



1594-1991

The CHESTERFIELD SCHOOL

A Tribute to Excellence

FOR almost 400 years Chesterfield's progress and culture has been furthered by a school that became a cornerstone of the town's heritage.

Chesterfield School established a reputation for the excellence of its standards and its boys have distinguished themselves in so many walks of life.

A reshaping of the county's education for the 1990s closed this proud chapter in the town's history this summer, and this special publication records the standing of the school in the community and the affection in which it was widely held.

Compressing 397 years of history into a few pages gives no more than a glimpse into the school's fascinating past and we are grateful to many old students, staff and their families for their help with our research.

Chesterfield School has closed its doors but has left a profound impression on the town and district it served. And its spirit lives on... an Old Boys reunion is already scheduled for Friday March 27 next year, at the Chesterfield Hotel.



400 YEARS ON



• Upper picture—the old school house, here greatly extended.

• Lower picture—the modern school that has now become Brookfield.

• Lower picture—familiar outline of the old school on Sheffield Road, on the outskirts of Chesterfield town centre.



CHESTERFIELD SCHOOLDAYS

Shaping the lives of boys through four centuries

CHESTERFIELD SCHOOL has written a glorious chapter into the history of the town. Now those schooldays are over and another chapter of Chesterfield's evolution closes.

The gates shut on Chesterfield School at Brookside for the last time at the end of the 1990/91 school year. They reopened with the school bearing a new name and format with the changing face of Derbyshire education.

Now generations of townsfolk, whether old students, their parents or staff, can look with pride on the way that Chesterfield School helped shape the town spanning two Elizabethan ages.

In that span the school distinguished itself by setting its scholars on the path to some of the highest callings in the land - in universities, the church, in industry and in government and diplomatic posts.

Chesterfield School would have celebrated its 400th anniversary in three years, but in fact a school of some sorts existed before the date of 1594 which is taken to be the school's inception.

The town of Chesterfield had been granted the Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1218. It bestowed credibility and defined the people's liberties and most likely tied in with that status the privilege of a school.

Church

So it is probable that the origins were laid down in the reign of Henry III and that until Henry VIII came along over 300 years later Chesterfield School was a facet of church life.

Under religious reform and civil suppression exercised by Henry VIII the town's ecclesiastical school ran out of time and it took until near the close of the 16th century for public opinion to gain the confidence to press for a new school.

Bequest

It was in 1594 that the will of Godfrey Foljambe bequeathed £13.6s.8d from the income of his estates in Walton and Cutthorpe to be used for a schoolmaster to teach Chesterfield children.

The status of the Chesterfield School was given royal prestige when in 1598 Elizabeth I granted to Chesterfield a charter that mentioned a grammar school.

The first headmasters drew salaries from the wills of local benefactors like Foljambe, and in the middle of the 18th century under the headship of the Rev. William Burrows, the school claimed to be the leading establishment in the north of England.

Yet by the end of the century the school had almost dwindled to nothing. Poor standards cost grammar schools the patronage of the middle classes and in 1794 there were only eight or nine pupils on the roll. By 1827 it had fallen to four and then to a single boy by 1832.

New plans

For the next 13 years the buildings were empty and decayed, but in 1845 the Corporation revealed new school plans on the site off Sheffield Road where the school remained until 1967.

Financing of the new school was laid down by the Court of Chancery, under which it was split into two departments each with 20 free scholars and others paying £9 a year - with a discount of £3 if they dropped Greek.

The name of Chesterfield Grammar School was restored to the establishment by Queen Victoria in 1878. The classical and commercial schools were merged and the Head's salary became £150, plus a capitation fee of £3 - £5 on each pupil.

There were ten scholarships worth £6 a year for three years.

Age limits were 8-17 and tuition fees were £6 to £10 a year. Boarders paid £35 to £50. Subjects taught were English, Latin, European languages, natural science, vocal music and drawing. Greek was still a £3 'extra'.

Houses

The school's strength topped the 100 mark for the first time in 1878 and a house system was set up in the early days of this century.

The houses commemorate the names of founders of the school - Clarke, Foljambe, Heathcote, Large and Lingard. The sixth house, Bradley, was added later.

The school buildings on Sheffield Road on the outskirts of Chesterfield town centre, familiar to generations of old boys, were built in 1845 at a cost of £2,400. Stone was used from Wingerworth's Bole Hill quarries and an adjoining house was built for the schoolmaster.

