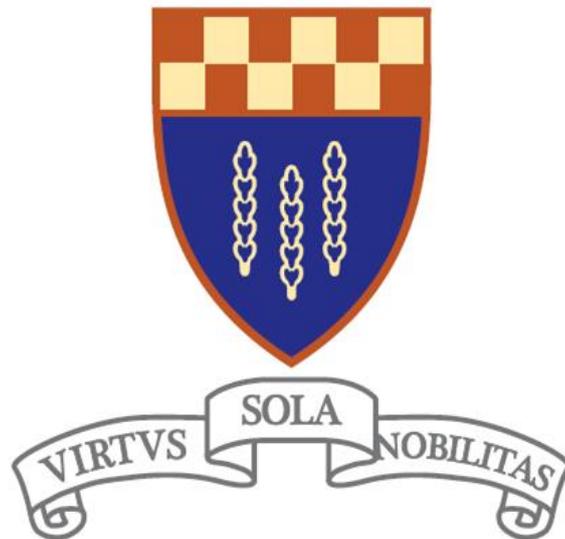


The Pavior



The Newsletter
of
The High Pavement Society
(founded 1989)

November 2018

Your Committee

The Committee Members listed below are always delighted to talk to you on any matter – particularly if you have a contribution to make to this publication!

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Committee Chairman: Ken Kirk 0115 9568650

Deputy Chairman: John Elliott 0115 9266475

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Faces to Remember
Robert J Rayner
Long serving Senior Laboratory Technician
at High Pavement School

COMMITTEE REPORT

The Society was unfortunately unable to hold its Annual General Meeting this year due to the necessary quorum being unavailable. Consequently the committee took the correct steps within the rules governing Friendly Societies, by announcing a Special General Meeting within seven days (at which no quorum would be necessary) and notifying all members by post. As a result the meeting took place at the Offices of Page Kirk and several members made it their business to travel there (in one case from Mansfield) and join members of the committee in the necessary work of compliance. The Financial Statement was approved and The President gave a report explaining the difficulty of conducting the affairs of the Society due to its numerous but scattered membership. He also foresaw changes would be necessary in our operations as the membership declined due to the ‘ravages of time’ and the small numbers of new recruits who join us from time to time. He concluded by expressing his thanks to the loyal few who had made the effort to attend the meeting in somewhat difficult circumstances.

Last but not least he regretted that the Social Evening which normally followed the AGM had to be cancelled at short notice.

The Society is still without a regular Secretary, since Noel Gubbins stepped down on health grounds. Noel’s work of was of great value to the Society and we are pleased that he is still able to serve on the Committee. For the time being the Society is relying on a temporary secretariat formed by other members of the Committee.

EDITORIAL The Support Staff

Readers may have noticed that our ‘Faces to Remember’ photo on the previous page features a member of the High Pavement Support Staff rather than one of the teaching facility. Many will remember Bob Rayner and his colleagues who kept our laboratories functioning so efficiently and gave friendly help and advice there when necessary.

Others who kept the wheels well-oiled and smoothly turning include the office staff and those good people who prepared our meals and kept the premises neat and tidy, in spite of the depredations of the eight hundred young tearaways who filled it each weekday.

The editor is pleased that members continue to send correspondence to *The Pavior*, especially those who were personal friends of theirs during distant schooldays. We have just received an enquiry from **John Barlow** (HP 1959-66) who wants to contact his old friend **Dave Widdowson**. Neither are members of the Society but if anyone knows anything about Dave please contact the editor who will forward messages to John.

Elsewhere on these pages we give a report on the joint Act of Remembrance which took place at High Pavement Sixth Form Centre in Chaucer Street. Many members were present at the invitation of our friends in the Centre, which has undergone considerable re-organisation within the City’s educational system. We greatly appreciate the trouble they took to make the event possible.

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OUR JOINT ACT OF REMEMBRANCE 2018

The 1914-18 war memorial of High Pavement School, which once graced the school hall on Stanley Road, later moved with the school community to their modern premises on Gainsford Crescent, Bestwood. Here, as at Stanley Road, respects were paid to the fallen every November. In more recent times, with the establishment of the High Pavement Sixth form Centre on Chaucer Street, the War Memorial again found a new home.

All these travels had left the great bronze plaque somewhat the worse for wear and the High Pavement Society undertook the demanding task of cleaning and resurfacing in time for the centenary of the end of that great conflict in November this year. That struggle which had caused a terrible loss of life among the military forces, dwarfed any losses from earlier conflicts and every community sought comfort in erecting memorials to the fallen, including High Pavement who had lost some 93 alumni and staff from the school.

