

1. The last singing of the School Song



I was certainly more of a product of the Mr. Hamilton era but I did see the change over to HHS albeit very briefly. I went back to visit old friends the following summer (1969) and although they all looked like HGS students the change had definitely begun so the old traditions gradually eroded from then onwards. As for the incident with the school song, basically, from what I remember it went like this:-

As the summer of 1968 approached there was massive building work and alterations going on in and around the old school buildings to get the place ready for a Comprehensive start in September. For this reason I believe we couldn't have the end of term assembly in the old Hall as usual so it was to be held in the Gymnasium instead. Now I'm sure you must have sung the same old hymns and the School Song for 5, 6 possibly 7 years just like we did. Also, despite maybe thinking that by the time of your senior years it was a little bit uncool to do that, secretly, deep down you enjoyed it. Well I certainly wanted to leave after singing it one last time. I don't know how rebellious you and your friends were but we used to go down town at lunch times (despite only being an Assistant Prefect - shock, horror) and on the last day we were going to have a farewell drink. Even so it was a bit of a shock to bump into Mr B. who discreetly left when he saw us enter the pub. As he passed us, he quietly pointed out that the new Headmaster was not going to have the School Song sung in the final assembly.

When the time for the assembly arrived the new Headmaster and Staff were at the far end of the Gymnasium with rows of pupils in front starting with the sprogs with us right at the back blocking the only entrance that was open. So when the new Headmaster asked the Prefects to quietly dismiss the rows we all burst into the School Song which was soon taken up by the 5th, 4th and 3rd forms who had been steeped in the tradition. There were quite a few Staff nodding their heads, smiling, and joining in. As it was, after 7 years at the School the end had been rather an anti-climax and if it hadn't been for this piece of defiance it would have been even more so.

Fred Johnson

2. Memories from the Thirties



My memories of A.G.J. are few, although I can picture him sweeping on to the platform at morning assemblies. He was a great traditionalist, and looked the part of the Head, much more so than R.W.H. when he first arrived. I had very little contact with him but his cane had contact with me on one occasion when I had been particularly rebellious one term! Among other teaching staff were Leslie Collette, Mr. Austin, Mr. Storer, Mr. Manning, Mr. Hamilton (Art), Edith Bromley, Miss. Shortridge, Mrs. Griffiths, Miss Townsend (Music), Miss. Kenward (Biology). Firman was Head boy at one point but I don't recollect other names at present. A former Head girl in the early thirties was Lorna Jagger who came from Shafton. Price House always seemed to be the strongest in my time (I was in Holgate). Stuart Walker may remember more of the air raid shelters than I for he stayed on after I left in 1940.

I remember the Dining Hall well although I sometimes took a packed lunch to save my parents the three shillings a week (eight old pence a day if paid individually) they used to cost! When in the 5th form we played "Fives" at lunch times quite often. Mr. Austin sold the dinner tickets on Mondays in room 9, which was 5A's form room at that time. Oh, Mr. Hyde was another master. He was a splendid amateur magician and came to Shafton chapel occasionally to entertain us.

For some years I kept a few souvenirs, such as a Magazine and a Speech Day programme, when Lord Halifax, then Foreign Secretary, was the speaker at the Hippodrome, but I think I must have disposed of them. If I come across anything of interest I will let you know.

Is there still an Old Hilmians' Association in existence? I imagine things altered when the school changed its status.

Wesley Kenworthy (1935-40)

3. Dux



If you remember, when the Upper Sixth took their A levels, the Assistant Prefects took over as Full Prefects for the back end of the summer term. I and a couple of other Lower Sixth pupils had been Full Prefects for all our Lower Sixth year. I was simply informed by Russ Hamilton that the staff thought that I would do a decent job as temporary Head Boy so I did exactly that for about a month. Round about the second week of the following Autumn term, I was in a Physics lesson when someone came to the door and informed the teacher that I was wanted by the Headmaster. When I arrived outside his door, Margaret Biggs was already there so I had an inkling what was about to happen as she was an obvious candidate for Head Girl. Sure enough we were both formally offered our respective posts, which of course we accepted. We took an oath in full assembly as did the Assistant/Full Prefects although I cannot recall if ours was a slightly different version. We were then handed our silver badges and I wore mine on my blazer lapel along with the Prefect's Badge from the Lower Sixth Year.