Extensions were added in 1872 and 1897, costing £500 and £6,000. The north wing was added in 1927 for £17,000 and a dining hall was built in the 1950s.

Hurst House, on the opposite side of Sheffield Road, was bought by the school in 1928 for £2,000 and used as the Headmaster's residence.

Then it became the Junior School then after the World War housed the sixth form.

As the school's size grew to 800 pupils, pressure on space forced sporting activities out to green fields off Storrs Road to the west of the town. The science block followed and eventually, in 1967, the whole school shifted to the site known as Brookside.

Now, in 1991, it becomes Brookfield, the co-educational school for a new era in Chesterfield education.

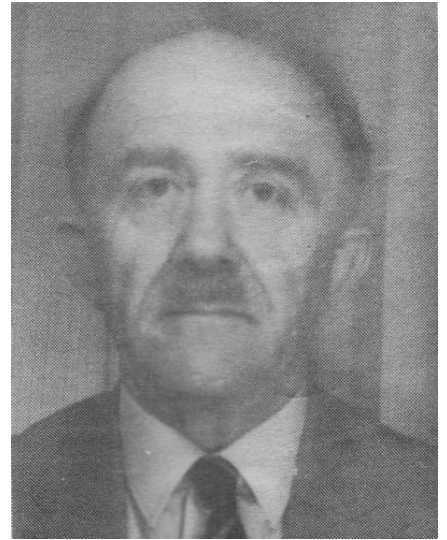
A centre of excellence

Chesterfield School set out to be a centre of excellence mainly (but not exclusively, as the following list shows) in the academic and cultural spheres of life.

The success of the school has been consistent for nearly four centuries and can best be illustrated by our alumni from the twentieth century. This includes four knights of the realm and men who have held varied and outstanding

positions in our society; an ambassador, a director of the Bank of England, an international goalkeeper, a member of the Cabinet office, a test cricketer, a university professor.

In addition, of course, there are many Old Cestrefeldians who have contributed in their own ways to the success of our country and this town over those centuries. All of this illustrates Matthew Arnold's view that 'Men of culture are the true apostles of equality.'



The school has always strived to care and cater for the needs and aspirations of all and the success of its pupils over the next decades in achieving their own potentials will bear witness to this.

Therefore its demise will always be a matter of sadness to those of us who have loved and benefitted from an association with the school. This is especially so in my case, as I have had the privilege of being a governor as well as a parent of a boy attending the school.

However, in looking forward to the school's scion, I wish the new Brookfield Community School and her pupils' success. May they too bring credit and honours to their school and to the town of Chesterfield.

David Chinn, chairman of the governors

END OF AN ERA



Talking about times at school between 1936 and 1943 are (left to right) - Jim Brier, Harry Husband, Peter Rhodes and Bill Ramsden.

Below three Old Cestrefeldians catch up on the news. Left to right - John Radford (1934-1941), Phil Whiting (1925-35) and Ken Taylor (1925-1932).



Some of the last pupils at the school attended the reunion.

Governor and old boy, Mr John Roberts, called for three cheers for the school - and three more for the new Brookfield Community School which will be its successor.

As midnight on August 31 approached - when the school officially ceased to exist - the old boys divided into their houses to sing the school song to the music of the Holymoorside Band.

Memories rekindled at farewell event



Recollections of schooldays past from 1951-1958 by (left to right) - John Roberts, Mal Hughes, Mike Hadfield, Sayed Stevenson and Gordon Reddish.

Old boys sign off with school song

Former old boys met up again to mark the end of the school's 397 years of history at a farewell reunion. About 200 old boys, staff and wives assembled for the event organised by the Old Cestrefeldians Society at the school.

Mr Bill Glister (84), head of the school when it moved to Brookside was there along with Mr Geoffrey Price, who held the post from 1968 to earlier this year, since when long serving member of staff Dr Steve Poulton had been in charge. Old Cestrefeldians recalled how in years gone by the society's annual dance at the Victoria Ballroom was one of the major events on the town's social calendar.

A tradition has been attending the school's annual remembrance service. Memorials listing the names of Old Cestrefeldians who died in the two World Wars are kept in a special room at the school..

