

1. Random Reflections



1. 1951
 Nearly the whole school went on the chartered train to London to see the "Festival of Britain" site.

2. Crates of Apples
 These came from either the USA or Canada during wartime.

3. Morning Assembly
 Anyone who had disgraced the school was made to stand in front of the First Formers at the front of the Hall so the that whole school could see them.

4. School Reports
 These were in book form (I have still got mine). Parent had to sign it before you returned to school just to prove he/she had read it.

5. Ship's Pennant
 This hung opposite the Head's Study. Was it HMS Esperance?

6. Speech Days
 These were held in the Hemsworth Hippodrome. All the staff wore graduation gowns and hoods. The colours were beautiful.

I do not remember walking to the Hippodrome from school. I seem to remember we either had the day or afternoon off and went from and to home - but I could be wrong. At the Speech Day ceremony the pupils were down stairs with the juniors in front and the rest in order with the seniors at the back. The staff, parents and guests were upstairs on the balcony. The pupils receiving prizes assembled to the left of the stage and were organized by Mr Leonard and Mr Collette.

Terry O'Marr

7. Stars and Stripes
 There was a large board at the foot of the Main Staircase.

8. The Statue in the Quadrangle
 Wendy. This was decorated with the pants of Senior Boys on the last day of the school year. One year some boys who were leaving raising the fire alarm and had the whole school outside.

9. The Tech.
 This was at the bottom of the Main Drive and was used as an extra-classroom. We had to wait outside sometimes in the snow or rain until the master or mistress came.

10. The Walk from the Green Gate
 The walk from the Green Gate up to school was wonderful. As seasons came and went one saw lots of flowers under the trees. Above were the noisy rooks. Was anyone dive-bombed by them? Who remembers the Japanese Tulip tree overhanging the Car Park wall? Sometimes the scene was enhanced by the sound from St. Helen's Church letting us know the time.

11. Winter Lunch Breaks
 All out on the playing fields all the year round including when it had been snowing.
 We had some great snowball fights!

12. Exercise and scrap books.
 Queuing up at stationery cupboards at set times to exchange full books on a one for one basis.

The stationery supply room was, as its name implies, used for stationery - mainly exercise books (I cannot remember whether there were other types of stationery). In my first few years this came under the jurisdiction of the senior physics master, Mr Storer. Stationery was available only at specific times, and when our exercise books were full we used to go along and Mr Storer would check them to see that no space was wasted and then mark the cover and either hand them back or discard them, depending on which was required, and issue a new one. Mr Storer used this room as his private office. There was just room for a small desk and

chair, and he would sit there in his free periods and after school doing his marking. I cannot remember who took over this duty when he retired in 1949.

Terry O'Marr

13. Staff.

Percy Crossland, Senior Master, adored and respected by the whole school. Mr (Daddy) Austin. Like a father figure, hence his nickname.

14. Pigeon-holes.

We had to place homework there which had been set the previous day. The Senior school had 4 subjects a night.

15. Winter months.

Walking 5 miles to school and home again when the bus did not turn up. Many times in the snowy winter of 1947.

16. School choir.

Carol singing around Hemsworth always finishing up in Station Road at one of the Member of Staff's houses and being invited in to be given hot drinks, mince pies and a warm before we went home.

17. Mock General elections held in School.

Great fun but quite a lot of hard canvassing went on and a little bullying.

18. Refreshments

When I was a senior girl, making lemonade in the Dom. Sc. room on Fridays ready for Home Cricket matches, and returning on Saturdays to serve it and watch the match on the beautiful playing fields.

Irene Wright

2. Miss Smith

I have still not explored all this site yet. One question. Can anyone let me know what happened to Miss Smith after 1968 when I left? She was my inspiration, and I have many happy memories of her lessons, albeit with a healthy amount of fear!

Ron Dyson

I remember fondly Miss Smith, as one of my French teachers. Although as stated she was in appearance a frail lady, she was a true lady in the sense of the word. I once remember a small incident, when, as she was coming up behind me, I held the door open for her. She smiled and said thank you as she walked through the doorway. She then asked my name, to which I told her, using my surname first, as all boys at the school did. I thought nothing of this until my parents went to a teachers meeting on an evening, to discuss our progress. On asking my mother whose offspring they were to discuss, when my mother mentioned my name, she smiled and said "Oh Hall, what a Polite boy." It certainly surprised my mother, and me also!!! I failed my French O level, (as I could not remember what the word "Demain" meant, in the paragraph we had to translate. To this day I now remember it means - Tomorrow!! Of all the teachers I had, I felt that I had let Miss Smith down, so, on leaving school, I went out and bought French books and tapes, and taught myself to speak French. It must be some testimony to her, that French people now say that I speak French like a frenchman!! (Not bad for a Yorkshire Lad!) I will always remember Miss Smith with a fondness and affection. She was, as previously stated, a true lady.

