Margaret Dora Higginson
1918-2009

Shared Memories

Part 5

"And Crispin Crispin shall ne'er go by
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;"

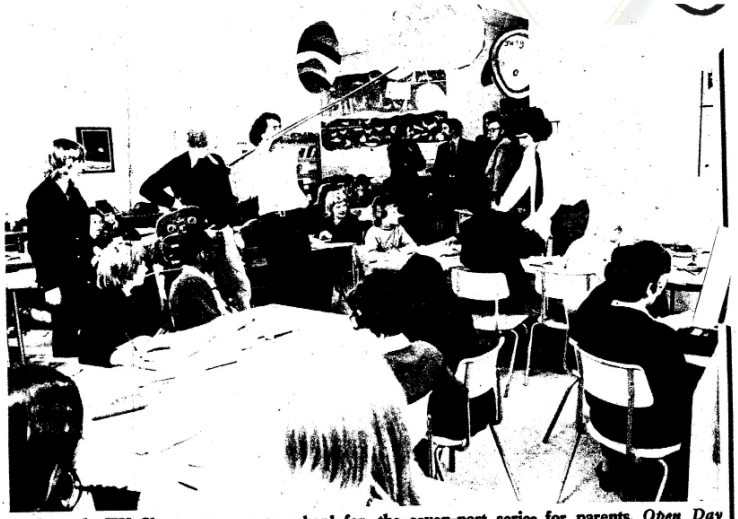
It is possible to zoom further in the newspaper items and printed materials for more comfortable reading.

This final 'issue' of Margaret's memories is to be devoted almost entirely to he thoughts she penned or wrote with help of a pre-computer typewriter. They are a mixture of letters to newspaper editors, replies to and comments about other newspaper readers' thoughts, book reviews, firmly-held views on the Direct Grant system, girls' education, co-education and creative writing. We thought it good, with some exceptions, to leave the various pieces without comment and allow them to speak for themselves, rather in the manner in which, as schoolgirls we would not have dared to interrupt the magisterial flow.[Yet how she relished a good discussion!]

INSIDE TELEVISION

BY ALIX COLEMAN

What did your child do at school today?



A Granada TV film crew goes to school for the seven-part series for parents, *Open Day*

SUNDAY MORNING viewers aren't that thick on the ground, which sometimes doesn't matter. But with four programmes behind them and three to go, it is to be hoped that Granada TV's *Open Day*, a seven-part series aimed at explaining schools to parents, has pulled.

How well those overwhelming emotional investments known as children are doing scholastically—indeed, what are they doing at all, if anything—is too rarely inquired into by those most needing to know. In spite of officially encouraged interest by forward-looking schools, too many parents closing front doors behind their kids five days a week from nine to four often have only the haziest notion of how young minds are being formed in those packed classrooms up the road.

Open Day sets out to tell them, with a look at seven schools in the North West, ranging from the unashamedly academic direct-grant Bolton Grammar School (Girls' Division) to Lancaster's Secondary Modern mixed Castle School. It wasn't, said Granada producer Peter Heinze, a totally random picking, but as random as possible, taking in comprehensives and one Catholic school on the way. Public schools were given a miss because most parents don't have children at them.

Open Day, said Heinze, does not attempt portraits or comparisons. Rather, it sets out to look at seven major overlapping topics: discipline, curriculum development, parental involvement, careers, pastoral care, teacher training, financial control. By the end of the series, fewer and fewer children are on view, while it is the adults shaping their lives who are called to account: directors of education, school governors, civil servants specialising in education and, above all, heads.

The heads, said Heinze, were both co-operative and down-to-earth. They crop up right through the seven programmes, an intrepid, fluent lot. As Margaret Higginson, head of Bolton Girls' School, observed: "Teachers are the most articulate creatures on this earth and headmistresses the worst of their species."

Not unnaturally, the heads felt they were putting themselves at some risk. As Allan Thompson, head of the Castle School remarked: "When you let outsiders into the school there's always a touch of apprehensiveness. You don't know how you're going to be edited. Schools' reputations are very delicate things and years of work can be destroyed in a moment. But I welcome anything that lets parents know what's going on in schools today."

Margaret Higginson was gratified to find the interviewers knew a lot about education. "It's a serious subject," she said with some restraint. "I appreciate their difficulties. If certain questions are a bit angled, well, you can't put self-congratulation on the screen."

Pastoral care, currently the most fashionable phrase in education, crops up often, especially in large, rumbustious schools. Castle School is largely drawn from a working-class population but that is not necessarily why they need this particular kind of watching-over. "Everyone," observed Thompson sagaciously, "needs pastoral care."

Margaret Higginson, whose dry, literate humour should much enliven the series, reflected they enjoyed having the Granada unit at Bolton Girls' School. The unit enjoyed it too, what with prefects wearing gowns for prayers and a rabbit on the platform on St. Francis' Day. That, thought Miss Higginson, ought to upstage any competition. "What could be more progressive than having a rabbit on the platform for prayers?"

READERS' VIEWS ON THE NEWS

INTENT NOT TO DEPRECIATE OTHER SCHOOLS

SIR,—I agree entirely with Mr. J. Peet (Readers Views, Oct. 28) that the Direct Grant Schools are in a position to be highly selective and that it would be disgraceful if they did not produce fine academic results. I should be very sorry indeed to appear to depreciate the efforts of other schools of all types, for which I feel the greatest admiration, knowing how often they are successful in circumstances far less favourable than ours.

Anyone who knows this school knows that its mainspring is the belief that "of those to whom much is given much shall be required."

Perhaps I misunderstood Sir Alec Clegg's remarks, but this is how he was reported in the Oct. 17 Observer: "He suggests that the brightest pupils do no better at a high-prestige school than at their local grammar school — and adds that there are signs that pupils in the next intellectual layer do worse at the direct grant institutions . . among the next layer of intelligence his tentative conclusion is: 'If anything, success showed up in favour of the maintained schools'"

The point that I was making on Speech Day was not that our most brilliant girls (who would admittedly be brilliant anywhere) win dazzling success: I was speaking of our broad average achievement.

Sir Alec suggests that less clever children in Direct Grant schools tend to sink to the lowest stream and give up. We have no streams and nobody gives up.

The figures I quoted were these: 90 girls entered in 1958 and 78 of them took Advanced Level in 1965, all of them going on to worthwhile careers—31 to university, 30 to training college, etc. etc.

This general level is what gives us so much satisfaction, and I hope there are many other schools that can say the same.

I think it is not generally realised that Direct Grant schools, though they have more than their share of the top ability, also have a large body of good average pupils. Half our girls are fee-payers and not necessarily academic high-fliers. We think particularly highly of those who earn their success the hard way.

Incidentally one of the outstanding girls in the group I was speaking of was not offered a place in any grammar school by Lancashire County in 1958.

MARGARET HIGGINSON.

Girls' education

From Miss M. D. Higginson

Sir, Mrs Esslin (April 28) complains that girls' education suffers because women teachers set a bad example by getting married and instantly forsaking their posts. Her experience has been unlucky; mine has been quite the reverse and is, I think, much more typical of girls' schools.

There are 54 women (beside two men) on the staff of this school. Precisely half the number are married and 19 of these are mothers. The average length of service to date for the 27 single women is 8.9 years and for the 27 married it is nine years. (The average figure is exactly the same if one excludes the 10 part-timers.) Only twice in 19 years has a woman resigned after as little as one year's service; the average even for our youngest recruits is around five years.

If women like the people they work with and have a fair scope and status they are outstandingly loyal and far less tempted than men to move for money or promotion. As to marriage being a disqualification, surely the example of "the family woman" is even more relevant for girls than that of "the family man", welcome as he is in most girls' schools today? It is highly desirable that girls (and boys too) should see women obviously happy and successful in a dual role, and carrying responsibility as a matter of course; whereas in mixed schools they often see almost all senior posts occupied by men and may, if they are ambitious, conclude that to reach the top one must cultivate masculine traits.

Incidentally, my colleague in the adjacent boys' school has kindly passed on to me a circular letter from the Governors of a well-known girls' boarding school requesting his help in finding a new "headmaster or headmistress". No such circular was sent to me. I look forward to being invited to assist in the selection of a "headmistress or headmaster" for Eton College.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET HIGGINSON,
Headmistress,
Bolton School (Girls' Division),
Bolton,

THE DIRECT GRANT SCHOOLS

From the Chairman of Governors of Manchester Grammar School

Sir,—I have been correctly reported as stating that if the majority recommendations of the Donnison Commission are implemented, the Governors of this school will probably decide to go independent. I should like to make our position clearer.

These recommendations insist that we must absolutely give up any selective entry. Since our resources and organization are geared entirely to our present entry, a switch to non-selected pupils would completely extinguish the school as we and all the world have known it. Manchester Grammar School would have ceased to exist. A new comprehensive school in our buildings would be one more neighbourhood comprehensive added to the 26 already in the city.

This would not be participation in the movement to comprehensive education, but destruction of one type of school and duplication of the provision already existing in a large boys' comprehensive a mile away. The city would have gained little, but the region would have lost a world-famous institution of the highest academic standard.

Nothing could justify such a waste. The Governors would be bound to decide to maintain the school in its traditional function of providing excellent broadly based academic education to pupils of suitable talents. In this role, without public money, it would have an assured future, probably no less famous than its past.

But it would be at the cost of social divisiveness. To quote the *first* report of the Public Schools Commission (para. 20), "To believe that all the public schools will wither away through economic pressures in the foreseeable future is an illusion. So long as they exist as a separate sector, they will continue to stand apart from, and may well cause harm to, the major educational movement of our times—the opening of opportunity to all children, whatever their background, to be given an education suitable to their talents."

Let there be no doubt about the loss of opportunity that would result to some of our children. About 40 per cent of our total annual intake of 200 boys come from manual, clerical or other sub-managerial parents; of the 60 boys from Manchester itself perhaps half come within this category. Unless these boys were lucky enough to live close to one of the city's best comprehensives, they would lose tremendously.

This is no fault of the present Manchester L.E.A., of which I am a member. It does its utmost within the available finance and building programmes to make all its comprehensives as good as possible. But many have few or no A level courses, and there is little prospect for many years that our pupils, dispersed over such schools on a neighbourhood basis, could receive anything comparable to the M.G.S. standard of education.

Therefore, not for our sake but for the sake of equality of opportunity, we deeply desire that our selective entry shall remain open by some means to those unable to pay. This is not a question of super-selective status but of social justice and common sense. We stand ready in the light of the report to discuss with all our 11 L.E.A.s any methods by which we can contribute to public education in this region—at least until the comprehensives achieve their ideal of giving every boy, as their grammar schools gave to Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath, the education suited to his particular ability.

Yours faithfully,

R. W. BALDWIN.

Manchester Grammar School,
Rusholme, Manchester 13.

Sixth forms for girls

From the Headmistress of Bolton School

Sir,—May I draw attention to one aspect of the Donnison report which has attracted little notice?

Volume one contained a good deal about the comparatively limited academic opportunities open to girls in the boarding-schools. (Average size of sixth form 49 against 157 in equivalent boys' schools.) It is therefore surprising that volume two has not emphasized that these much-needed opportunities exist in the girls' direct-grant schools. Their average sixth form size is 112 against 164 for boys. (Paragraph 108.) The Commissioners must know very well that average figures and 10 per cent samples mask the brilliant achievements of the stronger girls' schools, most of them descended, like those of the Girls' Public Day School Trust, from the pioneer schools of late Victorian times, which for a hundred years have set the pace for girls and are still in the lead today.

The failure of the report to take note of this is misleading and ungenerous. In particular, why does table 14 on page 71 show only the proportion of Oxbridge places taken by *men* from direct grant schools? The equivalent figures for women do exist—they are given in table eight of volume one.

That table shows that the girls' direct-grant schools, educating 3 per cent of the population, take 35 per cent of the very small number of Oxbridge places for women.

One would not wish to make too much of this as a measure of total value, but since the report gives the figures for men one wonders why there is no acknowledgment of the outstanding achievement of the girls' schools in this sphere.

Yours &c.,

MARGARET HIGGINSON,
Headmistress.

Bolton School, Chorley New Road,
Bolton, Lancashire.

NEW AND NOISY

From Mr. George Malcolm Thomson

Sir,—In Tottenham Court Road tube station there are two escalators, one old and quiet, the other new and noisy. Why spend money in replacing a low hum with a succession of screams, groans and grunts?

Yours etc.,

GEORGE MALCOLM THOMSON.

P.S.—Anyone wishing to verify these facts will have to go on a day when by good luck, both escalators are working.

46 Well Walk, Hampstead, N.W.3.

The beliefs of youth

'1968'

Sir,—In view of our clique's preoccupation with the subjects of sex and religion [" World of the Sixth Form," last Sunday's Magazine] we must thank you for your two most stimulating articles — " The Sexual Behaviour of Britain's Teenagers," which appeared earlier this year, and last Sunday's " How Heathen is England?" As the Magazine article looked at our " Lower Sixth Clique," we thought you would like to know that the national increase in promiscuity and decline in religious faith is by no means reflected at Latymer. And definitely outnumbering our inevitable agnostics are five active members of the Church of England, one Baptist, one Congregationalist, one Salvationist, one member of the Reformed Synagogues, and most exciting of all, one boy who intends to become a priest. Even Sarah Thomas, described by you as a leading member of the clique, is taking A-Level Religious Knowledge.

David Edwards
Latymer School, London N9

Not prissy

Sir,—In your interesting feature on Community Service Volunteers, you describe the work of Alison Carter in Bolton and say " It takes nerve to face a headmistress who thinks her girls are being introduced to parts of the town that no nice young lady should see."

I am the headmistress of a rather conspicuous girls' school in Bolton. We were glad to welcome Alison Carter, but for eight years now senior girls have been regularly visiting lonely old people in the back streets of Bolton. (Some of us even live in them.)

This is, of course, a trivial point, but I write because, with many of my colleagues, I am sick of the way journalists cannot mention girls' schools without a suggestion of prissiness. An automatic " prunes and prisms " reflex belies the truth, which is that the girls' schools are on the whole leaders in realism and social responsibility.

Incidentally, not only have several of our own girls done C S V work, but since 1961 eight of them have done Voluntary Service Overseas in localities rather more dangerous than the back streets of Bolton.

Margaret Higginson,
Headmistress, Bolton School
(Girls' Division)

READERS' VIEWS ON THE NEWS

BEST PUPILS, SO SCHOOLS GET BEST RESULTS

SIR,—Bolton School (Girls' Division) is fully entitled to be proud of its record of academic success. However it would appear that Miss Higginson's observations on the views of Sir Alec Clegg on Direct Grant Schools are somewhat misleading.

Sir Alec Clegg maintained that Direct Grant Schools, by a process of super-selection, cream off a very high proportion of the intellectually most able pupils: that pupils of the higher intellectual quality who attend maintained schools do not achieve records of academic success inferior to those of similar pupils who attend Direct Grant Schools: that arguments based on the quantity and quality of their records cannot therefore be used to justify the academic superiority of the Direct Grant Schools.

It is to be expected that their supporters will make a vigorous defence of Direct Grant Schools. It is doubtful, however, whether their cause is best served by misrepresentation of the arguments of their opponents.

J. PEET,
1 Waterfall-terr., Belmont.

COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS

Sir, - Once again, in your issue of November 4, you assert that the logical outcome of the introduction of comprehensive schools is the ending of all streaming and setting, with a consequent drop in standards of achievement.

This may be a logical conclusion based on your reasons for the introduction of comprehensive schools but, since you are so much against them, it is not surprising that you do not fully understand the reasons for their introduction.

The reasons for introducing comprehensive schools are certainly as much educational as they are social. There is strong evidence to suggest that selective schools do less well by their weaker pupils than non-selective schools with pupils of the same ability and that in certain spheres at least (e.g., mathematics) the selective system in this country has produced fewer children reaching the equivalent of O and A level standards than elsewhere in Europe. A well organized comprehensive school, with setting, avoids classifying pupils in terms that suggest limits to their final achievement, permits advances to be made according to development at any age, does not hold a pupil back in one subject because of lack of overall attainment, and removes the sense of failure from those in the top quarter of the ability range who would appear to be weak links in a grammar school.

In the interests of the individual, and of the country as a whole, a comprehensive school should aim to develop each pupil as completely as possible. If this is to be done, then it must be possible to allow the exceptional child to make progress at a rate commensurate with its abilities. In many subjects, setting is the best way to achieve this. In other subjects it may be possible to achieve the same results within groups of mixed ability.

Perhaps the underlying social principle behind the move towards comprehensive schools is that all men, of whatever ability, are of equal importance. If this principle is to apply, it must apply to the gifted as well as to the average. I see no reason, therefore, to equate comprehensive schools with the ending of all streaming and where streaming is ended it should not lead to falling standards.

T. B. J. MARDELL,
Headmaster.
High Storrs Grammar School for Boys, Ringinglow Road, Sheffield 11.

Sir, Readers may remember the controversy and publicity about comprehensive schools, before Kidbrooke School opened in 1954. One newspaper heading was "All equal and all stupid". This is remembered with amusement by the staff of the school as time has shown that comprehensive education has not led to a lowering of academic standards.

I am therefore horrified by the statement in the article "Heads and V-Cs" (*T.E.S.* November 4) which ran "It will be apparent to any sensible person that if comprehensive education is made universal, and any logical application of the comprehensive argument cannot tolerate streaming for long, attainments at 18 must necessarily sink." Are we now saying that "all equal and all stupid" is educational policy? I taught for a year in British Columbia, in a high school with very little streaming, and found that the brightest pupils were given no incentive for making the most of their intelligence but were being conditioned to waste time by sitting in a class containing very much slower children. One was expected to teach to the middle ability range, and the children were not accustomed to working alone while the teacher helped those in difficulties or encouraged the able to go further. Is this the result of non-streaming in America that we want here?

Professor M. V. C. Jeffreys referred to the egalitarian doctrine that nobody should have what everybody cannot have, when writing about independent schools, and it seems to me that this doctrine is being pursued to the point of absurdity. We are not all equal. We have different talents and different temperaments, and true equality in education is surely to enable each child to reach the highest standard of which he is capable and to fulfil himself as a person. In my present school there are no actual "forms" or "streams", but the children are in sets for main academic subjects. I cannot see why this is contrary to true comprehensive policy.

Whatever arguments there are for or against comprehensive education I could never teach in a school where able children were deliberately held back. This is not equality but uniformity and the two must not be confused.

D. M. PAINTIN,
Deputy Head.
Thomas Bennett School, Crawley.

SOCIAL MIXING

Sir,—Elizabeth Allsop and David Grugeon in their letter of November 4 criticized Sir Edward Boyle for saying that direct-grant grammar schools achieve "more social mixing, with their limits, in the larger cities tha the neighbourhood comprehensives

They then reiterate their own cla that "even predominantly working cla neighbourhood comprehensive schoo appear to achieve more social mixir than direct grant grammar schools They conclude by asking, "Is there som new evidence?" To this question should like to offer a small but factua answer.

Last year I taught for a term in a "first-choice" secondary school, 800 strong, drawing from a densely populated area of East London; the headmaster said that, so far as he knew, there was not one parent who had been to grammar school, let alone university. No Cabinet Minister sent his children to that London comprehensive.

Half a column of *The Times Educational Supplement* would not suffice to record the variety of parental background and occupation in this Northern direct-grant school. We have managers, miners and milkmen; teachers, tacklers and trade union officials; weavers, waitresses and Wanderers (Bolton variety); lawyers, lecturers and labourers; a bishop, a bookie and numerous busmen. Close friendships cut right across these lines of demarcation, encouraged by deliberate non-streaming of a social as well as an academic kind.

Which of these two schools has the wider social mixture?

MARGARET HIGGINSON,
Headmistress.
Bolton School (Girls' Division).

SOCIAL MIXING

Sir,—Miss Elizabeth Allsopp and Mr. David Gruegeon in commenting on Sir Edward Boyle's observation on the social range of the direct-grant schools refer to their own argument in their Fabian research pamphlet, *Direct Grant Grammar Schools*, and inquire whether there is any new evidence.

The section of their pamphlet entitled "Middle Class Schools" suggests that only a very small proportion of children of working-class parents are to be found in direct-grant schools, although they allow that "the Roman Catholic DGs are more representative of working class children". In particular they refer to a survey carried out by a sixth-form society in Bristol Grammar School of which the results, on the basis of rather less than a two-thirds response to the questionnaire issued, showed a 34 per cent representation in the school of the Registrar General's Class III (skilled manual and non-manual workers) and 1.5 per cent in Class IV (partly skilled manual workers). They then say that the "34 per cent in Class III includes an unidentified proportion of children of white collar workers. The only hard evidence of working-class parents is the 1.5 per cent in Class IV".

The findings of an inquiry into H.M.C. schools, recently published by Mr. Graham Kalton of the London School of Economics (*The Public Schools*, Longmans), includes a table (page 35) showing an analysis of entrants to the schools on the basis of the Registrar General's five classes. Here Class III parents are subdivided into manual and non-manual, and the table shows that in H.M.C. day direct-grant schools 13 per cent of parents were skilled manual workers, 3 per cent partly skilled manual. Thus 16 per cent of entrants' parents were either skilled or partly skilled manual workers. Since as has been said Miss Allsopp and Mr. Grugeon themselves observe that "Roman Catholic DGs are more representative of working-class children", it is clear that over the direct grant schools as a whole the figure must be larger than 16 per cent. How much larger is a matter of conjecture: it surely cannot be less than 20 per cent, and may well be 25 per cent or more, since roughly a quarter of direct-grant boys' schools are Roman Catholic foundations. (I speak of boys' schools only because Mr. Kalton's figures of course do not include the girls' schools.) It is therefore clear that any suggestion that working-class children in direct-grant boys' schools are a tiny minority of the school is well wide of the mark. In such schools it is now established that there is solid representation of the sons of working-class parents.

I add two further comments. First, of course we well know that the proportion of working-class boys in direct-grant schools is far below the proportion of Class III manual, Class IV and V workers in the population as a whole. (The figure of 67.8 per cent of such workers for the City of Bristol given in the sixth-form survey referred to and quoted in the Fabian pamphlet gives some indication; the figures Mr. Kalton quotes from the 1961 census 10 per cent sample unfortunately cannot be used as they do not differentiate between manual and non-manual workers in Class III.) It is not however due to any unwillingness on the part of the schools that the proportion of working-class boys is not greater. Second, my own experience of direct-grant schools, now fairly wide-ranging, would emphatically suggest that within the schools social discrimination does not exist.

J. MACKAY.
Headmaster and Chairman,
H.M.C. Direct Grant Committee.
The Grammar School, Bristol 8.

Sir,—As the intellectually gifted head of one of the most intellectually snobbish schools in the country, Miss Higginson must be well aware that, although the facts of her letter are correct, the implications are wholly false.

It is probable that the greatest contributory factor to industrial unrest in England has been the separate education of children at the time of their lives when they are still young enough to appreciate common humanity and uncommon gifts.

C. E. BENTHAM.
The Coach House, Colyford, Colyton, Devon.

Sir,—It is difficult to know how to reply to Miss Higginson's letter of November 11, in which she appears to be disarmingly innocent of the approved methods of social science. She seems to have missed the point at issue (social mixing) which cannot be answered by a mixture of her own good feeling and a London headmaster's hunch.

Miss Higginson mentions 15 different occupations to indicate the variety of parental background and occupation known to her in her own school. This is only evidence of 15 children which she balances against 800 occupations in the London school, of which she gives no details. As she says, the London headmaster did not actually know whether or not any of the parents had been to grammar school themselves, but even if all 1,600 had not they might still be broadly representative of 80 per cent of the community. In fact, it appears to be a secondary modern school, for Miss Higginson should remember that 19 per cent of London's children of secondary age still go to selective schools.