High Pavement Sixth Form Centre has co-operated with our Society in organising an Act of Remembrance to recognise the importance of the centenary and also the re-installation of the renovated Plaque, which stands in a prominent position in the Centre's entrance foyer. Today, on Friday November 9th, the members of your committee were joined by several of the Society membership who had responded to our campaign of information about the ceremony. Our representation numbered some 14 or so persons plus others taking part in various capacities.



We were joined by a large group of the Centre's 'A' level students who lined the gallery above the area of commemorative activity.

The modest ceremony began at 10.45 am when our President Ken Kirk was introduced by Alex MacDonald, Faculty Leader of the Centre. Ken then spoke briefly about the meaning of

◀ The Restored Memorial Plaque

Remembrance and quoted from his personal experience when, as a member of the British Legion, he was able to visit battlefield sites and burial grounds associated with the First World War. The focus then passed to a team of four people who were to each read out a list of names taken from the High Pavement Memorial.

The speakers were: **Alex MacDonald** from the Centre; **Graham Wybrow** and **John Mason** (both from the Society); and **Shelley Blake-Carey**, a young student from the Centre's 'A' level courses.

These four read out the full names of the dead and **their age** when they died as a result of the war's activity. This last item, which is not given on the memorial plaque, revealed that most were on the very threshold of their adult lives, ranging from late teens to early twenties. Ken Kirk then recited the traditional lines from *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon:

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

Our visiting bugler Andy Borgdale, an ex-soldier from the British Legion, then sounded *The Last Post* to signal the commencement of the traditional two minutes silence at 11.00 am. The silence was concluded by the sounding of *Reveille*.

John Foster, author of our commemorative volume entitled '*We will remember them*' then spoke about his interest being stimulated when standing before the War Memorial when a young scholar at High Pavement, leading him to become a historian and discovering details of the lives and backgrounds of the war dead. He gave several examples of these as he spoke. Peter Foster then presented a copy of the volume to the Centre's library.



▲ A wreath of poppies is laid before the memorial Plaque by Colin Salsbury, Registrar of the High Pavement Society.

► **The assembled participants:**

Front row: Shelley Blake-Carey, Peter Foster.

Left hand group front to back: John Mason, Michael Gladwell, Geoff Thomas, Colin Salsbury, Jerry Morris.

Centre Front to back: Stephen Godward, Malcolm Pilkington, Alex MacDonald, Andy Borgdale.

Right Hand group front to back: Alex Rae, Ken Kirk, Robin Taylor, Graham Wybrow.

Ken Kirk then closed the ceremony with a recitation of *The Kohima Epitaph*:

*When you go home, tell them about us and say:
For their tomorrow we gave our today.*

The company then dispersed, in thoughtful mood.

ooOoo

FROM OUR READERS
FROM GRAHAM WYBROW

Dear Editor,

As the Society contemplates its future, I feel that we should give some thought to the kind of memorial that the Society will eventually leave behind to mark the 230+ years of High Pavement School. I am concerned that, currently on the Internet, there is only about one paragraph to summarise the whole history of the School. Whilst there are some good and detailed histories available in paper form, these are generally out of date, out of print and difficult to find. I would like to suggest therefore that, before we all sing ‘Carmen Paviorum’ for the last time, we set ourselves the goal of rectifying this situation.

Might I propose constructing a dedicated Wikipedia Page and a detailed ‘History of High Pavement School’ up to about the year 2002, to be published in either book or electronic form.

The most comprehensive History of High Pavement School currently available is, I believe, the excellent book ‘*High Pavement Remembered*’ (HPR) which was published in 1988 for the School’s Bicentenary. I believe that this book could provide a solid foundation for both the histories that are required. HPR was an A5 paperback of some 170 pages (including 16 plates) which was edited by Alan Bates (then Head of the HP English Department) from a range of sources, and was structured in two roughly equal parts. The first part recorded the ‘*Factual History*’ of the School from its foundation in 1788, while the second part tried to convey something of the ‘*Character and Life*’ of the school over those years, via recollections of staff and pupils, mostly gathered from old editions of the School Magazine. Following this same excellent format, the document could perhaps be improved with:

Updates: Much more material from the ‘Bestwood Years’ 1955-2002 (which are hardly mentioned in HPR) including appropriate recognition for the many long-serving and dedicated Staff (some more than 40 years) who gave so much to the school during what might be called the ‘Golden Years’.

Modernisation: A concise introduction/summary, including clear presentation of key facts (e.g. using tables), with more and better illustrations and a comprehensive index.

Alumni: A comprehensive list of distinguished alumni and their achievements, including much new information derived from internet searches. Also Rolls of Honour from both World Wars.

