge

Miss D.L. Prince

Miss M. Smith

Miss Griffiths was the first Senior Mistress. She was followed by Miss Shortridge. The latter left in April 1946 and Miss Smith took up her position in September 1946. For the Summer Term 1946 Miss Prince (History and Geography) was the Senior Mistress. Does anyone have any memories of these four lady members of staff?

Dave McKenzie



Even though I did not start at HGS until 1956, I knew Miss Shortridge very well as she was my Godmother. After HGS she taught in Northumberland for many years and died in Wark in that County many years ago. Unfortunately I have no record of the year.

John Robinson



Dear Dave,

Miss Shortridge was Senior Mistress from my second year until I left. Her predecessor was Miss Griffiths, a tall, white haired distinguished lady with (what seemed to a nervous first year) very piercing eyes. In my first week she came into a cookery class, walked slowly round and scrutinised each one of us. Stopping in front of me, she demanded to know why I wasn't wearing the regulation school blouse, which was a pale tan colour. I remember stammering out 'Please miss, my mother didn't know there was one' - which was perfectly true. We had been given no information whatsoever as to what was required and didn't know anyone else who was at the school. What a difference compared to the induction procedures of the present day! Miss Griffiths must have been responsible for the voluminous knickers/shorts that the girls had to wear for all P.E. and sports activities. They draped down in huge folds - presumably to preserve decency! They soon disappeared when Miss Griffiths retired.

Miss Shortridge was short in build as well as name, was very brisk and efficient and a good disciplinarian. I can still hear the 'click clack' of her heels as she bustled to and fro from her office to the staffroom which was next door. She taught French and I can remember the first lesson of one new year when we all held our breath as we heard approaching footsteps, dreading to see who was going to be the teacher! My recollections are that she was a good teacher. During our second year in the Upper Sixth most of my colleagues were busy applying for teacher training colleges and going for interviews. I couldn't because I was too young to go, even though the Government had lowered the age for admission because of shortages. One day, Miss Shortridge called me to her office and said that I could go after all because the age limit had been lowered still further. I blurted out that I hadn't had any interviews and she smiled and said that wouldn't matter, so off I went to Leeds Training College, which was housed in hotels in Scarborough as the Headingley College had been taken over for military purposes. So, at nineteen and a half I started my first post as a qualified teacher!

Miss Prince taught history. She can be seen on the photo of the teaching staff of 1946, front row at No. 4 - next to the Head. Connecting that with a comment from someone else, that was probably when she was acting Senior Mistress when Miss Shortridge left in April.

Jean Burton



Grace Kaye (nee Mills) HGS 1926- 32) told this story to her son Peter Kaye (HGS 1955-62).

Before getting a scholarship to Hemsworth (and I think this was to join Year 2 in 1926), Mum had spent a year at the Girls' School at Moorthorpe. There the uniform was green. The transfer to Hemsworth meant a change of uniform colour - and there was no way that her family could afford to buy new items. The Miners' Strike produced great hardship for local families. So Grace and her mother dyed the green uniform. Alas it came out black! My mother felt so ashamed at the first assembly - and Miss Griffiths told her to stay behind. Mother, close to tears, explained why her uniform did not conform. "You silly girl", said Miss Griffiths. "There is a special fund to help!" Mother was taken to a local shop and the navy uniform was provided!

2. Senior Master's Room



I was interested in the comments on the room behind the tuck shop, which I always knew as the Senior Master's room. In the Sixth Form, because I was taking Maths, Physics and Chemistry, I was also required to take Scientific German for two periods a week, taught by Mr Davies. Originally, there were four of us but one dropped out after a short time. He was also taking A level Biology, and I think that this provided a reason. By the time we got to the Upper Sixth, the other two had also dropped out of one of the two weekly lessons, leaving just myself and Mr Davies for one of the periods. My having twice the number of lessons would have meant that the class would be rather difficult to teach unless something was done. Mr Davies therefore decided that in my "extra" lesson, we would cover normal German. Eventually, I was entered for the O level in German. The extra lesson was held in the room behind the Tuck Shop. Which eventually explains the point of the story. As far as I know, the exam timetables in 1967 meant that everyone else in the school had finished all their O and A level exams when I came to the German O level. It was held in the room behind the tuck shop, and I was well aware from the happy voices outside that exams were over while I was sitting mine. The oral exam was held in the Sick Room, just across from room 10. I think that was the number; the one up the stairs from the half landing.