There is more recent and far more authoritative evidence than any we were able to collect, in Kalton's survey for the Headmasters' Conference. This shows that in the direct grant grammar schools belonging to the H.M.C. 70 per cent of the intake are from classes 1 and 2 (which make up 17 per cent of the whole community). This is irrefutable evidence that these schools are predominantly middle-class and strikingly unrepresentative of the community. Such schools, even if they incl... token represenation of the ... per cent of the community, Whe... difficult to provide a factual basis for their claims of wide social mixing.

ELIZABETH ALLSOPP,
DAVID GRUEGEON.
51, Combemartin Road, London, S.W.18.

Bolton's good record . . .

Sir, — The table (compiled by Dr Midwinter himself and published in "Where?" in February, 1973) which places Bolton sixty-ninth in social class order but twenty-seventh on university awards, is presumably based on official statistics for children actually resident in Bolton and receiving awards from that Local Education Authority. The many others who come in from surrounding areas to Direct Grant Schools would, if included, raise the scale to a still higher level.

Bolton's exceptional record must not be attributed merely to its five Direct Grant schools. It also has highly efficient selective grammar schools of its own. Clever children get a remarkably good chance in this old-fashioned town.

I cannot truthfully answer the question about the exact number of "social classes 4 and 5" forming part of Bolton's 8.2 per cent of university entrants; this would demand examination of records to which I have no access and would be foiled by the tendency of parents to call themselves "salesman," "municipal employee," "transport worker." (Is Steptoe rightly described as Company Director"?)

What I am certain of is that a large number of Direct Grant parents themselves left school at 14 and see the Direct Grant school as offering to their children chances they never had. Of the seven girls who went up to Oxford and Cambridge last October from this school (five of them Bolton Free Place holders) only two had a parent who had attended a university.

So far from its being true that Direct Grant schools "parade their working-class prodigies like drunks at a temperance rally," the exact reverse is the case. One can hardly stand up on speech day and say: "The girl now approaching the platform has a drunken granny and a mentally deficient mother and her dad is doing time. . . ." (Readers will understand I take a hypothetical case.) Whereas all the world knows when the girl in the limelight is a doctor's daughter.

Margaret Higginson.

Bolton School,
Bolton, Lancashire.

THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT 6.10.72

Seen from inside: the hea

We asked four headmasters and two headmistresses to comment on Anne Chisholm's art

Margaret Higginson

"The bedrock of a happy school is skilled, fair-minded time tabling"

I cannot to this day pass a toffee paper without stooping to pick it up, because I am indelibly dyed with the personality of my one-time headmistress, a woman of such grandeur that she could even show us (on the platform) what ladies didn't do without evoking the suspicion of a smile. My pupils tolerantly observe me picking up toffee papers, and do not do likewise. But after they have left they write me letters telling me things about their lives, their ideas, their experiences which I would never have dreamt of confiding to Miss Lees. Awe has departed, friendship has come in.

Like most of those quoted in Anne Chisholm's well-balanced article, I conceive the head's role essentially in terms of relationships; he or she is the enabler, even the liberator of other people, the agent to bring out all that is good and positive. The precise mode of organization, the frequency of staff-meetings, the often pasteboard structure of school councils and the like—these are secondary to the central function, which is to recognize the strengths and possibilities in others and give them a chance to flower. Most heads—certainly I am one—are far less clever than many of their colleagues and potentially, their pupils; the head's job is to offer encouragement, to facilitate experiment, to say to others, "This is your responsibility—now get on with it". It is to pick the right staff as far as circumstances allow, but it is also to sympathize and support when one's invaluable colleagues wish to move on.

Most people do better if they are assigned a limited sphere and given freedom within it. Not everyone wants to be consulted all the time about everything. It may be flattering at first but it can grow tedious. If Countesthorpe can arouse a passionate involvement on the part of their caretaker in the sociology/Chinese options in the sixth-form good luck to them, but it is not the way things work in any school I have ever been in. Of course teachers should not operate in separate compartments. Staff meetings should be very frank and on the really big questions—such as the moral aims of the school or the structure of the curriculum—everyone should be listened to, not least the youngest. But it is the heads' role to draw from the general discussion the effective consensus.

Although I do not much admire the style of headship (which I have experienced) in which a silent staff meeting is sprayed as by machine-gun fire with abrupt announcements, I concede that, followed up by daily cyclo-styled directives, it may lead to efficiency. Certainly one should not yield to the temptation to disguise inefficiency as lovable idiosyncrasy. Techniques are important. The bedrock of a happy school is skilled, fair-minded timetabling, and there is much craft (in two senses) involved in making the seventy-first UCCA candidate sound fresh and subtly different from the first. These are professional skills it takes a long while to acquire.

These tasks can, however, be shared or delegated; the head alone can be, as it were, the fixed leg of the compasses. To him or her, everyone—governors, parents, staff, pupils past and present, cooks and cleaners—should be able to relate. No doubt in very large schools it becomes almost impossible to keep the door of the head's room always open, yet it can be done. Anyone who has visited Mayfield and seen Margaret Miles at work knows what I mean. Even if the head is not actually in direct contact with each child—and I personally aim to teach every girl in my school at some point in her career—he or she is felt to be there, a focus and guardian for the whole community.

Schools are for many children now the only fixed institutions. Security and stability and a predictable system of values may sometimes be found in them alone. A certain fairness, even a just severity, is not so repellent to children as the current folklore suggests. It is no fun bouncing your ball against a wall made of cottonwool. Martin Buber expressed what I mean: "Trust, trust in the world because this human being exists—that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists, meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth." Arrogant words to apply to oneself, and expressing the ideal rather than the actual—yet have not we all known here and there teachers and schools that have seemed the guarantors of meaning in a distracted world?

Margaret Higginson is headmistress of Bolton School (Girls' Division).

Co-ed figures

Sir,—May I supplement the figures given by David Norris (September 10) which showed the vast disparity between the numbers of boys and girls taking science subjects in a sample of co-educational schools, with these figures from my own school?

Number of Science/Maths passes 73
Number of Arts passes 151
Number of General Studies passes 69 (Involving a 50 per cent science component)

Has any material been collected to supersede the figures given by the Ministry of Education in 1967, which indicated that "almost twice as many girls from single sex schools as from mixed schools, in proportion to the number of girls in each type, go on to read mathematics or science at university"?

Finally, might one suggest that it would be easier to form an accurate judgment if the Ministry would present its annual statistics in a different form? At present the tables of O and A level passes distinguish between boys and girls, but there is no means of knowing how many of these passes are gained by boys in boys' schools and how many by boys in mixed schools, and similarly for girls.

Academic achievement is only one element in a school's success, but it does offer the one ground on which objective evidence can be adduced and is therefore worth considering, especially at a time when it is so frequently said that we waste the ability of women.

MARGARET HIGGINSON,
Headmistress,
Bolton School (Girls' Division)

Science of selection

Girls in single sex schools do more science, at both O and A level, than girls in mixed schools. But boys in mixed schools do more science than boys in single sex schools, says a report published by the Gloucestershire education committee science advisory group.

Data collected in 19 grammar schools and two comprehensives into factors affecting choice of subjects in the sixth form showed that not only were there more boys doing science courses, but that they did more science. Girls do about 25 per cent fewer science subjects in mixed schools.

Girls lean towards arts subjects and away from the sciences, except biology, says the report. It appears that among both boys and girls more pupils are studying English literature, physics and pure mathematics than would have chosen freely to do so. More would have liked to study biology than are doing.

Enjoyment of the subject material is the first reason given for the choice of A level subjects. Computer sorting indicated that there was no difference between arts and science in this respect.

The large majority of pupils (82 per cent) saw a recognizable division between arts and science in school education. Most, though not as many (68 per cent), thought this division to be undesirable. In the same vein, the majority (more than 80 per cent) felt that a person who had studied both arts and science was better educated than one who had specialized in one area of learning.

Girls keener than boys

Girls in comprehensive schools are better motivated than boys and in a mixed class of 30 pupils only four would give cause for concern and only 1.5 would create serious problems.

A recent survey by Mr E. S. Conway, headmaster of the Jewish Free School in North London, showed that there was only one problem girl to about 10 highly motivated girls, compared with two problem boys to nine highly motivated boys.

Mr Conway, writing in the current issue of *Comprehensive Education*, analysed the summer-term reports of more than 1,000 boys and girls at his school, an eight-form entry comprehensive with a wide spread of ability among the intake. He found that when looking at motivation the lowest score of unsatisfactory assessments of all the years was among pupils of the first year. This was because children in their first year at secondary school were likely to be so interested in the novel opportunities that they would display an eager interest in their work.

Even so among first year children there was still a proportion of five girls to three boys with high motivation. "Girls, on the whole, appear to show a keener interest in their work and this may be because they are more mature, or more amenable to the conventional demands of teachers and of the subjects.

Comprehensive Education, Summer 1972 price 50p from Campaign for Comprehensive Education, 123 Portland Road, London, W11.

A maligned system that gets results

Sir,—Eric Midwinter (May 14), attacking Direct Grant schools, says: "We can estimate fairly accurately sixth form and university placements for a town by reference to its social position." And he clinches his argument by printing the following table:-

	Social Class I & II	Social Class IV & V	Sixth Formers	University entrants:
United Kingdom	20%	30%	19.5%	7%
Barnet	34%	17%	35%	16%
Barking	9%	36%	9%	2.5%

Had he examined the full table more closely he might have discovered Bolton, which figures thus:-

Bolton	15%	33%	17.8%	8.2%

In others words, this northern industrial town, predominantly working-class in composition, has a university entry well above the national average, though 69th in social class order of the 103 boroughs, it is 27th on university awards.

Could this have anything to do with the fact that it has five Direct Grant schools? Dr Midwinter's sneer at these schools for "brandishing their lower-class prodigies like reformed drunks at old style temperance rallies" reveals more about him than about the schools.

Margaret Higginson.

Bolton School, Lancashire.

ISIS Newsletter, winter 78-9

All Animals are equal...

(but some are less equal than others)

by Margaret Higginson
Headmistress of Bolton School (Girls Division)

It is an assumption frequently made that every pupil in an independent school comes from a wealthy home, or at least not from a very poor one. But is this true? Another uncontested assumption is that there are adequate State benefits to alleviate poverty, especially as regards children, and that these are universally available to all those who need them. All political parties tell us that they care, and the one presently in power would be particularly shocked if it were convicted of unfair discrimination against one small group of deprived children.

The provision of free school meals has been widely advertised both nationally and locally as a benefit available to all children in need. The income scale is fairly generous; if, after deductions for a number of essential items of expenditure, the total weekly income is no more than £38.00, all the children in the family get free dinners, and if you have ten children you can earn as much as £104 a week and still benefit. Such a scale seems to indicate a magnanimous concern on the part of our rulers for the poor and struggling. At least it would do so if all animals were equal. In fact, some are less equal than others.

On the foregoing scale a number of children in the independent sector of this ex-Direct Grant school appear to qualify for free meals for, in spite of a current fee of £699 per annum, they are either holding means-tested L.E.A.-assisted places or are paid for wholly or in part by Governors (whose recent "Open Door Appeal" has brought in £670,000 for twin boys' and girls' schools). It is thus by no means impossible for a child to attend this school whose parents – or in some cases single parent, for two of the instances I have most in mind are unsupported mothers – are well below the poverty line.

Their claim has not, however, been allowed. The free meals benefit has been denied to these parents on the ground that in opting out of the State system of education, parents have knowingly opted out of all welfare benefits connected with it. This is an argument one can accept logically, though regretfully, as it applies to uniform grants or bus-fares; one has to admit that if one chooses to send one's child on a ten-mile journey out of one's own area when she is entitled to a place in the school round the corner, then it is one's own responsibility and it would be hardly fair to expect the L.E.A. to pay for an unnecessary journey. But the food is a different matter. Children have to eat, and it costs no more to eat in an independent school – not in this one, anyway – than in a maintained one. And if the child were in the school round the corner, not only her school dinners would be chargeable to the public purse, but also the entire cost of her education, a burden now being voluntarily borne by her parents and/or the school Governors. The cost of dinners is a trifling item set against the huge saving to the education budget which arises from the existence of self-maintaining independent schools.

A CASE IN POINT

She is aged 16. Her parents are Salvation Army Officers; her father is almost blind. She is one of two children and the family's income is so low that they qualify and receive supplementary benefit.

The girl is bright. At the age of 11 she won a free local education authority place to a former direct grant school in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Recently the family moved to Sheffield, a city famous for its comprehensive schools. It is also one of the first cities to introduce a new educational maintenance grant for children who stay on at school after the statutory school leaving age.

Had the girl chosen to go to one of the city's comprehensives, rather than accept a place at Sheffield High School for Girls (a former direct grant school now independent) she would have received: free school meals, a uniform allowance and the new educational maintenance allowance of more than £7 a week because the parental income was below £2,000 a year.

The school, which is a member of the Girls Public Day School Trust, referred her case to the local education authority, but it refused to give her any help. The Headmistress has arranged for the girl to have free school lunches.

Mr. G. M. A. Harrison, Chief Education Officer for Sheffield, wrote as follows: "It is not my Committee's policy to give any financial assistance to pupils who are attending private schools, and, therefore, I am unable to give a secondary school maintenance allowance to this young lady."

What is the motive for denying this small but significant cash benefit, amounting to £45 a year, to one very small group of parents? It cannot be justified as an attack on the rich, for this group is by definition poor – otherwise they could not qualify for free meals. The motive seems rather to be a desire to punish these parents simply because, though poor, they dare to be independent. These are people who fight against the current, who exercise choice, who will make any sacrifices to give their children the chances they never had themselves. The old saying seems to be directly reversed – "He who will work shall not eat."

This may seem a very small matter to make a fuss about, but I raise it for two reasons.

Firstly, the exclusion of children in independent schools from entitlement to free school meals could form a precedent in a very much larger matter. There is currently much talk about Sixth Form grants. Are payments to boys and girls who stay on at school after sixteen (if such payments come) to be restricted to those in maintained schools? If so, parents will be caught both ways – besides paying large fees, they will also forfeit their right to receive a subsidy. This, no doubt, is what a lot of politicians want, but it would be patently unjust to citizens who, while paying their rates and taxes, have not made their children's education a charge on the State. It would also work against the strongest form of sixteen-nineteen education which we have, the independent school sixth form. (Perhaps I may be forgiven for making the point that this would militate especially against girls, who now stay on in far greater numbers in the girls' independent schools than they do in the largely mixed maintained ones; typically, the figure this year in my own school is ninety-six entering the Lower Sixth out of the ninety-nine girls who took 'O' Level).

My second reason for raising this matter is concerned with the 'image' of our schools and the gulf that seems to be widening in the public mind between independent schools and the rest. This is often seen as a gulf between rich and poor, but it is not so. There should not be any gulf at all. Parents should be free to choose whichever suits their child best – perhaps different systems for different children – and if they choose independence and are willing to work and pay for it, they should be admired and helped, not vindictively penalised. That many people share this view is proved by the tremendous response up and down the country to appeals for bursary funds. It seems mean-spirited in the Powers-that-be – and something very like humbug – to withhold from a few talented children a minor welfare benefit which is automatically available to everybody else.

The following extracts from the magazine of Sutton High School written by the teenage Margaret give an indication of what was to come. We have also included poems by Ceridwen (C.Cotes) as the two girls were so in tune with each other.

Under the Silvery Moon.

Under the silvery moon, the earth
Lies silent and sleepily still;
Save where an owl
With a sorrowful howl
Mingles its cry with the rippling rill.

A little grey rabbit skips silently by,
The shimmering leaves of the brushwood shake.
All nature is still,
Save the rambling rill,
But the moon will go, and the world will wake.

M. Higginson (*Upper III*[1].).

1929

The Awakening.

The great port stirs, and wakes.

The frowning ships are heaving at their anchors, impatient for the restless sea. Human specks appear upon them; other specks climb their steep sides; men are everywhere, insignificant, all pervading. The great mechanism of the port is in motion.

On one side lie the impressive liners, with towers of gaily painted decks. Away from them, float the cargo boats and barges, dirty workers of the sea. By them run railway lines, smothered with trucks, and men exchanging goods.

Suddenly, the bellow of a siren screeches through the mist-thick air, and, amidst cries and wavings, a great liner steams out to sea, the first of the outward procession of the day.

One of the giant warehouses opens its cracked doors, and from its loft the lift takes its load of cotton and wool in bales, while all along the wharves below a crane is loading barrels of wine and kegs of rum upon a blackened cargo ship.

Another majectic liner weighs her anchor and swings gently to the eternal lilt of the boundless sea, moving, bending, bowing, heaving towards the misty sea. Then, past the harbour bar . . . .

M. Higginson (*Form Upper IV*[1]).

1932

On Battle Abbey: A Sonnet.

Upon this tranquil ground a realm was won;
Here fell the English king, his power rent.
The conqueror raised a noble monument
Where by quiet monks the web of peace was spun.

The golden light of the fast fading sun
Upon the softly shaded grass, is spent;
The Abbey soars, high and magnificent,
Black in the primrose sky, massed into one.

So does the call of War together weld
A million paths into one common way:
But battle kills itself, and war must cease
At some exhausted point: the tumult quelled
Come quieter builders of an Empire's sway:
Light behind dark, and after battle, peace. 1933

M. D. Higginson (*Form Lower VI*).

Moment.

Blue wood-smoke curling through the leaves
So palely green,
Drooping and veined like languid hands,
And the light between;

The lucid evening light of Spring,
And the smoke scent strong,
Ripened to instant perfectness
With blackbird's song.

The nectar has o'er-brimmed the cup
Of the gods on high,
And there hangs on the web of time a drop
Of eternity

C. Cotes (*Form Upper VI*).

Delight.

Delight is too intense and deep
To satisfy its own desire;
There is no perfect joy but sleep
That darkly quenches every fire.

All wonder sharpens points of longing
To stab my own unguarded mind;
But I had rather hurts came thronging
Than be in numb oblivion blind.

1936

M. D. HIGGINSON (*Form Upper VI*).

End of Fine Weather.

Now I am glad because the wind
Is freshening up for rain;
There will be wetness on the earth
And cold in the air again.

Now I am glad because the sky
Is clouded with repose;
Its weary blue is steeped in white
Pure as Antarctic snows.

Now I am glad because not long
Perfection lives alone,
And glimpsed elation leaves behind
Refreshing monotone.

1937

M. D. HIGGINSON (*Upper VI*).

UPON the kerb they wait
In chill grey weather,
In rutted routine separate;
The 'bus is late.

Above, the misting sky,
The traffic flashes,
The black Macadam road swoops by
Before their eye.

For many miles around
Spread road and pavement,
So many miles of living ground
Cemented, tar-bound.

Initial urge is gone
From man, earth, 'weather
This Almond-tree I look upon—
A skeleton.

And yet its branches leap
With naked vigour
Skyward, although the clouds are deep
As winter sleep.

The buds are swelling white
With bud skins bursting,
The central core enswathed from sight
Pushing to light.

Such eager wakening
The young world knew,
Whose forests teemed with quickening
In early Spring.

C. Corus (*Upper VI*).

A round retort (provoking flat disagreement?)

Triangular Man
With his apex of brain
Likes his geometry
Perfectly plane.

For spherical Woman
A different art –
She finds it more human
To live by the heart.

"Le Coeur a ses raisons".
Has your raison a coeur?
What price a liaison
Between him and her?

(inspired by Henry Judge, 197-?)

‘An Afterthought’ is a short history of the Girls’ Division, written in Margaret’s inimitable style and culminating in congratulations to the Boys’ Division on their hundredth birthday.

An Afterthought

In the main courtyard of Bolton School grow two horse-chestnut-trees. One, on the boys’ side, is large and mature; thrusting up on the girls’ side is its junior companion, planted within the last ten years or so. They have not yet quite reached the point of intertwining but the event is foreseeable and symbolic.

Though so much younger than the boys’ school, the girls’ division is venerable among the ranks of girls’ schools. Their timetable is quite different. The first public day school for girls, Miss Buss’s North London Collegiate School, was opened only in 1850, and when in 1877 a group of far-sighted Bolton citizens came together to found a girls’ high school they were in the forefront of a movement which was sweeping England. Everywhere the claim of girls to have ‘a sound English education’ was being recognised. What was a little unusual was the strong Dissenting element among the founders, many of whom were connected with Bank Street Unitarian Chapel, a tradition perpetuated by our present Chairman of the Girls’ Committee, Miss Rosamund Taylor. Each founder guaranteed £200. Most notable were Mr. and Mrs. W. Haslam; she served as a governor for forty-five years and their son Will Haslam, who earned excellent reports from 1895-8 in the Kindergarten (the forerunner of Beech House) is happily still with us and may claim to be our most distinguished and loyal Old Boy.

The first thing to do was to find a Headmistress. To this end they advertised for “an efficient lady teacher” who was ”required to teach the following subjects – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, English, History and Needlework: French and Latin language also preferred.” As an afterthought she was also required to ‘organise the school’ and for all this she was to receive £100 a year – a magnificent salary for a woman in those days. Present-day parents may perhaps be filled with nostalgia on learning that the fees were originally four guineas per annum- but they went up almost as regularly as they do now,. Even this modest sum proved hard to extract from the parental pockets – the Minute Books are full of accounts of tussles with defaulting fathers: for twenty years the school was to be run on the narrowest financial margin, always in danger of closing down. Twenty-two pupils were recruited and the school opened under Miss Eliza Kean in a room of the Mechanics’ Institute on October 1st, 1877.

There seems to have been surprisingly little prejudice to be overcome. No-one seems to have objected, as they frequently did elsewhere, that examinations would impair the natural modesty of the female sex, or , more frankly, that "young gentlemen do not like brains in a woman." At any rate, the first Prizegiving in January, 1879 seems to have been a genial affair, with great stress laid on the benefit likely to accrue to the town. Mr W. Hart, for instance, said that "he felt there was a great want in this town of a school similar to the Bolton Boys' Grammar School for the advantage of girls." Mr Mason went further and after remarking on the brilliant achievements of the boys of Bolton in Chemistry, jovially added that "he was afraid they would find the girls beating the boys. The boys, he had no doubt, would try to hold their own."

The account occupying three full columns of the Evening News, of the second Prizegiving in December, 1879, is even more enlightening, not only as it shows the state of the school but even more as it reflects the Bolton of that day. An unkind anecdote is told about the competition for the Thomasson Exhibition in 1878: "it was characteristic of the place and the class that the father of one of the visiting boys should have expressed a wish to take his son's exhibition in cash!" (laughter). This slight was indignantly repudiated by another speaker, who said "that there was not another town the size of Bolton which could present so many ladies and gentlemen who had so deep, earnest and intelligent an interest in matters of education." There were interesting contrasts in the social attitudes on the platform. One speaker assumed, as might be expected at that date that secondary education should be available only to one-seventh of the population which belonged to "the upper and middle classes"; whereas the visitor, Professor Wilkins of Owens College, lived nobly up to the democratic reputation of that place of learning. " He had been told of a lady in Manchester - for a lady she was in every sense of the word although engaged in the retail business - who had been to one or another, three or four, of the good schools, the schools of high repute, where she could get a sound education for a promising girl of hers, who had been turned from the door of every one of them. Well he (the speaker) thought such a state of things as that - where a girl of high promise was refused the opportunity of a sound education because her mother was in the retail trade - could not be allowed to exist any longer." (applause) He believed all these new public day schools ought to be "absolutely free from snobbery and class-distinctions." (Hear, hear) His remarks were evidently well-received. Nor was it long before free scholarships were given at the High School, first by private generosity and after 1905 as a necessary condition of the school entering into the Board of Education scheme.