The best thing was undoubtedly the prestige that went with the job. On several occasions, when edicts were pronounced that did not go down well with the Prefects, I acted as their representative and put a case to Russ on their behalf. I found Mr. Hamilton to be a very fair man and he was quite prepared to listen to our point of view. The main thing I absolutely hated was having to speak in front of large audiences such as at Speech Day - remember the Hippodrome?

Geoff Cartledge

Dear Geoff,

Priceless memories! Isn't it amazing when you get going on remembering things from those times! Thanks so much for giving us your views. Yes, I also recall the Hippodrome, and the walk across the fields in a crocodile to get there. I was a fifth-former when you had to give the address to the School there, and I sang in the choir conducted by Mr. Boyd. I remember being impressed by all the different colours and bits of fur in the "posh" gowns the Staff used to wear, as they processed down the centre aisle and up onto the stage.

Sheila

4. Practical Esperanto?



When I started at H.G.S. we took Esperanto for the first two years. (Deviation here - we took French too but for the first year we learned it phonetically.) I still have my Esperanto dictionary and three simple text books which were sent to me by a male Dutch teacher who was a pen-pal. I didn't know that he was either male or adult when I was given his name and address. There was no problem at all in those days, but it couldn't happen today, could it?

I remember well the words to Lilli Marlene and will write them out at the end of this letter. Apart from that the only thing that comes readily to mind is 'Mi dankas vin' but no doubt more will surface. I went to Barbezieux in 1947 with a group from school. We stayed at what we were told was a boy's boarding school. Of course, in August they were not in residence. Joining us in this Esperanto Colonio was a small group of 4 boys from London, a group of French boys and a separate group of French girls, all with their attendant teachers. We were all instructed to speak in Esperanto when in their company. Our English group were by far the best 'Esperantists'. We ate together and drank coffee from bowls. We went for a communal walk every afternoon to the woods, and I think we even attempted to collect snails on one occasion. We had a rest in the dormitory each afternoon. We needed it as Mr. Leonard woke us all at an unearthly hour every morning by bouncing a big ball into the dorm. at which point we had to go down to have gymnastics 'en la Korto'. We kept a diary, each of us writing the events of the day in turn. I still have it.

There were lots of photos too. One in particular I remember of Anouk Aimee. I'm not sure, but I think she is still around. She was a young French 'film star' who, having heard that a group of English children and teachers were in residence at the 'college', came to look for us because she wanted to practise her English. She has been in many films since that time. She also joined us in Paris as we made our way home. We were accompanied by Mr. Hamilton, Miss. Smith, Miss. Davies and Mr. Leonard. As we got to know all the other boys and girls we had great fun. I remember that we played a sort of ring game 'en la korto' that resembled our 'Lucy Locket'. It was called 'Chantelle'. It sounds very tame now but we did enjoy it all so much. It was the first School journey following the war. The concert that we rehearsed for daily was one of the highlights of the trip. We also had lessons of a sort each morning though I remember very little of them so they can't have amounted to much. We went to the seaside one day by coach and one of our girls hurt herself on the rocks. I believe it was at St. Palais. We also went to the cinema in Barbezieux and to a visiting fair and to the Cognac distilleries. Of course we did a lot of shopping in the town too.

I don't remember any of us causing any trouble at all though I believe some of the French boys shocked us by smoking from time to time and obviously when away from any adult. After we arrived home those of us who had taken cameras (Remember, this was just after the war and cameras were not so commonplace then. I was lucky that my mother had a little Kodak Brownie which I borrowed.) were asked to show our photographs to Mr. Leonard who acquired copies and produced a Diary and Photos for each person who had been in the group. That is how I got mine and I'm sure there must be others around somewhere.

Mr. Hamilton's son Graham and his daughter Barbara also came along on the trip. Graham went to H.G.S. His mate when we were in France was Bob Lumb. Barbara went to a school in Wakefield. She was about a year younger than me. I kept in touch with her for a short time after the trip. She asked me to a Christmas party at her home in the school grounds. Mr. Hamilton was there, of course, and Mrs. Hamilton. I knew her as she had at one time taken us for P.E. I think, as we awaited a permanent member of staff. Mr. Leonard was also there with his wife. Unfortunately I lost touch with Barbara after that but a couple of years later when I was doing a bit of uncertificated supply work I was sent to a school at Grimethorpe and found Mrs. Hamilton teaching there. I think I had better finish this now so for the time being and to the strains of Lilli Marlene I'll sign myself off.

Sub la lampo lumas, ce la kazerna pord,
Lumas gi fidele, en ciutage ord,
Sub, trotuara ston eben, rakontas min, mi dum promen,
Kun vi, Lili Marlena, Kun vi, Lili Marlen.