Former president of the Old Cestrefeldians for about 10 years, Mr Harry Husband, said "It was a successful event to mark the passing. There was a certain amount of nostalgia. I met another old boy I hadn't seen for 30 years."

He added it was hoped the society, which now holds an annual dinner, would continue to function.



A paper wreath sent by old boy Jack Cayser, who now lives in Kidderminster. event to mark the passing.

A Vital organ in the make up of the town

For four centuries Chesterfield (Grammar) School has been a vital organ in the make-up of Chesterfield town. Let us consider what they have done for each other, and wonder how the town may survive the operation to remove that organ.

The school has naturally been mainly for sons of townspeople of Chesterfield, although there used to be a few boarders, and in modern times some boys have come daily by train from further afield.

If my memory serves, when I entered in 1916 and my brother Andrew a little later, the total number of boys in the school was some 250 (not counting a small junior school that flourished about then). So we are considering what for long was a vital but smallish, organ.

Apart from buildings and grounds, there seem to have been no endowments. So for most of the time the governors, consisting of a small body of worthy citizens, must have run the school as self-supporting on school fees.



Sir William McCrea, FRS president, Old Cestrefeldians Society, and a world-renowned professor of astronomy.

Wisdom

In my time the county awarded annually perhaps half-a-dozen scholarships; recently, of course, the school must have depended largely on public money. So long as the governors could act with sufficient independence, they must have guided the school with robust wisdom through drastically changing times.

There should now be put on record a hearty tribute to their accumulated service to the school and through it, to the town.

From the standpoint of the town the school's pupils have fallen broadly into two categories. A majority must have aspired to follow callings generally like those of their fathers, in Chesterfield or in similar towns, just as Chesterfield would expect some such intake from elsewhere, with some expecting to enter family concerns.

This category would include some who could well hope in due course to serve the borough as councillors, aldermen or mayor. In short the school expected to help good townsmen of one generation to produce good townsmen of the next generation, naturally with movement between towns and with contributions from other generally similar schools.

This may seem very obvious, but it did determine the school's ethos, and a good ethos it was.

I emphasize this because a normal healthy school should not have as its main aim the production of high-fliers. But it had to look out for any that happened to come along and to encourage them to spread their wings.

Leaders

Clearly this too has been a service to the community in producing leaders at the national level. All I can do is cite a few examples ...

Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), grandfather of biologist Charles, was at the school 1741-1750 presumably as a boarder; he was perhaps the most remarkable Englishman of his time.

Sir Robert Robinson (1886-1975), possibly the greatest organic chemist of the century, was at the school for a

short while around 1998, and it is recorded that the headmaster, James Mansell, was the first to stimulate his interest in mathematics. He was president of the Royal Society 1945-50 and president of the Old Cestrefeldians Society in 1946.

Albert James Bradley (1899-1972), a family connection of Robinson, was at the school about 1909-16; in 1939 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society for pioneering work on the X-Ray study of crystal structure.

Vivian Bowden (1910-89), Lord Bowden of Chesterfield, was a little junior to me at the school. He was an eminent physicist and educationist, and was president of the OC Society in 1967.

Nearer the present, three Cestrefeldians have played significant roles as professors in the development of Sussex University. Another three very eminent public servants have been recent presidents of that Society, one a recent British Ambassador to France, one the present chairman of HM Customs and Excise, and one the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board.

These are only a few who have brought credit to the name of Chesterfield; readers can doubtless add many more to the list.

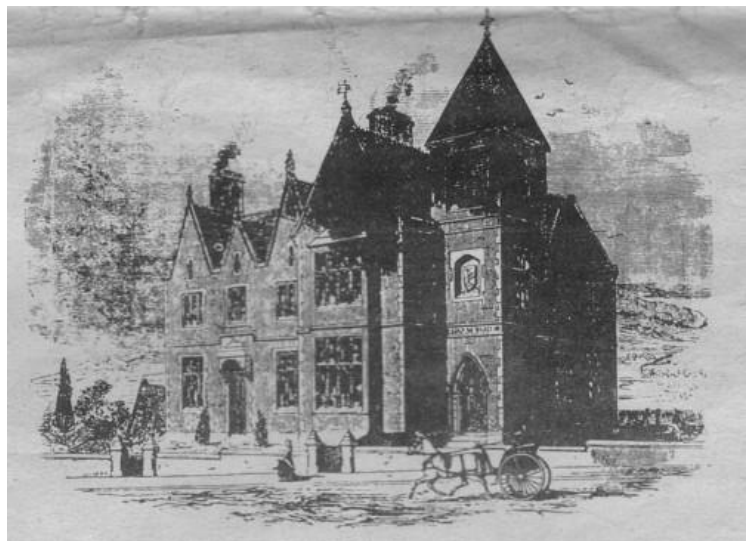
A new organ has been grafted in at Brookside. We all wish it may function excellently. But it is not designed to function as did the organ remembered here - what will?

