

1. Uniform change



1952 Panoramic - just a comment that 1952 appears to be the year that there was a changeover in the uniform requirements for boys. The grey did not seem to signify Junior as opposed to Senior, as there are boys on the front row who wear the light grey blazers as well as older boys with Prefects badges. The gingham of the girls seems already well-established.

Sheila

2. The Forties



On the subject of school uniform, during and for a few years after the Second World War there was rationing for clothes as well as food. Consequently the requirement for school uniform was relaxed so that clothes which could be used outside school could be worn. Never-the-less there was still a requirement laid down; for instance boys were expected to wear a sports-coat, grey trousers, shirt, school tie & school cap. When rationing came off the requirements for school uniform was re-introduced. However for senior pupils approaching leaving this requirement was not enforced and consequently there was a period of time when there was a mix of school & nonschool uniforms. An addendum to this was that in the 2nd, or 3rd forms I remember Mr. Leonard, the PE teacher, measured our feet because above a certain size the government issued you with additional clothes ration coupons.

Terry O'Marr

3. Forties Uniform and Rationing



In 1942, clothing was rationed so there was some relaxation in school uniform regulations - only tie and cap were compulsory. Parents were allowed to buy where they could. However, to take the point in one of the Forums, Sawdons of Cross Hills were the official suppliers of school uniform as far as I remember. Sheila Sawdon was a pupil at HGS when I was there, between 1942-1949, though not in my form. Regarding rationing, anyone with an old Report Book will remember having their weight and height recorded on the back page at intervals - done by Mr Leonard in PT lessons. We also had our feet measured and I well remember exceeding the Government limits for foot size and age and being able to go home and tell my Mother that I had been awarded an extra 40 clothing coupons for this. As you can imagine, these were received with delight as extra bargaining power in the bartering culture of the times.

Eric Jones

4. Some Clothing Incidents



One day, when I was in the first form, the teacher kept us in detention for misdemeanours I cannot remember. After a while there was a tapping on one of the classroom windows. The teacher went to investigate and standing there was my mother who then launched into what looked like becoming a long and passionate explanation of why she needed me immediately, to go and purchase some item of clothing. After a while the teacher must have realised this was going to continue until he surrendered and so he gave in and I was allowed to go. If Star Trek had been invented then, I would have asked to be beamed up!

In my early years the boys had to wear caps, which, added to short trousers and some of the hair cuts of the time must have made for interesting viewing. However, the excruciatingly embarrassing bit was that you had to lift your cap when you passed a woman teacher. There was some considerable comical manoeuvring to avoid the situation arising, but these were not always successful. In my final year I bought a check overcoat and wore it to school. It was not regulation wear which I think required a plain fawn or navy raincoat. There was an inspection one day and I was instructed to return with something that met the regulation. My father had a raincoat which qualified, but he wore it when he went to the Club and it had more than a faint odour of beer. Nevertheless I wore his coat to school and it passed the test no bother. There were no queries about my drinking habits!

Alvin Bashforth

5. Hard Times



Grace Mills 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!

6. The Freedom of Dress Experiment



From the School Magazine 1963

In the first week of October, 1962, came a startling phenomenon to Hemsworth Grammar School. The juniors stared and the seniors envied while the prefects proudly carried out their duties in 'civies'! The Freedom of Dress Experiment was welcomed by one and all - of the prefects. School uniform, although sensible, can become monotonous and dull after seven or - in some cases - eight years of wearing it. The change in the Girl Prefects' room was immediately apparent. For one thing, the mirror was in much greater demand as hair was continuously combed and make-up repaired. In the Boy Prefects' Room, however, there was little change except for the occasional 'Mind my coat!' But there was another change - a change in the attitude towards school life. Perhaps our smart appearance made us determined to match it in intelligence. It was easier to concentrate on lessons knowing that we looked smart - we hoped! And at least one teacher told us that he enjoyed teaching a class of young ladies instead of

scruffy schoolgirls. We tried to be sensible and, on the whole, the apparel worn was suitable for school. There were no Hartnell and Dior creations ; make-up was used only in moderation - but the effect was surprising, if not astounding. The Freedom of Dress Experiment seemed successful to us, the participants. We enjoyed wearing our 'civvies' and did not wholly relish the return to uniform. I should like to thank, on behalf of my fellow prefects and myself, Mr. Hamilton for allowing us to wear our informal clothes and Miss Smith for giving us every encouragement.