Remember:'ce' has the 'ch' sound; 'ston' has the 'sh' sound.

Very sincerely,
Doris Richardson

5. Save the Children Fund



Sheila writes:

I have looked for a specific area for details about SCF, but apart from the odd mention (in House Prayers, Election Days etc.) there's not much other correspondence about this. Such items, buried deep in our own non-political records, give an insight into World history. I presume that the refugees who were being supported by the pennies of the children of HGS were those created by the Hungarian Uprising of the mid-1950's.

"Save the Children Fund" - School Magazine 1956

The year's contribution to the Save the Children Fund is one of which we may well be proud. There has been a marked increase in the collection from all Houses. The response towards the yearly collection of clothing has been most encouraging and we hope this will continue in the future.

This is an Organisation doing work of tremendous importance - schools, hospitals and other institutions have been set up in many parts of the World including Malaya and the Middle East; and help given to the necessitous children of our own country. The second sum of £29 (collected from August to March) was, therefore, gratefully received by the Secretary of the Fund who expressed his gratitude in a letter which we have all heard. We appreciate the work of Miss. Harris and thank her for her work in connection with the Fund during the year.

Joan Martin, L6A (Holgate)

"Save the Children Fund" - School Magazine 1957

This year the "Save the Children Fund" collection amounted to £46/16/3d. This amount was gratefully received by the Secretary of the Fund as the need for this money is growing every year. Miss Harris organised a collection of clothes for the Hungarian refugees. The response to this demand was overwhelming and very encouraging. We feel sure that all future demands will be

responded to in the same way. This organisation is doing wonderful work throughout the world by maintaining schools, hospitals and other medical institutions. We would like to thank Miss Harris for the time she has given to this work and we hope that she has been rewarded by the result.

Barbara Johnson, 5A (Guest)

"Save the Children Fund" - School Magazine 1966

So far this year £130 of the original target of £150 has been collected in aid of the Save the Children Fund. In addition to the House Collections various extra-mural activities, such as the Sixth Form "Carolling" at Christmas, and a Junior Concert have raised additional money for this fund. More of these money-raising activities are looked forward to, for besides raising money for a worthy cause, they are a source of great enjoyment to the participants.

At the present time over 100,000 homeless, needy, and often starving children of 27 countries are being saved each day in the struggle against poverty. Working in this field are 1100 doctors, nurses, and various welfare workers, and the cost of running such welfare services is colossal, over £4,000 a day. It can therefore be seen just how important our money is to these children, and it is hoped that each member of the school will continue each Tuesday morning to give some contribution no matter how small to help this excellent work.

We are most grateful to Mr. Hudson for his valuable organisation of the Save the Children Fund in this school.

Therese Gardner, L6A (Talbot)

"Save the Children Fund" - School Magazine 1967

On December 20th, 1966 the Director-General of the Save-the-Children Fund wrote a letter to the Headmaster congratulating the school. The gift which he had just received brought the total of our contributions to £1,000. At the end of the Spring Term the total collection stood at £104 14s. 4d., and there is every prospect that by the end of the Summer Term the total for 1966-67 will exceed last year's record of £143.

We are grateful to the children of the school for their generosity and support.

R.G.H.

"Save the Children Fund" - School Magazine 1968

In the School Year 1966-67 a total of £168.4s.9d. was collected for the Save the Children Fund. In addition Christmas Cards to the value of £20 were sold. Here is an extract from a letter written to the Headmaster by the Director-General:

"It is my very pleasant duty to acknowledge receipt of another splendid gift from Hemsworth Grammar School. I would like you to pass on my thanks to everyone who has helped to make this gift possible. We would like, if we may, to use our gift for our work in Algeria. The Fund operates in a small oasis town in the Northern Sahara called Messaad and provides the only medical care for a largely nomad population of nearly 50,000 people. Malnutrition, trachoma and TB are the main problems which our two clinics deal with. In addition we operate a mobile clinic to 17 villages, a child welfare clinic and also feed some 400 children daily...."

This year, 1967-68, our contributions are being devoted to the work of the Fund's Mother and Child Health Centres in the West Indies and particularly in the Windward Islands.

R. G. Hodson

6. Flowers at the plays



Panoramic 1936-37 Photo 4

I don't remember the name of the boy on the second row at number 4 but I do remember that much later he had a starring part in the School Play when it had become the custom to present flowers to various leaders on the final night. This practice had grown and lots of presents would be sent up to some people. It got really out of hand when his family sent up a set of dictionaries for him, and I think the practice was curtailed after that!