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS - AUGUST 29, 1846.

NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL AT CHESTERFIELD

The Borough of Chesterfield in Derbyshire had its grammar or free school founded in the reign of Elizabeth and well attended for a long period. It was under the management of the Corporation, who seem however, scarcely to have respected the munificence of their ancestors, for, in 1832, the school was closed owing to the affairs of the Charity being in Chancery. At length, the prospect brightened, when the old structure was ascertained to be in such a decay, that it became necessary to take it down and rebuild it.

The architects chosen for this purpose - Messrs Patterson and Hine of Nottingham from whose design the building engraved above has been erected on the site of the old school - a beautiful spot in the outskirts of the town and commanding a fine view of the Derbyshire hills.



The new edifice is of stone, and in the early pointed style of English architecture. The plan comprises two lofty school rooms, 44 by 18 feet with masters' residences, and excellent accommodation for boarders.

On the south side is a tower containing the staircase to the upper schoolroom and a chamber for a clock and

bell. The work has been substantially executed and is a pleasing architectural group.

He charted the course through the days of change

HEADMASTER at the school through the turmoil of its move to Brookside was Mr. W.E. Glister, who fully welcomed the change.

"It is not good for a school to be divided," he says - and Chesterfield had been split for most of his 21-year career there.

Due to limitations on space at the Sheffield Road site, sport and then science were pursued where the school was eventually to be resettled in 1967.

"I'll never forget the day of the pantehnicons," says Mr. Glister. "We had to run a shuttle service to move to the new school. He recalls: "I was able to make suggestions for the design of the new school and it worked very well."

Between 1947 and 1968 Mr. Glister, the penultimate Head, steered the school through the changing world of post-war education. He took over the reins just after the word 'Grammar' had been erased from the title - dictated by 'anti-elitism' in the 1944 Education Act.

"It did not alter the spirit of the school or its standards in any way," he says.

Now 85 and quietly spending retirement at his Dore home with his wife and daughter - also a retired teacher - Mr. Glister recounts the pleasures of his days in Chesterfield, that saw him realise his teaching ambitions.

He repays tribute to administrators for their support and to the quality of his deputies. "At all times the school was concerned with the full development of every boy and the main work was in the classroom.

"Good standards of work were expected and many boys went on to universities, colleges and polytechnics."

He also took a pride in sporting prowess. Born in Beverley, Yorkshire, William Ernest Glister was faithful to his county's fascination for cricket and football, playing for his school in both games.

At Oxford, where he gained MA honours in mathematics, he also rowed in the eights - and had trials for the Boat Race squad.

Cherished memories of his Chesterfield days centre on the first day of term, the end-of-term service at the Parish Church and his faith.

"The first day of term was always good fun," he says. "The new boys were met at the school gates by the captain or vice-captain to be introduced to the school." And the Head took pains to establish contact with newcomers at that point.

"I particularly liked to teach religious knowledge for the first year forms so that I got to know every boy when he came into the school.



William Glister and his wife Norah renewed old acquaintances at the school's final fling at the end of August 1991.

There were 750 to 850 pupils at the school in Mr. Glisters time and over 200 sixth-formers. "I knew a goodly number of them and certainly all the sixth form," he says.



A highlight of the school year – Speech Day at the Regal Cinema in the late 1950s.

A staunch opponent of co-educational schools ("co-ed takes the edge off both boys and girls") his earlier career had taken in schools in Sheffield (King Edward), Derby and Coalville, Leicestershire, as well as the famous public school at Oakham.

He recalls with pride Chesterfield School's extra-curricular life, quoting the school choir, orchestra, dramatic society, debating society, science society, historical society, geographical society and cadet corps. "There was something happening every night."