References: Directions to the various High Pavement School archives and references to the several authoritative histories of the School that have been produced over the years.

All this would be a considerable task but I believe it to be both worthwhile and achievable with the full support of the membership. In his last paragraph of Part 1 of HPR, Alan Bates wrote (in 1988):

‘High Pavement will continue to develop, remembering its best traditions but also its responsibilities to present and future students. Perhaps in 50 or 100 years’ time a sequel to this volume will be produced to tell the story.’

I feel that now, the 30th anniversary of *High Pavement Remembered*, is perhaps that time.

Graham Wybrow

FROM COLIN CRAIB

Dear Colin, I enclose two photographs which may be of interest for your archive. The first one shows the School First XV for the 1955/56 season, or so I believe. I am seated on the ground, front left. The second photo is a newspaper cutting but I'm unsure of the correct date. It will be approximately the same period as the other photo or perhaps a year later. Clearly visible at front left is Lance Wright. I hope they are both of interest to your readers. I also possess a photo of the School (possibly 1954) but maybe you already have a copy. However if not I'll be pleased to send mine to you.

I arrived at High Pavement in September 1952, having moved from the north of England. I left in June 1958. I may say that I had a wonderful time at school, though perhaps I enjoyed my sport *too* much, at the expense of my academic studies!

In 1958 I went on to Loughborough College (soon to become a College of Advanced Technology and now Loughborough University) to study Civil Engineering. I spent the first few years after graduation in the south of England and in Scotland. For a while I was an engineer on the construction of the Tay Road Bridge in Dundee.

Then in 1966 I moved to Newcastle and remained there for the next ten years. However, in 1976 I moved to a job in Singapore, a happy move as it was there I met my wife. Apart from a brief spell in London, I remained overseas for the rest of my career, retiring at the end of 1999. As well as Singapore I also worked in Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates. I have now returned to spend my retirement in the town of Richmond on Thames.

While in Newcastle I briefly met Mike Hurworth and recently I met another Old Pavior who is a *banker* in London. Otherwise I've not made contact with any other ex-students. Sad!

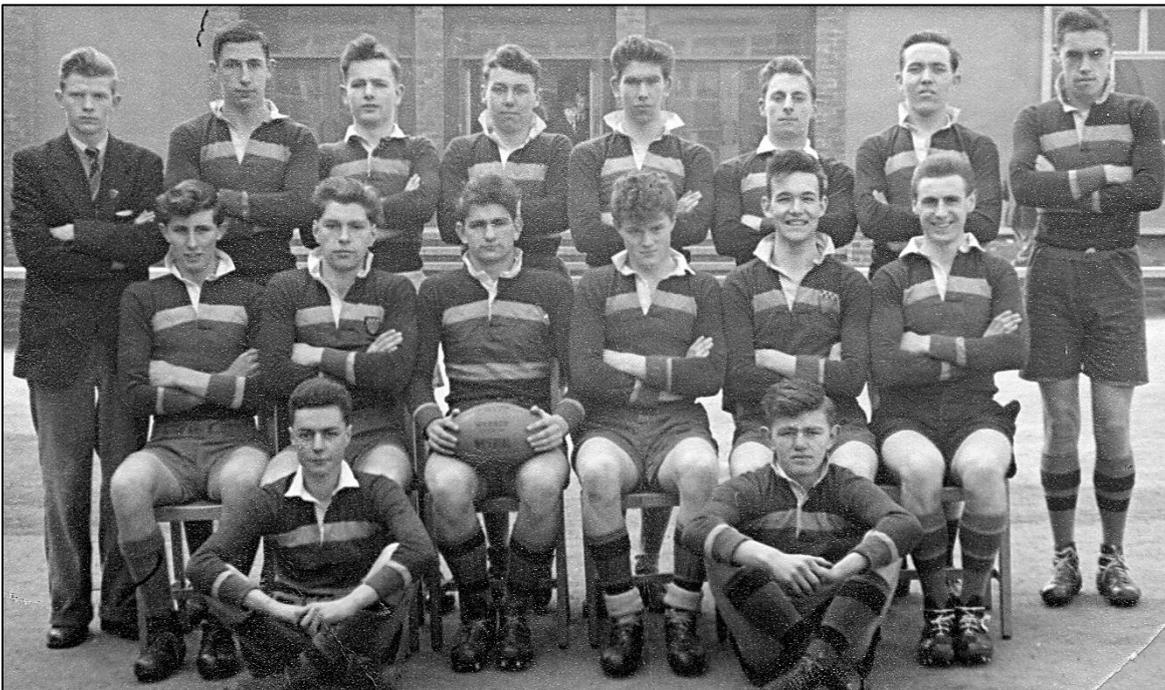
It is a long way to travel from London to your social events but I do hope to do so eventually.