Stephen Batey

3. Moor and Mountain Club



I think the Moor and Mountain Club arose out of two events. One was the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which we did in, I think, the 5th form. I remember choosing photography as my interest area, probably because Mr. Glenn took us. As a Physics teacher he could be very strict - even with 6th formers. The other major part of the award was the outdoor activities, which included hostelling around Derbyshire, the name will come back to me eventually. This led to a great interest in the outdoors, mostly walking, although a few of the braver souls also went climbing. In fact, it led to a life-long love of mountains for my brother Phil who was in the year below me. The other inspiration for the club must have been Dennis Bavister. It was he who organised the 2 trips to Beddgelert. He was also an active Christian and the accommodation in Beddgelert was in a Christian Hostel. I remember the Pyg track up Snowdon. We also went up to Skipton and back into Derbyshire several times.

Linda Collingwood

4. Reunion July 2004



Dear Dave,

I have just arrived back home, after attending our School reunion. Snatches of conversation are still whirling around my head, and I keep revisiting the memories of that pleasant evening and marvelling at the instant friendliness and warmth from everyone there. Adult voices were deeper and richer than in our teenage years, but still recognisable. Mannerisms and eye colours hadn't changed, nor the way someone would stand, or use hand movements when speaking. We experienced pure friendliness without the constraints of our 1960's unwritten rules of single-sex socialising. Remember those? Back then, we couldn't sit chatting in class next to a boy/girl without starting "rumours of romance". Peer pressure meant that we couldn't go for a walk at School with

someone whose company we may have enjoyed, unless they were of the same sex. Of course, when hormones started to influence us, the Upper School relationships changed some of this, but in general, we adhered to this self-policing. We could play out at weekends, or walk to the bus with the neighbour we grew up with, but once on the bus we separated. Well, the limitations of such single sex socialising in our formative years did not seem to affect most of us last Friday.

As someone who visits from afar, I don't have the 'in between' experiences of seeing how my schoolmates have developed over the years since School. I have only the mental snapshot pictures of people as they were in the 1960's, and then suddenly comes a giant leap forward in time (40-odd years!) to today's encounters. Many Hilmians stayed in the Hemsworth locality, seeing their School chums as they matured, knowing their partners, and their subsequent children. There is a continuity here which is lacking in those of us who did not return after college or university. Nevertheless, this factor only seemed to enrich the evening, making the contrasts more vibrant and meaningful because the encounters were fleeting. There was also, for me, the intriguing occasional glimpse during conversations of how others had perceived me as a schoolgirl. So interesting!

For those of you who are reading this and have wondered about the value of making the effort to attend such a gathering, I can only urge you to seize the chance next time. A whole new raft of instant friends will be revealed to you - and who doesn't need those? - with a shared bedrock of upbringing and schooling, and some life-enhancing stories to tell! Above all, - it's fun!

Sheila Kelsall, HGS 1955-62

5. I remember that!



More memories from Terry...

With regard to school buses there were quite a number some of which went almost as far as Wakefield. These buses would come up the drive past the Technical College Building (later on there was another Technical College built further along Station Rd.) into the school playground where the pupils would be lined up waiting. I had no experience with the buses since living in Hemsworth I used to walk to and from school. Talking about the playground reminds me of a couple of snippets of information. There was an old horse-mounting block just on the grass patch which the buses drove around on the playground. This block was a left over from the days when there was a private house occupying the site with some of the old buildings being the stables. Secondly, during cold spells in winter when there was ice about the boys would make a long slide from the play ground down the slope which was the drive from the Tech.. Some of the senior boys would go down this slide at a 'hell of a lick'.

Terry O'Marr

Boys in my years used to enjoy slides also. They were often made from the top to the bottom of the playground. Speed was the norm. Various sliding postures were adopted - the "Little Man" being very popular. More speed? Sometimes a snowy jump was also constructed at the end of the slide quite near to the horse-mounting block.