He himself made his own impression on Chesterfield social life. He was a member of the Rotary Club and a magistrate and his wife Norah was a member of the Inner Wheel and Townswomen's Guild.

He is a staunch Methodist but is happy to embrace any denomination – and makes a proud claim to have preached in every church in the Chesterfield area.

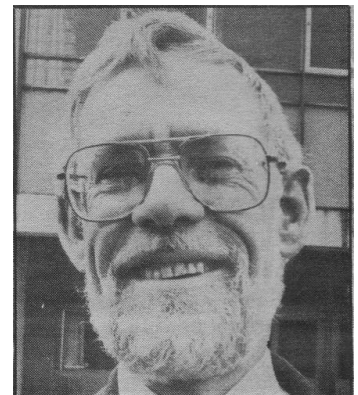
Head for the last term

Following the retirement of the school's last headmaster, Geoffrey Price, last Easter, control passed to his deputy for the final term.

Dr Stephen Poulton, 45, became deputy head in 1988 and had specific responsibility for the curriculum and timetable. A science teacher, he also monitored GCSE courses.

"As temporary acting head my objective was to maintain the standards and ethos associated with Chesterfield School and to see it through to its closure with dignity," he says.

He moved to a new post at Mansfield Woodhouse.



The Headmaster who defended tradition to the end

FOR Chesterfield School's last headmaster, retirement at 65 last Easter was timely.

Geoffrey Price, after 24 years in the driving seat, is as saddened as anyone at the demise of a school with 400 years of history and tradition.

"I'm sorry we didn't win the opt-out battle," he reflects on his final tussle with authority. Now his old school conforms to the changing face of education in Derbyshire with the start of the next school year.

Mr. Price helped develop Chesterfield School's name for academic and sporting achievement. "In my time 75 boys went on to Oxford and Cambridge," he says. "But we also placed boys who were not so bright.

Employers have said 'Well he went to Chesterfield School so he can't be that bad.'"

As a man with a strong sporting record himself he valued such talents among his charges. "Sport is character-building," he says. "I believe in the pursuit of excellence and in competition, and some of these things are anathema in today's system."

He had a trial for the university rugby squad at Oxford in the 1940s and played for the second team at cricket, having played both games for Halesowen Grammar School, where he topped batting and bowling averages.

With grammar school, Oxford and military service shaping his early life, Geoffrey Price had a good grounding for his career. He graduated in Modern Languages and his early teaching experience took him to the famous Merchant Taylors School. "I wish I'd had a private education," he says.

His leadership qualities were further honed in Cyprus at the end of the war when he had the delicate task of running a camp for illegal Jewish immigrants, preventing them from getting into Palestine. Some of them were Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camp survivors.

Geoffrey Price's record as Chesterfield's longest- serving Head began in 1968 when he had 860 pupils and 40 staff. He saw it move from grammar to comprehensive status in 1976 and in fact school numbers had dwindled to 650 pupils this year.

His management role threw him into conflict with administrators.

Uniforms

He regrets the demise of school uniforms and claims that in a canvass 94% of parents wanted uniforms.

He blames left-wing activists who came to power in 1979 for damaging the ethos of his beloved school and records the 'dogfight' he had with governors between then and 1988.

As a traditionalist schoolmaster he also stood his ground over haircuts, dress, discipline and the like, in his defence of respected standards.

He believes that one campaign to preserve tradition stands out. "I'll be remembered for the battle over our school crest and the county's 'nuclear free zone' slogan on school stationery."



Longest-serving and last headmaster Geoffrey Price (left) at the old school's recent 'final fling' with old boys and teachers Mal Hughes (centre) and Francis Elgar.

Retired to his attractive home overlooking Ashford-in-the-Water, he now plans to write his own history of the school. "My wife says I'm neurotic about it."

His two daughters upheld his faith in grammar education and went to Lady Manners School.

"I am a dinosaur," he says. "I believe deep down in the grammar school as the pride of the nation."

The changing faces in a school's life...

