

1. On Reaching 70



We have recently been transferring details and images from 1960-61 onto the HGS website. For me this involved scanning photographs from that year and then eliminating all signs of age from them. White specks, black dots and scratch marks were smoothed over as I travelled along the faces which were magnified as never before. Form groups, Sports, Choirs and Staff all passed across my monitor leaving me immersed in memories. I was happy at School, so this was no chore. In 1960 I was in the Lower Sixth, and that year's pupils will have passed, or be about to experience their 70th birthdays in 2014. Many still have their life's partners with them and some may be continuing their journey through life alone. Some are battling to stay healthy and inevitably there are those who will never reach this milestone. Those fresh faces from 1960 can revisit that time on our website with the aid of technology. Aren't we the lucky ones! A special Happy 70th Birthday to all my Hilmian peers. I still know you all, minus white spots, black dots and scratch marks.

Sheila

2. What Happened to our GCE papers?



"When I was a student in Manchester over 50 years ago, I spent some of the long Summer break working at the N.U.J.M.B. (Northern Universities' Joint Examination Board) in Devas Street. At that time (the 1960's) some of the examinations connected with this organisation were GCE Ordinary and GCE Advanced Levels. After pupils had completed their examinations in their schools, their written papers from all over the country were sent to the examiners in tied bundles, and marking was completed. Standardisation meetings of examiners were held, and area differences in marking were ironed out, and the completed papers were then sent to Devas Street to record the results ready for the 'reveal' of passes or fails in August.

My connection with the GCE papers began in what looked like a newly built octagonal building with stainless steel handles and sparkling modern floors. The huge airy central room to which we were all directed was filled with desks and chairs arranged in forward facing rows - a setting similar to that of my own GCE exams in the HGS School Hall a few years before! Around the room was a gallery with rooms leading off. Many of those present were my age, and had been drafted in from the student population to help to check that the marks awarded by the examiners on each page of the exam booklets came to the total which appeared in a circle on the front page. If any mistakes were found, a raised hand would bring someone to whisk away the offending paper.

About a hundred of us were given an introductory talk about the rules – absolutely no talking while working; absolutely no discussing amongst ourselves during break times what we had seen during our working day or later with anyone else outside the building. The presenter of this talk caused my jaw to drop – it was **Mr. Whittaker (photo above)**, who had been teaching at HGS during my final years there. He would have been known as Richard or 'Dickie' Whittaker to an earlier generation of his HGS peers, and if any other identification were needed, he was the husband of our popular French teacher formerly known as Miss Elliot. He gave us times of breaks, lunch and end of day, and then each of us started checking the pile of papers on the floor at one side of us, lifting a single one up at a time onto one's desk, and placing the completed ones at the other side on the floor. Each page was turned; each mark was noted and totalled, and when correct, we initialled the paper.

These piles of papers were then collected and taken upstairs to the gallery rooms for the transference of the final marks to the then new technology of computer cards. This involved a lead pencil! The printed cards had small oval windows in columns headed with numbers, and the idea was to mark in the value of each paper against the correct numbers by colouring in the requisite ovals. Apparently the computer would 'read' the markings of the soft lead pencils, so great care had to be taken to colour the whole oval! I was 'promoted' upstairs and found the whole procedure mind-numbingly boring!

As the days went by, we would receive papers from all corners of the country, and on all subjects. I kept a look-out for anything from HGS, and then one day – THERE IT WAS! MATHS AND FURTHER MATHS PAPERS 1 AND 2! I recognised many of the names on the papers – after all, they had only been two or three years behind me at School

Sheila

3. Memories of HGS 1931-38



Reading the Lesson

Sheila, it sounds as though you may be interested in Memorabilia, and I wondered if you would like my copy of 'Virginibus Puerisque' which was presented to me when I became a prefect. A copy of the **Prefect's Promise** is inside the front cover. For me it was a terrifying moment when I had to read it out at Assembly in front of the whole school. A similar even more frightening experience was the morning I had to follow A.G.J. (Mr Jenkinson) down the corridor and on to the platform to read the morning lesson from the Bible. To my dying day I shall remember struggling to read, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," **without muddling the aitches!!**

P.E.