Mark Hall, HGS 1964-71

Hi Dave,

Miss Smith had a scheme when reports were due. She read every report, certainly for all the girls. For every error missed by the form teacher she charged a halfpenny. If the report was totally correct she paid sixpence. I don't believe she was out of pocket.

Terry McCroakam

Dear Sheila,

I wanted to write a few words about Miss. Smith the Deputy Head, without whose aid and wise experience the school could not have run so smoothly. Initially I was a little intimidated by this quite formidable lady. She ruled with a mixture of gentleness, kindness, and exceptional caring attitude. It may not have seemed so for the girls for she had an eagle eye, spotting the exceptions to the school uniform code. If the skirt length was above the knee she had the offenders into her room to provide a firm rebuke and reminder to their parents. My abiding memory of Miss. Smith was her patrolling in the corridors of the school, never in the same place at early morning school, breaks and dinner hours. Whenever I passed her I would momentarily think of my dishevelled tie, my clothes covered in chalk dust and my unpolished shoes in case she might mention them to me privately. Unconsciously I smartened up after about 3 months; I think mainly to set an example, as most of the male staff did. The ladies were always neat and immaculately dressed. It is always interesting to know that Miss. Smith's remonstrations were inevitably successful and most girls returned to conform at least for a few weeks because I do not think they wanted to land up in her room again for a further ticking off. In my thoughts Miss. Smith had a reputation that was worse than that of my drill sergeant whilst I was on national service in Worcester. But she was more understanding than the drill sergeant was, and very forgiving. She always backed RWH in any new projects that he wished to put forward because he was a man of great insight and imagination.

Ken Sale, HGS Staff 1955-61

3. Three sides of the Quad.



You ask about the location of the three science laboratories in my time (up to 1953) so I thought I would do this by describing the various rooms etc. around three sides of the enclosed quadrangle.

The corridor outside the assembly hall / gym. runs roughly south (S) to north (N) so I will use these coordinates in the description. Starting at the 'S' end of this corridor immediately to the west (W) are the double doors from the girls' cloak / wash rooms and to the east (E) is the access to the old part of the building. Moving 'N' along the corridor on the 'E' side there is the end wall of the old building and then a low wall with glass windows above it which look out into the quadrangle. This wall runs the length of the corridor; at the 'S' & 'N' ends of this wall were two sets of double doors giving access to the quadrangle. On the 'W' side there is the assembly hall with three double door entrances to it, with one at the 'S' end, one in the middle and the last at the 'N' end. The latter gave access to the stage. At the 'N' end this corridor joins a second one which runs 'W' - 'E'; this second corridor is at a slightly higher elevation than the first so there are a couple of steps up to it. Having mounted these two steps this second corridor

extends both to the 'W' & to the 'E'; the section to the 'W' is short and is behind the 'N' end wall of the hall with a double doors at the 'W' end exiting to the pathway which runs outside along the 'W' side of the hall. This section was closed off and used as a storage for gym & sports equipment such as the cricket equipment.