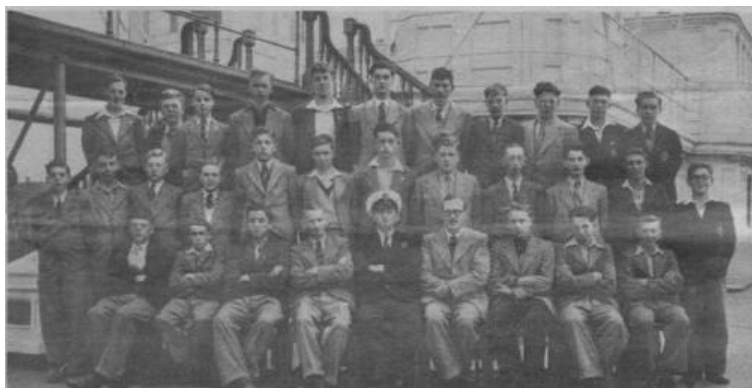
Snaps from old albums offer a glimpse of the school's wealth of talent and interest.



Champions and masters at the first sport's day on the new track at Storrs Road back in the 1950s.



Chesterfield's rugby 1st XV in 1980, with master / coach CEC Thompson, a former Rugby League professional.



The school's Combined Cadet Force party on a visit to Whale Island Gunnery School, Portsmouth, in 1949. The party are pictured on the old royal yacht, Victoria and Albert, and beside the ship's officer are J R Owen (left) and B O'Kelly (right). "We slept on the 'V & A' in hammocks for four nights, recalls contributor G Kay of Banbury.

The 1959/60 Under 15 soccer team – “probably the most successful U15 side ever,” according to contributor Mile Bond of Bolsover.



The 1952/53 could make the same claim, winning all 18 of the season’s matches, scoring 432 points and conceding only 35.

Tributes from a varsity trio

Three Old Cestrefeldians, all now senior members of staff at the University of Hull, recall some of their memories.

Terry Smith (1945-53), the university's senior overseas adviser, says: 'I finished my primary school in my home village of Shirebrook in 1945, and passing the scholarship exam and going every day to Chesterfield on the 'Shirebrook flyer' (the steam train) were quite big events in my life. The Shirebrook lot were always regarded as a pretty wild bunch - and we probably were. ..

"The really big occasion in my school life was becoming rugby captain in 1952," he says. The team, pictured above, included (Sir) Brian Unwin, Dave Hopkinson, Alec Coutts and Peter Baddeley.

Dr Graham Kirby (1952-59) is now senior lecturer in computer science.

"Without the superb base given by the stimulating teaching of people like JR (Jerry) Owen (chemistry) and B (Bobby) Durant maths the academic successes simply would not have been possible.

And one should not forget the influence of Headmaster, W. E. Glister," he says.

Stephen Parsons (1960-67) is the university's senior personnel officer and remembers fondly his time at the school.

I think back with great pleasure to the school, and the end-of-term service in the Chesterfield parish church, plays at the Civic Theatre, and speech days at the Regal," he says.

How a French affair began

From his home in Chelmsford, Essex, Tony Edney writes of his schooldays from 1963 to 1970.

The first impression was the overwhelming one of Mr Glistner as he took me to my first class.

"Modern theories of delegation were not for Mr Glistner. Each Monday morning he took the dinner money aided by that most efficient (and I discovered kindly) of secretaries, Joan Goodwin. "

"What always astonishes me is how much of this start to education endures. Reading the Prophets takes me back to 'Sid' Dinner and the inspiration with which he talked of then,

"My love of literature was started by BOK and I still enjoy the books we read with him. Four years of Froggie's inimitable style followed by two of 'Larrie' Alden's quieter way have left me fluent in French.

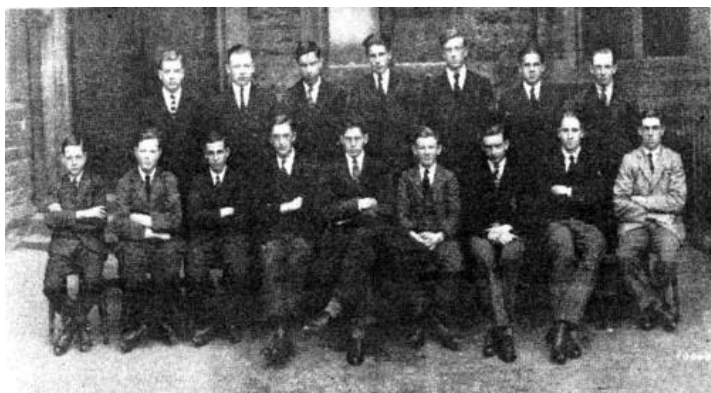


Left. Lance Storm and the Tempests played the rock 'n roll scene of the 1960s. All ex-Chesterfield they were led by Mike Bond ('Lance Storm,' centre), with, left to right, John Rodgers, John Pearson, Pete Rapson and Tom Redfern.