Thinking back to the daily school routine, has anyone ever told you about our **P.E. kit? Non existent.** We just had to remove our gymslips and do P.E. in school blouses and navy knickers!!! A sight to behold. I well remember peeping out of the Prefect's Room to see there were no boys around, and making a dash for the hall. As it was compulsory to change from outdoor shoes to plimsolls when we arrived at school in the morning, footwear was no problem. It can't have been fun in the height of summer to spend the rest of the school day in a sweaty blouse! What a long way we have come since then.

Wet dinner hours

When Fifth and Sixth Formers only were allowed to dance in the Hall. Sometimes Mr. Scourfield and Miss Shortridge joined us. He was a beautiful dancer. We danced Old Time and Sequence dances in those far off days, and we all hoped to meet Mr Scourfield in one of the progressions. We loved those dances and the wet dinner hours.

Annual General Knowledge Competition

The whole School took part, and I desperately wanted to do well in it, but what chance had lowly First and Second Formers against those clever Sixth Formers? It isn't very long ago that I had a clear out, and found one of my General Knowledge Competition Forms. Some of the questions on there are in today's Trivial Pursuits game. Reluctantly I consigned my copy to the fire.

Swimming Lessons

In the Third Form we had the chance to go to South Elmsall Baths once a week to learn swimming – one of the highlights for me. Our P.E. teacher took us, Miss J.C. Harrison. We were very impressed as First Formers that she had trained at a Scandinavian College or University and proudly wore its badge on her tunic. Thirty years or more after leaving school I saw her in the ladies cloakroom at Schofields in Leeds. We spoke, and she remembered some of my school friends.

HGS

I always enjoyed all our special occasions – Sports Day, the Annual Speech Day, and once a year the Country Dance Festival. Can you imagine dozens of pupils dancing the “Helston Furry” dance through the lovely grounds? I think most of us were very proud of the House to which we belonged. Mine was Holgate. There was great competition between them for Sports trophies, House choir competitions and academic achievements. We were always viewing the Stars and Stripes boards!”