When in 1880 Miss Kean departed, the committee advertised in a London paper for “a first-class Headmistress”- and they got her, although she was already in Bolton. Mrs Sarah Corbett had her own school in Silverwell Street, which now amalgamated with the High School and moved to 39, Chorley New Road, up which it has been edging its way ever since. As Miss Woodhead she had been one of the first three students at Girton, and the first to take the Mathematical Tripos. She is still remembered in the College song –

Let us give three cheers
For Woodhead, Cooke
and Lumsden
The Girton pioneers:

Sad to say, her health broke down in 1881, so her reign was short, but she seems to have given the school its direction for many years to come. From 1890 onwards there has almost always been at least one Bolton girl at Cambridge, often reading Mathematics. “ I have rarely examined a school” said the Cambridge Visiting Examiner in 1883, “which has done better in Algebra.” “As far as my experience of girls’ schools extends” says another visitor in 1885, “ it is in Mathematics that the School takes a distinct lead. The teaching is most thorough and methodical, and it is rare that I see, either amongst the boys or girls, so large a proportion of papers showing such an intelligent grasp of Mathematical principles…..”

The Cambridge tradition now established itself, for Mrs. Corbett’s successor was Miss Vokins, again a Mathematician and one of the first students of Newnham. Her photograph, which looks down on the present Headmistress’s desk alongside the penetrating, intellectual regard of Mrs. Corbett, is a surprising one. For one thing, she looks so young; for another she has the air of an Emily Bronte rather than of a Victorian headmistress – a passionate, dark, romantic eye. She lacks, too, the high-boned collar and the cameo brooch. However, her six years seem to have been marked by nothing more dramatic than steady progress and the move to “Hopefield”. The jocose prediction (“We shall have the girls beating the boys!”) was fulfilled when in 1882 F.E.Bevan came first in the Bolton Centre for the Cambridge Local Examination. The girls were evidently finding that Jane Austen’s maxim - “If a woman have the misfortune of knowing anything, she should conceal it as well as she can” – was one to be discarded in examinations, however effective it may remain to this day as a guide to social success.

When in 1887 Miss Johnson came (once more from Newnham) to be Headmistress, what seems to have been the Aesthetic Period set in. She was related to Macmillans the publisher and they gave 68 volumes to start a school library. The Magazine was founded. Miss Jarvis, too, came to teach "History, English, Sewing, Singing, Drill and Games"- Miss Jarvis who "had red-gold hair and wore dresses of Liberty serge; blue, green and golden-brown", and read poetry in a thrilling voice every Friday. Even the first Athletic Sports (888) seem to have been rather graceful. ("Light refreshments to be provided and a string band to be engaged.") But hockey, so surviving members of the club founded in 1891 aver, was never and nowhere played more ruthlessly. (Incidentally, in 1908, Albert Ward supplied six hockey sticks for 4/6d!)

Healthy murmurs of protest against too much brain-work too, are heard in the first School Magazine in 1893. –

Bolton Town's in Lancashire,
By famous Manchester City;
The River Croal, so dirty and small
Washes it (when it's washed at all);
But when begins my ditty,
In the year 1893,
The children suffering to see
From lessons: 'twas a pity:

But on the whole the Nineties were far more Noble than Naughty. The aesthetic note is heard in the accounts of pictures in the form-rooms and the ubiquitous form-mottoes. The Third Form had " Infinite is the help man can yield to man" in a tangle of wild roses, the First Form "'Tis only noble to be good", Form III A soared into Latin with "Omnia labor vincit" and the Fifth Form chose one that seems a little ambiguous – "Pitch your behaviour low, your projects high!" The whole school adopted Tennyson's

"Let knowledge grow from more to more
Yet more of reverence in us dwell."

Yet in Miss Johnson's own Reports the quotations are not from Tennyson, but Wordsworth's more austere formidable vision –

"A perfect woman, meekly planned
To warn to comfort, or command."

The private drafts of her speeches remain, with many underlinings and crossings-out, expressing a voluble, generous and impetuous character. Even today she strikes me as very modern in her emphasis on doing and making things instead of just absorbing knowledge, and on the social side of school life. She evidently grasped the great advantage which girls' schools had at this time (as a compensation for this lack of tradition) – their freedom to tackle education in a new way. Thus she claims "our Tuesday afternoon Arts and Crafts classes" as a unique institution. It is her strong opinion that "modern languages should be taught from a practical point of view – ie. not narrowly and commercially practical, but so as to enable us to get at and appreciate the thoughts and feelings of a person of different nationality from our own." Poor Miss Johnson! She had her exasperations. Although in 1891 Fanny Smethurst "has been never absent, never late for a whole year" she is a singular paragon; far too many pupils attend irregularly (especially on the morrow of holidays!) and call forth this cri-de-coeur: " I shall hate to appear - or to be - rigid or unsympathetic - no-one more desires than I to maintain a discipline which should be flexible and spontaneous, rather than formal and forced…." but what is she to do with these frivolous, unpunctual girls? Or with their mothers? Privately she records her interviews with them – "Mother gives them holiday for Royal weddings - I remonstrate." "Mother complains windows open in classroom (five minutes on account of smoke!)" " I have fainted (feint?) in Arts and Crafts." And what is one to make of this cryptic entry? "Mother says A is deaf, she is grieved about book and has seen a boy on Tuesday morning looking over a hedge"…….?

When she left Bolton in 1895, Miss Johnson went to keep house for her brother Willy, a notable don of King's College, Cambridge, and there in Edwardian times she entertained Will Haslam. He still remembers: "Fanny was full of well-meaning, amateurish magicals, and very intense. One had to be careful not to be caught in her traps." A surprising glimpse of a retired headmistress.

The milestone of the 1890s was the move in 1891 (with 67 girls) to Park Road (now the Boys' Division Junior School). This new building was the last word in school design and was rapturously appreciated. It was opened by the great Mrs. Henry Fawcett, whose speech on the occasion might have been given today, so typical are its warnings on 'specialisation' and 'over-pressure'. It is simple and profound. Sentiment and coyness have been left far behind. "The opening of the avenue of education and freedom to women" she said " has been an unmixed good. By this means the powers of the mind have been developed to be used, not for selfish ends - above all, not for self-display - but for the good of others. Such women must add to the national strength and greatness of England."

From this point onwards the school never looked back. In 1893 began the longest span in the school's history, the headship of Miss Olivia Dymond. (another Newnham mathematician) which lasted for twenty-six years. There was never any doubt that Miss Dymond was a great headmistress. In 1906 His Majesty's Inspectors congratulated the Governors on having " a very capable headmistress who is exercising a good influence on the girlhood of Bolton, not only intellectually but in other ways, not less important in the formation of their characters. Her influence is felt in every corner of the school." Like all those of her type and generation she worked incessantly. She did not even have a secretary until 1911. She attended to every detail. She kept, for instance, a scrap book in which she pasted every receipt or postcard received from the War Charities throughout the Great War. She introduced school uniform and compulsory games and she is the first (but not the last) Head Mistress who is described as issuing a circular " on the importance of the children's clothes being clearly marked." When the King proclaimed a week's holiday in honour of the Coronation in 1911, such was her devotion to duty that she said " the girls taking the Higher Certificate cannot possibly spare the time from their study" and gave up her own holiday to stay with them. One hopes they were grateful. Miss Dymond was followed by the magnificent Miss M.H.Meade (1919-38).

She had been a girl under Miss Beale at Cheltenham Ladies' College and her adventurous spirit had led her to India and Egypt; she brought to the school wider horizons and celebrated friends. She recruited distinguished staff, among them Miss Drury who was to stay forty-five years at Beech House, and Miss Bishop who brought lacrosse from St. Andrew's and founded a still lively tradition. It was she who presided over the move to the new building, where she insisted on absolutely first-rate quality in every fitment. She evidently had the energy and brilliance of lightning, and some of its terror. Her successor, Miss Varley (1938-54) was of softer mould, more self-effacing but no less strong. In her day everything was calm and kind; no-one ran in the corridors or shouted in the form-rooms, and she began every day by taking out a large yellow duster. From time to time she sends us benign messages from retirement in Sussex.

The impossible task of recording more recent developments, of which the last decade has been full, will not be attempted- what is intended here is merely a grace-note to the full and stately theme of this book. They are in any case much better known. But if one looks at the line of development from 1877 to 1974 there is a clear, unwavering direction: a steady aspiration towards intellectual excellence, a keen loyalty and pleasure in belonging to a growing community, and a gradual convergence with the much older establishment next door.

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The most significant date in the school's history is 1913, when the first Viscount Leverhulme coupled it with the old Boys' Grammar School in a single indissoluble Foundation. That he saw its potentiality as an equal partner in that enterprise, is one more proof, if one were needed, of his magnanimity and foresight. Very few business men in 1913 would have considered girls to be worthy of equal treatment with boys, with exactly corresponding facilities for science and sport and the same right to an atmosphere of dignity and tradition. Visitors to the Chorley New Road have been known to have been carried past in the bus and to exclaim, when enlightened " But I thought that couldn't be a girl's school; only boys' school look like that!"

Though younger in history we are very much contemporaries and comrades in the present, and certain to be partners in the future. So it gives the Girls' Division great pleasure to congratulate Big Brother on his four-hundredth birthday and to wish him many happy returns of the day.

Margaret Higginson

The following item is a record of a visit made by Margaret to Mrs Winder of Sheffield, who was a daughter of one of the founders of the High School.

In 1958 Margaret paid a visit to Mrs Winder of Sheffield, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Wm. Haslam. She produced a written record of that visit.

Record of visit to Mrs Winder, Sheffield, on Saturday, Feb 1st 1958

She was the second eldest child of Mr and Mrs Wm. Haslam. (The first child died.) Mr Wm. Haslam is her youngest and only surviving brother. Her mother had been the daughter of Mr Robert Heywood, 2nd Mayor of Bolton, Charles Darbishire's friend and fellow-traveller. (Among the portraits of her forbears is one of a Shawcross connection- Sir Hartley Shawcross is a nephew(?) of Dr Helen Darbishire's) Other family connections are the Crooks.

The High School was mainly supported by Bank Street members – ie. Mr Biggs (who gave children sweets) Miss Bowman, Mr Thomasson, Mrs Winkworth, and Mr Isaac Barrow (an old Grammar School master whose face had been twisted by a boy punching him.) Miss Waddington (she thinks) was a Quaker. Other names of the first committee mean nothing to her.

Her parents (also of course of Bank Street) were the moving spirits and it was almost all her mother's idea. "My father did anything she told him to!" Miss Heywood had been educated at a school in Knutsford kept by Miss Corbett (?) who was probably a Unitarian- at any rate she married one. She gave Miss Heywood progressive ideas! Later she went to Holly Hill, a Unitarian school in London. Her first action on leaving school was to send a subscription to the Manchester Branch of the Women's Suffrage Movement – but she was a suffragist, not a suffragette. Although she lived until the vote was won she never used hers because to her disappointment there was no election in Bolton. She was one of the first women Guardians, and would have liked to be Mayor. She was a friend of Mrs Fawcett. She was ' interested in everything' 'anxious and full of theories about her children'- but gave them freedom. ("I was always happy at home.") When the girls left school they were expected to help with the Girls' Club: Mrs Winder shared in this with Mrs Atherton (née Tillotson), who had been at the North London Collegiate School. Mrs Winder herself had two years at Wimbledon High School.

Mrs Winder remembers much talk at home about the High School, thinks her parents had to come to the rescue financially. They always insisted on paying generous salaries to their teachers. There were never enough pupils to make it pay properly – "We were promised a holiday when we got to 100 but we never did!" Mr Lever would never give anything to help the girls! (until much later on)

Mrs Winder remembers Miss Vokins as 'very neat' but Miss Johnson was the one she loved. She was gay and kind and taught several subjects, Scripture among them. She and Miss Jarvis and Miss ? acted the Three Witches from 'Macbeth' at one of Mrs Haslam's 'At Homes' – she was evidently not prim. You could not imagine Miss Dymond doing this – she did not like Miss Dymond (but other people did, or at any rate greatly respected her).

They used to play hockey with thin ash sticks. Katie Kenyon's button boots took too long to do up! Katie came by train, but when her mother decided the pony-trap was a luxury Mrs Winder had to walk - her brother William remembers having to run along after "Sister Freda's black legs that went so fast!" She had a pink silk dress for the opening of the Park Road building in 1891 and was very proud of it; Mrs Fawcett had grey silk and a bouquet. In those days growing up was much more exciting than now - putting your hair up marked an epoch. She remembers the Park Road ceremony very well; afterwards the Bank Street minister (Mr Coe?) wrote to her mother to protest vehemently against the words of "Now thank we all our God" – ie. "The Son and Him who reigns With Them in Highest Heaven". No Unitarian should countenance that! - particularly when he occupies a seat on the platform!

Her only critical memory of Miss Johnson is that she tried to make her (Freda) more friendly with a "scholarship girl" "But I am friendly to her!" "But you should ask her to play with you." "I couldn't! She was horrid!"

Miss Johnson evidently felt the possession of wealth was a special reason for public spirit; again when a picture ('A flight of fieldfares') was given to the school and Freda wanted it for her own classroom, Miss Johnson said, "What right have you to decide?" and gave it to another. In spite of this they all liked her. There were few rules. They never, needless to say, had any contact with the Boys' Grammar School - although Christine Matthews did tell Freda "My brother would like to marry you only you have too much money!"

Much later in life Mrs Winder once met Miss Varley. "I knew Bolton would be safe with her!"

The two 'Guardian' articles which follow were written by Margaret after the publication of 'Learning and Living: a Feminine Viewpoint', a survey based on a questionnaire sent out to Old Girls in 1960.

It will be fascinating for present students and Old Girls to consider the statistics given and to compare them with present-day statistics, e.g. 32% of all married women doing full or part-time work outside the home.

Learning and living (1)

by Margaret Higginson

WHEN Whitehead observed that "uneducated clever women, who have seen much of the world, are in middle life so much the most cultured part of the community," he scored a double hit against his own sex and against formal education, which, he complained, paralysed the mind with "inert ideas." This is a depressing thought for anyone engaged in that rather expensive and laborious process. If Whitehead was right, why, in fact, do we educate anyone, and least of all that half of mankind which, until about a century ago, used to be free from academic tyranny? Has the whole trend of schooling for girls been wrong? A liberation or an enslavement?

The latest attack has come, not from traditional masculine sources, but from the ultimate products of the system, the "graduate wives" whose frustrations are so widely advertised, in the "Guardian" and elsewhere. Wondering whether their discontent was really typical, and, on a wider scale, whether grammar school education was vitally relevant to women's adult lives, the Old Girls' Association of Bolton School decided to explore the experience and opinions of former pupils whose ages range from 18 to 82.

We recognised at the outset three disadvantages of this consumer-research project. The first was that the special circumstances of the inquiry would induce at once more intimacy and more reserve than would be the case in an impersonal survey. Perhaps many problems and frustrations exist which have not been frankly expressed. Secondly, we knew that we were more likely to hear from those who were happy and successful, although we stressed that we especially wanted answers from the less academic "ordinary" people. Thirdly, it is natural to regard with approval, at any rate in retrospect, the process by which one's own attitudes have been formed. There is a danger of self-congratulation, both for the Old Girls and for the school. Perhaps we have been seeing our wrinkled face in a rose-tinted glass.

No doubt among the 50 per cent who did not reply there are some who are unhappy, indifferent, even hostile, but evidence suggests that the commonest reason for abstention was diffidence, especially among very recent leavers. In any case, the thing is not to be taken too seriously. We are only amateurs writing for amateurs, not claiming a deep significance for what we regard as an experiment in friendly conversation. To us at any rate the voices seem fresh and candid.

The school (now on the direct grant list and forming, with the separate boys' division, half of the single Foundation, Bolton School), is typical of those founded in the 1870s, informed from the start with a spirit of plain living and high thinking, with industrious habits and ever-present reminders of social responsibility. Because it is a local day-school, its Old Girls form a fairly homogeneous group, but with considerable variations of social and economic background. ("My mother went to work at 12". . ." My mother was one of the first undergraduates of Somerville College". . .). Similarly, the range of its products is varied too, but within well defined limits: no film stars, no MPs, no society hostesses, but here and there an eminent don, an actress, a research chemist, a woman near the top in business, a missionary doctor.

We designed our questionnaire to discover both facts and attitudes. Some of the former may be briefly summarised.

Of 250 respondents, 19 had left school before 1920 (two in 1896), and 107 during the past ten years. The proportion of married women among those who left before 1950 was 78 per cent. Further training had been taken by 237 on leaving school, and all but two had completed their courses. Most had worked for some years before marriage, in the younger group many had worked after marriage too. As might be expected the age of marriage had declined steeply, but only ten of the 56 who had left since 1955 were married by 1960. Obviously training is still taken seriously and marriage is deferred at least until that is finished.

A heavily disproportionate number of graduates sent in replies—83, or 33 per cent—which is far in excess of the real proportion of girls going to university, even in recent years. Moreover, of these 83, 31 were "Oxbridge"—again, a disproportionate number. The next largest groups were 54 who had trained as teachers and 38 in secretarial work; there were also various minority groups.

We asked for details about size of families. This question could only be fairly asked of the 41 wives who had been married 15 years or more; on this very small scale we were interested to find that graduates had a clear lead of an average of 2.16 children apiece to the nongraduates' 1.6, which corroborates a point made by Mrs Hubback in "Wives who went to College."

Although 32 per cent of all our married women were doing full or part-time work outside the home, only two of these had children below school age, and those were both teachers who took toddlers to school with them. Many of our respondents said emphatically that more opportunities for part-time work would be welcome; only 18 per cent dissented from this.

The idea of training for new careers later in life, on which we also asked for comment, was plainly new to many but on the whole it was well received. There was a pretty even balance of two strong feelings: an almost unanimous agreement that "being a proper mother" must come first, and a sense of obligation not to waste gifts and training, especially noticeable in the younger groups.

A typical summing up came from a recent Oxford graduate, already engaged. "Given my health and strength, I should like to live what most people would call this 'double life' (marriage and teaching), though I hope to prove that both are really parts of one life."

(A second article by Miss Higginson, who is headmistress of Bolton School (Girls' Division) will appear on Friday.)

Learning and living

by Margaret Higginson

The second of two articles on women's education based on an inquiry conducted by the Old Girls' Association of Bolton School

THE second half of the Bolton School questionnaire to its former pupils was directed to finding out what was most remembered and valued in school education, what old things ought to be discarded and what new introduced, and how much school had really helped the total adjustment to adult life. The answers were fluent and fascinating, and quite irreducible to statistical terms. The effect was of a massive yet not uncritical vote of confidence in academic education. Only five out of 250 definitely said it had failed to fit them for their subsequent lives and only nine wanted something basically different for their daughters (three of these the same curriculum in a co-educational setting).

The greatest unanimity was on moral and social training, the habit of responsibility, the ingrained sense of right and wrong that was "like a second conscience." It struck us sharply that, on this point particularly, the generations spoke with one voice; 1959 said almost the same thing as 1912. Of course there were some striking contrasts: "I wish we had learnt to talk to boys," said 1946; "I feel at home and at ease with all types of people," says 1958, "no matter what their background—whether they are doctors or teachers or the local coalman!" The confident attitude predominated.

We were surprised by the strength of the approval for academic studies. "We took 'science' for granted as a subject . . . I should feel very ill-educated without it (especially as my husband is a scientist!)." "The most useful subjects were Latin and Greek, which taught me to be clear and articulate in my own language, by the use of which I earn my living." (Very few say the time spent on Latin was wasted.) Perhaps one ought to balance these typical comments with the cri-de-coeur of a vicar's wife: "A knowledge of medieval French romances doesn't help much with the Mothers' Union!" (But her husband added a footnote, "Education is never wasted.") The main point is that so many of our respondents speak of the value of being made to work strenuously and to think for themselves.

Asked what they would like to have learnt that they did not, one in every four said "More modern languages," with an emphasis on conversation and a bias towards Russian. Close behind was the demand for more practical domestic science and there were very articulate minority groups wanting more art, music, and current affairs. But hardly anyone wanted to give anything up, for the traditional policy, typical of girls' grammar schools, of a broad, general five-year course was heavily endorsed. As to the sixth form: "I feel we concentrated too much on academic subjects, and not enough on the wider issues of politics, philosophy, and religion" (Cambridge Wrangler); "I would have fewer subjects of 'cultural' interest if they cannot be studied deeply" (Oxford don). Most just want the best of both worlds.

We asked about present activities and tastes and whether there was enough scope for women today. On balance the answer to this was "yes" but many examples were given of lingering prejudice against women—e.g. in medicine, pharmacy, industry, as motorists. Most felt that it depended on the woman herself, that home-making was itself a career, that talents could be used "if she does not always want to exchange them for money." Here and there real frustration was expressed: "It is the being alone that defeats women"; "Graduates are apt to find themselves visibly turning into cabbages. . . ." But this young Oxford graduate was answered by an older one, the mother of five children: "Let no one tell me such an education has been wasted on married life! I can think of none which would have prepared me better for its vicissitudes!"

The general view was summed up thus: "I think graduate mothers get too sorry for themselves—they should use their brains and training to get to know their less-educated neighbours and to organise their work so that they have more leisure time in which to follow their own interests."

To the question, "Does your outlook differ from that of your mother?" the answers were about equally divided. There were thoughtful comments on "the common problem" which exists where almost illiterate parents see higher education simply as a means of "getting on." "Later they may be hurt and puzzled to find they and their children have grown apart." It is pleasant to set against this the splendid mother who, deprived of a chance herself, is "the proudest grandmother in England" now that she has one grand-daughter at Oxford, and another at a training college. "She is fiercely approving of education for women and so am I."

The general impression, underlined by some appreciative and lively comments from husbands, is of fulfilment and happiness. These women have positive, energetic attitudes and little use for self-pity. They do not, on the whole, regret their decisions in life. And they certainly do not deplore having had an academic education nor feel it is irrelevant to the main business of living.

It often seems to be assumed that the more a woman knows about philosophy or history or science the less responsive she will be to the life of the senses and the emotions. Is not the exact contrary the truth? Dr Johnson's illustration of happiness still holds good: "A small drinking glass and a large one may be equally full; but the large one holds more than the small." Anything, in fact, that deepens the mind deepens also the capacity for pleasure—and for suffering.

However, the answers to the questionnaire are seldom as solemn as that. Perhaps this very condensed summary may end with a tail-piece from a husband (I quote it with apologies to the august institution in Fallowfield—a cat may smile at a king): "I had a very limited education at Manchester Grammar School. There is no doubt that the more general education of my wife has helped her greatly to live a very full married life. . . . One of my children explained to a visiting parson not long ago that 'Mummy is the clever one in our family!'"

[Copies of "Learning and Living: a Feminine Viewpoint," the full report of the inquiry, may be obtained from Mrs B. Vause, Bank House, Blackburn Road, Bolton, Lancashire: price 2s 6d.]

The following extracts are from the Headmistress's reports on Speech Day. Far from being a dry account of the year's activities Margaret's reports always written and presented with a happy blend of precision, warmth and appreciation for her staff. Quite apart from the necessary statistics and information to be replayed there was always some nugget to take away and ponder on.

Extracts from Speech Day reports

1954 – Thank you for the extraordinarily kind welcome I have received since I came to Bolton. I suppose no one was ever made to feel at home more quickly. The thing which strikes me most is Bolton's strong and satisfying sense of its own identity. It is big enough to afford variety, but not so big as to have lost its personality, it seems to be a place to which one can really belong.