Three science rooms occupy the building which is on the 'N' side of the above mentioned 'W' - 'E' corridor. This corridor is similarly constructed to the above mentioned 'S' - 'N' corridor, and looks out on the second side of the quadrangle. Starting at the 'W' end of this corridor is the Domestic Science room with its access door at the 'E' end. Next to the DS room is a small room which was used as a stationary supply room. Behind and to the 'N' of this supply room is a similar small room which was used as a dark room and which was accessed only from inside the Physics Laboratory. Behind and to the 'N' of the dark room there was space for a further small room which I assume would have been used as storage for the Domestic Science with access into it from the DS room. Back to the corridor, to the 'E' of the stationary supply room was the Physics Lab with its entrance door at the 'E' end. Next and to the 'E' of the Physics Lab was a door which accessed two interconnected storage rooms running 'S' - 'N'. These locked rooms were used as storage of chemicals for the Chemistry Lab and each also had a door from within the Chem. Lab. either side of the raised platform teacher's desk. The Chem. Lab with its entrance door at the 'W' end occupied the rest of this building to the 'E' of these storage rooms. Just past the entrance to the Chem Lab and on the 'S' side of this corridor was an entrance to the third corridor running 'N' - 'S'. The 'W' - 'E' corridor continued past this entrance with the end wall of a 'N' - 'S' building on the 'S' side & the Chem Lab on the 'N' side until it reached double doors which exited out into the playground. The above 'N' - 'S' corridor ran at the west of the 'N' - 'S' building and was at a lower elevation than the 'W' - 'E' corridor so there were two steps down to it. Immediately at the bottom of these steps & to the 'E' was a locked door in the 'N' - 'S' building which gave access to a small room used for storage of text books. The Biology Lab. was to the 'S' of this storage room & had its entrance door at its 'S' end. On the opposite side of the corridor directly opposite the Biol. Lab. entrance was another door which gave access to a small room known as the Biol. Lab. annex. There was just space in this annex to fit a table with about half a dozen chairs around it. To the 'S' of the Biol. Lab. there were two classrooms and on the 'W' side of the corridor there was a recess from which ran the stairs to the upper floor.

Terry O'Marr

We are most appreciative of your latest contributions to the HGS website. We all carry these memories around with us, but it takes a description like yours to activate all the associations we have with those times. For instance, I remember the three corridors you describe as being floored with marble. Also, in between the sets of double doors to the Hall were cupboards which in my day (1955-62) were designated for the use of Assistant Prefects - one shelf each on which we stored our books, and to which we returned the books at lunchtimes and the end of the day, unless required for homework. Wasn't there a bit of wall space along there upon which were hung the panoramic photos of the years which had gone before? The only people I ever saw walking about in the middle of the quad were the pupils who were taking readings from the small weather station there. The only time I ever saw the doors open to the Quad was one hot summer, when they were set ajar to improve the cooling air flow of the corridor.

Sheila Kelsall

The Top Corridor

If one walked along the corridor alongside the Hall, heading away from the girls' cloakrooms with the 'quad' on the right, the Domestic Science Room was the first classroom on the left as one turned the corner to the right. There always seemed to be a smell of baking coming from there, as I think that apart from the cookery lessons, cakes and buns were made for the Staff meetings sometimes. Quite a few cookers, sinks and large tables with integral equipment cupboards meant that on 'Cookery' days one just had to remember to bring the required ingredients from home. In our 1st and 2nd years the girls made cookery aprons in Needlework, and then wore them for Cookery. We made Raspberry buns and Rock cakes, and one day we had a visit from a demonstrator who showed us how to operate the newest thing - an electric food blender. We were all amazed that she put the whole egg into the mix, without removing its shell, but were reassured that it was the correct way to do it (- not!) The next classroom along was a Science room in 1955-57. Benches and bunsens, and Mr Farrar showing us how to make an experiment to prove that tap water was impure. We labelled 'retort', 'tripod' and 'evaporating dish'. Much later the room was converted to a classroom/lunchtime Common Room - was it for the Lower Sixth? The third and last room along that corridor was the Music Room, containing a Steinway and a storeroom in which sheet music, instruments and exercise books were kept. Most of the choir practices were held here, the Main Choir, the Madrigal choir, the Male Voice choir, the Junior choir and the Orchestra rehearsals all rang out, encouraged by Mr Boyd and later Miss Evans.

I have a vague memory of these three rooms each having French Windows on the opposite side of the room from their corridor entrance doors. These windows overlooked the Dell, which incidentally might have provided the stone for the original house. In

our day it resembled a landscape gardener's idea of a Garden Feature very popular around the early 1900's. It was carefully contrived to appear naturalistic. Snowdrops, ferns and shade-loving shrubs were planted against a backdrop of dark stones, and contrasted against the green of the sloping lawn leading down to it. I don't think I ever saw anyone down in the Dell during the whole of my seven years at HGS, but the fact that we were not given open access to this area meant that it survived for the future, and there was no resentment at our exclusion. Children's trampling feet had acres of other space to explore.