Vivienne Toft, U6A

7. School Outfitter



My query in the New Block correspondence has just been answered by Geoff Govier. I asked for the name of the School Outfitter at Cross Hills, and he tells me it was Jackson's. Of course it was! However, in the School Magazines of 1958, 59, 60, 61 and 62, I can see an advert for an establishment at 6, Bank Street, Hemsworth by the name of Webster (Late Theo. Sawdon) Complete Gentleman's Outfitter - Official Outfitter to H.G.S. (Boys). I wonder does anyone remember this?

Sheila Kelsall

Sheila, your report from the school magazine reference Sawdon's HGS Outfitters, was perfectly correct, even well before the fifties. During my years my Mum was fortunate enough to obtain a clothing "grant" to be spent ONLY at SAWDONS, on Bank Street!. There was SO MUCH red-tape concerning this grant. SAWDONS did not have the item my Mum wanted, in my "small" size [I believe it was a blazer]. As the "grant" was only to be used for certain specific items, my Mum had two options. She could either put to what was left of the "grant" and have a rain-coat, or lose the remainder. I didn't need a rain-coat, because my mum had scraped together enough to buy me one from the BBCS Cooperative Tailors at Johnson's Corner in South Kirkby. The outcome was that I was given a "grant" but not "granted" the gift of flexibility to use it! Another shop (it may have been Jacksons) did sell school clothes but was not on the "grant" list.

Such was life!

Malcolm Thomas

8. Caps or "Take a stripe, boy, for not wearing it".



This article appeared in the School Magazine of 1955.

Caps are articles of clothing detested by fifth and sixth forms, treated indifferently by the middle school, and idolized by first, and, in some cases, second formers. The reasons for these different points of view on what has been, for many years, a very delicate subject, should be quite obvious. However, I shall endeavour to explain the reasons, for the benefit of any H.G.S. boy's mother who may be bewildered by her son's attitude. In the case of juniors, wearing a cap which contains a comparatively new badge (thank you, Mr. Leonard) is new experience. They adhere very closely to the custom of wearing one, rarely being seen without the beloved object. With the middle-school boys, the novelty has not yet worn off, but they are influenced by the older boys and do not wear one. Why doesn't the average fifth and sixth former wish to wear a cap? Is it because he cannot obtain one with adequate dimensions? With the exception of several U.V.I.A. boys, I would venture to suggest that this is untrue. The simple reason is that it is below their dignity to have "one of those red and black things" concealing their beautiful hair. Why should they wear one, and not Mr. Taylor? Although I think that the majority of boys prefer not to wear a cap, I ask them, in moments of despair, to thank their lucky stars that they have not to wear one of those horrible hats which the girls so proudly display.

Homer, R. V.A (Price)

9. Uniforms in 1926



School uniforms in 1926/27. Photos contributed by Grace Mills. They show her form teacher, Mr. Shiells, and two pupils from her form, Linley and Eva.

10. Girls' Uniform in the Sixties



I went to HGS in Sept. 1962 and I believe this was the first year that blazers and school hats were no longer compulsory for girls. Winter uniform was still box-pleated gym slips, white shirt blouses, navy cardigan and 70 denier lisle stockings (only obtainable from the school outfitters in Hemsworth). From the Fourth year we could wear pleated skirts instead. Summer uniform was gingham dresses (only one size check allowed - quarter inch I think - again only from the school outfitters). Luckily my mum could make my dress, the winter uniform was expensive enough. We were the children of the miniskirt generation, so the rule was that skirts must touch the floor when kneeling up on the floor!! Of course, pleated skirts could always be rolled up at the waist after the check, and pulled down again if Miss. Smith was spotted in the distance.

Linda Collingwood