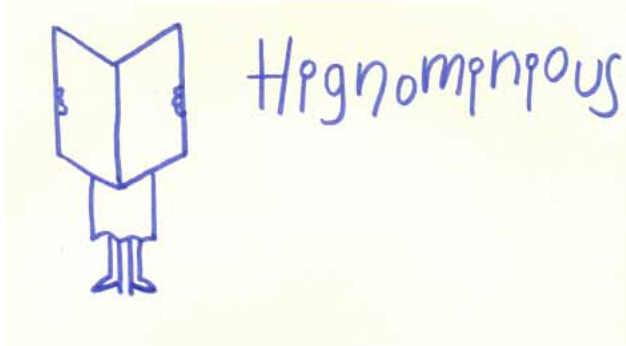
1955- As for the rest of the Staff – well, a staff is a thing to lean on, and I certainly lean on mine. The School would be nothing without them. A lot is written of late about the declining quality of the teaching profession, as if it were a poor second choice in life, but I see absolutely no evidence for that view. On the contrary, it seems to me to go on attracting, as it has always done, some of the very best people; and we are lucky here in having a delightful mixture of wise experiences and fresh enthusiasm. I am sure that with such a staff this will continue to be what Miss Varley called it – 'A Happy School

1956 -Like all good schools, we aim at something rather portentously called an ideal of liberal culture, which we approach from various directions. …we hope to maintain the proper mutual respect and equilibrium of Arts and Sciences. But to keep this balance we have to relate both kinds of study to what matters more than either, the pursuit of simple goodness. Fortunately girls are no longer faced with that depressing Victorian option of being either good or clever- often the brightest mind goes with the finest nature; but to show the right relationship of knowledge to virtue and to develop integrity and humility and imagination, it is, of course, utterly essential to have good teachers- good in every sense- and these we are fortunate enough to have.

1957 – The life of a school always seems to me rather like a complicated and never-ending piece of music, and in that music, there are certain deep chords which are sustained for a long while, forming a background to many charming trills and flourishes. In our symphony there are certain people who have held these notes for many years, without whom our world would seem quite different. They are the standard –setters for the rest of us.

1958- I sometimes wonder whether our atmosphere is almost too good. When one reads articles such as the recent series in the 'Observer' on Adolescence, one gathers that there is nothing more sinister than apparent normality. Rebellion, rudeness, violence and misery are said to be the signs of health and if you have a teenager who answers politely when spoken to, shuts the door quietly, washes up more or less willingly, actually likes wearing school uniform and is quite fond of old Aunt Eliza, then you are in for a bad time of it later on. All I can say is that if those are the signs of maladjustment, we must have a lot of potential neurotics in this school, because, on the whole, our girls appear happy, friendly and law-abiding. They even read articles on Adolescence and laugh at them. Of course the school does not claim more than a small share of the credit- that belongs to their families- but as far as the school atmosphere is responsible for what strikes me as a healthy state of happiness the credit belongs to the staff.

Janet Hathaway, who was Head Girl 1965-66 ad an excellent working relationship with Margaret during her term of office (and afterwards!) and Margaret was delighted when Janet presented her with the following collection of cartoons.



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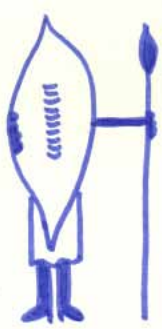

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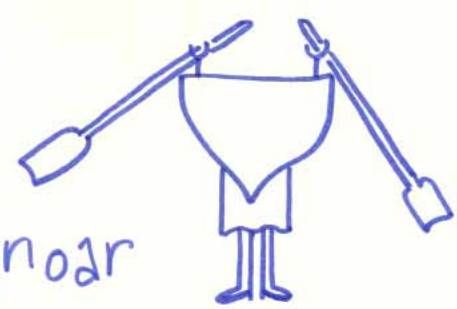

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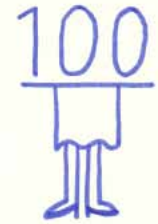


Introduction to MDH's prize 'The education of girls in the 19th century'

Introduction to MDH' s prize essay "The Education of girls in the l9th Century. (Written when she was in the Sixth Form at Sutton High School during the mid-1930s.)

As you might expect, (and you won't be disappointed), this is an amazing piece, which brings together her wide knowledge of the period both in literature and what would later be called social history. Written nearly 70 years ago, when she was a schoolgirl herself, it lays out the core beliefs that we later knew and respected. It's also very entertaining.

Her punctuation and grammar are impeccable as always, and apart from one rather endearing spelling-mistake that we all made at Bolton School ("predjudice"), it's transcribed just as she wrote it.

She examines in detail the first century in which girls' education made real progress, and notes that women were officially admitted to Oxford in 1919. But it comes as a shock to read that Cambridge had still not given in on his point at the time she was writing.

In happy memory of the many arguments we had on this topic in later years, a few points arise.

P.2. The first author to draw her fire is Rousseau, insisting that a young girl should be educated entirely for the convenience of men. Even worse, that this servitude must be constantly and visibly demonstrated, whether genuine or not.

(30 years later I remember an uneasy silence in class when I pointed out that Rousseau's interest in the development of his own (illegitimate) infants ended on the steps of the local foundling-hospital.)

P.3. She cites her beloved Jane Austen as one of the luckier girls of the late 18th C., in that she had access to a good library and sensible parents, unlike many from wealthier homes, whose education was designed to give the high polish that made them socially successful, and little else. (She can't have read one of her later favourites, Middlemarch, at this stage, or we'd have the cold elegant sylph Rosamond Vincy, whom MDH quoted to us as "the soft white mushroom that pushes up the paving-stone." Rosamond has picked up the impressive style of her piano-tutor at Mrs.Lemon's Academy and young Dr.Lydgate mistakes her for a woman of intelligent feeling. She mistakes him for a man of property, and therein lies their tragedy.)

P.4. She has no time for feminine frailty and is a trifle hard on poor little Harriet Smith in "Emma" who "fell down in a faint when she met a gypsy." In fact Harriet was mobbed by a whole pack of gypsies after her purse and was lucky to be rescued before she was robbed.

P.5. Horribile dictu! Poetic diction rears its ugly head in the genteel magazines of 1809, where all the girls have mouths that are “portais of coral” and “teeth whiter than pearls.” The text is so overgrown with poetic fungus that it’s quite impossible to tell what’s happening to Elvira and her admirer Augustus.

P.S. MDH cites “Mangnall ‘s Questions” as “the horrible primer”, a sort of tyrannical textbook that imposed knowledge by the question-and-answer method, as if life were a sort of chilly perpetual “Mastermind”. There are several other disparaging references to this book, including p.11, where the Royal Commissioners reporting on the condition of endowed schools in 1863 complained that it led only to parrot-learning of disconnected strings of information. This seems more like disapproval of the way it was used rather than the text itself.

But had MDH actually looked at a copy? Richmal Mangnall was a very successful Yorkshire headmistress, and judging by her portrait, a dead ringer for Jane Austen, fashionably-dressed, with lively dark eyes. The full title of her book was “Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the use of Young People, with a Selection of British and General Biography, &, &. “It ran to 500+ pages and was so useful that it went in to 100 editions during the 19th C. Copies can still be picked up on Amazon.

Ms Mangnall was particularly proud of the frontispiece, an engraving of all the kings and queens of England since the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy, arranged in the branches of an oak tree. In her Preface, she explains that it is designed for self-study, assuming enquiring minds and a continuing thirst for knowledge in her pupils. After her death in 1820 it was expanded and revised several times to keep it up to date. Later editions include navigation, astronomy, botany and other scientific subjects, at a time when the only university courses were based on divinity.

P.11. Perhaps over-reliance on Mangnall ‘s Questions did lead to a scattergun approach to learning; MDH recalls Jane Austen’s satirical account of the poverty of the aristocratic Bertram sisters’ education in “Mansfield Park”. But like Jane Austen, she leaves it to the reader to appreciate the achievement of their self-taught cousin Fanny Price, whose natural good taste and sensitivity to literature is recognised and fostered by their more intelligent brother.

The essay becomes less critical but no less lively as the proper education of girls develops with the century, to the benefit of both sexes. There were still campaigns to be pursued, and MDH was to play her own part in these for the rest of her life.

The Education of Girls in the 19th C. by MD Higginson (prize essay while in the Sixth Form at Sutton High School.)

The century I have to deal with is an odd one that defies classification. You might consider, as you advance from Jane Austen to Mrs.Pankhurst, that the landscape gets wilder and wilder; on the other hand, if you start from the French Revolution and end with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee it might seem to become more and more humdrum. It was a time of extraordinarily various change, yet it was an age of exceptional order and continuity. It was full of imperceptible revolutions, which are accomplished, not by direct challenge, but by silent penetration. Among these silent changes, there are none more important than those in education. It is hardly too much to say that every branch of education suffered a revolution in the 19th century. Universities and public schools were reformed out of all recognition; technical and adult education grew up from nothing at all, and of course the state system of elementary schools, let alone secondary schools, did not begin to exist till after 1833. The change in girls' education is one of the most entertaining to follow the history of.

I shall confine myself entirely to the education of girls in the upper and middle classes. This division makes itself quite naturally, because there was not any differentiation of sex in the elementary schools... the denominational schools which were the nucleus of the state system. When the Act of 1870 was passed, setting up Board Schools, girls were admitted to them on exactly the same terms as boys, except for trifling distinctions as to needlework. Girls were expected to acquit themselves as well as boys; no allowances were made in the Board School for the delicacy of the female constitution or the inferiority of the female brain. It is worth noticing that the equal opportunities which upper class girls had to fight for with the greatest tenacity were given as a matter of course to their social inferiors.

But if! narrow my subject in this one respect, I intend to treat it in the very broadest way in all others. I shall not keep very closely to the history of the subject because you are more likely to be entertained by suggestions than by statements. Indeed most of the history is only to be discovered by looking into contemporary literature. All the best and most lively evidence is to be found in the books of the time... in Jane Austen, in Mrs.Gaskell, in the Brontes, in George Eliot, in George Gissing, in Tennyson's Princess, in Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies., in fact in almost every book that has a heroine. All these authorities speak so delightfully for themselves that I shall hardly do more than attempt to bring them together and supply the historical thread. Again, I shall regard my subject as a very elastic one which can include not only the changes in Girls' schools but the feminine assault on the universities.

Lastly, I shall not keep very closely to education in the formal sense at all. You cannot explore girls' education in any age without receiving some impression of the ideal of feminine character which lay behind it. I should like to capture these successive, subtly changing perfect ladies... these and some of the real women who modified the ideal.

There is no temptation to overrun my century at the nearer end. The great Education Act of 1902 makes a most convenient limit to it. This is the Act which set up State Secondary Schools on equal terms for boys and girls and the history of girls' education as a distinct topic almost ceases with it. But at the other end of the century there is nothing so distinct as an Act of Parliament, and I hope I shall be forgiven if I glance quickly back on the 17th and 18th centuries. To go back as far even as the Puritans, their ideal of women had been more or less that of the Old Testament... Milton's Eve in fact. Her chief virtue was sobriety and her vocation household management. But this ideal was complicated by new ideas from France, where woman was regarded as a beautiful scintillating creature, a delicate toy." I consider woman," said Addison at the beginning of the 18th century "as a beautiful romantic animal", and his view prevailed widely in the years which followed. Rousseau made it worse by his popular account of the upbringing of Sophia, the supposed child of nature. Where Emile, the boy, is concerned, Rousseau is enlightened if not revolutionary, but there is no emancipation for Sophia.

"The whole education of woman should be related to that of man. To please them, to be useful to them, to become loved and honoured by them, to bring them up when young, to care for them when grown, to advise, to console them.. . these are the duties of woman at every age, and that is what they should be taught from childhood.

They are dependent on what men think of them, on how highly their virtues are valued, just as much as children are at the mercy of the judgments of men; it is not enough that they should be estimable: they must be esteemed; it is not enough that they should be beautiful: they must be pleasing; it is not enough for them to be virtuous: they must be considered as such."

If even a philosopher could show such prejudice, it is not surprising that the rest of the world followed suit, and the kind of duplicity of character he recommends become an approved thing. It was thought proper that women should cultivate their accomplishments and even their virtues merely for show. The celebrated Dr.Gregory admonishes his daughters in the little book he wrote for their instruction, about 1800, to cultivate religion for two reasons: because it was a good thing, and it endeared them to the opposite sex. No wonder poor Mary Wollstonecraft exclaimed "It is time to separate unchangeable morals
from local manners!"

But she was a voice in the wilderness and these standards of seeming rather than being had an immense effect on girls' education. All the efforts of the fashionable boarding school were concentrated on making their girls appear well in society. Social graces were valued far higher and happy was the school that could offer as one prospectus of the 18th century offered, the advantage of a coach in the back garden, from which young ladies could practise ascending and descending with elegance. This is not to say of course that there was no education which was not frivolous and no conception of women which went beyond the peacock stage. Jane Austen herself, born in 1775, was one of the fortunate exceptions who belonged to a large sensible family and was taught at home by both father and mother. She had the run of a good library, sharpened her wits in company with her brothers and sisters, and had written a delicious parody of Goldsmith's History of England before she was 16. Other women escaped even more decisively from the frivolity of girls' education, but they escaped into oddity and became bluestockings, a class apart and rather glorying in its smallness. And other women, perhaps the majority, escaped in the other direction. They carried on the older, solider tradition of the good housewife. One of these was the lady whom the Vicar of Wakefield chose

"as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but for such qualities as would wear well. To do her justice, she was a good-natured notable woman, and as for her breeding, there were few country ladies who could show more. She could read any English book without much spelling and for pickling, preserving and cookery, none could excel her."

And even Mrs.Boswell, that pathetic nonentity who was left in her bleak Scottish manor house while her husband was gadding with Dr.Johnson, was famous for one thing.. . she made delicious marmalade. Women, even of the upper class in the i8~ century still had a trade. Their proper occupation was housekeeping and it employed their energy and brains and gave an object to their education, usually conducted in the home. But the occupation fell out of fashion. Do you remember Mrs.Bennet in Pride and Prejudice saying (when Charlotte Lucas is "wanted for mince pies") "I always keep servants that can do their own work. . . my daughters are brought up differently." The eviction of the i9~ century lady and her daughters from their own kitchens was little less than a tragedy and resulted in a terrible boredom and superficiality in social life. Not to work with one's own hands became the touchstone of respectability to which thousands of women were aspiring. The boarding school miss came more and more into vogue as the housewife dwindled. Emily Davies writing fifty years or so after Mrs.Bennet's time, makes of this change an eloquent argument for a better intellectual education.

“A hundred years ago”, she says, “women might know little of history or geography and nothing at all of any language but their own. . .they might be careless of what was going on in the outer world... ignorant of science and art. . . but their minds were not inactive. Circumstances provided a discipline which is now wholly wanting and which needs to be supplied by a wider and deeper cultivation.”

So far I have only reached the threshold of the 19th century and I still intend to pause there long enough to glance at 3 or 4 heroines who illustrate different types of feminine ideal which will appear again and again during the century. They all flourished about the year 1800. There is Mary Somerville running wild on her Scottish moors till at the age of 8 she was packed off to a Musselburgh ladies’ seminary where she was clapped into cast iron corsets and her chin supported by an iron ring. Needless to say she languished. She was allowed to come home again, though she had to struggle for 20 years before she could get books to satisfy her craving for mathematics. So well did she succeed that in the end her book on the Differential Calculus was actually adopted as a textbook for Cambridge University... There was Dorothy Wordsworth, keeping her exquisite journal and tramping 30 miles a day across the Cumberland Fells. Sometimes she goes completely alone and talks to all the characters she meets. Her circle makes its own conventions, but they are all rare people in it. How unlike her is Harriet Smith, the typical boarding school product described by Jane Austen in Emma. By no means the worst of her class, a nice quiet, easily amused, brainless girl, she falls down in a faint when she meets a gypsy, providing an opportunity for some easy gallantry on the hero’s part. How Harriet would have called down the thunders of the magnificent Mary Wollstonecraft, the heroically daring authoress of A Vindication of the Rights of Women. This is what she has to say about feminine timidity.

“In the most trifling dangers they cling to their support with parasitical tenacity, piteously demanding succour, and their natural protector extends his arm or lifts up his voice, to guard the lovely trembler. . . from what? Perhaps from the frown of an old cow or the jump of a mouse; a rat would be a serious danger. In the name of reason and even of common sense, what can save such beings from contempt, even though they be soft and fair?”

Mary Wolistonecraft sees that women are their own worst enemies because they cling to petty artifices which bring them power but also bring them contempt. She wants a noble equality of the sexes, based on reason and mutual respect. “It is time,” she says, “to effect a revolution in feminine manners, to restore them to their lost dignity and make them as part of the human species labour by reforming themselves to reform the world.” But all the eloquence of this first suffragette beats in vain against the rocks of prejudice; slow corrosion, not frontal attack, was to overcome them.

For many years to come the only claim woman in general could have to men's respect was Beauty and the achievement of beauty and the social graces remained the ideal of girls' education. Perhaps the most typical feminine ideal of the time is that expressed in the magazine heroines, who are all as like as two peas. Here is Elvira, who figured in the Ladies 'Magazine for 1809.

"Elvira's complexion rivalled the snowy whiteness of the lily. Her eyes were black as jet, fringed with long silken auburn lashes, which looked extremely soft and feminine and peculiarly fascinating. Her nose was a handsome aquiline and rather prominent. Her cheeks transcended the loveliest bloom of the peach blossom. Her mouth was a portal of coral ranged with teeth whiter than pearls. A profusion of glossy auburn tresses shaded her fine countenance, which, I may say without exaggeration was as beautiful as was ever gazed on by mortal."

Here, incidentally, is the companion picture:-

"Augustus was a noble, ingenuous and accomplished youth.. . often would the fear of commiserating sympathy gem his fine and intelligent eyes at hearing the sorrows of Elvira. Frequently would he carelessly wander with her and his beloved sister in the umbrageous walks at their Elysian residence whilst he listened enraptured to the refined and judicious conversation of Miss Whatley."

It is quite irrelevant to girls' education, but here is the end of the story.. .alas!

"The torch of Hymen, the smiles of Cupid, the loves of Venus were exchanged by the ignominious and flagitious circumvention of a parent for melancholy and despair, and finally for the sable apparatus of the tomb."

(Perhaps it is only fair to Elvira to suggest that heroines quite as superlative, disguised in modern terms, might be found in every number of Woman or Eve.)

And it was Elvira, with perhaps a diminishing stress upon her judicious conversation, who dominated the English Boarding School for the next 50 or 60 years. Miss Pinkerton was in her heyday.

There is really very little educational history to record in the first half of the ~ century. More and more girls were sent to boarding schools to acquire elegance, but no new ideas entered with them. The back board, the piano and Man gall 's Questions held undisputed sway. Perhaps it is worth quoting Thomas Hood's summary of the curriculum at The Grove:-

"And thus their studies they pursued. . . on Sunday
Beef, collects, batter, texts from Dr.Price;
Monday, French, pancakes, grammar, of a Monday;
Tuesday..hard dumplings, globes, Chapman's Advice;
Wednesday. .fancy work, rice-milk (no spice);
Thursday. .pork, dancing, currant bolsters, reading;
Friday. .beef, Mr.Butler and plain rice;
Saturday. .scraps, short lessons and short feeding,
Stocks, backboards, hash, steel collars and good breeding."

While I skip half a century of school history, perhaps I should spare time to look at the home education, and first at the private governess. Most of us take our idea of the governess's life from Charlotte and Anne Bronte and regard it with horror. It is just, therefore, to remember Emma Woodhouse's Miss Taylor, who was her pupil's close and trusted friend. Still, even in the same book, Emma, we hear much of Jane Fairfax's reluctance to become a governess. Charlotte Bronte's fate was much more the rule than Miss Taylor's. The governess was often treated as a mere upper servant.., a friendless creature crushed between the upper and lower millstones of the family and the domestics. No doubt you all remember that when Charlotte Bronte's youngest pupil once burst out at table "I love oo, Miss Bronte", his mother remarked with astonishment "What, love the governess, my dear!" Add to this disdain the fact that a governess was almost always afflicted by fortune before she took to the trade and you get a dismal picture... Indeed, this was the curse of the schools as well as of the governess system.. .that no-one regarded these occupations as a profession. Teaching was the only way in which a lady who had lost her money or been disappointed in matrimony could hope to keep herself. Incredible though it may seem, girls' education was left entirely to the mercies of the world's failures. Do you remember in Cranford, where Miss Matty has lost all her money, her natural reaction is to think of teaching? But....

"As to the branches of a solid English education.. .fancy work, the use of the globes, such as a mistress of the Ladies Seminary, to which all the tradespeople of Cranford sent their daughters, professed to teach.. .Miss Matty's eyes were failing her and I doubted if she could find the number of threads in a worsted work pattern, or rightly appreciate the shades required for Queen Adelaide's face in the loyal woolwork now fashionable in Cranford. As for the use of the globes, I had never been able to find it out myself, so perhaps I was not a good judge of Miss Matty's capability of instructing in this branch of education, but it struck me that equator and tropics and such mystical circles were very imaginary lines indeed to her and that she looked on the signs of the Zodiac as so many remnants of the black art."

Miss Matty of course, gave up the idea of being a pedagogue and sold tea instead, but many a Miss Matty had no alternative. As one of the reformers was to put it "To have lost money was formerly considered all that was necessary to prepare a woman for earning a salary." In this state of affairs, enterprise in education was hardly to be expected. The governess could only teach what had been taught her, perhaps very flimsily, in her own youth. And naturally, where little sound knowledge could be offered, great stress would be laid on the genteel character of the education, till gentility and ignorance began to seem synonymous.

But there was one way in which the Victorian girl could receive a good education if her circumstances allowed. Many of the Victorians were fortunate enough to belong, like Jane Austen, to big lively families with sensible parents. Elizabeth Fry was one of the 11 Gurneys, the gay Quakers of Eariham; Josephine Butler was one of 9; Elizabeth Barrett had a sympathetic father and a crowd of brothers and sisters. If their brothers were sympathetic, the girls often kept up with them in Latin and in their turn taught the younger members of the family. Indeed, later in the century, we find the brothers learning from the sisters, for whom during the 60s a course of lectures on political economy ("a subject ridiculed by many persons") was given at the North London Collegiate School not only did the girls take up the subject very willingly, but the brothers who laughed at them at first, "afterwards took up the subject with them." Or we find Sara Burstall, one of the earliest scholars of Girton, coming home to coach her younger brothers in their turn for the University. The only eminent early Victorian woman I have been able to hear of who was educated at a day school was Harriet Martineau, and she obtained her schooling by a peculiar accident. When she was 12 the master of the Norwich school where her brothers went was suddenly converted to Unitarianism. The immediate result was that half his scholars were withdrawn and Mr.Perry was forced to fill their places with girls. Harriet made full use of the opportunity and later took the advice of her brother who advised her "to give up darning stockings and take to literature." It was she who carried off anonymously 3 prizes offered by the British Unitarian Society for 3 essays designed to convert Jews, Mohammedans and Roman Catholics respectively.

The family spirit is one of the pleasantest things in Victorian social history. Many of the great figures were supported by a sympathetic father or brother or husband and of course this is why the women's movement accomplished its ends so tactfully, so unsensationally. It was respectable. But of course in individual cases everything depended on the family and the Martineaus and the Gurneys were few and far between.. . A girl might be utterly cramped by family life and home education.