Sheila

4. More Reflections



It is amazing how memories and names come flooding back. Here are a few from 1955-62:

- a. The fear standing outside the Head's Study waiting to walk with him along the corridor to the Hall when it was your turn to read the lesson in assembly.
- b. We had the classroom opposite the Head's study as our form room (2A) with the wooden desks, which we personalized with photos inside the lids.
- c. I will always remember our final assembly in the Hall, singing the School Song with tears rolling down my face, knowing that this was the end of seven very special years.
- d. Do you remember those dreaded lisle stockings (we must have been proto-types for Norah Batty) and the hats which we put a tuck in and then balanced precariously on the back of the head.
- e. Do you remember the iced Sally Lunn's which we got from Riggotts bakers in the village when we were allowed the privilege of going into the village at lunch-time when we made it into the Sixth Form?
- f. Ackworth Quaker School used to be the favourite venue for hockey matches as they had hot showers followed by afternoon tea!
- g. The highlight for the athletics had to be the Yorkshire Schools' Championships at Redcar.

Memories are never ending. Obviously I haven't yet seen all the site-sections. The sight of seeing myself in pigtails certainly made me wonder "What Next?!" I cannot wait to discover more. Thank you for all your work, it's brilliant. I will keep in touch.

Pat Cockburn

5. Air Raid Shelters

The site invites comments about the Air Raid Shelters situated at the School.

I started HGS in 1945 and consequently the war was over so I have no experience of the air-raid shelters. Although I do remember the grass mound over them and remember lounging on top of it during cricket matches etc. The mound was to the west of the cricket pitch / running track and at the south end of the North Walk.

Terry O'Marr.

Reference the air raid shelters adjacent to the sports field. Unlike my young brother who was a rather keen sports addict, I did not possess that attribute. Occasionally, when one considered it safe, a few of us would walk down the few steps and open the door. We must have left the door open because I cannot recall any lights, but then, Yes there were hanging paraffin lamps with a little knob on the side to raise the broad wick. We managed quite a few lessons' homework during rigger etc. The seats were strips of round edged wood, as were the floors, probably in retrospect to keep one above the cold wet concrete. Unless my memory fails me there were three "runs" of shelters. I'm positive that they were built in sections with doors between the sections. My memory tells me that two ran parallel to the rigger field, and one ran at right angles. I do not recall whether they were all "intercoupled" but I don't think so. They were certainly not locked - today they would probably have been locked barred and electrified.

Malc. Thomas

Air Raid Shelters were to be found between the old Cricket Pavillion and the top corner of the 1st XV rigger pitch. In 1942, when I started at HGS, we were still obliged to carry our gas masks and we had Air Raid Drill. When the alarm bell was sounded, we all trooped out to the shelters to sit on hard wooden benches in cold damp surroundings lit only by lamps. After a suitable interval we all trooped back to class. Whether or not the shelters would have provided any protection against bombs is problematical in hindsight but it was exciting at the time.

Eric Jones

I was supposed to start HGS in Sept 1939, but the outbreak of the Second World War intervened. The new pupils only attended once a week until January 1940, collecting homework, whilst the air raid shelters were being constructed.

Doug Wilson

6. Memories of H.G.S. from 1936 to 1943



Dear David and Sheila,

Thank you both for your emails and for all the hard work that you have put into the site - it's a credit to you and I'm sure will bring a lot of pleasure to former pupils. I will add some recollections - in note form - and you are welcome to use them as you wish.

Best wishes to you both,

Jean Burton

Jean Jones (nee Burton), in Guest House, from 1936 to 1943, lived in Upton for the first few years and then moved to, and travelled from Ackworth.

Mr. Hamilton the Art Master

Mr. Hamilton the Art Master was not the one who became Head. Sheila asked why I remembered him. The Art room had desks where the working surface could be raised to an angle suitable for drawing, with a ledge at the bottom which would support the paper and a flat bit at the top which would hold the paints and water container. At our very first lesson, Mr. Hamilton gave a spine chilling description of what would happen if we sat with chairs tilted forward on two legs and the other two legs in the air. Someone would accidentally knock the chair from behind, throwing us forward so that we would hit our foreheads on the top ledge, this would spill the paint and water over us, as well as being painful. At the same time, the chair would tend to slide backwards so that we would then hit our chins on the ledge at the bottom. This would be terribly painful and might even break our teeth. As the chair slid backwards, the top would then hit us on the back of our heads. This gruesome picture was undoubtedly effective and I don't remember anybody daring to tilt their chairs!