Jean Burton (1936-43)

7. Mr. Hamilton retires.



Mr. R. W. Hamilton
M.A., M.Litt., D.B.E.A., M.R.S.T.

Term after term we have had to say goodbye to very many members of staff, but only twice since the School was opened in 1921 have we said goodbye to the Head of the School. Mr. R. W. Hamilton was Headmaster of Hemsworth Grammar School from 1937 to 1967, and under his wise guidance and leadership the School grew in size and in reputation to its present strength. Great progress was made on the academic side of school life; sporting and cultural activities were increased, and the teamwork of Headmaster, Staff and pupils did indeed succeed in "putting Hemsworth on the map".

Not only was Mr. Hamilton an excellent organiser, but an able participant in all School activities. A good all-round games player, he excelled in Hockey and in Cricket, and captained Staff teams in countless matches. His example was an inspiration to all our teams. At the annual Folk Dancing Festival, he and Mrs. Hamilton always led the procession as pupils from all schools in the area took up their positions for the opening dance.

Mr. Hamilton's talents were not, however, confined to the field of sport. Music he always encouraged; Drama was constantly to the fore, as was shown by the annual School and Staff plays; the establishment of Esperanto both as a Club subject and also as part of the curriculum was another of his many achievements. Nor was Social Welfare overlooked. With the Headmaster's encouragement, regular help was given to the Save The Children Fund, to the Lord Roberts Memorial Fund, and to other deserving causes, local, national, and international.

Mr. Hamilton has left his mark on the School. During his long term of office, he "upheld its best traditions", and won the respect and affection of Staff and pupils. His retirement at Christmas was truly the end of an era. We are proud to have this opportunity of paying our tribute to Mr. Hamilton, and of thanking him for all he has done for the School. To him and to Mrs. Hamilton we wish good health and happiness in the retirement they have so well earned.

The article comes from *Insight 1968*.

I was fortunate to be captain of the Hilmians cricket team in Mr. Hamilton's last two summers at HGS. He played in almost every game Saturday and Sunday, home or away, during that time as well as for the Staff team on Friday evenings. Everyone called him Head. He bowled his 8 to 10 overs when required, generally getting a few wickets with his leg spin and could be relied on to get some runs in the middle order when needed. He was reliable in the field, not bad for some one of retiring age.

My last memory 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

8. Mr. Collette retires.



The end of this term sees the end of an era in the history of Hemsworth Grammar School. The School opened in 1921 and five years later in January 1926 our present Senior Master, Mr. L. N. Collette, joined the staff. He has served the school for 39 years and a term. This is a record that is unlikely to be surpassed by anyone in the life of the school.

When Mr. Collette came to the school there were approximately 16 teachers on the staff. Today there are 43. The buildings consisted of what we today call the Main Block, plus the Woodwork Shop and the other rooms in that block, plus the Dining Room. The additions to the school have been the Junior Block, the Science Block, the Gymnasium and the extension to the Dining Room. The playing fields consisted of the present cricket area, the 2nd XI. hockey field and the, 1st XV. field. All the rest of the playing areas have been added since. The present Gardener's Sheds and the Fives Court were on the site where the Science Block now stands. The Cricket Pavilion, too, was placed where the Science Block now stands. Even the Assembly Hall was not then available, for Mr. Collette well remembers Morning Prayers being held in the Library. The number of pupils was much less, about 250 to 300. Our present number is about 790.

Pupils of today and of just a few years ago think of Mr. Collette as the Senior Master and a teacher of English. In the days of the 1920's, however, a young teacher was expected to teach many subjects, and he did. In his time Mr. Collette has taught such subjects as Mathematics, History, Religious Knowledge and, above all, Commercial Subjects such as Shorthand, Typing and Bookkeeping. After English this last subject was probably his favourite. Many hundreds of boys and girls owe their present positions to the skill they acquired in Shorthand and Typing at the hands of Mr. Collette. For many of these pupils the word "hands" will have a significant meaning!

I wonder how many of the present pupils could imagine Mr. Collette clad in white flannels with a ring of bells tied around his knees and coloured ribbons flying from each shoulder, and thus adorned, tripping lightly through the most intricate of dances as he took his place on the greensward with the [Staff Country Dancing Team](#). How many think of him as a stalwart member of the Staff Cricket Eleven. Yet he was and many were the school wickets he took with his googly. Not one of the present members of the School has had the pleasure of seeing him on the stage in a Staff Play. Yet many are the roles he has played and many are the tales he can tell of what went on, both on the set and behind the scenes. One of my clearest memories of him is as a Cocktail Barman. He looked exceedingly smart in his little white jacket and he was no mean hand at shaking a cocktail either!