Thackeray describes it at its most dismal. “This is the condition of a young lady’s existence. She breakfasts at 8, she does Mangnall’s Questions with a governess till 10, she practises till 1, she walks round the square with bars round till 2, then she practises again, then she sews or reads French or Hume’s History, then she comes down to play to papa, because he likes music when he is asleep after dinner.” (Even when parents were rich and clever like Mr and Mrs Nightingale, and gave their daughters the best culture they knew, the daughters might still be cramped. It was social snobbery that kept Florence so long from nursing. She speaks of her mother’s horror at the proposal.. “I might have wanted to be a kitchenmaid.” Florence Nightingale made her escape, but how many Victorian girls of less genius and willpower never did!”)

About 1850 there began to be signs of awakening in girls’ education, both in theory and in practice. A very important event indeed was the founding of Queen’s Coll~g~ in Harley St in 1852, if not with the patronage, at least with the consent of the Queen, who though a drastic opponent of “women’s rights”, took a kindlier view of education. She was herself one of the best educated women of her day. Queen’s College, which grew out of the Governesses’ Benevolent Institution with the idea of giving some training to teachers, was virtually the first approach to University Education for women, although University Coli~g~ and King’s College had both on their foundation in the 1820s thrown open their lectures, though not their degrees, to men and women alike. But the atheistic reputation of that godless institution in Gower St and the reproach to propriety in lectures shared with men, made it impossible for ladies who valued the name to attend them. Queen’s College was therefore welcomed with open arms and its classes enthusiastically attended by young women who wanted something better than the skimpy education of the boarding school. Its standard was dragged down almost to that of a secondary school by the unprepared state of those who came, but still it had some distinguished lecturers. They were nearly all men, since there were as yet few women capable of lecturing on any subject. They included such men as Charles Kingsley, Archbishop Trench, and Frederick Denison Maurice. Among its first students were Dorothea Beale and Frances Buss, later to become the first of the great headmistresses.

Meanwhile elsewhere there was formed the Northern Association for Promotj~g the Hjgher Education of Women, from which sprang the system of the Un iver~jty Extension Lectures, instituted specially for the use of women. For the first time in history there was talk of women and the Universities in the same breath. (Incidentally, Mr Stuart of Cambridge who first instituted the Extension Lectures remarks that no-one but the women ever offered to pay him. They offered £200.) Miss Emily Davies led the first slight but significant assault on the universities when in 1862 she persuaded the examiners of the Cambridge Locals to read some 80 papers written by girls.

The arithmetic was shocking but the general result was so good that a few years later they were formally admitted to competition on equal terms, though there was much disagreement as to whether, in the interests of female modesty, the results ought to be published. Meanwhile public opinion was being leavened in another way.. .by the increasing discussion of girls' education in all kinds of literature. Tennyson's Princess looked forward with a queer mixture of jocularity and sentiment to the female university:-

"With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,

And sweet girl graduates with golden hair.."

It rises to the great climax:-

"If she be small, slight natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? But work no more alone!
Our place is much; as far as in us lies
We too will serve them both in aiding her...
Will clear away the parasitic forms
Hat seem to keep her up, but drag her down-
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her- let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undeveloped man
But diverse; could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain, his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker they must grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world,
She mental breath, nor fail in childhood care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at last she set herself to man
Like perfect music unto noble words."

Eloquent as this is, considered as practical advice it is rather vague. Still, sadly as it curtails Princess Ida's ambition, it is a noble advance on the more usual Victorian view. What never seems to have occurred to Tennyson was that the academic ideal might be held in combination with the social one. . . .that women educationalists were not of necessity men-haters, nor interest in astronomy incompatible with a graceful demeanour.

This Victorian antipathy to the well-informed lady comes out continually in the oddest ways. It lurks for instance in John Keble's gentle censure on one of Charlotte M. Yonge's novels. "I think that when you make the ladies quote Greek, it would be better if they were to say that they had heard it from their fathers or brothers."

I now come to the central document relating to girls' education in the 19th century. In 1863 a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the condition of the Endowed Schools of England. A small group of ladies, under the generalship of the redoubtable Miss Emily Davies and including such great names as Lady Stanley of Alderley, sent a petition asking that girls' schools might be included in the Commission's Report. . . .on the ground that many Grammar School endowments spoke of "the children of the parish", but that this had always been unfairly interpreted in favour of the boys. The commissioners' verdict on this point was very definite. "The appropriation of all the educational endowments of the country to the education of boys is felt by a large and increasing number both of men and women to be a cruel injustice." Still it is an odd circumstance that the only reason why girls' schools were ever included in the Endowed Schools Inquiry was precisely that they did not come within its terms of reference. There was hardly any endowed girls' school in the country. However that may be, Emily Davies' ingenuity won the day and included they were; consequently an extra volume was added in 1868 to the Commissioners' 16- volume report on boys' schools. It was soon republished separately with a preface by Miss Beale of Cheltenham and had a wide circulation.

The state of affairs revealed in this report is almost past belief and the commissioners, all wise, unprejudiced and eminent men (one for instance was the philosopher TH Greene) do not mince their verdict. Their conclusions are roughly of two kinds, those which concern the curriculum as such, and those which consider the whole function of girls' education in society.

The curriculum of such schools as the commissioners could obtain entrance to.. .for many select establishments shut their doors in the face of what they considered impudent interference.., showed a peculiar mixture of dry-as-dust particles of knowledge with the most superficial and hazy accomplishments. Reading and writing were in general well-taught, which confirmed the commissioners opinion that women were good teachers of what they knew well themselves. But beyond this all was weak and inexact. Spelling was variable, arithmetic excessively elementary and inaccurate, French ungrammatical, Latin and Greek almost unattempted. English Literature was one of the stronger subjects and was treated with taste in some of the better schools, but it tended to be rather languid.

History, Geography, science and general knowledge were often considered to be covered by the horrible primer known as Mangnall ‘s Questions, of which a certain portion was given to be learnt each day. In consequence, nothing was known except in the sequence in which it was learnt, or if known, could not be used. “I think,” said one typical young lady to a question from the commissioner, “that Chaucer lived in the reign of George III, but it might have been any other reign.” One of the commissioners writes “On the day of my visit to Norwich Commercial School the master had just heard his little daughter repeat her lesson before she set off for school. The lesson was a marked passage from a book of miscellaneous questions and answers. Four questions followed in this order:-

1. What is the hinder part of a ship called?
2. What is grass called after it is mown?
3. What are stalks of corn called after they are threshed?
4. What is the name of the principal cemetery at Paris?

Instead of taking the questions in order, as most schoolmistresses would do, the father began with the last and the child unhesitatingly answered that the name of the cemetery was “a stern.”

Things had certainly not changed much since the time of Jane Austen’s Miss Bertram, who could repeat by heart “the names of the Roman Emperors as low as Severus, besides a great deal of the heathen mythology, and all the mortals, semi-mortals, planets and distinguished philosophers.” But if this is what did duty for knowledge, the accomplishments were even worse. The home demand for fancy needlework defeated even those schoolmistresses who wanted to teach good plain sewing. The home demand for piano-playing was even more tyrannical. The commissioners condemn the indiscriminate teaching of this subject most heartily. It interferes most intolerably with the other lessons when each girl has to spend two or three hours a day practising... “acquiring”, as Miss Beale observes with unusual asperity “a mechanical facility which in the most favourable cases enables them to rival a barrel-organ.” But bad as were some of the subjects taught, the omission of any exercise of a lively kind was worse than all. There were no outdoor games save croquet and running about was usually quite forbidden. There was no vigour either in work or play. No wonder the girls were listless! Almost as bad was the omission of any household subjects, for although the obvious aim of these schools was to turn out marriageable young ladies, nothing at all was done to equip them for their future occupation. As one of the commissioners sums up:-

“I cannot find that any part of the training given in ladies’ schools educates them for domestic life or prepares them for duties which are supposed to be eminently womanly. . . everywhere the fact that the pupil is to become a woman and not a man operates upon her course of study negatively, not positively.”

The commissioners consider several suggestions for the improvement of the standard of school work. The chief of these is the institution of impartial examinations. They cross-examine Miss Emily Davies, Miss Beale of Cheltenham and Miss Buss of the North London_Collegiate School on the experiment of the Cambridge Locals. The headmistresses are emphatically in favour of an outside test and they energetically resist the suggestion that there should be one certificate for boys and another for girls. Very naturally they think that no-one will believe that the girls’ arithmetic was as good as the boys’ unless they undergo an identical exam. Some curious objections are quoted against the public examinations. One mistress tells the commission “The results must be kept strictly private, not only from the public but from the girls themselves. Girls are unduly fond of approbation and this weakness must be carefully controlled.” And another: “I have been told that the girls would hate each other if they became rivals, and that parents would be so jealous of the success of another person’s child that they would remove their own.” The commonest outcry was on the score of health. Would it not be injured by excessive study? But the reformers are well-armed to deal with this attack. In her preface Miss Beale quotes the opinion of several distinguished medical men, of which this is typical. “I am quite certain there would be less illness among the upper classes if their brains were more regularly and systematically worked.” She backs this up with a list of long-lived intellectual women. It is a remarkable fact that the average length of life is so long among these ladies. Mary Somerville died at 93, at work till the day of her death on The Theory of D?fferences; Fanny Burney lived to be over 90; Miss Beale herself lived nearly as long; and the indomitable Miss Emily Davies, the moving spirit of the 60s, went on crutches to record her Parliamentary vote at the age of 91. At any rate, Miss Beale was in no doubt as to the effect of hard work on a girl’s health. She writes “I think study improves their health very much. They will not do nothing. . . you cannot say to the human mind that it shall absolutely rest, but if they have not wholesome and proper and unexciting occupations, they will spend their time on sensational novels and things much more injurious to their health. When I have heard complaints about health being injured by study, they have proceeded from those who have done least work at college.”

But the real kernel of the Royal Commission's Report is not its review of school conditions, appalling as that is... it is its criticism of the prevailing social ideal. Again and again it is the ignorance of parents who do not want their daughters to use their brains that the commissioners come up against. There are still too many mothers who say with Jane Austen's Lady Susan "I do not mean that Frederica's accomplishments should be more than superficial, and I flatter myself that she will not remain long enough to understand anything thoroughly." The only career they entertain and idea of is marriage... "that one sacred vocation of matrimony" as Frances Power Cobb observed, "for which a girl may lawfully leave a blind father and a dying mother and go to India with Ensign Anybody." To this, career-education is regarded as a hindrance and not a help. Mr Fitch reports an interview with a fashionable schoolmistress. "She turns upon me archly and says 'You know that gentlemen do not like learned ladies; our great aim is to make the young people attractive in society, and if we can do that we are satisfied." Needless to say this reflects little credit on the gentlemen. Another mistress despairingly informs the commissioners that when she complains of a girl's laziness in arithmetic, her mother replies "Oh but you know her husband will be able to do her accounts for her!" This makes us remember the first Mrs. David Copperfield. Yet as the commissioners point out, marriage needs a trained intelligence as much as any other career. Even Dr. Johnson had conceded that "a woman may not be a worse wife for being learned." Besides, real social graciousness was hardly likely to come from an education based on fancy work and Mangnall's Questions, which if they had any effect at all, would turn a girl into a walking dictionary. The commissioners are of the opinion that sound knowledge will not injure good manners. One reports "It happens that the finest manners I ever saw among young people, the most perfect self-possession, modesty and freedom from affectation, were in a class of girls brought to me to demonstrate a proposition in Euclid."

But if it is bad for the future wives to be educated thus, it is worse even for the very large proportion of girls, something like a third, who will have to spend their lives as spinsters or widows. They have no means of attaining economic independence or mental satisfaction. They will have nothing to occupy their minds. And here the girls' problem links with the schoolmistress's, because mistresses are almost without exception, from this class of unfortunates. Happily, the commissioners already saw signs of change, largely because of the labours of Miss Beale and Miss Buss, who had begun to introduce a professional spirit into the world of girls' schools. New movements beyond the schools were having their effect. For the first time there was some goal to act as a magnet for the best schools. There was an incentive to enter for the newly-opened outside exams and the further incentive in a few cases to send girls on to Queen's College, or to Bedford College which had been founded a few years later.

There must have been tremendous stirrings in the educational world of the 60s to account for the landslide of prejudice in the next few years. The Royal Commission made a great contribution to this by expressing the confidence of a group of cultured and experienced men in women's natural powers. They expressed their conclusion thus: "So far, therefore, from acquiescing in the natural inferiority of women as the moral state of things, it is really by the females of a community that one might expect to see its mental tone maintained; it is there that one would look to find a keener relish for literature or art, a livelier intellectual activity, a more perfect intellectual refinement."

After 1868 events followed very fast on all fronts. In 1869 a committee, again headed by Miss Emily Davies, opened at small college for young ladies at Hitchen. It began with five students who worked industriously for the Cambridge degree examinations. The difficulties were tremendous. They came from schools which gave them little or no preparation for such high standards. They all had, of course, to take Greek and Latin; they had no regular tutors, but had to rely on sympathetic University men who came perhaps once a week to lecture and some even of these kind men... for instance Mr Bryce who despised the University curriculum and wanted to give them something much more interesting, for their purpose of passing university exams, were quite useless. Finally, they never knew till the very last moment whether their efforts had been in vain, for it depended entirely on the examiners' indulgence whether their papers were read or not. They had no official status at all. Still they persevered and found enormous happiness in feeling themselves pioneers in a great movement. One of them records that she woke up each morning with a sort of sting of delight. And Miss Davies remarks with pleasure that appetites both mental and physical were very keen. It was a new thing for there to be any kind of intellectual comradeship among women.

The Hitchen College prospered and removed to Girton. In 1870 a very similar idea was mooted at Oxford and the twin colleges of Ladyjylaigaret Hall and S ervilic were founded.. .like Girton enjoying the tolerance and casual instruction of many university men. Meanwhile the great provincial universities, Manchester, Leeds and the rest, were being founded to admit women on equal terms with men. Naturally there was a startling improvement in girls' schools as they began to acquire ambitions and good teachers from the new colleges. The era of the day schools began with the foundation in 1870 of the GPSDT and high schools began to spring up all over the country. The gym tunic came in; even the conservative Miss Beale of Cheltenham allowed playing-fields and bicycles by the end of the century; the popularity of Physical Culture is shown by the Punch cartoon of 1883 of the proud mother explaining to the would-be suitor "Any one of my daughters can knock down their father."

The old cry that women were incapable of intellectual achievement was silenced by the proof of it, particularly at Girton. Public interest in the experiment ran so high that when it became known (though women's results were never published) that Miss Agnata Ramsay was the only candidate in classics in 1887 to be placed in the 1st division of the 1st class, Punch brought out a cartoon in which Mr Punch in academic dress ushers a lady into a railway-carriage labelled "First Class: Ladies Only."

The battle was won. The tide had turned and begun to flow equally strongly the other way. Of course recognition from the older universities was still hard to win.. . women are to this day not actually members of Cambridge, though enlightened Oxford admitted them in 1919. But in the schools there were no reservations and the story may end very properly with the setting-up of our present system of State Secondary Schools under the Act of 1902. A tailpiece to that is the provision in 1907 of the free place system which now links the secondary with the elementary school... a consummation which would have made Miss Pinkerton's hair stand on end.

The influence of boys' education on that of girls has been, some people think, excessive and injurious. But the victory would never have been won if the pioneers had not adopted masculine standards, because those were the only standards then respected. There was a moment in the last century when it seemed likely that a double intellectual standard would be formed. Special women's degrees were proposed. It was a true instinct in Emily Davies to oppose this and she got her claims respected. Now of course the wheel is coming full circle and after an austere academic interval, the l8~ century domestic studies are coming more and more into their own again in girls' education. But if the influence of boys' schools on girls' has been large, so has that of girls' on boys', especially in giving artistic subjects a greater significance.

The most fascinating thing about the ~ century movement is the tact with which it was conducted. It is a lesson in the technique of revolution. Its great women never outraged public opinion. They enlisted the proprieties on their side. With what serpentine wisdom they persuaded 3 bishops and 2 deans to adorn the committee of Girton College! With what perfect understanding of the Victorian parent Miss Beale fixed the hours of Cheltenham College "so that pupils may leave after other schools are assembled," and run no risk of walking to school with young gentlemen! The movement abounds with fine aristocratic figures like Lady Stanley of Alderley the dowager of education, with the great men of the time.. .TH Green, Henry Sidgwick, Ruskin, Dean Alford, JS Mill.. .men who believed with Tennyson that "the women's cause is man's." Nothing was done indiscreetly. It was not so much artifice as a real sympathy

with the reformers and their age. The note is perfectly struck by the comment of one of the commissioners on the headmistresses giving evidence.. . “What struck us was their perfect womanliness. Why, there were tears in Miss Buss’s eyes!” And yet with all this grace and gentility the reformers had wills of iron. They knew what they wanted and always got it. Their method was to make an experiment and afterwards reveal the result. Again and again the public was confronted with an established fact. Instead of asserting women’s capacity, they proved it. They were always practical. But behind their practical efforts there was always a strong awareness of the waste of life that the old system meant, and the determination to use life for the best. They were fulfilling that forlorn hope of Mary Wolistonecraft’ s that women would one day “labour by reforming themselves to reform the world.”

It was self-evident that Margaret should be a great admirer of the suffragettes and indeed her aunt by marriage, Eleanor Higginson, was one, and suffered much for the cause. ‘Red Nelly’ as she was known, visited Bolton School ay Margaret’s invitation and talked to the girls of her experiences.

Extracts from the Bolton Evening News concerning local suffragettes.

21st March 1907.
House of Commons besieged by suffragettes. Bolton suffragette Mrs. Kate Ford, Laburnum Street, was bound over to be of good behaviour for six months.

30th November 1907.
"Addressing a meeting of the Breightmet Liberal Association, George Harwood, M.P. referred to the suffrage question and said he did not blame the procedure of the suffragettes. He thought they had to thank Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for the annoyance they were receiving inasmuch as that gentleman told them to "go on pestering". Personally he would not pay the slightest attention to any kind of intimidation. He did not think it would be safe or wise to hand over the fate of the Empire to an electorate, the majority of which were women, but they wanted women in connection with social institutions."

18th January 1910
Mrs. Alice Lloyd, a well known Bolton suffragist, in furtherance of the cause of 'Votes for Women' made a speech at Bostok's Jungle, Manchester in a cage which occupied eight lions. The lady spoke for about ten minutes and then retreated, covered by the trainers.

18th November 1910
Among the women arrested during the militant suffragist march on the House of Commons was Mrs. Marshall, a daughter of the Reverend Canon Jacques M.A., formerly for many years vicar of Westhoughton, and later the rector of Brindle.

4th March 1912
Mrs. Mary Alice Lloyd of Bolton addressed an audience from a lion's den at Birmingham, her subject being 'Votes for Women'.

26th February 1913.
A.H. Gill gave his annual review as Member of Parliament for the Borough. It was freely interrupted by suffragists and several were ca ried out. Still the interrupting continued and Mr. Gill said it was bad taste to disturb the meeting of those who had been their friends.

14th March 1913.
Militant section of suffragists visit Bolton and pour streams of black fluid into letter and pillar boxes on Victoria Square.

5th July 1913.
Upwards of thirty suffragists from Bolton took part in a procession from Manchester to Stockport, the first stage in a non-militant suffragist pilgrimage to London.

8th July 1913
Sensational suffragist outrage. Roynton Cottage, the Rivington bungalow of Sir W.H. Lever was wantonly fired and destroyed as a part of the suffragist agitation. A message was left behind stating that the act of destruction was "Lancashire's message to the King from the women, that votes for women were overdue". Tracks of a motor car were discovered and a double-headed spanner was found. It was supposed that this might have been dropped from the car and might possibly have been used in effecting an entrance to the bungalow. It was evident, so it was stated, that this fire had been started at various points and that at each it had taken secure hold. The damage was estimated at from £15,000 to £20,000. The King next day wished Sir W.H. Lever "much regrets to hear from the newspapers that while you were here (Knowsley) last night your house at Rivington was destroyed by fire. I sympathise with you in your loss".

/Continued.....

Extracts from the Bolton Evening News concerning local suffragettes.

10th July 1913.
Edith Rigby, 40, Wife of Dr. Charles Rigby of Preston, was remanded at Liverpool on her own confession with causing an explosion at the Exchange buildings. She also confessed that she was responsible for the burning of Sir W.H. Lever's bungalow at Rivington, stating "I did it alone".

7th August 1913.
Mrs. Edith Rigby, Wife of a Preston doctor, sentenced to nine months hard labour for a brash outrage at the Exchange buildings and of burning Sir W.H. Lever's bungalow at Rivington, was released from the gaol under the Cat and Mouse Act, after resorting to hunger strike.

20th September 1913.
News received with great satisfaction in Horwich and Rivington that Sir W.H. Lever had let a contract for the rebuilding of a bungalow on the site of the structure destroyed by fire by Preston female suffragists. Improvements in the ground were also being pushed forward.

21st June 1914.
Suffragist interruption at Bolton Parish Church service. The interruption took the form of a prayer "for suffragists now being tortured in English prisons". When approached the lady interruptor (Miss Geldard, 610, St. Helen's Road) rose and with her friends left the church. The case was before the magistrates at the Borough Court next morning but at the request of Canon Chapman, Vicar of Bolton, no evidence was given and the matter was discharged.

EIGHT BRAVE WOMEN

Beth Hesmondhalgh and Eleanor Higginson reminisce together in later years about their suffragette days. Below, the dramatic scene outside the Houses of Parliament when Eleanor Higginson was arrested during a "Votes for Women" protest.

THE Seven Men of Preston had a reputation in the 1830s as the scourge of drunkards.

Eighty years later the Eight Women of Preston gained theirs as the scourge of politicians.

The Seven Men — led by Joseph Livesey — were bent on temperance reform while the Eight Women — led by Edith Rigby — were bent on parliamentary reform — and all went to prison sounding their clarion call "Votes for Women".

The Eight Women were Edith Rigby, Eleanor Higginson, Beth Hesmondhalgh, Mary Burrows, Rose Towler, Jennie Jackson (afterwards Mrs Bruce Glucas), Grace Alderman and Catherine Worthington.

Among the wild and reckless incidents in which they were involved were the burning down of a peer's bungalow, firing a cannon in a corporation park, defiling a public statue and pelting public figures with missiles.

Despite the wave of emotional excitement, fear and disgust which their actions aroused, the women were unrepentant and claimed that they were only doing what men themselves had done in earlier years in a bid to extend the franchise.

Like their suffragette sisters in other parts of the country, the Preston women were a constant headache to the police and local authorities throughout their reign of terror, aimed at attracting attention to their cause. Several of the Preston women also went on hunger strike while in prison.

They regarded their "votes" campaign as a preliminary fight against social injustice suffered by men as well as women. Some combined their suffragette

Released from jail, they were greeted by a brass band

[illegible] the Independent Labour Party, while others regarded their attitude as part of Christian ethics.

The big difference of opinion was over the methods of achieving their aims. Female suffrage had been talked about for 60 years and successive governments had merely paid lip service to the idea. Some women were content to follow constitutional methods but the Pankhursts roused others to militancy.

Edith Rigby and Mrs Higginson were the two most militant of the town's suffragettes and their zealous action in fighting for women's rights frequently landed them in trouble.

Edith came from a well-known family and was the wife of Dr Charles Rigby, a prominent physician, and they lived at 28, Winckley Square.

Golden-haired Edith was many years younger than her husband and, even if he did not share all her

1928-1978
EQUAL VOTING RIGHTS

Part Two:

By Terry Farrell

strongly radical views, he respected her right to hold them and often publicly stood by her.

She was educated at a public school but from an early age she showed passionate feelings for the poor and downtrodden. Her first attempt at social reform began about 1900 when she started a recreation club for working class girls in the old St Peter's School in Brook Street.