Kind regards, Colin Craib



◀ Lord Luke (right) Chairman of the National Playing Fields Association, chatting with members of High Pavement Grammar School Rugby team, when he opened the Nottingham Co-operative Society sports ground at Gregory Street, Lenton yesterday. In the centre is Councillor A S Shelton, president of the Society.

Colin Craib asserts that Lance Wright is at the front left. Lance confirms this and offers the following names
L to R: J Higginbottom, Lance Wright, Terry Coombes, ? Jackson, Brian Page, Alistair Craib, Mike Wright, Dewi Tidno Williams



The First XV
Standing:
 J Loweth
 C Bacon
 D Williams
 T Weaver
 D Hudson
 P Houghton
 R Humphreys
 G Brown
Seated:
 B Page
 T Phillips
 W Williams
 R Barber
 J Gibson
 M Hurworth
Foreground:
 C Craib
 W Jackson

[Thanks Colin, it was ever thus, you don't often meet a friendly Pavior in the afterlife, except by mere chance. Not surprising though, since the school gave us an education that offered opportunities all over the world. Thanks for the photos. Maybe someone can give the exact dates. Let us know when you are likely to drop by. What about the Christmas Lunch? -Ed.]

FROM JOHN HOLLIS

Dear Colin, I continue to enjoy receiving *The Pavior* and have been re-reading the last few issues, leading to the following few observations/comments:

In November 2017 (p.7) the article about HP prizewinners there is a photo showing my brother Brian (HP 1946-53). He is second row from the front, left of centre, wearing glasses.

In the same issue under the appeal for help regarding the late Colin Kendall – I wondered if this was the same Colin K who attended Scotland Road Infants/junior school off Valley Road. I didn't know him at HP, probably because he passed the 11+ and I didn't go until two years later (1943). However, we met fleetingly in Ehrwald, Austria when I was away doing my National Service and enjoying local leave there from Germany, where I was stationed.

It is always interesting to see the names of those Paviors with whom I enjoyed playing Rugby in the Old Paviors RFC, some like Mick Husbands, sadly, via the obituary notices.

I enjoy the item inside the front cover 'Faces to Remember' although many of these were not present during my time at HP. Would it be feasible to give a brief biography, now and then? This would be of interest to those readers who wish to know what happened after they had left HP.

Best wishes, John Hollis

[Thanks for your suggestions, John. The editorial note this month about Support Staff, which included our Face-to-Remember, Bob Rayner, may be of interest. We can't give complete biographies but we can give details from our various resources. An interesting idea. -Ed.]

FROM JOHN LONSBROUGH

Hello Colin, Thank you very much for the August Pavior. It is a wonderful way of keeping in touch and provoking memories.

In particular the correspondence about Bill Benner was interesting. I did not connect with him at HP, because I did not do Art and also because of my poor eyesight without spectacles did not do Rugby, both fields of interest to Bill. I opted instead for the alternative of cross-country running which I found very satisfying, trotting around the peaceful countryside.

I knew Bill Benner (assuming this was the same man) very well as the organist at St Leodegarius Church, Basford, where from the age of 14 when my voice deepened, I sang bass in the choir. This too was one expression of *his* artistic talent, music, which he performed well. Belonging to his choir was a happy experience. He was a very capable and much respected man at Basford.

As you know, I live on the south coast and I do not expect to visit Nottingham again as I am now aged 92 and not very mobile. However, I do retain an interest in the city and look forward to reading about the activities of Paviors there (and anywhere else, for that matter).

My very best wishes to you all.

Sincerely, John Lonsbrough (HP 1938-44)

[Thanks John. There is no doubt about it, this was one and the same Bill Benner the Art teacher. I remember in his art lessons in the first forms how Bill regaled us with stories of his experiences as a choirmaster, some of which we took with a pinch of salt! One such was about some choirboys being discovered poking about in a grave. One had supposedly discovered a leg bone and the others were trying to locate the skull! Bill taught us how to make that plop! sound of a cork being withdrawn from a bottle, by pressing your finger against the inside of your cheek, and other tricks for party entertainment. There was no one quite like him. -Ed.]

ooOoo

FROM JAMES WAKELIN

(residing in Kontich, Belgium)

Dear Colin, I remembered Alf Smith, smiling at me from page 2 in the latest copy of *The Pavior*, who died in 1979, (Faces to Remember). He was an excellent teacher of Spanish, a language which I have retained despite my accidents¹, at least basically.