Prefects, 1952/53, with headmaster W. E. Glistner and deputy head J. R. Owen (sic).

I am informed that it is not Mr Owen but Mr Varley - Editor





The Modern VI-form was inaugurated in 1927 by headmaster A.C.Bescoby and retired accountant John Roberts of Newbold, who loaned this picture, says: "It proved to be a success with its emphasis on economics, English literature and modern French and German. Pictured are, left to right, back row, Eric Staton, Haydn Marshall, J.R.Littlewood, G.R.Micklewright, Sims, Kenneth Portman and L.N.Blatherwick; front row, Ewart Talbot, E.W.P.Cash, E.R.Birley, E.R. Wintle, J.A.Hunter (form master), J.A.Roberts, G.P.Brummell, Walker and J.Hardwick.



Writing from Rochester, Kent, H. C. Fletton reminisces that he has kept old school reports with comments from some of the staff at the time - names like Nigger Varley, Tessie Swain, Smuggy Walmington, Dodo Vickers, Jerry Webster, Jimmy Ingham, Daddy Lightowler and a French mistress called Dilys Evans. The officer commanding 10BB ATC Squadron of which I was a member was the art master, G. S. Wood - a real gentleman," he says. Pictured is Form IIIb from 1940. Left to right are: rear, F. Tagg, Heather, Miles, Fletton, Edwards, Thorpe, Pugh, Anderson, Howes; third row, Ibbotson, ?, Minty, Halsall, Grimes, Robinson, Haslam, Frost, ?; second row, Breedon, Ward, ?, ?, form master Hanson, Leaning, Howarth, Thacker and Owen; front row. Johnson. Waterfall, Tagg and Preece.



The school sporting talent seemed limitless. These boys are boxing finalists in 1944 competitions and with them are masters G. H. Radford and J. B. Shields.

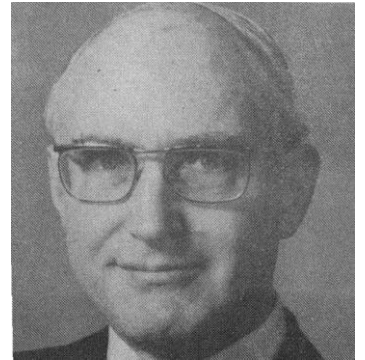
SCHOOLBOY MEMORIES

A hard road to follow

Sir John Fretwell – Former Ambassador in Paris

In my early days Chesterfield School was known just as "the grammar school". It was looked on as a hard road to follow, with the prospect of ever-increasing mountains of homework and ever-more fearsome examinations.

My first term in 1940 coincided with the Battle of Britain, the blackout, rationing and all the restrictions and anxieties of war. The life of the school was considerably disrupted as the younger masters were called up, including most of those with gifts on the sports-field.



In the meantime the staff was reinforced by a bevy of lady teachers, who succeeded in educating us even if the minds of some of our number were at times distracted from the finer points of French or English syntax by their very notable charms.

Looking back over the seven years I spent at the school I remain deeply impressed by the quality and dedication of the staff. They made us want to learn, to think and to understand.

They also encouraged us to compete, in the classroom as on the playing field, but always in the bounds of close friendship in which we enjoyed each other's successes almost as much as our own. Forty-four years later those friendships are still very much alive.

I believe that most of my generation will share my feeling of gratitude to the school for the education it gave us. It launched us confidently on the various paths we took.

After 40 years we can still look back on our time there with pride and pleasure. It served Chesterfield well and gave the town an honourable place on the educational map of England.

Richness of education

Sir Brian Unwin – Chairman, HM Customs & Excise

I followed my father to Chesterfield School in 1945 and stayed until 1953. It was a time of great change. Masters were returning after the war and in 1946 the school settled down to the long and distinguished headmastership of Mr W E (Bill) Glistler.