Later she began attending the newly-formed Women's Social and Political Union meetings held in Manchester. It was there that she met Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter. Soon after this Edith decided to form a Preston branch.

In 1907 Edith went to London to accompany a deputation, which included the Pankhursts, to the House of Commons. They refused to be held back by

Edith [illegible] her suffragette days. She gave herself up to police after settin fire to Lord Leverhulme's summer bungalow near Chorley.

the police when they tried to enter the lobby and a struggle ensued and nearly 60 women, including Edith, were arrested.

They appeared in court the next day and were fined — but refused, on principle, to pay.

Edith was among those who got 14 days and when released, the women were given a big reception by hundreds of women and greeted by a brass-band outside the prison gates.

The Preston women eventually set up a committee room in Glovers Court,

Edith's husband often publicly stood by her

after being booted out of several other places because of their advanced views. Not long afterwards, Edith along with other national suffragettes, was arrested in London and jailed for a month.

When Winston Churchill came to speak at Preston Public Hall no women were allowed to enter the building so Edith and her campaigners gate-crashed through a barrier of police and a terrific fight broke out between them.

Many of the women were arrested and, elsewhere in the town, women went on a riot, smashing shop windows.

Not long afterwards the women tarred Lord Derby's statue in Miller Park because he was opposed to women's suffrage. At his feet they placed a notice: "Votes for Women." This outrage shocked the Preston gentry.

Following this, Edith Rigby, in a lone action, set fire to Lord Leverhulme's summer bungalow at Rivington, near Chorley. The place was empty at the time and, having made her protest, Edith gave herself up to the police and again she was jailed. Her punishment was nine months hard labour.

She refused food and water for several days and, when she became too weak, she was allowed home to recover and then taken back to jail to complete her sentence.

The local suffragettes caused a fright when they secretly placed explosives in a Crimean monumental cannon sited in a Blackburn park. They attached a fuse and ran off as the cannon exploded with a roar. Luckily no one else was around at the time, but hundreds quaked as they heard the bang.

On the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the suffragettes called a truce and showed their loyalty by giving service in various spheres. Edith turned her sword into a ploughshare by joining the Women's Land [illegible] Bill of 1918, [illegible] women over 30 to vote.

Later Edith moved to North Wales on the death of her husband and she died in 1948 at the age of 76.

Eleanor—spirited little fighter

ELEANOR HIGGINSON was only a small woman but she had a tremendous fighting spirit. Before her marriage she was a teacher at St Mark's School, Preston.

She and her husband, who was an analytical chemist, kept a health food store in Cannon Street. Eleanor did not become an active suffragette until about 1911, because of her young children.

She was arrested while attending a suffragette demonstration in London, for throwing a brick through a public house window. While serving her sentence in Holloway Prison she went on hunger strike and endured the painful ordeal of forced feeding.

Eventually she was released and allowed to go home as the Government did not want any suffragettes to die in prison and so become martyrs for their cause.

They gave her a few weeks to recover and then took her back to jail to complete her sentence. She was soon released again and then re-detained, but her sentence was never completed because of the outbreak of war in 1914.

When Winston Churchill, then a Liberal MP, visited Preston Public Hall in 1913, to address an all-male audience, Eleanor was one of the few women who managed to gate-crash the police barrier and she quickly chained herself to a seat inside. The stewards were unable to remove her from it so they threw her out into the street — still chained to the chair.

Eleanor's two surviving children, Mr Duncan Higginson of Paddock Drive, Blackpool, and Mrs Constance Bernie Crossland of Droitwich, can still recall riding in a procession with their mother when the crowd turned against them.

"A group of about eight suffragettes decided to join either the Guild or Whit procession of 1912," explained Mrs Crossland.

"They hired a horse-drawn vehicle, which they decorated with placards, and made themselves long purple cloaks with hoods. At the last moment one of the women dropped out and I, as a child of five, was dressed in one of the cloaks.

"I can remember the crowd pelting us with cabbage stalks and I wanted to throw them back but my mother told us to leave them as we would only be giving them more ammunition."

After the war, Eleanor and her family went to live in Waterloo Road, Ashton, and she became a well-respected member of the community. In 1945, as the ward's Labour candidate, she came close to capturing the Tory-held stronghold, failing by only 124 votes.

Prior to that she had represented Labour in Trinity Ward for five years and she was also a borough magistrate.

In the 1950s she moved to Bognor Regis and died in Chichester in 1969, at the age of 88.

Needless to say the Women's Liberation Movement did not pass a Margaret by, and the following notes form the basis of a LVI General Studies groups for the Sixth Forms of both Divisions but we have no record that boys were present at this particular course!

LVI General Studies - Women's Liberation

Some ancient views on woman and her role.

1) The woman tempted me and I did eat -- (Genesis) c.B.C.800

2) Zens punished man by creating an evil thing, woman, as the price of fire ... from her is the deadly race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble ..... (Hesiod) c.B.C.735

3) The Kumana of S. Africa call the earth their mother and the sky their father, and the Navajo Indians of S. America reverence a sky-man (Yadilqil Hastqin) and his wife the earth-woman (Nihosdzan Esdza).

4) Thank God you are a freeman and not a slave and that you are a man and not a woman. (Socrates)

5) In Hindu religion a widow should commit suttee - i.e. throw herself upon her husband's funeral pyre.

6) In Islamic marriage a woman prostrates herself before her husband.

7) Woman is a palace built above a sewer. (Tertullian, c.300 A.D.)

8) In Christ there is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free. (St. Paul)

9) Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
God's mother be. (Mediaeval carol)

10) If a woman becomes weary and at last dead from bearing, that matters not; let her die only from bearing, she is there to do it. (Martin Luther) c.1559

11) For contemplation he and valour form'd,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace:
He for God only, she for God in him. (John Milton) 1666

12) Most women have no characters at all ... (Alexander Pope) c.1700

BOOK LIST

Mary Wolstoncroft:	A Vindication of the Rights of Women.
J. Kamm:	Rapiers and Battle-axes (five copies)
Mitchell:	Women on the Warpath.
J. Kamm:	How different from us and Indicative Past.
Mary Price:	Reluctant Revolutionaries.
John Bowlby:	Child Care and The Growth of Love.
Bettelheim:	The Children of the Dream (about the kibbutz)
Germaine Greer:	The Female Eunoch.
J.O'Faolain:	Not in God's Image.
Hambel Morgan:	The Total Woman.
Eva Wilson:	The Woman's Handbook.
	The "Punch" Book of Women's Rights.

(All these and others can be borrowed from my room)

Written work must be in by -

It can take any form, provided it is related to the main theme - e.g. historical, biographical, political, controversial, imaginative (a short story?)

Consult me before you decide on your subject.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Education

A. Facts — PAST

1841 Foundation of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution.
1848 Foundation of Queen's College in Harley Street.

These two moves to raise the status of governesses resulted in the movement for girls' education. The two greatest students of Queen's College were
Frances Mary Buss (1827-94) - founded the North London Collegiate School in 1850.
Dorothea Beale (1831-1906) - founded Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1858.

1863 Girls admitted to Cambridge locals. Success in examinations led gradually to their being allowed to compete on a higher level.
1865 Elizabeth Garrett qualified as the first English woman doctor.
1869 Emily Davies (1830-1921) founded Girton College, Cambridge.
1870 Elementary education established for both sexes.
1870 onwards Girls' Public Day School Trust founded High Schools all over the country.
1874 Association of Headmistresses founded - i.e. one association for all types of secondary schools.
1876 Manchester High School.
1877 Bolton Girls' High School.
1885 Philippa Fawcett was placed (unofficially) above the Senior Wrangler at Cambridge - but not given a degree.
1903 State Grammar Schools established on equal terms for boys and girls.

B. OPINIONS

Then surely if women are to become fit to be guardians, we shall not have one education to make guardians of the men and another for the women .....?
(Plato, The Republic)

A woman's education must be planned in relation to man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young.

Little girls always dislike learning to read and write, but they are always ready to learn to sew. (Rousseau, 'Emile' 1760)

If you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding.
(Dr. Gregory's "Legacy to His Daughters" 1774)

The accumulation of nervous energy, which has had nothing to do all day, makes women feel every night when they go to bed, as if they were going mad..... They suffer at once from disgust and incapacity; from loathing of conventional idleness and powerlessness to do work when they have it.
(Florence Nightingale , around 1850)

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,
Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long,
And so make life, death, and the great forever
One grand, sweet song. (Charles Kingsley)

Pretty girls should not be educated: they'll get married. It's all right for the plain ones to be intelligent. (Barbara Cartland)

The time is not yet come, perhaps, when we may advocate the education of boys and girls together; but this time must come, and when it does come, education will have a better chance of doing its full work.

Political, Legal, Economic Aspects

A. Facts

1857 Married Women's Property Bill was defeated in Parliament. (A woman's property and earnings belonged absolutely to her husband). Passed in 1872.
1866 John Stuart Mill (author of "On the subjection of Women") presented first petition for women's suffrage.
1867 Manchester Women's Suffrage Committee.
1870 First Women's Suffrage Bill passed its second reading, but was defeated by Gladstone's influence. Women became eligible to serve on the new School Boards and thus proved their capacity for public work. Committees were formed all over England.
1897 Mrs. Henry Fawcett (1847-1929) became President of the Suffragists, who tried to get the vote by peaceful persuasion.

The Militants

1903 Mrs. Emily Pankhurst (1858-1918) founded the Women's Social and Political Union (the Suffragettes).
1905 Militant methods adopted after a Private Member's Bill had been 'talked out' in the Commons.
1910 Pitched battle between suffragettes and police in Parliament Square.
1912 A moderate Bill again thrown out.
1913 "Cat and Mouse Act"
Emily Wilding Davison threw herself under King Edward VII's horse in the Derby.
1914 Outbreak of war suspended action and allowed women to show what they could do.
1918 Suffrage Bill - vote for women over 18.
1919 Lady Astor elected for Plymouth.
1920 Women got vote in U.S.A.
1928 Full franchise for women
1929 Margaret Bondfield Minister of Labour - first Cabinet Minister.
1968 Swiss Women got the vote.
1970 Number of women M.P's - 27 (out of 630).
" India, Israel and Ceylon have women Prime Ministers.
" The Soviet Politbureau is exclusively male.

Economic Status

Victorian working women - e.g. in mills, sweated home industries such as match-making, were grossly exploited. 1849 Pay for making a shirt was 1½d. Very few professions now officially exclude women: exceptions - the Stock Exchange, The Anglican priesthood, the Jockey and Kennel Clubs.

Equal Pay

1969 Unanimous resolution by T.U.C. demanding equal pay (81 years after first resolution). Common Market entry requires policy of equal pay.
BUT - cost would be 600-1,200 millions.
1968-9 National average full-time earnings -

Men	£24.25 a week
Women	£12.35 a week

Very few women earn high salaries.
Approximately 1 woman in 30 earns as much as the average man.
Equal pay is given in Medicine, Teaching and Civil Service.
Women can retire at 60, men at 65.

B. OPINIONS

c.1700 A woman is nothing unless she be the mistress of some great man.
(Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough).

c.1770 A woman preaching is like a dog walking on his hinder legs: it is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.
(Dr. Johnson).

1837 In everything women attempt, they should show their consciousness of dependence ... their sex should ever dispose them to be subordinate, and they should remember that by them influence is to be obtained, not by assumption, but by a delicate appeal to affection or to principle.

(Mrs. John Sandiford)

1869 What, in unenlightened societies, colour, race, religion ..... are to some men, sex is to all women; a peremptory exclusion from almost all honourable occupations ...

(John Stuart Mill)

1930 "The German girl is a State Subject and only becomes a State Citizen when she marries ... her world is her husband, her family, her children and her home."

(Hitler, Mein Kampf)

(The original Nazi programme included repeal of women suffrage).

1965 "The influence of women is only successful if it's indirect."

"Then it can be quite influential?"

"Oh certainly, so long as it's exercised in country houses, at the dining-room table, in the boudoir and the bedroom."

(Conversation with Randolph Churchill)

1791 "It is not empire but equality that women should contend for."

(Mary Wollstonecraft)

1908 "We are here not because we are law-breakers: we are here in our effort to become law-makers."

(Mrs. Pankhurst at her trial for incitement to disorder, which resulted in a three months prison sentence).

Women's Liberation (Sheet No. 4)

Psychological, Social, Moral Change

A **Facts**

1843	Manchester had 320 brothels, 1,500 prostitutes
1850	London had around 25,000 prostitutes
1864	Passing of the Contagious Diseases Act (which imposed compulsory medical examination of women, not men).
1869 onwards	Josephine Butler's campaign against the Act. (Finally repealed in 1886)
1865	Elizabeth Garrett qualified (first British woman doctor).
1876	First book on birth control - (by Annie Besant)
1885	W. T. Stead of the Pall Mall Gazette exposed the White Slave traffic.
1891	Hardy wrote 'Tess of the Durbervilles'.
1890 onwards	The influence of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who taught that infantile sexuality influenced all later development, opened up the whole subject of sex. (See Ibsen, Shaw, etc.) Methods of birth control were propagated by Annie Besant, Marie Stopes and others.
1967	Passing of the 'Abortion Act'.
1968	Abolition of theatrical censorship.
1970	Passing of the Divorce Act (allowing Divorce after five years' desertion).
1971	One person in 200 attending a V.D. clinic in Britain.
1971	20% of all teen-age pregnancies ended in abortion.

B **Viewpoints**

I (.....) take thee (.....) to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth. (Book of Common Prayer, 1549)

Would it not grieve a woman to be over-mastered by a piece of valiant dust? To give an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? (Beatrice in 'Much Ado' c.1600)

If you love him, let me advise you never to discover to him the full extent of your love; no, not although you marry him. (Dr. Gregory's legacy to his Daughters, 1774)

Man's love is of mans life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence. (Lord Byron, c.1820)

The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed slavery of the wife ..... within the family he is the bourgeois and his wife represents the proletariat. (Engels, 'The Origin of the Family' c.1845)

There are things we do and know perfectly well in Vanity Fair, though we never speak of them .... It is only when their naughty names are called out that your modesty has any occasion to show alarm or sense of outrage ..... (Thackeray, 'Vanity Fair' 1848)

The prostitute is the necessary guardian of the family.
(Lecky, History of European Morals 1869)

Nora: What do you consider is my most sacred duty?
Helmer: Your duty to your husband and children.
Nora: I have another duty, just as sacred ... My duty to myself.
(Ibsen, 'A Doll's House', c.1890)

Women must submit to the positive power-soul in man for their being. (D.H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley, 1928)

I think teenagers should be promiscuous .... Promiscuity in adolescence is a learning situation and necessary for children who are emotionally deprived. (Dr. Martin Cole, 1971)

"Skinhead girls admire the way their boys treat them. They treat them as if they weren't there. They never include them in their conversation, you must do this yourself, and even introduce yourself to new friends. They have no manners, are cheeky and disrespectful, but the girls respect them for being this way. It is all part of the understanding that goes with being a skinhead, and being a true one."
(Yorkshire schoolgirl, 1971)

"Is there anything you get really worked up about?"
"Yes, the equality of women. Both my parents were Salvation Army officers and my mother held higher rank than my father .... I'm absolutely convinced women are the equals of men."
(Sir William Armstrong, Head of the Civil Service, in a T.V. interview, 17.10.71)

"It is only when a woman surrenders her life to her husband, reveres and worships him, and is willing to serve him, that she becomes really beautiful to him. She becomes a priceless jewel, the glory of femininity, his queen!" (Marabel Morgan - "The Total Woman" 1975.

Dr. Robert Edwards, of Cambridge University, the leading experimenter in human fertilisation in the laboratory, is to continue his work in spite of the opposition of a panel of scientists and theologians who urged him to stop. They said .... "You can only go ahead if you accept the necessity of infanticide." Dr. Watson added: "There are going to be a lot of mistakes. What are we going to do with the mistakes? We have to think about some things we refuse to think about.
(17.10.71)

The following are quotations from various writings of Margaret, culled from a number of speeches given at different venues.

Quotations from the various writings of Margaret Higginson

" I read the article (written in the paper by Mrs. Cicely Lucas, a retired headmistress, in a series on the suffragette movement) with relish, as I read anything by women of her generation who have spent active, purposeful lives."
'BOLTON EVENING NEWS, 1963

"Although we (as teachers) receive little flattery, I believe we nevertheless operate from a unique position of power and influence."

"It seems to me that many parents fail to appreciate that you have to talk to children, and let them hear you talking among yourselves, and disagreeing, too, about serious matters, if you expect them ever to share their thoughts later on. Some parents are hurt that their children do not confide their deepest doubts and dificulties in adolescence, and yet they have made little attempt to use words as bridges in the earlier unselfconscious years."
THE TEACHER AND PEOPLE

"...I must say I was glad to see, when an old girl took me on a guided tour of the great OUP building one recent Sunday afternoon, that the very heart of the whole Dictionary is in a locked room filled with boxes of hand-written cards sent in daily from all over the world on which an army of volunteers record new words or new uses of old ones. No system can work without people."

"How lucky women of today are to be free to use all their gifts!"
LETTER TO OLD GIRLS, 1994

"Absolutely no-one can stand on their own feet. We all depend on one another. ... It's obvious in school, not so obvious outside - people often feel lost when they leave - but never happy unless they belong - family, school, church."
TONGE FOLD PRIZE-GIVING,1958

"And in the last resort to all of us Oxford isn't the lovely shell of the place, it's the spirit and quality that resided there which once having been in contact with you never quite lose."
SPEECH AT THE OXFORD SOCIETY DINNER c1960

"The intelligent girl wants to go on thinking, using her brain, she wants to be active and useful, she wants to be able to keep up with her children. This is going to be more and more important with the fantastic acceleration of knowledge today. Always in the past, the old have known more than the young - now reversed."
GRAMMAR SCHOOL GIRL'S PREPARATION FO R LIFE, 1961

"Just every now and then in life you meet someone and say to yourself, 'In that situation, that is how Jesus would have acted', directly and simply, without ifs or buts or reservations of any kind. When

you do meet someone like that you know what Jesus meant when he said "Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self".
CHAPEL SERMON, ABBOTSHOLME, 1962

"These schools (independent schools) were the seed-bed of the feminist movement: they expected girls to use their brains, to have a career, to take leadership roles, to serve society. They are still in the lead in these respects - they served as a model for the grammar schools of 1901."

"They are good schools and therefore good for the whole nation; without them girls in particular would offer much less service and leadership. If they weren't good, they would be killed by lack of demand."
SALFORD UNIVERSITY,1978

"The OGs of B.S. are characteristically public-spirited, responsible people, the kind of people who hold the home and society together and on whom others rely, people of steady judgement and purposeful activity."
"It is felt, and rightly felt, that this school has more than academic training to give, that it turns out people who are not just carbon copies of the conventional feather-brains in 'Woman's Own'. I would define its ideal quality of personality as an infinite responsiveness to life, so that in every situation the mind is able to find something good and stimulating, and yet for all this suppleness is never without the backbone of principle – has, in fact, always something to give of itself as well as something to get. It is that quality of giving which I recognize with most joy when I meet it among the OGs of BD.

80th BIRTHDAY 1957 JH

Margaret was often called upon for book reviews and also contributed frequently to the 'Bolton Evening News. The following are some examples:

WITHIN THE GATES

'Observer' 1954?

Who Lie in Gaol. By Joan Henry. (Gollancz. 12s. 6d.)

By MARGARET HIGGINSON

THIS book gives an exact account of eight months spent in prison—a repellent subject, but treated with good taste, sensibility and a delightful dry observation of character and speech. For those who enjoy leaving no stone unturned, there are things such as one usually finds under stones: but one is also made to comprehend some of the finer sufferings of prison life—its isolation, degradation, dehumanisation.

Miss Henry criticises Holloway strongly. During the first week there, she says, "The average prisoner forms a revulsion against authority that in normal circumstances would take a lifetime of mismanagement to acquire." But on being transferred to Askham Grange, the prison without bars near York, she suddenly felt she was a person again. She likens it to "a very austere girls' school" with a great headmistress, and one almost expects to hear of an Old Girls' Reunion That the writer, plainly a sensitive, right-minded person, should feel the Governor's influence is not surprising, but the coarsest characters felt it too. At Holloway everybody would wish "good luck" to an escaped prisoner. When somebody walked out of Askham she was considered to have let the old school down.

Askham is not "soft"—in fact, its inmates work harder and eat less well than at Holloway; but it is human, and humanity itself. It also, of course, costs far more in terms of devoted effort, and one is left wondering how the right recruits, such as are now drawn to the Probation Service, may be attracted into this hard vocation.

This is certainly a book that anyone with pretensions to a social conscience ought to read.

READERS' VIEWS

Action is mean, short-sighted

SIR,—Your leading article (Aug. 30) rightly draws attention to the closure of the reading room at Bolton Central Library, and the withdrawal of various popular newspapers.

This, however, is only the latest development in a deplorable process. The branch libraries have ceased to provide any national newspaper other than The Guardian, and the reading rooms are closed.

Those who wish seriously to understand what is being said and stage done on the national stage — and wish to be conversant with points of view expressed in newspapers other than the ones they may take at home — must now pay for extra copies or make the journey to town (at what cost in daily bus fares?) to read the single copy of The Times provided in the Reference Library.

We are aware of the need for public economy, and are not unsympathetic to the pressures local authorities now face. But this action is mean and short-sighted. Few investments could produce such high returns for so small an outlay as one daily copy of a paper such as The Times in each branch Library.

It is a truism that the life-blood of democracy is a free Press, but newspapers must also be free in the other sense of being accessible to the general public.

Bolton was a pioneer of the Free Public Library in Victorian times. Our forefathers set a high value on the free circulation of information and ideas. As citizens who care about the quality of life, and the level of public debate in this town, we feel constrained to protest against this pitiful economy.

David Baggley, Frank Barwise, Gordon Benfield, Archdeacon H. O. Fielding, Margaret Higginson, Alan Knowles, Ald C. H. Lucas, Rev D. H. Swansbury, addresses supplied.

AGGRESSIVE BUT HONEST

A challenge to egalitarians

"A MIDDLE-CLASS PARENT'S GUIDE TO EDUCATION," by WALTER JAMES (Hodder and Stoughton, 12s 6d)

By MARGARET HIGGINSON

DO you want to know how to make £1,841 18s 8d turn into £3,453 11s 6d worth of school fees in seven years? Or how to coach your son for that vital university entrance interview? (Get 'Who's Who' and read up the Professor's speciality.) Or where to get help if your child is spastic or partially-sighted? Or how—more delicate question—to discover the real quality of the staff when the Headmaster is diverting your attention to the excellence of the dormitories?

The answers to these and many other questions are to be found in this book by Walter James, Editor of "The Times Educational Supplement." It is an aggressive title, throwing out an immediate challenge to egalitarian opinion, but at least it is honest, and this is the great virtue of the book. Mr. James writes quite simply for parents who themselves were educated on academic lines, though he does not expect them to be very clever, judging by the footnote that he adds giving the answer to a very elementary "eleven plus" problem in the text. These parents want their children to have as many advantages as they can give them or buy for them. (And this, though so often nowadays regarded as moral, is not really so very

Does anybody censure parent who saves on etter to buy d war s holidays or even to buy them an encyclopaedia?).

Selection

Mr. James is ruthlessly unsentimental. He says aloud things which sound hardly decent in sensitive modern ears. For instance:

"Selective tests, unpleasantly needling though they are to parents and candidates, are indispensable in our sort of world — the rigour of all advanced courses today demands that careful efforts be made all along the line to sift out those capable of taking them. There is no escape from the selective process. If one reviews the different careers entered upon by those leaving a comprehensive school, which receives a cross-section of ability at eleven, it will be seen immediately what a process of selection has gone on inside it."