Do you by chance have the obituary of Fred Millidge, my French teacher from the days when Modern Languages were all important to me, prior to my first accident in 1962 which ruined any further opportunities at Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge? I would enjoy reading about Fred, who presumably died before I joined the HP Society. They were two men who supported my career in an unforgettable manner

Could you please send the obituary to my son (name and address enclosed)? I would be delighted to have these memories of a time when I was considerably more promising in my prospects.

Thanking you most sincerely, James R Wakelin

[While we have no actual obituary for Fred Millidge (his actual names were Alan Phillip!) we can search for as much information as possible from our various sources. We will be most happy to meet your request. However it may take a week or two to track it all down -Ed.]

¹ James was seriously injured in a motor accident as a young man -Ed.

KENNETH LEWIS OBE

We have learned from his family that our member Kenneth Lewis died in September 2018 at the age of 90. We send our sincere condolences to Jean, his widow, and the family.

ERIC BENISTON

We have been informed by Steven Beniston that his father, our member, Eric Beniston died in February 2018 at the age of 83. Again we send our sincere condolences to his widow and family.

ERIC WIDDISON

We have received the news from his family that our member, Eric Widdison, has passed away after a long illness, at the age of 81. We again send our sincere condolences to his family. A memorial service was held at St Mary's Church, Nottingham, on November 7th when the Society was represented by Ken Kirk.

PATRICK McCARTHY

We have received news from his partner, Brenda Robbertze, that our member Patrick McCarthy passed away on October 24th, aged 81, after a long illness. We send our sincere condolences to Brenda and his family. His funeral was held on Wednesday November 14th at Wilford Hill Crematorium when the Society was represented by Noel Gubbins, Colin Salsbury and Brian Dove.

PETER HUDSON

We have heard via Colin Bacon that Peter Hudson (HP 1941-48) passed away on November 14th, aged 88. Peter was not a member of the Society but those who were at Stanley Road during the war years and after will recall his outstanding rugby, boxing and athletic prowess. He qualified at Loughborough College and became the head of PE at Stockton Grammar School.

THE HIGH PAVEMENT SOCIETY TIE – AGAIN!



Our exclusive design means the ties must be made to order. We have been contacting suppliers and as far as we can gather we must order a minimum number of 36. We are quite ready to do this **if we can be sure that we can sell most, if not all, of them to our members.** Alas, we have not reached that target yet. A polyester tie should cost £10 +pp. I would make a nice Christmas present. If you would like to acquire one and look as smart as all those others, please let us know by contacting the project leader, John Mason at **22 Arnold Smith House, Bridge Street, Shepshed, Loughborough, Leics. LE12 9AD** (or j.mason.144@uwclub.net). If there are enough takers we will place an order with the suppliers. No need to send cash yet. We will announce through these pages when the stock is available and, after confirming the price, will arrange to collect the necessary cheques prior to despatch.

The Committee

ooOoo

PUB LUNCH NEWS

The Ferry Boat Inn Stoke Bardolph



Smiling faces all round at the Ferry Boat Inn, including Brian Collier ►



Our valiant crew of regular pub-lunchers were joined by a couple of new faces including Brian Collier, who joined the Society on the day.

Welcome, Brian! He obviously enjoyed himself as did all the others present. It was unfortunate that four original diners were unable to attend due to poor health and we wished them well in their absence, but we still numbered 18 souls, which was not a bad number so near to Christmas.

The pub is blessed with the most gorgeous views over the 'smug and silver Trent'² and we enjoyed a relaxed meal, perhaps a little too relaxed, as the service in the Ferry Boat was tediously slow. Much social engagement ensued and it was with reluctance that we went home once more.



Advance news of our Christmas Lunch

The HPS **Christmas Lunch** is always an enjoyable gathering and thanks to the efforts of John Elliott and John Mason we have again managed to book the Mapperley Golf Club for this year's gathering. The date is **Wednesday December 12th**. Time 12 for 12.30 pm. Put it in your diaries now. Menus and other info will follow shortly, via email where possible. **Look in your In-boxes.** We are advised that the cost will be similar to previous visits.

ooOoo

HIGH PAVEMENT SOCIETY PRIZES FOR 2018

This year, due to the problems with further reorganization at High Pavement Sixth Form Centre, we have been unable to present the four prizes which we make annually to the high performers among the student body in their A-level examinations.

The likely candidates have now taken up their places at universities, beyond our reach, as it were. However the selected four recipients have been invited to attend our simple ceremony to receive their awards, by returning to the Sixth Form Centre in December, at the end of the current session. A report will appear in *The Pavior* in February.