For me it was an exciting world of new friends, fresh subjects and variety beyond anything I had previously known. Many of the friendships have lasted and have been renewed at old boys' reunions,

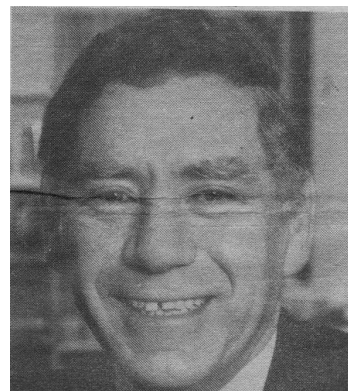
But my abiding memory is of the richness of the education provided. Academically, the range of subjects was astonishing and the school's record of scholarships and university entrances formidable.

On the sports field there was scarcely a game we did not play. In winter, soccer, hockey, cross-country and rugby; and in summer cricket, tennis and athletics. I captained the cricket XI, and the highlight was cricket week in July on the "bottom field" at Sheffield Road, before the assembled school.

Out of school the range of activities from the Socratics to the Science Society, from the Debating Society to the CCF - was incredible. What a lot of time and encouragement the staff gave us.

I no doubt see those days through a rosy haze. But I am deeply grateful for the opportunity the school gave me and many others to widen our horizons and seek excellence in our chosen spheres.

I therefore deeply regret the demise of the old school but I wish its successors well and hope that future generations of Chesterfield boys and girls will still enjoy the enlightenment and opportunities that we were given by Chesterfield School.



An inspired spirit

Sir David Walker – Chairman, Securities and Investments Board

Great emphasis is rightly being placed on equal opportunities in education for children, irrespective of background, race or creed.

This is a very proper emphasis but, like other desirable objectives, it sometimes risks displacing others unless priorities are carefully assessed.

Another objective for education is excellence, which can take many forms: one is plainly a high standard of academic achievement in a formal sense. Another form of excellence is the all-round achievement of young people who, alongside the benefit of good formal education, also learn skills on the sports field, music, amateur theatre and debating.

Access to a goodly mix of these is needed, obviously in differing degrees, to make whole men and women, and Chesterfield School, formerly and more distinctively Chesterfield Grammar School, provided them.



For those of us who had the very great benefit of an education at Chesterfield Grammar School in the 1950s, it is a cause of great sadness that the school will not celebrate what would have been its 400th year in 1993.

But we have a still stronger sense of gratitude for its achievement and what the school stood for. And we must look ahead to the education of young people in Chesterfield in the 1990s and beyond.

Chesterfield School had a spirit that was inspired by successive headmasters, in my own time so brilliantly effectively by WE Glister, and by staff whose dedication extended well beyond the classroom.

If the new school, despite its different structure and catchment area, can emulate something of that spirit of commitment, then the boys and girls of Brookfield Comprehensive will be well served indeed. I wish the staff, the girls and boys of the new school every success in their new venture.

From Storrs Road to Wembley

Bob Wilson - Sportsman and television personality

It is very difficult to comprehend that the life of Chesterfield School is coming to an end. Some 400 years' existence is something of which to be proud but how sad that a school which is 400 years young should cease to exist.

Then again there is a lovely saying which suggests that 'nothing dies as long as there is someone left to remember. Well there are a lot of us left to remember. I'm sure our memories, in the main, are fond ones.

In my own case I was the last of five Wilson brothers to arrive at the school, then situated on Sheffield Road. Jock, Billy, Don and Hugh had all left their mark in one way or another!

My own school life was notably unremarkable on the academic front, although I have a lasting appreciation of those who coaxed, urged and simply prayed that I would achieve the basic qualifications required to enter Loughborough College of Physical Education in 1960.

As you can guess, the story on the sporting front was far more worthy. Thankfully I excelled in most, if not all sports.

The biggest problem was in selecting a specialist sport. For a time I was caught in a web which enveloped athletics, tennis, cricket and football. It didn't last long because the goalkeeper in me came diving out head-first.

With some 35 to 40 matches arranged each year by the late Gordon Jephcote, I was able to assess my goalkeeping talent and realise there was a chance, albeit small, of one day becoming a professional.

That it did eventually lead to Arsenal, League and FA Cup glory and European trophies is due in no small measure to Chesterfield School. It is strange, but at those moments when you tread the Wembley turf and the like, you always recall the more humble beginnings, the teachers, the opposition, team-mates and, of course, your old school.

From Storrs Road to Wembley really isn't a million miles apart, if you have people around you who can nurture and develop a raw but burning ambition.



Chesterfield School did that for me, and much more besides.