Dave McKenzie

Dear Dave,

I have just been reading about the schoolyard, and the slides which the boys used to make on the slope. This led to one poor little first year (me), rushing to get to the school bus to Shafton at 4 o'clock, skidding and sliding half way down the yard. I stopped before I went under the wheels, and was so embarrassed, I laughed. The teacher on duty was furious with me, but I couldn't help it, I was probably in shock. Talking about the Dog 'ole and the rooms beside the yard - I think I remember having recorder lessons at lunchtime in the classroom up the wooden stairs, probably so that no-one could hear the noise we made. It must have paid off, because eventually I joined the orchestra. I also sang in the Junior, Senior and Madrigal choirs. I remember Speech Days as our busiest time of year.

Linda Collingwood

6. Football!



Calling all Hilmian males born between 1930 and 1940! Please will you give us your recollections on that aspect of School life which will no doubt amaze the generations of pupils who followed you. I speak of the House Football Cup. Football at HGS? We need to know about this! In 1947 the cup was won by Talbot, 67 points, in 1948 the winner was Holgate, 83 points, and in 1950 the House Football Cup went to Price with 75 points. Points not goals? How was this calculated? We are making the assumption that in those days the girls were not involved. Is this correct? Where were the pitches/goalposts? Was there a School team? Does anyone recall which members of Staff were the referees? The earliest rugby team photo we have on the site is 1934, and so the tradition of rugby was well-established by the late forties. Was football looked on as a novelty sport? Did the members of the rigger teams change their game, and form the teams in the House Competition, or did others step in? Any enlightenment would be welcomed."

The 1957 report of the death of Mr. Crossland, a History, English and Maths teacher at HGS for 20 years, gives us an insight into the early days of rugby at HGS. It makes clear that in the first two years of its existence, 1921 and 1922, the pupils (boys) of the School played Association Football. Together with his colleagues, it was Mr. Crossland who gradually swung the school over to rugby, although the two must have run side by side for some considerable time, as Football House Competitions were still in existence in 1947, 1948 and 1950, when Mr. Crossland retired from the School.

Sheila Kelsall

7. What do I think of when I think of Hemsworth Grammar School?



Being in year one and being in awe,
Of everything I saw,
Getting a Stripe for not wearing a hat,
Doing exercises on a gym mat,
The Stars and Stripes Board for the Houses,
Mr Lock trying to rouse us,
"How can I teach you French when you can't
speak English yet?"
After we'd asked,
"Have you marked us books yet?"
Translating texts literally from Latin,
The rows that we sat in,
Listening, entranced, to Mr Reed reading Wordsworth in his cultured accent,
Speaking French in class with a Yorkshire accent,
Playing tennis on the grass court,
Learning by "doing" as well as being "Taught",
Smelling and watching the pigs next door,
Racing through the showers and slipping on the floor,
The Prefects controlling the school grounds,
Looking for students who were out of bounds.
The hideous hats and sixty denier stockings,
They looked shocking!
Strolling with friends down the back lane,
Mr Young saying, "You're late again!"
The beautiful Miss Elliott changing hands as she wrote,
A remark on an Essay saying, "You need to quote."
The sixth formers and the School Dances,
And all those Romances,
The assemblies and singing the School Song,
The Science experiments that went "wrong".
The list goes on and on!
Here today and gone tomorrow
How the days since school have passed
But I remember school with joy not sorrow
And I remember, "Labor ipse voluptas"!

Janet Noble, 19 June 2003
(Student 1953 to 1960)

8. Memories of the 1930s from Doris Watson



I attended Hemsworth Grammar School (as Doris Watson) from 1931-37 and was Head Girl in my last year.

School Dinners

The thirties were a lean time for most families. We had never had school dinners before. We sat waiting round the table for the master (Mr. Crossland) to come in. What seemed to me an enormous joint of beef placed in front of him. He carved and plates were passed round and we helped ourselves to vegetables. I don't remember how long this went on for but a new dining room was built and it was never the same again.

Size of School

To us from tiny village schools, the school seemed very big. There were rooms for physics, domestic science and chemistry labs, two tennis courts, a netball pitch, hockey and rugby fields and even a cricket pitch. But every teacher knew every child.

Nickname

When the school changed its name from Hemsworth Secondary School (HSS) we were no longer teased at the bus stop as being at Hemsworth Sausage Shop.

Doris Watson