² Title of a famous painting by Sir Arnesby Brown.

THE 'OLDEST-ESTABLISHED' HIGH PAVEMENT SCHOOL

Following on from the article in our last issue about the first proper building for High Pavement School, I found myself on Thursday November 15th joining my committee colleague, Graham Wybrow, in the *Pitcher and Piano*, the Lace Market wine bar, for a quick coffee. This consumed, we passed along the side passage of this discreetly converted chapel to the *Heritage Mews* behind. Not much of the Mews is visible from the street and when you reach it only the top storey is visible but it is a building of great interest to Old Paviers. It is the original building which housed the classes of the school for the 'children of dissenters', which later became known as High Pavement School.

As many will be aware the school began in the home of the first headmaster, Mr Wheatcroft but these were the first purpose-built premises to be constructed under the sponsorship of the Unitarian Church. In our last issue we printed an article, extracted from material Graham had compiled in response to a request from a correspondent in New Zealand whose great grandmother had attended there in the late 19th century. In the accompanying photos the buildings in question are clearly visible from the direction of Broad Marsh and appear to be clinging to the face of the sandstone cliff that divides the area in to two distinct levels. Today we were to be afforded a look inside these memorable premises.

Graham was interested because he is gathering information to compile a revised and enlarged history of High Pavement School. I was there because the whole story fascinates me, since my family has connections with the district going back many years.

GW had discovered on enquiry that the buildings were in the process of extensive structural conversions. The interior now consisted of two vertically separate premises, originally used for office accommodation. One firm, EDGE Property Solutions (involved in property development) still made use of the suite of offices to the west side. We were welcomed there by Neil Smith, a director of EDGE who took us around the rooms, where the lively staff showed great interest in our visit. The lofty classrooms, more than fifteen feet high, were now sub-divided into two floors and further developments were in progress. There were



◀ One of GW's trick pan-shots of the work to modify accommodation in the west (girls') section of the old school. The great steel beam is actually dead straight but appears curved due to the panning action. A new ceiling is being installed beneath the old roof timbers.

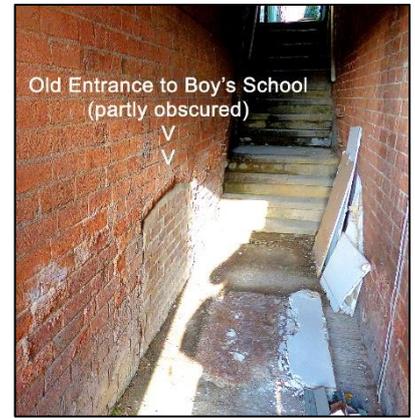
splendid views from the windows from which, an old prospectus claimed, could see across the Trent valley as far as Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire!

The eastern part was now being converted into a series of studio apartments, again using the inserted floors but undergoing more drastic interior reconstruction. Here we were welcomed by Mark Daws, Site Manager for the contractors, D L Rhodes and Son Ltd.

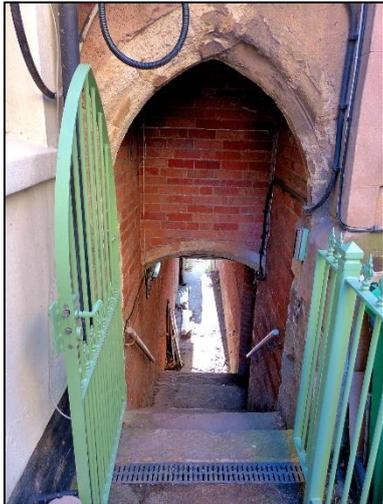
Because of the conversion work it was possible to see partly exposed walls with arches and doorways not now in use. The front wall of the top storey (level with High Pavement and standing several feet beyond the rear of the chapel) had been stripped of its rendering to reveal

the original brickwork. This had baffled Mr Daws because he identified the brickwork as being of a character typical of an *internal* partition wall. Here GW was able to explain, from his researches to date, that the forerunner of the old chapel had stood well back from the street and abutted the school building, without the gap now formed when the chapel was rebuilt.

In the roof area we were able to see the original heavy timber trusses, some of which had undergone alteration and/or repair over the years and a vaulted cellar (cave?) was revealed partly recessed into the sandstone rock of the cliff. The brickwork had been substantial and



◀The stone staircase



so well-built that the building was sound enough to withstand the extensive conversions, both in the past and ongoing. We descended a stone staircase which had been the sole access between floors in the school era and explored the small terraces overlooking Broad Marsh and Narrow Marsh, which had been the drying ground for the girls' laundry classes. The whole building had been heated in winter by a single (hopefully large) coal fire, though we could not discover its site.