Mr. James's own bias is frankly expressed. For those who can afford it he is in favour of boarding education, and also, one gathers, of a pretty rigorous academic and social discipline. But he gives a fair and trustworthy account of the State system. The book is full of useful facts and it is written with a wry economical elegance. What he hardly ever tells us, of course, is which schools are actually the best, though there is a tantalising feeling that he could if he would.

This book will have a large sale because, in spite of its rather unfortunate title, it does appeal to the best type of pa he one who is wondering just how much say he is going to have in his child's life when a benevolent State (or Town Council) has taken over all the rights and responsibilities which were formerly considered to belong to parents alone.

Can't lose

Still, the middle-class parent has not really much to fear from any system of organisation. In fact, he can't lose. The "eleven-plus" was invented in 1944 expressly to defeat him: it was to be the utterly impartial instrument which would measure pure intelligence uncomplicated by "background" — and look where that has landed us! ("The professional or managerial class forms a mere 3.2 per cent of the population, yet it contributes rather over a fifth of the children in grammar-schools"). The "Leicestershire Plan" of junior and senior high schools with staying on on a voluntary basis is said to be working out to the delight of the middle-class parent. The "single-tier" comprehensive school on a neighbourhood basis will simply put up property values in the "good" areas of our towns and once more the richer parent who can choose where to live will come off best.

Another guide?

Somebody ought now to write a "working-class Parent's Guide to Education" pointing out among other things that the person who has most to lose by "comprehensive" education is the working-class child — if he is slow because he may lose personal significance in a huge neighbourhood school (where a boy who leaves at 15 will never get a chance to shine or lead); and if he is bright because he will lose the special stimulus of meeting fellow-spirits from many backgrounds on the common-ground of the grammar-school, where hard intellectual effort is naturally accepted as a condition of life.

What some people think his best chance of all, the Direct Grant School, could, if it were reluctantly forced to rely on fee-payers, as is happening in Bristol, be closed to him entirely. But that is another story.

Headmistress's Notebook

By MARGARET HIGGINSON

Hobby horses

• • •

Last ditchers against TV

• • •

Teaching is still teaching

• • •

Grim science-fiction

• • •

Where are the great walkers?

MY Notebook will have no casual graces, but the editor's invitation to mount any personal hobby-horse I please without committing anyone but myself is not to be refused by one who maintains quite a mettlesome stable.

I see that ITV has recently issued a report looking forward to the time five years hence when it will have 98 per cent coverage. A two per cent gap they regretfully feel will never be quite filled. I gather that this is a geographical gap rather than a pocket of psychological resistance—they do not appear able to envisage anyone not wanting TV—but I nevertheless intend to. What does one do to be part of the gap? Not fill it surely?—that is the opposite of what I mean. Perhaps it would be easier to change the metaphor and equate this gap with the last ditch. I would not presume to put myself in the same class as Sir Eric James, but it is nevertheless rather a delicious thought (to me) that we shall be sharing that last ditch together.

Several other people I know will be in it, too, and there may even be some interesting survivals of the art of conversation. Not that I shall object to other people owning TV—the elderly, the invalids, the deaf and the people who have never learnt to read, or even my own friends who so forgivingly invite me in to watch the occasional treat—but for the able-bodied and the able-minded, particularly the young, I continue, despite the views of my pleasant acquaintance Cathode, to regard it as on the whole a bad thing.

* * *

CATHODE has recently been chiding teachers for not leaping to incorporate the new TV services for schools in their curriculum. The argument seems to run that the thing has arrived, is a part of the Modern World, and we shall be out of touch (terrifying threat) if we do not use it straightway. But then many other things are part of the Modern World which we do not indiscriminately introduce into schools. Perhaps our Mathematics teaching would be more vital if we related it to that strong element in modern experience, the football pool (some of us may). I am told that somebody in France has actually invented a machine for doing children's homework [illegible] they sleep—it wor[illegible] "Brave New World" [illegible]ciple and penetrates their [illegible]conscious so that they wake knowing their lessons. Evi[illegible]tly this would be a very [illegible]ful gadget—shall we there[illegible]e adopt it?

[illegible] lessons are simply another method of teaching, and methods must always be considered in relation to the ends they bring about. If it is a doubtful proposition that the end justifies the means, how much more doubtful is it that the means justify the end? One very possible end of this process is a centralization of education. We smile in a superior way when we hear of all the Russians sharing one textbook and one timetable, yet already the attention of half our so-called adult population can be simultaneously focused on a group of moth-brained, third-rate professional "personalities" playing inane guessing games.

BUT the real argument against the widespread and frequent use of TV in the classroom is a more immediate danger. (I am not, of course, going to deny that films can provide an occasional valuable supplement to lessons, especially in Science but even here I think it should be only occasional.) Familiarity breeds indifference. What we risk losing is the most valuable thing of all — the sense of making one's own discovery. There is no education without wonder, and wonder is an exhaustible response. Children today are in danger of knowing far too much—and knowing nothing. Shelley summed it up a long time ago: "Our calculations have outrun conception; we want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know." Unless we feel the truth of what we see (and we all have only a limited capacity for feeling) we might just as well not see it, for then all we have is a conceited illusion of knowledge. Our own minds could so easily become like TV screens, flickered over continually by successive images, none of them sinking in and succeeded when the programme closes down by a blank flatness. Knowledge ought to be a first-hand discovery, made with effort and accompanied by feeling. Millers say that having killed the living wheat germ they can put back its equivalent by means of various chemicals: there is no such process possible in education, no substitute for the living imaginative principle.

* * *

I WAS thinking these thoughts more or less when I picked up a volume of short stories by Ray Bradbury, the American science-fiction writer, and came across one called "The Pedestrian," which I strongly recommend to Cathode and others. The date is 2052. The sidewalks of this great anonymous city have grown grassy because no foot ever treads on them. All day the torrent of cars floods the streets but at nightfall all the people in the city sit watching television in their houses, "the tombs...... where they sit like the dead, the grey or multi-coloured lights touching their faces but never really touching them." Only one man ignores the hypnotic forces and walks by night. "In ten years of walking by night or day, for thousands of miles, he had never met another person walking in all that time." I will not tell you the horrifying end of the story—the book is in the Bolton Public Library.

AND that brings me to my second hobby horse, of the same breed as the first. I hope Boltonians will forgive me if I express disillusionment. In my Southern childhood, my Preston-born father used to tell stories of the enormous energy and toughness of the Northerner. There was that man, for instance, who, having arrived home in Preston on foot from Bradford, found he had left his penknife behind and without a word tramped back and fetched it. There was that other rather unattractive character who would walk 10 miles round to avoid paying a penny at the toll-bridge. ("Couldn't he work out the cost of the shoe leather?" my mother would inquire rather tartly.) So when I came to Bolton I expected to find a race of vigorous Spartans. I thought they would tramp the moors at week-ends, rain or shine. I even thought they would live with the windows open. I was much mistaken. Perhaps they are still like that in Preston. But more likely times have changed everywhere. I expect many older readers of the B.E.N. remember the more sturdy time; it is on record, for instance, that Bolton's first mayor, Charles Darbishire, walked every Sunday morning from Horwich to Bank-st. chapel and back.

* * *

BUT how different it is now! It seems almost incredible that so lovely a countryside should be so disregarded. Do those who have been born here not see how beautiful it is? To one accustomed to the tame "pretence" landscape of the Home Counties, the tract of country to the north of Bolton appears splendidly free and spacious; to reach that from London, on a Saturday afternoon one would willingly travel 20 miles or more. Yet I have many times walked four or five miles away from roads and met scarcely a single person. On one glorious Saturday afternoon, I remember (admittedly the Cup Final was on—TV again!) I walked from Walker Fold over Winter Hill to Horwich without meeting a human being (until by the quarry I met two little boys, who, seeing the bog-cotton in my hand, inquired "Is them snowdrops?"). But drop down to the Belmont road any Sunday and it might be Le Mans. Or watch them drawn up in their little glass boxes all along Scout-rd. gazing out like poor melancholy fish from their tanks, or drinking tea out of vacuum flasks, even little children listlessly cowering on the back seats. Parents are so genuinely anxious to give their children the best, but what is the best they can give? One of the cheapest and most precious gifts surely is the love of the countryside? We search so seriously for pleasure and yet all around us unexplored is this nearest, simplest, purest source of joy.

And now, having proved myself a reactionary of the first water I dismount from my hobby horse (her pet name is Cassandra), feed her a bag of oats and put her back in the stable, leaving the editor trot off once more on her sleek lively, not under-nourished palfry, on which I think he might appropriately have ridden to Canterbury with Chaucer's cheerful pilgrims.

C. D. Lewis has the gift of music

By MARGARET HIGGINSON

Collected Poems 1954, by Cecil Day Lewis (Cape, 21s.)

POETS in this century are involved in an unhappy paradox. They strive and strain to express "modern" experience — (some of them even believe that if you talk enough about gas-works and scalpels you are necessarily closer to "reality" than if you talk about lilies and swords)— but their verses have in fact grown more and more unpopular and unintelligible. There is no poem to-day which speaks to the general ear as "The Charge of the Light Brigade" spoke 100 years ago.

We, the audience, are of course, partly to blame; we are lazy and too much occupied with other means of communication which drench us incessantly with light impressions. Poetry needs a silence. But the poets are not blameless either. We want one who can speak plainly and out of pure feeling, and yet can wear naturally the new clothes which science has given to our old ideas; for surely this fresh wardrobe is an asset to poetry, and our cosmos more exciting to the imagination than ever before with its new conceptions of speed, energy and power.

Vocabulary of a technical age

Such a poet, both in feeling and expression, is Cecil Day Lewis. For the natural way he wears the vocabulary of a technical age one may contrast Shelley, entreating the West Wind to "drive not dead thoughts over the universe like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth," with his image of the dead enduring "as radiant energy, charging the mind with power that all who are wired to receive him can surely share." Yet Day Lewis never surrenders his right to the traditionally beautiful natural image, and he has the gift of music, (a quality rarely found in his contemporaries unless they are parodying someone else).

"Rest from loving and be living . . ."

or

"For me there is no dismay
Though ills enough impend.
I have learned to count each day
Minute by breathing minute—
Birds that lightly begin it,
Shadows muting its end . . ."

If poetry is rightly defined a "memorable speech," this is certainly poetry.

Love of England

This verse, however, is more than memorable, it is also lovable, and lovable because its own spirit is positive, loving and generous. Certainly, many of the poems in this collection are denunciatory. Day Lewis found his voice in the '30s and to him the Spanish War was what the French Revolution was to Wordsworth. Some of the earlier poems are naive and no doubt seem so to his older self, but he has rightly let them stand because they express a positive passion for freedom which has outlived its mere occasion, and indeed come (history repeating itself once more) to be identified with the love of England. Probably the common reader will like nothing in this book so well as the quiet stoical verse written during the war—the gentle Hardy-ish poem about the Home Guard Stand-To in Devonshire, or the one about the little girl nursing her doll in the air-raid shelter.

"Dear sheltering child, if again misgivings grieve me
That love is only a respite, an opal bloom
Upon our snow-set fields,
Come back to revive me
Cradling your spark through blizzard, drift and tomb."

From the Bible

In such verses he has the poet's greatest asset, an experience his readers have deeply shared. (In another way, too, he draws constantly upon a common stock; the phrases of the Bible are everywhere in his verse, and he cannot, even if he would, escape from the English tradition). Day Lewis knows how to be a spokesman, a public poet; even, at his finest, an heroic one. The greatest poem in that volume is "The Nabara", the plain story of a naval action during the Spanish war, which combines all the panache of Tennyson's "Revenge" with a far deeper passion, summed up in its key phrase, "Freedom is more than a word".

Something worth saying, then, [illegible] a new and haunting way [illegible] it, what more can a [illegible]

He adores [illegible] that love England, [illegible] ear for her mus

Those who have an ear fo poets, her music, will list Day Lewis.

The rare partnership of the Webbs

By Margaret Higginson

"BEATRICE WEBB Diaries 1924-32," edited by Margaret Cole and published by Longman, Green and Co. at 25s. is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand the inner constitutional history of the 1920s, but those for whom this sounds too austere an ambition need not conclude that the book is not for them. It is full of shrewd sidelights on the great and famous, notably Ramsay MacDonald and G.B.S., and reveals a personality beside which the synthetic "personalities" of to-day dwindle to their proper smallness.

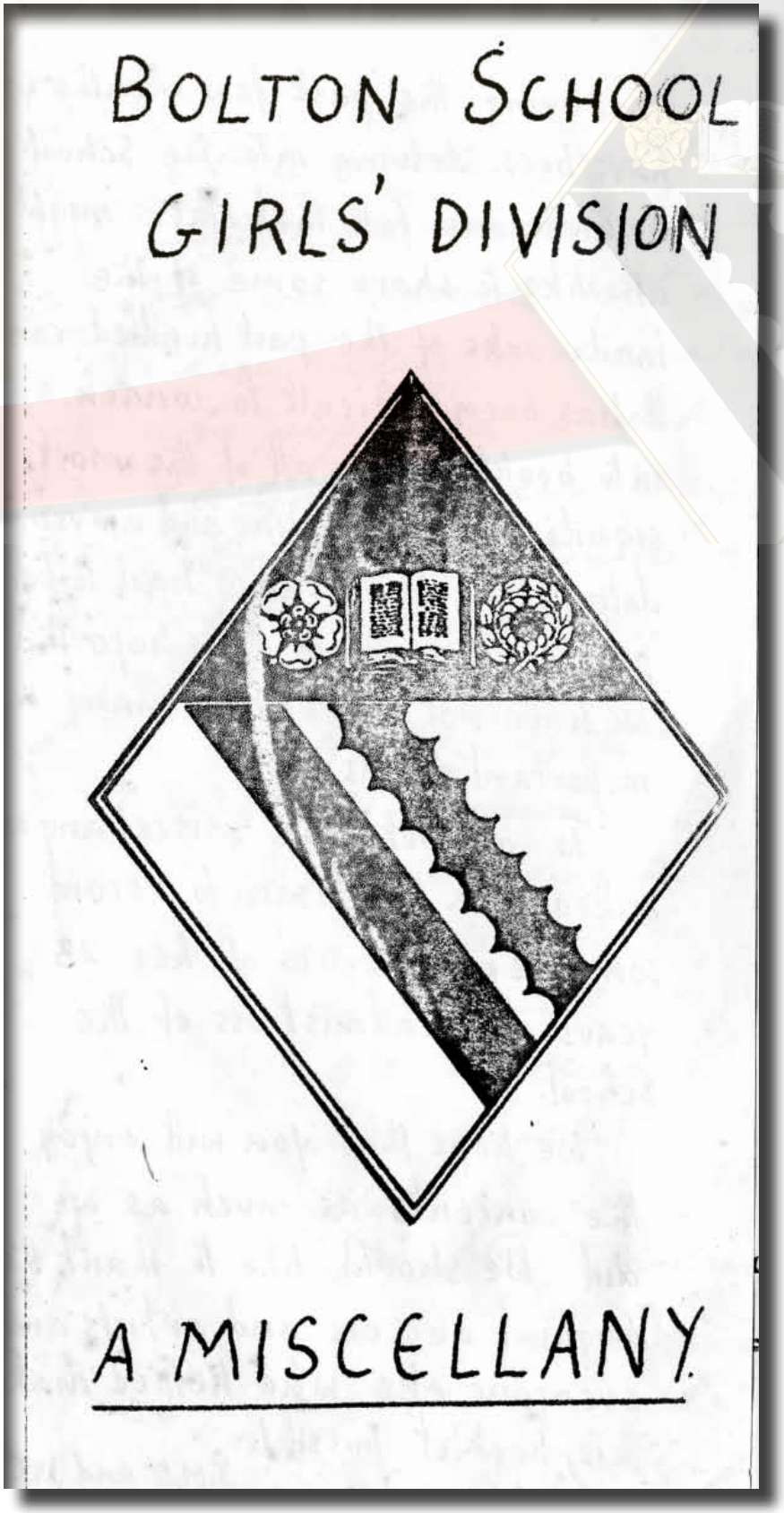
It certainly has not the superficial allure of the common run of books by women. Mrs. Webb would never have entitled a book "This Feminine World"; one is even a little surprised when she betrays a touch of the acerbity natural in her sex when one of her political visitors puts his "boots up on my best Indian shawl." Her more characteristic note is well sounded in this summary of a country house party: "A really useful and happy week-end . . . The conversation was exclusively political—I doubt whether during those forty hours there was a single allusion to women, wine, horses, sport, scandal or money making . . Undiluted public affairs, and the philosophy upon which they are based was the order of the day."

Yet it would be quite wrong to conclude that Mrs. Webb was unromantic; on the contrary Tristan and Isolde were not more absorbed in one another than she, who as a rich, beautiful and spirited girl had been courted by the most dazzling of young men, and Sidney, who had a mind like a filing cabinet and a dwarfish face and figure that even in a photograph look like a cartoon by Max. They were a supremely original pair, for they virtually invented a new type of happy marriage, inspired by an intense moral purpose and fed on a diet of unremitting cerebration. If ever there was a marriage of true minds, this was it. "An extraordinarily peaceful and interested life," she calls it, "one long day of loving companionship and joint intellectual endeavour."

In each successive photograph the beauty of Mrs. Webb's face grows more striking; it was a beauty bred in the bone, and flesh never counted for much in her estimation. In reading this book one feels a sense of gratitude that intellect wears so well, and something like awe for the author's restless, indomitable spirit. Was there ever any other old lady of 72 (or any old gentleman for that matter) who could write, "I am going to try to concentrate on working out some practical scheme of parliamentary devolution. Having broken up the Poor Law, why not break up the British Constitution?"

Yet that quotation by itself gives a wrong impression. Mrs. Webb may have been revolutionary in her thoughts, but she was not destructive, and she was selfless as only a born aristocrat can be, having nothing to gain for herself; and perhaps to some readers the most significant page in that book will be the frontispiece in which the aged pair, on verge of their l[illegible]est Soviet [illegible] tea in t[illegible]arden at [illegible] silve[illegible]

A booklet was produced as part of 100th Birthday celebrations and Margaret was asked to record some reminiscences of her years as Headmistress of Bolton School, Girls' Division. This what she wrote:



During the past few months we have been delving into the School Archives and felt that others might also like to share some of the landmarks of the past hundred years. It has been difficult to condense into booklet form all of the most significant, interesting and amusing details. The final choice had to be purely personal and we hope that we have not omitted too many important items.

To complete the miscellany we asked Miss Higginson to record some reminiscences of her 23 years as Headmistress of the School.

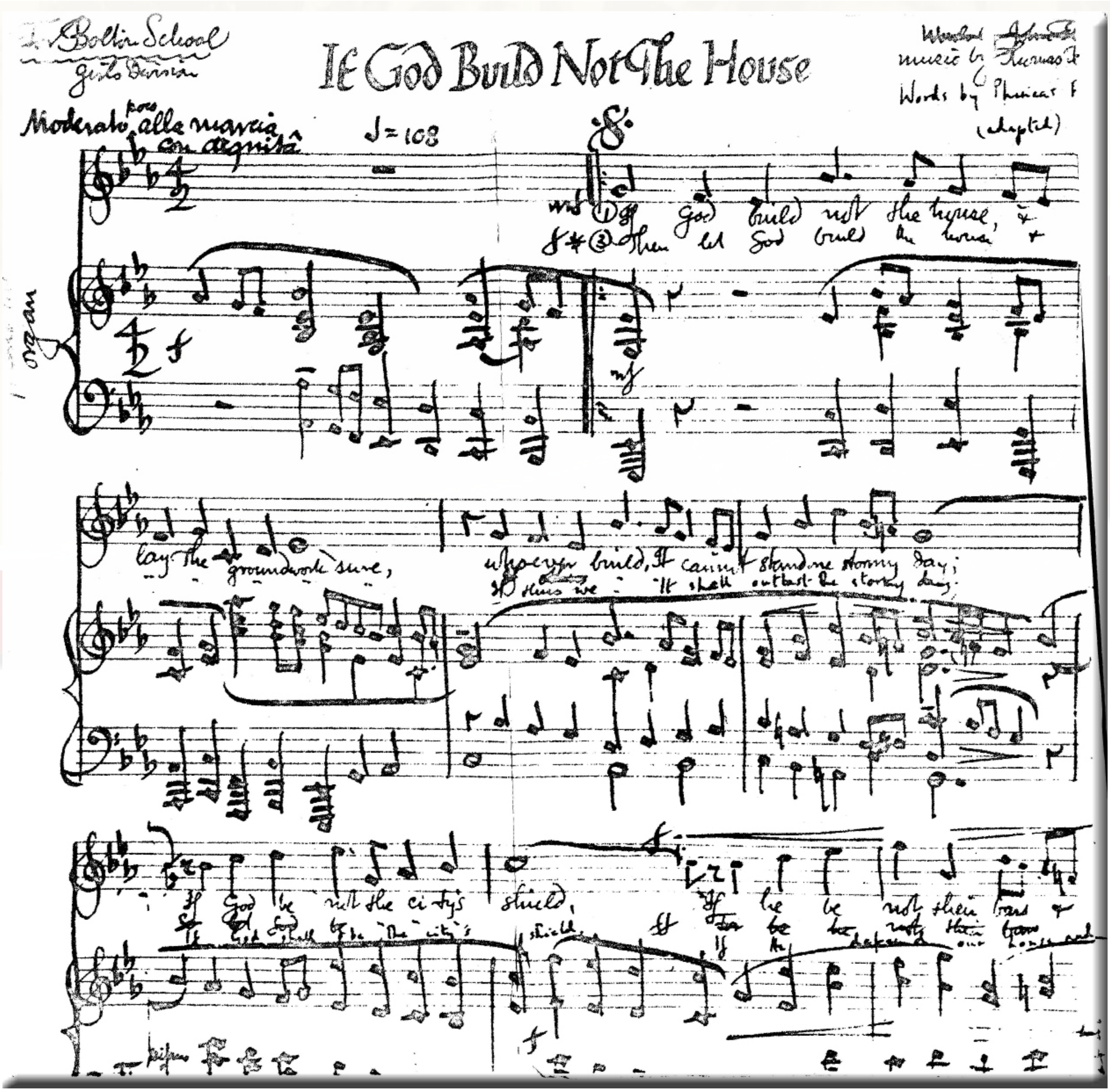
We hope that you will enjoy the contents as much as we did. We should like to thank the original authors and artists and everyone else who helped make this booklet possible.

J.M.D and V.C.

At a Meeting of the General Committee of the Bolton Mechanics' Institution held on May 14th 1877 it was resolved that a joint-committee comprising six Ladies & six members of the Class Committee be appointed to submit a scheme for establishing a Young Ladies' Day School; & the following Ladies & Gentlemen were appointed to draw up the said scheme,

Mrs Winkworth
Mrs Bowman
Miss Waddington
Miss Harwood
Mrs Powell
Mrs Woodland
Mrs Prentice
Miss Gordon
Mrs Wm Haslam

Messrs J. P. Thomasson
Stephen Winkworth
J. Hy. Biggs
Isaac Barrow
William Haslam
James Makeyne
Richard Hadfield
James Skelton



Bolton School
If God Build Not The House
Words by
(adapted)
Moderato alla marcia con dignità
♩ = 108
If God build not the house, &
Then let God build the house &
lay the groundwork sure,
whoever build, it cannot stand one stormy day;
it shall outlast the stormy day;
If God be not the city's shield,
Organ

SCHOOL SONG.