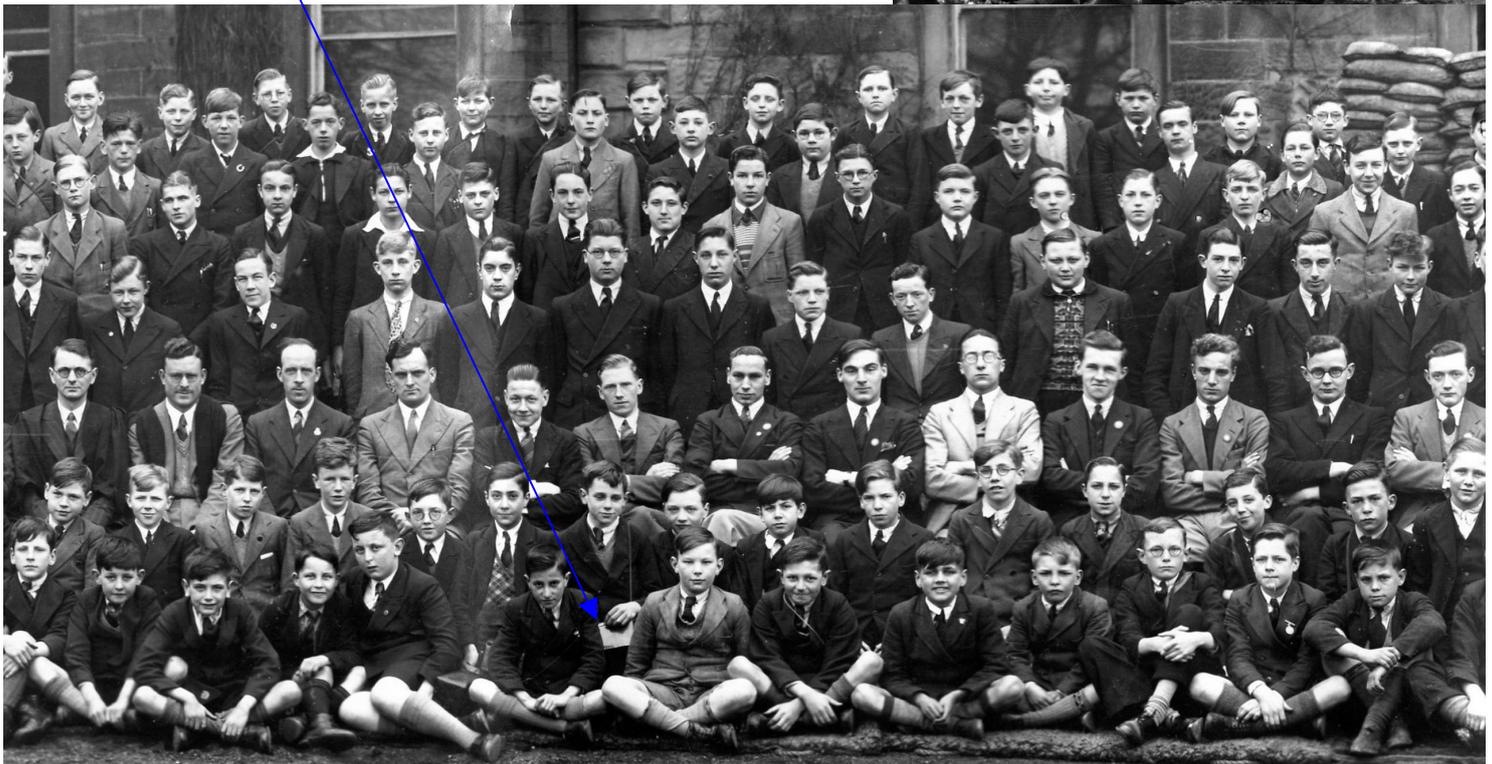
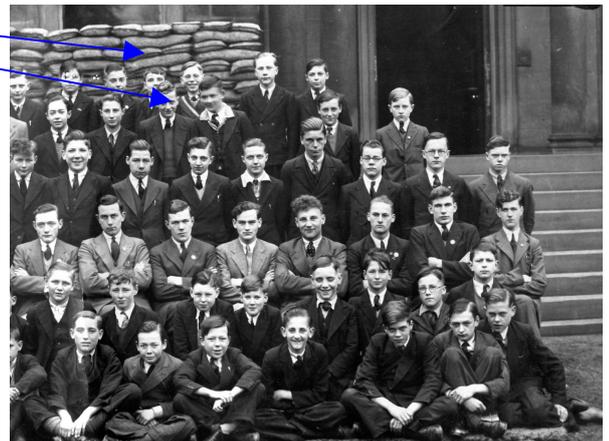
Mr Crossland used to travel from Leeds to Hemsworth every day, and was often already on the service bus I caught each morning - no such thing as special school buses! - and he often chatted to us. He was a perfect gentleman.

Margaret Berry, HGS 1931-38

4. Sandbags and Gasmasks 1940

I would guess that the straps over the shoulders were of the holders of gas mask boxes. In the photo below, 2nd row, number 7, the boy seems to have his hand on a box. They were supplied in a brown cardboard box with a cord to go over the shoulder - or across the chest. Many people bought a 'case' made of various kinds of waterproof material or leatherette, which fitted the gas mask (without the box) and was rather less bulky. Also, they were not quite so vulnerable to rain. We were supposed to carry them everywhere and of course this was a great nuisance - so we became careless. That would then promote a campaign - "Where's your gas mask!"