GW took a few photos (a mere 360 of them) to further his work, which eventually will be available for the historically minded. We show a few here. It was a most absorbing, not to say beguiling, visit and our thanks are due to the two gentlemen mentioned for their whole hearted co-operation. **Colin Salisbury**

ooOoo

FROM THE LATE RON MARTIN

[Ron Martin's death was reported in our last issue, with one of his poems. He wrote another, anticipating his end and it was read at his funeral by Matthew Leiper. We present it here.]

At My End

Throughout my life I always tried
To prove my worth before I died.
I don't know if I succeeded,
That is something for you to decide.

As a boy I had parents that I loved,
I hope they were proud of their son.
When they passed away I was sad.
I think that was a battle I won.

Then I became a family man,
Two children and a loving wife.
I tried to show them how much I cared,
They really were the love of my life

Then with grandchildren I was blessed,
Of them I can say that I was proud.
In my life I have been so fortunate,
With so many blessings I have been endowed.

I've also had a lot of friends,
Of their needs I have been aware,
Service to them I freely gave,
Believing my time was something I should share.

In so many ways I tried to serve,
To do those things I knew I should do,
You showed your appreciation in so many ways.
I give my sincere thanks as I say goodbye to you

Ron

OUR END PIECE

[This interesting and relevant article was written by Dr Tim Caulton, son of Ray Caulton who was known to a generation of Paviers, either as a School Captain and prefect at Stanley Road or as a member of the school staff at Gainsford Crescent until his premature death in 1973. Tim wrote the article in response to an item in the Evening Post by journalist John Pownall who had described the work done by Beatrice Whitby in WW1 but wondered what sort of person she was. Tim took up the challenge, for she was none other than his grandmother.]

Miss B Whitby and Comfort for Troops in WW1

By Tim Caulton

In an article 'Comfort for Troops in WW1' John Pownall describes how Miss B Whitby organised and dispatched parcels to British POWs during WW1 as Honorary Assistant Secretary to the Nottingham 'Comfort for Troops' Committee. Miss Whitby was awarded the MBE in 1919 for her wartime charitable work. He then asks: "*Who was this Lady? I have no idea who she was. I have looked on the internet and only discovered limited information. Just enough to write my article. She did receive the MBE, but when and why? On a personal note, I have not found a photo of her which is a disappointment.*"



Beatrice Mary Elizabeth Gee (née Whitby) MBE was my maternal grandmother. She was born at home at 33 Manor Street, Sneinton on 12 July 1892 to her parents Seely and Elizabeth (née Chettle). Seely Whitby was a Provisions Merchant Manager for Allcock's on Smithy Row (on the present Council House site). He was an active teetotal social reformer working for various organisations, including the Red Cross, Salvation Army and also the Liberal Party (he became Lord Mayor of Nottingham in 1933). When the proprietor of the *Daily Express*, Arthur Pearson, set up his *Fresh Air Fund* to provide holidays for poor children in 1892, Seely set up a branch in Nottingham. In 1894 he raised funds for a party of 200 young poor children to go on a short holiday to Scout Farm, Mapperley. He also had his own comfort fund which he operated from home, and sent balaclavas, mittens, scarves and cigarettes to soldiers in the Boer War

It was in this context of charitable social reform that Beatrice was raised. After short periods at Miss Chapman's private school in Belvoir Hill, Sneinton and at a local church school, she was educated until eleven at Sneinton Board School, from where she got a scholarship to Mundella Girls School. She liked school but not the homework, and left aged 15 to work at Morley's and Armitage's shop selling sweets and cakes.

Her charitable work started at a very early age. When she was just eight she knitted a scarf for a soldier in the Boer War and got a letter back (which she still treasured in 1974). In 1903, her father asked her if she would like to hold a 'Backyard Bazaar' rather than have an 11th birthday party. Seely wrote to all the grocery suppliers, and she was given items like miniature bottles of HP sauce and scented soaps to sell. A councillor opened the event, and the money raised was sent to Pearson's *Fresh Air Fund* in London, paying for 200 poor children

Pearson's Fresh Air Fund.

**BACK-YARD
BAZAAR**

Miss Beatrice Whitby will hold her **THIRD** Bazaar in aid of the above Fund, at the back of
33, Manor St., Sneinton,
— ON —
Thursday, July 13th, 1905,
To be OPENED at 3 o'clock, by
COUNCILLOR J. H. GREGG,
Supported by Messrs. J. G. Short, F. Wilde, J. Calladine,
F. Parkinson, C.C., F. Willey, J. Pell, C. Gelsthorpe,
J. Talbot, S. G. Ward, T. H. Lindley, H. Seely Whitby,
Hon. Sec. (Nottm. Branch) P.F.A.F., and others.