To commemorate the 80th Birthday of Bolton School Girls' Division, in 1957, the Parents' Association commissioned Dr. Thomas B. Pitfield, teacher at the Royal Manchester College of Music, to orchestrate a paraphrase by the Elizabethan Poet, Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650) of the 127th Psalm. This was adopted as the official School song.

SCHOOL SONG.

If God build not the house, and lay
The ground-work sure, whoever build,
It cannot stand one stormy day;
If God be not the city's shield,
If He be not their bars and wall,
In vain the watch-tower, men and all.

Though then thou wak'st when others rest,
Though rising thou prevent'st the sun,
Though with lean care thou daily feast,
Thy labour's lost and thou undone;
But God his child will feed and keep,
And draw the curtain to his sleep.

Then let God build the house and lay
The ground-work sure, if thus we build,
It shall outlast the stormy day;
If God shall be the city's shield,
If He defend our house and hall,
It standeth fast, it cannot fall.

General Examination 1894

I.What is a map? Draw a map of the way you would walk from the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Station to the High School,marking the names of the streets you would pass through.

II.Write briefly what you know of the following persons-(1)Sir George Tryon (2)Lobengula(3)Lord Rosebery(4)Nansen(5)Duke of York(6)Louis Kossuth

III.If it is clear,will Jupiter be visible this evening?At what times of the year are the Great Bear & Orion visible in Bolton? Make a picture of the stars in these constellations.

IV.Explain the meaning of the following expressions-to weigh anchor,to box the compass,to board ship,to scuttle a boat,to weather a gale,to ship a sea,to raise a siege,tolead the van.

V.What do you understand by a "strike"?

VI.Distinguish between the meanings of the following words:(1)bootless & shoeless (2)numeration & enumeration(3)borough & burrow(4)satire & satyr(5)libel & label (6)irritate & irrigate(7)stationery & stationary.

VII.Who killed Cock Robin?

VIII.What is"following on"in cricket? Why is it a topic of discussion at present?

IX.Describe the picture which hangs in the middle of the wall opposite the platform in the Assembly Room.

X.In what direction is New Zealand?What are its native inhabitants called? Do their heads point upwards, as ours do?

XI.Where are the following places? Write shortly anything you know about them: (1)Buluwayo(2)Ubbazia(3)the Old Kent Road (4)Siam(5)Georgetown(6)Uganda(7)the Box Tunnel(8)Chicago.

EXTRACTS FROM SCHOOL MAGAZINES

A MESSAGE FROM MISS M.H. MEADE, HEADMISTRESS 1919-1938, TO THE SCHOOL ON ITS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

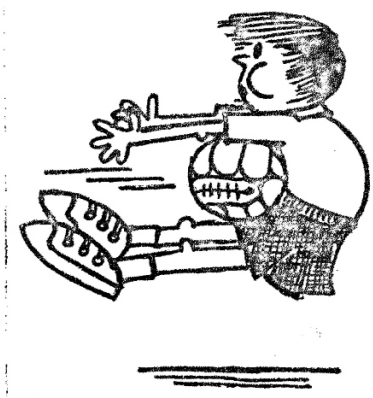
"I SEND, WITH PRIDE AND AFFECTION, WARM CONGRATULATIONS ON THE SCHOOL'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY. THE SCHOOL DOES NOT GROW OLD AS WE WHO HAVE SERVED IT GROW OLD. YEAR BY YEAR IT RENEWS ITS YOUTH AS A NEW GENERATION OF LITTLE GIRLS BECOMES ITS MEMBERS, AND AS IT GOES FORWARD, MEETING VIGOROUSLY THE FRESH DEMANDS OF AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD, WE ARE LOOKING BACK OVER THE EIGHTY YEARS THAT HAVE LAID OUR FOUNDATIONS AND BUILT UP OUR TRADITIONS. WE LIVE FORWARDS, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, BUT WE UNDERSTAND BACKWARDS, AND SO WITH NEW ILLUMINATION AND HOPE, WE SHALL FACE THE FORTY OR FIFTY OR EIGHTY YEARS ON..."

"I'M NEW THIS TERM."
[LYNDA HOLT. Lr VI P. 1966]

THE PASSING OF THE OLD RED BERET

"SEPTEMBER FOUND US BRIGHT AND MERRY,
GOING TO SCHOOL WITHOUT THE BERET,
NO MORE SEARCHING AT HALF PAST EIGHT,
NOW ITS THE GLOVES THAT MAKE US LATE.
WHERE WILL THIS ALL END? THEY SAY,
HAS THE BLAZER HAD ITS DAY?
BLOUSES AND TIES CAN'T FEEL SECURE,
NOW THAT THE BERET IS NO MORE."
[A.H. Lr IV. 1973].

AN EXTRACT FROM THE SUB-EDITORS' GOSSIP COLUMN. 1962. [NOT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY]. "SPRING HAS HIT THE STAFF. AND TOWARDS THE END OF LAST TERM IT WAS NOTICED THAT CERTAIN MEMBERS OF STAFF HAD BECOME MORE FASHION CONSCIOUS. A SURVEY OF SHOES WAS UNDERTAKEN:-
ORDINARY TO DOWDY SHOES: 40% STAFF WORE THESE.
VERY DOWDY, BUT USEFUL: 13%.
PLEASANT, BUT JUST OUT OF FASHION: 13%.
FASHIONABLE, PRACTICAL, IN FACT AI.: 34%.



1956 MAGAZINE: FANNY SMETHURST, PUPIL 1888-1896 REMEMBERS....

IN MY EARLY DAYS THE SCHOOL WAS AT HOPEFIELD AND IT WAS A RED LETTER DAY WHEN THE SCHOOL MARCHED IN PROCESSION, FORM BY FORM, TO SEE THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE NEW BUILDING IN PARK ROAD. AFTER THE FORMAL STONE LAYING WE WERE ALL ALLOWED TO "LAY A BRICK" AND THE ARCHITECT, MR GILBERT FRENCH, SUPERVISED THIS PART OF THE PROCEEDINGS. WHEN IT CAME TO MY TURN I PUT DOWN THE MORTAR, LAID MY BRICK, AND THINKING TO DO THE THING IN GREAT STYLE I GAVE IT A GOOD BANG AND THE MORTAR SPURTED UP AND COVERED MR. FRENCH.

Extract from a Cautley Log Book: "Don't get ruffled, but it's another Elizabethan weekend"

Susan Fisher 1974.

CAUTLEY

IN 1967 A VERY GENEROUS ANONYMOUS GIFT ENABLED BOLTON SCHOOL TO PURCHASE A COUNTRY PURSUITS CENTRE AT CAUTLEY.

THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS PROBABLY REVEAL AS VIVIDLY AS ANY WORDS CAN THE IMPRESSION CAUTLEY HAS MADE ON SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE STAYED THERE.

"WE SET OUT TO CLIMB GREAT DUMMACKS... NOT EVERYONE REACHED THE TOP BUT THE TEN STALWARTS WHO DID SO SANG THE SCHOOL SONG - NOT EXACTLY LUSTILY, BEING WORN OUT BY THEIR EFFORTS, BUT HOPING THEY WERE SETTING A TRADITION FOR ALL SUBSEQUENT SCHOOL PARTIES AT ST. MARK'S." [FIRST SCHOOL PARTY. 1968].

"MANY PEOPLE THINK CAUTLEY IS SOMEWHERE WHERE YOU CAN PLAY GAMES AND REST; BUT I DON'T THINK SO; IT IS HARD WORK ALL THE TIME, BUT YOU REALLY ENJOY IT."

"I LEARNED SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY AT CAUTLEY. I DIDN'T LEARN ANY MATHS OR ENGLISH BUT I DID LEARN TO BE LESS FUSSY AND I DID LEARN THE NEED FOR GOOD MANNERS.

"LAST YEAR THERE WAS MUCH TALK OF A GHOST AT CAUTLEY. WELL, THERE ARE GHOSTS - GHOSTS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE STAYED THERE, SLEPT THERE, EATEN THERE, LAUGHED THERE, AND LOOK BACK IN IT ALL WITH NOSTALGIA. MY GHOST IS THERE."

[HARRIET LYLE. LR. IVE. 1971].

SURELY, THESE LINES, DISPLAYED IN THE COMMON ROOM AT CAUTLEY WILL BE UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED BY EVERY TRUE CAUTLEY-ITE...

"WHAT WOULD THE WORLD BE, ONCE BEREFT OF WET AND OF WILDNESS? LET THEM BE LEFT, O LET THEM BE LEFT, WILDNESS AND WET; LONG LIVE THE WEEDS, AND THE WILDERNESS ..."

Past, present and future.

When I first saw the advertisement for the headship of Bolton School in the Spring of 1953, I visualised - I blush to admit it now - a rather grim establishment probably with asphalt playground, high walls and gothic, barred windows, certainly with a back drop of mill chimneys billowing smoke. Boltonians, I assumed, would possess the more intimidating virtues such as industry, candour, sobriety, thrift, and a disposition to walk five miles rather than pay a half-penny on the toll-bridge. (This was the folk-lore derived from my Prestonian father). This prospect did not repel me, in fact I found it attractive in a perversely romantic way. But when I first saw the mellow sandstone and green lawns, and even more when I was received with gracious ceremony by the Clerk and Treasurer Mr John, and most of all when I was ushered into the library before the great conclave of Governors with his Lordship in the chair -then I felt like the Queen of Sheba who, when she had seen the magnificence of King Solomon, had "no more spirit in her". In other words, I nearly took the next train straight back to London.

But I stayed. It took a long while for the awe to wear off - indeed it has hardly done so yet. I am still thrilled with the sheer beauty of Bolton School, outside and in: the coloured stone, lovely in all lights, but especially in the sunset; the superb finish and craftmanship of the woodwork and the floors; the brilliant organ and its majestic sound; the abundance of trees and the mysterious 'wood'. Surely this environment, even if taken for granted at the time, must have a lifelong influence on those who are brought up in it when young?

People, too, conveyed the same immediate c
sense of quality - all those senior members t
of staff who bore so loyally with a raw newcomer; s
the most traumatic moment of a young head- v
mistress's life comes when she realises that the
door is being held open for her by a person of
such presence and dignity - Miss Sturrock or Miss
Drury for instance - that every instinct of the
well-trained junior makes her spring to open the
door herself. How much I owe to those kind, wise
seniors who made me understand what was expected
of me! But a pedestal gives an insecure foot-hold
and I have devoted a good deal of effort over the
years to lowering mine -Headship in the old grand
style is finished. What matters now in any school
is the consensus-the shared principles, the agreed
goals, the practical wisdom of the whole staff-and
it is in this consensus that Bolton School excels.

From the start the friendliness of the place made itself felt, and not only inside the walls : one was aware straight away of the genuine support of the Old Girls' Association and very soon of the parents, whose Association was founded in 1954. There is a 'togetherness' about Bolton School which I have never seen equalled -I do not mean merely in the Girls' Division. When one considers the total numbers of people who have an interest in the school - the 1800-odd pupils of both Divisions and Beech House, with all their parents, uncles & aunts, the Governors, the members of staff - not only those who teach but those who type, clean, cook and mow - it adds up to a vast network of relationships extending far beyond the immediate neighbourhood and the present moment (as indeed the Old Girls' recent survey, using living testimony from 1901 to 1975, has proved). The Bolton School campus may be summed up as not so much an institution, more a way of life. It has been the greatest strength to this school that, though its parts are distinctive and largely autonomous, it

can operate as one entity when need arises, as in the 'Open Door' Appeal; and a large part of the astounding success of that Appeal must be attributed to the 'family' atmosphere of the whole Foundation.

We are celebrating our Centenary - a hundred years in which the pace of change has accelerated in a way inconceivable to our founders. The most obvious revolutions have been in science and the shift of political power; in 1877 no-one had left the ground, except in a balloon, no woman (and no black African) had the vote. Yet more subtle and profound than these quantifiable changes are those which have altered social and psychological attitudes. Inventing a space-ship is child's play compared with re-shaping the hearts and wills and prejudices of men and women, which have been set in one mould since the dawn of history. The Girls' Division has not produced, to my knowledge, any inventor of space-ships (though it has some quite competent engineers). But it has contributed steadily over the years to the subtle shift in attitudes which has made women considerable for their own qualities and powers. And this development, liberating as it eventually will a vast potential of energy in half the human race, may ultimately bring about deeper, more truly significant changes than those which at the moment attract most attention.

Margaret Higginson

Hannah Lea LVIS.

The following article appeared in the Bolton Evening News on the occasion of Margaret's retirement:

TWENTY FIVE years ago, a rather junior teacher from London surveyed the impressive portals of Bolton School . . . and nearly fled back South!

"I was over-awed", admits Miss Margaret Higginson, who is about to retire after a quarter of a century as headmistress of the famous School's Girls' Division. "At the time, I didn't know how I'd got the cheek to apply for the job there!"

"But having done it, and got it, ~~like Margaret Thatcher said recently~~, I thought 'Well, now there's work to be done, so I'd better just get on with it'."

Miss Higginson had never been to Bolton before she came for her interview and was unprepared, not only for the impressive School buildings, but also for the beauty of the Northern town her Southern colleagues had labled "grimy".

Strangely enough, it was the romantic notions of a young girl about the North that had prompted her to apply for the post at all.

VARIED

Her father was a Preston man, married to a Southern girl, and Margaret, one of two girls, was brought up in Surrey. But, Mr Higginson spoke often and fondly of his Northern background "And I thought of the North as the rugged moors of the Bronte country, so I was immediately attracted here".

Young Margaret was educated at Sutton High School and Somerville College, Oxford, where she obtained a first-class honours degree in English language and literature. She went on to gain a diploma with distinction at the Oxford University Department of Education.

She then began a varied career in teaching which included terms at a girls' boarding school and two co-educational schools before going to the well-known St Paul's Girls' school in London. Here, she was an assistant English mistress — "the lowest form of staff life there!" she recalls, laughing.

ADMIRATION

When she came to Bolton School, she knew nothing about the place, but soon grew to love the School and the community which nurtured it.

A woman interested in education itself Miss Higginson took an unusual "sabbatical" 11 years after becoming headmistress there. "I decided to put myself to the test. I wanted to know if discipline had to do with the school or the head-teacher", she explained.

So, granted a term's leave of absence from Bolton School, she went to a tough comprehensive school in Stepney to take charge of Form 3D. "I soon found out what I wanted to know — I was terrible at keeping discipline!

"It was very hard work and just strengthened my admiration and sympathy for the teachers in some comprehensives.

"Mind you," she added, "I still don't think that's a reason for abolishing places like Bolton School."

The School is a place close to her heart; its relationship with the Boys' Division she views as "ideal." And the Girls' Division itself: "a marvellous place."

"It is not," she said, "a smug feeling of 'I'm all right Jack' here. This is an excellent school because the children who come here do so because they want to.

"What is special about it is that it gives every pupil a chance to use her talents to the full, whatever they are.

"Girls leave here with a feeling of indebtedness to society; a sense that they must put something back into the community, and not waste anything."

Miss Higginson's years at Bolton School have been sweet ones for her, and she's quick to attribute this to "the governors, staff, girls, parents, aunts and uncles — all of the people who form the community that is the School."

She gets letters from former pupils all over the world: "The girls still feel a tremendous sense of loyalty to the school," she stated, "and it's marvellous having all these honorary grandchildren!"

Even at times of illness and reduced physical strength Margaret's sense of humour, determination and ready wit did not desert her. (This was sometimes a matter of some amazement to the medical staff that supported her. Who else at the age of 89 would refuse to stay overnight in hospital in case she was 'bed blocking'?)

Scraps from the Rehab Ward or The Uses of Literacy

Dost ~~thou think I have not wit enough to lie straight~~ in my bed?

Everyman can master a grief but him that hath it.... there was never yet philosopher that could endure the toothache patiently.

Man must endure his going hence even as his coming hither. The readiness is all.

Is man no more than this? Consider him well.. thou art the thing itself. Unaccommodated man is no more than such a poor bare forked animal as thou art.

What is a man if his chief good and market of his time be but to sleep and feed?

For myself, I count the world not an inne but a hospitall and a place not to live but to dye in.

Last scene of all
Is second childishness and mere oblivion
Sans wit, sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered rag upon a stick unless
For every tatter in its earthly dress
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing...

No Spring or Summer beauty hath such grace
As I have seen in one Autumnal face..

And an old age serene and bright
And lovely as a Lapland night
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

He that points the sentinel his room
Doth license him depart at sound of morning drum.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity...

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey
This plesing, anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?,,

.... Often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy because
We have been glad of yore.

It tickleth me about my herte rote,
Yea, to this day it dothe my soule bote
That I have had my world as in my time.

My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me.

Look thy last on all things lovely
Every hour. Let no night
Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
Till to delight
Thou hast paid thine utmost blessing,
Since that all things thou wouldst praise
Beauty took from those that loved them
In other days.

Two obituaries form Margaret's 'adopted daughter', Glenys Carter, and a dear friend, Charles Winder, of the Boys' Division need no further commentary.

Miss M D Higginson, Headmistress (1953-78)
Educated at Sutton Girls' School, Surrey, and Somerville College, Oxford, Margaret Higginson taught English at a variety of schools before taking her Bolton headship. Before the war she was at Wycombe Abbey School, she spent some time at Bemrose School, co-educational, in Derbyshire and moved next to St Paul's School in London. Her experience was wide and equipped her well for leadership.

Margaret had lasting relationships with many of her pupils. Only this year, Baroness Shirley Williams, whom she taught at St Paul's, wrote a tribute to her teaching in the national press. Quite recently a pupil from Bemrose, later Professor of English in Glasgow University, sent her his very detailed book about Reynard the Fox as a recurrent presence in medieval myth. Her success in teaching enabled her to see and develop opportunities as headmistress. During the 'sixties and 'seventies, she and David Baggley worked productively together in establishing shared sixth form teaching in General Studies, Classics, Economics and more widely in Oxbridge tuition groups; they initiated a joint entrance examination; co-operation in music and drama flourished; jointly the schools developed the outdoor pursuits centre at Cautley.

Margaret enjoyed many expeditions to Cautley and loved not only the activities but the family feeling it nourished. Years later old girls were still writing to her about these and other early experiences. Her correspondence in retirement was immense and there was annually a cascade of Christmas cards. She was sorry that in the end she was unable to send cards and letters by herself.

Last Christmas a card was sent to many on her behalf. It contained a poem about the nativity by the writer Ursula Fanthorpe whom Margaret greatly admired. She was deeply satisfied to learn how friends were moved and struck by the depiction of the Magi and shepherds, who

"Walked haphazard by starlight straight
Into the Kingdom of Heaven".

Poetry was for her a serious and lifelong pursuit. She was probably responsible for the framed print of "Inversnaid" by G M Hopkins in the Common Room at Cautley, expressing her interest in the living language and the living world. It was the extent of her reading and her knowledge of poems by heart which helped sustain her in her last years. They formed a hinterland in which she could live. Her courage was great, her mind as acute as ever and she was always ready for conversation with visitors on political and social affairs. She loved Bolton, she loved the school. She loved her friends, she had loved her work in retirement for the blind, for Oxfam, for the United Nations, the Civic Trust and as a governor of Canon Slade School. Death came as a quiet end to an energetic and generous life.

CBW

I was Margaret's first pastoral care case in 1954. Margaret had only been a headmistress for a month. She must have had many other priorities, but she realised that I was in trouble. I was a very ordinary Lr. IV pupil, but my father had just died unexpectedly. My mother was both blind and bedridden. From then on, I was my mother's chief carer.

The neighbours thought that I should leave that posh school and go to work in the mill where I belonged. My mother was under pressure. Only with Margaret's support was she able to resist the pressure and allow me to continue with my education.

Over my school career, Margaret secretly, sensitively and unreservedly, ensured that my mother's aim to keep me at school was met. The Lr V fete money, the free Halle tickets and bus fare were probably school funded; but not so the caftan dress she made me for my first dance, the birthday books and the Christmas food, all delivered in a matter of fact manner that kept her boundaries and our dignity intact.

I need to stress my ordinariness; no high flyer material and never the archetypal Bolton schoolgirl. I never did rush around with a violin case in one hand and a lacrosse stick in the other!
And yet she cared: rarely in words, always in deeds.

Margaret's role change from caring head to headmistress mum was seamless. I became an adopted daughter. When I gained my teaching certificate there was no other significant adult to tell except her.

After my mother's death, while still a student, in characteristic mode Margaret challenged my freedom. " If you are going to live with 5 men Glenys, I trust there is safety in numbers and I wish to meet them."

So, for 5 colonial post grads, an evening of sweet sherry and hard sausage rolls- how many of us have been there?- began a process in which she became " Higgy" to them and " Mum" to me.

And so the years rolled on. The Family week at Cautley, the country pursuits centre near Sedbergh, then owned jointly by both Divisions, where, for one week of the year, I and my 3 young daughters provided her family element to the school party. Who can forget the dragging of the push chair up Cautley Spout to sing the school song. Margaret, or Nana , as we called her always cooked the final meal of the week using up all the left over ingredients. Who can remember- who can forget- the trifle made with cornflakes.

Over the years we bridged the generations. I grew to understand Margaret's vulnerability and worldly innocence operating alongside that fine mind and high moral integrity.

Some memories: An example of the unworldliness - a kitchen table scene the evening before her 80th birthday drinks party for 35-40 people. Her liquid provision for the feast: 2 bottles of indifferent wine, 1 bottle of the inevitable sweet sherry, and 2 bottles of home made lemonade.
..... " And the Bishop doesn't drink"
Consternation, Ceridwen, Stuart's " petrol" search.
Result :"Just put that bottle on one side will you" Ceridwen and I loyally drank the lemonade (but the sweet sherry was a step too far).

In her final years, my mum faced the indignity of old age with impressive stoicism. Her still acute mind found solace in poetry and Shakespeare. Despite her increasing dependence on being read to she would have an immediate response. Last August I asked what poetry I should use to interest my 10 year old grandson Josh. Instantly
" The Everyman edition of " The Lays of Ancient Rome" It has rhythm and it has fighting"

A last anecdote, that sums up my headmistress mum; her belief in high standards, her acerbic quality.
Imagine my trepidation when I had to confess that her youngest granddaughter had become the Series producer of Big Brother. I leave you to imagine the reaction.
And my relief when I could tell her that Di had been headhunted to become the Director of Production at MTV UK and Ireland
Her response..... Is Diana still producing programmes that we don't care to watch?
Only someone who is loved and knows it, and who loves in return can make that kind of comment and get away with it.

Loved, loving and now desperately missed.

Group of friends at 63, Albert Road West.

Margaret and fellow-workers

School Prayers were always an important part of the day for Margaret. The following are some of the prayers she wrote;

Many Bolton School Old Girls have abiding memories of School Prayers which were a daily feature of our life at school, Apart from ‘set’ prayers Margaret wrote many herself. Here are just a few examples:

God our Father, we have no right to call ourselves your children unless we recognize all men as our brothers, whatever their race, colour or religion. If we have the chance to help strangers, make us friendly, imaginative and kind. And may we always think and speak justly and generously without fear of the crowd.

O God, you who fill our universe and without whom all space would be empty and all life meaningless, draw us on always to seek fearlessly for truth, and help us to find it, not only in knowledge of things outside ourselves but at the heart of our own experience and in other people: through Jesus Christ who told us to seek and promised that we should find.

God out Father, in whose image all men and women are made, and from whom we derive all sense of meaning in personal relationships, we thank you for all the love we have already received and given, and for all we hope to give and receive during the course of our lives.

Plant in us the outgoing, generous spirit that does not seek to mould and possess, but to understand and encourage others, and increase in us daily the insight to perceive your spirit at the heart of all human love, grief and joy.

We hope you have enjoyed these shared memories of Margaret.

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