Major Jenkinson

I don't remember a lot about Mr. Jenkinson, the Head - mainly his 'presence' at Assembly. When the school had assembled, a bell would be rung, there was dead silence and the Head Boy would escort him down the corridor and onto the platform. Mr. J. would mount the steps with great dignity, raise his mortarboard and place it carefully on a table, and then speak to the school. I imagine he would be responsible for the words of the school song and the prefects' pledge - attempts to inculcate high standards and ideals.

Prefects' Pledge

Photograph of the school assembly hall/gym. The platform was at the end from which the photo was taken and the staff would sit along the back wall. I became a prefect in due time and well remember how we had to face the school in turn and repeat the 'pledge'. 'I promise, God helping me, to be a faithful servant of the school, without fear and without reproach. I pledge myself to put the school first in everything, actively to oppose what is wrong, to protect the weak and to be humble in my office. I will do my utmost to leave the school better than I found it.' (That was from memory after 61 years - so it certainly made an impression!)

Duty

That pledge caused me to agonise over whether it was my duty to report a boy who was smoking on the bus going home. I did so, and I think he was caned, but I'm still not sure whether I was right.

P.E. Uniform

A memory of the gym. The girls had to wear incredibly voluminous knickers/shorts for P.E. - yards of material in them and they draped down in folds. It was a catastrophe if the elastic at the waist gave way! After Miss Griffiths, the deputy Head retired, there was a rapid change to basic black shorts.

Green Gate

I was pleased to see that several contributors had mentioned the 'Green Gate'. There was something special about that gate - it was the doorway into another world. On occasional visits to Yorkshire in later years, I would point it out to my family with great satisfaction, and was very sad the last time I saw it to see how scruffy and neglected it looked.

Air Raid Shelters

My memories are not very clear and are mixed up with the pictures of countless others I have seen. It was always a pleasure if there was a 'practice' as it meant a trip out into the grounds. For years we had to carry our gas mask cases around wherever we went.

Country Dancing Festival

This used to be organised by Mr. John Swinbank who was the Headmaster of a primary school in the South Elmsall/South Kirkby area. I think his son was on the staff in later years. It began with the Helston Furry and the long procession of dancers would line up in the shrubbery and then gradually proceed round the cricket pitch.

False Accusation

Someone mentioned a story about Mr. Collette and a classroom half way up the stairs on the left hand side. I think that was number 10. I can see the desk now where I sat in an English lesson (1st or 2nd. Year) and while thinking about an exercise, jiggled my pencil in a small hole in the old wooden desk - and the point broke. The teacher must have been exasperated with pupils asking to sharpen their pencils, so she looked at mine and accused me of breaking it deliberately. No matter what I said, she wouldn't believe me and kept me back when the others went out for break. She kept on and on at me - while my thoughts were increasingly anxious about the bottle of milk waiting for me in the dining room. In the end (how could I have been so incredibly foolish!!) - I decided that if I said I had broken it deliberately, she would let me go, and then I could get the milk. What a mistake - the recriminations went on endlessly and when I finally reached the dining room, the milk was finished. Perhaps that seems a trifling story, but it has remained with me and there are some lessons to be learned there.

Rooms

External photo of the buildings 1939. The room top left was for Geography - the teacher used to keep a supply of National Geographic magazines for us to browse through. The buildings on the R.H. side were for craft, I think. The windows on the 1st floor, slightly left, on the front of the building were the library. Whether you use these notes or not, it has been an enjoyable exercise for me! I will now try to send them as an attachment - something I haven't done before, so fingers crossed!

Very best wishes,

Jean

7. A Special Place

"I started Hemsworth Grammar in 1927 and left in 1933. I was in the School Choir and a Prefect, and thoroughly enjoyed my days there. I'll never forget the day I opened that green door in the stone wall and looked into what looked like heaven after Grimethorpe Primary!"

Eileen Morley (1927-33)

Eileen Morley's message is yet another manifestation of the fond memories engendered by that Green Gate. There are so few "magic" places in children's educational establishments of today that we should consider ourselves blessed to have experienced this green relic of a former era. It was not huge, not imposing, not embellished, yet it stays in the hearts and minds of all generations. In years to come, I wonder how many pupils of today will recall with affection their main entrance to Secondary School? As an example, my own three children's High School double metal gates are painted prison-grey and have spikes on the top. A tarmac roadway leads a visitor from the gates up to the rear of the kitchens - a most uninspiring first impression!