Jean Burton (HGS 1936-43)



5. Contact with Mr Hamilton



I remember the year I was taking the Test Exams (1960) I missed the quarter past eight South Yorkshire from Shafton. I stood having an anxiety attack, knowing that the twenty to nine would drop me in the village and make it impossible to hotfoot it through the Green Gate and up to school in time to be in the hall for the start of the exam. Drastic action was called for. I was the only person at the bus shelter, and a car was approaching from the Two Gates in the direction of the receding bus. I marched into the road and held my hand up. The Hillman Minx came to a halt, and I stood rooted to the spot in amazement as I saw R.W. Hamilton wind down his window and offer me a lift. He had just taken his wife to Cudworth Railway Station and was returning to school. That was a white-knuckle ride, as I realised that in five years I had never previously had a one-to-one conversation with the Head. He drove up the drive at the side of the Technical College and into the main playground just as the five-to-nine bell was going. That was my centre-of-attention exit from a car.

Sheila Kelsall



I was a pupil at HGS for 7 years. I do not remember meeting Mr. Hamilton on a one to one basis until the Sixth Form. "HMP" or "Headmaster's Period" lessons were very scary! Everyone paid great attention to the proceedings! In the Upper Sixth I met him several times concerning matters in School, university applications and, of course, on the days when I had to read the lesson in Assembly. In my Upper Sixth year, I was the first of the boy Prefects to read the lesson from the Lectern. My first attempt was much too fast and so did not have the required "emphasis" and "gravity". I knew it was not good form to read the lesson so fast - but I just had, and in front of all the pupils and Staff! Mr. Collette, who was a teacher I always respected, took me to one side during that day. He had, of course, noted my nervousness and delivery speed. Some behind the scenes coaching really helped. Over time my confidence grew and I no longer feared that walk to the stage

with the Head. Thank you, Mr. Collette. He always called me "Mac". Mr. Hamilton always called me "McKenzie". During my last Sports Day in 1962 my parents came to the School to watch the action. The Head made them very welcome. They always remembered the moment when he met them.

In about 1970 Mr Hamilton came to the school where I was teaching. He came to see Miss Ward who was one of the Deputy Heads. This must have been at the end of the school day. After their private meeting, I imagine she gave him a tour of the school. As they were walking back into the school, by chance they bumped into me. I was on my way to the car park. This was 8 years after I had left HGS but I could still feel that well-known nervousness growing as I had an idea of what was to come. The lead article by Mr. Branford on the site's Home page says what I felt when the Head looked at me:

"Looking back after over half a century that which one recalls most vividly about Russell Hamilton was his penetrating gaze, his almost piercing examination of the face of whoever was in conversation with him, be he or she a member of staff, a pupil or his own Secretary."

I did not expect him to remember me, but he did! Miss Ward must have primed him. Mr Hamilton put me "at ease" immediately. I remember that during the conversation we spoke about some things that were relevant to me, especially as a teacher, and one specialist topic - the Mercator Map Projection. He had such a depth of knowledge about so many things. As Ken Sale says on the "Snippets 1" page of the site:

"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."

Sadly, I never saw Mr. Hamilton again.



Moving on 44 years to February 3rd 2014, I attended Miss Ward's funeral in Rochdale. There I met Mrs D. Whittaker (Miss D. Elliot) and her husband Richard. Both had been on the Staff at HGS. Mrs Whittaker taught French. During our conversation before going in for the service, Mrs Whittaker said she thought Mr Hamilton was "a very impressive Headmaster". What more can I say?

Dave McKenzie, HGS 1955-62

6. Memories from Mollie Weaver (HGS 1937-43)



On Film Shows

"We had film shows in the Art Room, though that may have been because the large size of the room was necessary. They may not have been organised by the Art Master. I remember particularly "Lorna Doone" to the accompaniment of Fingal's Cave (Mendelssohn). That music has always reminded me of the scene at the end of the book where a character sinks into the bog! We eventually visited Iona and Staffa but the connection of the music and Lorna Doone still lingers and I fear always will."