An activity of his which has brought much joy to the individual pupil and much profit to the School, has been his organisation of the school tuck-shop. As was to be expected from one keenly interested in Commercial Subjects, it was he who volunteered to be responsible for this venture. As a result of his activity in this field the School was able to provide the chairs and curtains for the Library and the clock for the Tower. For many years to come these will be tangible marks of his service to the School.

Whatever the activities of the school Mr. Collette has always been in the forefront of those who willingly gave of their time and labour to make those activities a success. There are hundreds and hundreds of Old Hilmians who will gratefully testify to this. Rugger, Soccer, Cricket, Tennis, Folk Dancing, Acting, Producing, Business Manager - in all these spheres he has been active at one time or another. Nowadays, of course, he limits his sporting activity to golf, but it will be for his interest and participation in activities enumerated above that he will be gratefully and affectionately remembered by his former pupils.

Although at one time School Librarian, a post where as usual he left his mark, his enthusiasm for Commercial Subjects led him quite naturally to the post of Careers Master. This post he has held for more years than he would care to remember and the number of pupils he has helped to secure their first job just cannot be counted.

His outstanding quality was his kindness and consideration for others. But he was not soft! Woe betide the offender! Many a former pupil will tell you that he quaked in his shoes when Mr. Collette's eagle eye was upon him. He stood no nonsense. He had no use for the shirker. But he would go to any lengths to help one who was trying, as long as he was not too trying!

His colleagues, both present and past, wish him everything good in his retirement. Not a few of his ex-colleagues have freely and gladly admitted how much they owe him for his kindly help during their years on the staff of Hemsworth Grammar School. Many who began their teaching career here have later gratefully acknowledged the friendly advice and support he gave them during their early years as teachers. All of us who have been privileged to serve with him, sincerely wish for him and Mrs. Collette many, many years of happy retirement. Right well has he earned them!

R.W.H.

9. Inner Tubes?



Mr Leonard took us (Danes) for Geography but it was only for a short while so we never got to know him like you all did or like we did with other teachers through the years. I do specifically remember his Geography lessons because at the time they seemed most unusual. One of our first homework tasks was to fetch in a piece of old bike inner tube?! This we duly did and next lesson found ourselves pulling it over the legs of a theodolite then proceeded to survey the oval shaped grassed area that the buses drove around in the main playground. At the time it didn't seem like Geography as I knew it but I certainly understood Trigonometry better in later years.

Fred Johnson

10. House Prayer and House Prayers



I've just read a comment from Doris Richardson mentioning that she remembers a Price House Prayer. It begs the question about whether each of the other three Houses had a specific House Prayer. Although I was House Capt. I don't remember one for Holgate. Does anyone remember a House Prayer for their House?

Sheila

.....the House Prayer. They may have all been the same, with just the name of the House different. This is what I remember.

Oh Lord, who see-est all we do from day to day, grant unto all members of Price House that spirit of truth and brotherhood, without which true happiness can never be attained. Endow us all with the House Spirit, and make us active members, fulfilling our duties with lasting enthusiasm. All this we beg, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

There may have been more to it than I remember, and perhaps a word here or there should be something else but that I think is the gist of it.

Doris Richardson

Every week during term-time (Tuesdays rings a bell for Holgate), each House met to have prayers. The House captain, Vice-captain and the House Teacher sat at the front, and led the proceedings which for us were held in the classroom which had its doorway opposite the Boss' study. After there were prayers, and maybe some singing? The occasion was used to give out notice of future House Competitions, or the results of the same. Music and Drama Competitions, Relays, Netball and Hockey all involved the choices of House teams and strategies. The collection of the charity money for the Save the Children Fund was a constant theme. An element of competition existed between the Houses, to the benefit of the funds collected. I don't recall any boys being present, so maybe they had a meeting elsewhere, and sexes were separated for this short interlude. Miss Ward was our House Teacher for the seven years I was at HGS, and each year she made an entry in the back of our Report Books listing our specific House involvements.

Sheila

The boys had meetings at the same time, I think. Holgate met in Mr. Colley's History Room. It was up a few steps from the staffroom corridor - quite near the Library.

Mac