Sheila

8. The game of "Hockey"



Hi Dave,

You may like to know that I decided to see if there was a site for HGS on the net after reading the Harry Potter books. So many things were similar: The House Systems, Prefects, Headmaster and Assemblies and Stars and Stripes. If anyone has not read the books I recommend them. However, J.K. Rowling hardly needs my help to sell her books. In the books you will find that the game they play at Hogwarts is Quidditch. I am convinced that this mad game is based on a hockey match played at Hemsworth on the 9th of January 1957 at 1. 35 PM. The boys in our year were due to play rugby but the ground was frozen solid. Mr Tate in a moment of complete madness told us that it was unsafe to play Rugby but we could play Hockey instead. "Hockey, Sir?" the cry went up with a note of disgust and a look of disbelief. Then one or two started to nudge their mates, sly grins spread across faces and heads started to nod enthusiastically. The game was on!

As we strode out from the changing rooms with our sticks, some were practising cricket strokes, others golf swings and, most worrying of all, baseball swings. Mr Tate briefly explained the rules and we went to bully off. Now this is where alarm bells should have started to ring in Mr Tate's head. We tried to bully off eight times and though many other things were hit the ball never was. Rather than go through all the details I will only pick out the highlights. Albert Parkin struck a beautiful 60yd lob shot that we all thought was a great goal, but it was disallowed for some reason. Our goalkeeper was a complete wimp and ran away every time they got in shooting range. Their goalkeeper was an absolute rock and never flinched. It was only when we came to change ends at half time that we realised they had tied his boot laces to the posts. When Spike Wilson made a slightly high challenge on Twiggy as he raced down the wing, Mr Tate shouted, "Wilson we're supposed to be playing hockey, not hook a duck". My diary shows that the score was 28 to 25 to the whites but, due to a blood stain, I cannot make out whether that was goals or fouls. As an aside to this story, I was crossing the playground after the game dragging my left leg and dabbing the blood off my lip when I met Ellen Toulson. Now Ellen absolutely loved the game and played for any team, any time, any where. As we crossed, much to her surprise, I shook her hand said nothing and walked on. So, Tully, if you are out there and have been wondering why for 44 years, it was out of complete admiration!

Frank Poskett

9. Subsidiary?



In the Speech Day programmes of the Forties, which were kindly lent to us by Joyce Dixon, I was interested to read about the School Certificates, and Higher School Certs. They were the precursors of G.C.E's, Ordinary and Advanced, which in turn became, C.S.Es, G.C.S.Es and then a myriad of any combination of letters of the Alphabet one could care to choose! With reference to the School Cert., the grading of D - Distinction, C - Credit and P - Pass is pretty straightforward, but in the Higher School Cert. the corresponding grades are D - Distinction, G - Good, P - Pass and S - Subsidiary. Would someone please explain what Subsidiary Grade meant?

Sheila Kelsall

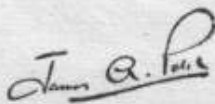
Universities of Manchester Liverpool
Leeds Sheffield and Birmingham

JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD

This Letter is to state

THAT

WAS ADMITTED TO THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION IN JULY 1948 AND REACHED THE SUBSIDIARY
STANDARD IN THE FOLLOWING TWO SUBJECT(S): ENGLISH
LITERATURE AND GEOGRAPHY.



Secretary to the Board.

Dear Sheila,

Reference your query regarding Subsidiary grades, this may help. The run to Higher School Certificate was 2 years in the 6th Form at the end of which one sat the appropriate exam. However, at the end of the first year one could take an exam at what was called Subsidiary level in order to see how one was doing. This exam was not compulsory but in practice we all did it as a matter of course.

Regards,

Eric Jones

10. French Speaking Competition



Sheila Kelsall writes:

I asked Dee Tyrrell about a dim memory I had of an occasion when we were in 3A (1957-58), room 10 (I think near the Sick Room?) and Mrs Whittaker chose Dee to represent the school in a French-speaking competition or festival held elsewhere than School. Here's what she wrote....

"The French thing you mentioned - the only thing I can think of happened, I think, in year two or three. Three of us went to Leeds University to enter a French speaking competition. We had to introduce ourselves, read a pre-rehearsed piece (mine was from Le petit Prince), recite a poem, all in French. I remember a senior boy whose face I recall but not his name. Bob? -- , another girl and me. I seem to think we acquitted ourselves quite well?? (A rosy haze passes over this time.)"

Dee