On Miss Cowley

"Have you got the name of a Miss Cowley on the HGS Staff? She taught me English in 4A (1940-41), but didn't stay at School long. My main memory of her is the trouble she had with Findler (Hugh?) brother of Bessie - so much so that in her note of farewell to us she wrote, "Farewell to 4A and Findler." Alas, he went into the RAF and was killed in the War."

On Miss Griffiths

"Miss Griffiths, the Senior Mistress, took us for a French lesson in the First Form in 1937. She asked questions in French, and when she asked very sternly "Qu'est que c'est que ca?" a boy called **Secker stood up**, thinking he'd been called. Those who remember still smile about this."

On uniform

"My Gran knitted a navy cardigan with a red border – but they had to be all navy or all red in those days. Money was scarce at that time, but no exceptions were allowed, and how disappointed my Gran must have been that I couldn't use the cardigan at school."

7. From the pupils to Mr. Hamilton in 1967

"There are certain qualities which are eternal and one of these is service to other people." Said Mr. Hamilton, Headmaster of Hemsworth Grammar School, on Thursday, when the pupils assembled in the quadrangle to make him a farewell gift before he retired. The Head Boy (John Covell) said that Mr. Hamilton had given very valuable service to the school. On behalf of the pupils the Head Girl (Christine Stephens) presented Mr. Hamilton with binoculars and a clock.

Mr. Hamilton stressed the importance of loyalty and service to the organisation to which they belonged - to their home in the first instance, then to their school, college or university, and the work they took up as a career. "So convinced am I of this that I felt that in leaving this school I should try to leave behind some token that would impress this idea upon the thousands of boys and girls who will go through the school in the future," he said. He presented to the school two identical cups inscribed "The Hamilton Service Cup" and said he hoped they would be awarded annually to the boy and girl who, in the opinion of the Headmaster, Deputy Head and Senior Master, had given the best service to the school during the year. "I hope the cups will be a constant reminder of the idea of service to others rather than just for self," said Mr. Hamilton.

8. The Snooker Table



Has anyone written in to tell the story of the arrival of the furniture van at the main entrance? Only twice did I have to open the main double doors and that van's load certainly needed a wide opening. Dad Austin wasn't at all pleased when he came to take Sixth Form Maths in the Boy Prefects' Room to find a full-size billiard table occupying 80% of the floor space. From Old Boy PB (Phil Bull, 1922-??) "To the Governors, Head Master, Staff and Pupils" on the brass plate. By 1948 of course, Phil had a Rolls Royce and a uniformed chauffeur.

W.G. Branford, HGS 1932-39 and Mr Hamilton's Secretary 1937-39.

9. Our Second Car and RWH



"...in 1952 or 53 my wife Mary and I bought our second car from RWH – his Austin 10 (1934 model) which he had bought from the undertaker on his arrival in Hemsworth in 1937. It was then three years old, so it was decidedly second hand when sold to us 15 or 16 years later. It had no boot, but RWH had had a massive wooden box made by the Hemsworth undertakers, which was bolted to the back. I still have that magnificent tool box in my workshop, with 'JX 1393' in large white letters and numerals printed on it, as it obliterated the car's registration plate. The word had gone round that RWH was at last selling it, and I drove over to Hemsworth in my Austin 7 (1931 vintage) to let him know that our car was no longer big enough for Mary and me and our three children and the dog. He wanted £110.00! My Austin 7 had cost me only £50.00. I offered the Head £100.00 and we shook hands on £105.00."

W.G. Branford, HGS 1932-39 and Mr Hamilton's Secretary 1937-39.

10. The best thing

Passing the 11+ was the best thing to happen to me. I was given confidence as well as an education. I was a nervous child and at 11 kept out of the limelight as much as I could. I luckily joined choirs and any group going at H.G.S. At first I hated being singled out for anything, even reading aloud in class. Being chosen to be an Assistant Prefect in the lower 6th was great for me as was being a Prefect the following year. I went on to become a confident Secondary School teacher at 21.

Juliet Parker (HGS 1948-54)

