

MR. G. GROVE : FROM NEW BOY TO RETIRED TEACHER

In the second week of February 1949 as a ten year old pupil at Bengeworth School, Evesham I sat the National 11+ Examination. As a result of this I first entered the doors of Prince Henry's in June 1949 to be interviewed by the Headmaster, Mr. C.E. Miller, to see if I was suitable to enter "his" school. This proved successful and I entered 1A in September 1949 with an intake of just 90 selected pupils. The school had a wonderful reputation and we felt honoured to be part of this establishment. We wore short grey trousers, blazers (with more braid than those of today) and white or grey shirts, the same tie and to top it all - a school cap. We all had a brown leather satchel on a shoulder strap.

No eating was allowed in school and in fact we were punished if we were caught eating or chewing in town. When wearing our uniform we were expected to raise our caps to all teachers in town and we were taught etiquette in the lunch time with the school meals which cost 5p a week. We were also taught Ballroom Dancing in preparation for the School Party Dance held annually each year.

The subjects we learned were very much like today's curriculum but we all learned LATIN for at least one year. Sport was a vital part of the school in those days and school matches were played on Wednesday afternoons and on Saturdays. For important cricket matches on a Wednesday the whole school would go and watch and on Saturdays many pupils would attend matches as spectators.

At this time the only present day buildings were the Main Block and the Art Block.

The Art Block acted as an H.E. Room and Wood Work Room downstairs and a Gymnasium upstairs. We changed for these lessons on the stairs outside the room. Girls on the present west stairs and boys on the east stairs.

The Main Block had teaching rooms downstairs including partitioned classrooms - Rooms 4 & 5 - where the library is now, and the main body of the library was the Assembly Hall. Speech Day and all concerts and plays were performed in there too. The Headmaster's study still remains in the same place as it has from 1909.

The school had prefab buildings and an H block - these were on the site of the present technology workshops. It also had a brand new Aluminium Block built in the 50's with changing rooms, showers and teaching rooms. This block has recently been replaced by the Burlingham Centre.

The site of the present Abbey Block and D Block was well cared for, grass tennis courts and the M Block corridor was a grassy bank on which pupils could watch the tennis and while away their breaks.

The members of staff in those days all wore gowns and this continued well into the 60's - I well remember cleaning the blackboard with the sleeve of my gown in my early days of teaching. The transfer from pupil to teacher was made very pleasant for me although it did cost me £30. I used to travel to and from school as a pupil on a drop handlebar racing bicycle and hardly thought the same mode would do as a new mathematics master. I therefore bought a black upright Raleigh bicycle to make the 2 mile journey to and from school. Most members of staff at this time lived in or very close to Evesham. At the present day, staff live in Cheltenham, Worcester and even further afield.

Pupils in the 1960's had theatre trips; skiing holidays started; walking tours took place, the forerunner of today's D of E; Foreign Exchanges took place to Germany and to Dreux in France. I believe that pupils of the 90's have an even wider spread of activities and trips; the school vehicles undoubtedly help by taking small groups of pupils to various locations.

In 45 years I have seen very many changes - not all have been for the good - but I am sure that the more relaxed atmosphere in the school has not gone too far as we are led to believe has happened in some educational establishments. The present day examination results are certainly a match for the days of the selective intake but I must add that the content of these examinations has much changed.

I hope that someone in Year 9 will follow in my footsteps and write their thoughts in the year 2039!