Miss Whitby's last year's effort realized sufficient funds to defray the cost of taking one of the poorest children of Sneinton to Wollaton Park for a day's outing.
Your Presence & Support will be esteemed.

PLEASE NOTE.
Since 1895 over
18,000
Poor NOTTINGHAM
Children have been
taken for a
DAYS HOLIDAY in the
COUNTRY.
Each Child costs
9d.
Total cost, £675 Os. 0d.

Miss Whitby, through
her BAZAARS has
raised—

	£	s.	d.
1903	8	2	0
1904	16	4	0

If **YOU** send
NINEPENCE
a Poor Sneinton
Child will have a
JOLLY DAYS OUTING.

to go on an outing in Wollaton Park. A pamphlet for the 1905 Backyard Bazaar suggests she held similar parties in 1903, 1904 and 1905, raising £8 2s 0d in 1903, and £16 4s 0d in 1904 - the latter being enough to support 400 children on a trip to Wollaton Park.

Beatrice worked at Armitage's for four years, and then helped her mother at home for the next three years. She used to go to Red Cross meetings and night school, where she learned book-keeping, shorthand and typing.

(From her own words on a family tape recording):

During WW1 both Seely and Beatrice became involved in the Nottingham Guardian subscription fund which collected up to £2000 *per day* to send parcels to Germany containing dubbin³, mittens, chocolate and

cigarettes from the Red Cross office in Washington Buildings on High Pavement (provided by a lace manufacturer). During WW1 there were 1200 Nottingham POWs in Germany, each of whom received a parcel every 5 days. She obtained the MBE for her wartime work in 1919, aged just 26 (or 27). She was given her MBE by the Duke of Portland as the King was ill on the scheduled day.

Beatrice's son Tommy Gee (of this Society) has donated Beatrice's private archive to the Imperial War Museum. The archive was explored in some detail in an article by Polly Russell in the *Financial Times* on 27 November 2015. The article describes how: "On November 30 1914, Miss B Whitby sent a letter headed 'Christmas Fund' to Private Pownall [sic], a British prisoner of war being held in Germany. She wrote 'I am desired by the Committee to forward you a box containing the following: 2lb plum pudding; 1lb Cad block choc; 1 pr mittens; 1 pr laces; 1 tin dubbin; 10 postcards with lead pencils; 1 tin peppermint; 1 tablet soap; 1 packet caramels; 1 tin Boracic ointment; 1 tin Vaseline.'

As Polly Russell notes: "On 'civvy street' in 1914, plum pudding and chocolates would have been standard Christmas fare, but for soldiers far from home they were a weapon to wield against despair, sent as reminders that 'the people of the City and County of Nottingham' had not forgotten them.

A fundraising drive for Comforts for Troops had been publicised in the Nottingham Guardian on 16 November 1914. Readers were encouraged to donate 'one shilling and upwards'. Within a day the paper had listed 100 donors. According to a typed account of the charity's business, 5,000 parcels were dispatched from the fund in less than a fortnight.

Every year of the war, 'Comforts for the Troops' provided Christmas packages. Contents varied slightly—between 1915 and 1916 plum cake was substituted for plum pudding and butterscotch was added—but a mix of the practical (laces) and the pleasurable (caramels)

³ A preparation for waterproofing army boots.

remained constant. Thankful recipients wrote to Miss Whitby, sending Christmas cards from the trenches and POW camps. In 1915 Walter Lewerny wrote ‘Heartiest Xmas and New Year’s Wishes’ on a card from Ruhleben camp (west of Berlin) with a photograph of a bleak row of huts surrounded by barbed wire.; on another, sent from Dyrotz camp in Brandenburg, a cartoon shows a man in a prison bed dreaming of plum pudding, turkey and wine.”

(For a flag-day) Her Grace the Duchess Portland has consented to sell emblems outside the Victoria Station, and at the Midland (station) Miss Beatrice Whitby, the indefatigable hon. secretary, will be assisted by Nottingham's gallant VC, Pte Caffray, who is home on leave, and Pte Farrow, happily returned home after 3½ years in German prison camps.

‘The Nottingham parcels,’ said Farrow, ‘are absolutely the best sent into Germany. We had six per month, and I am glad to say that they came to us regularly and untouched. Whatever else the Huns did — and we had some terrible experiences — they at least delivered the parcels, and I cannot tell you what the boys thought of them. Whenever they arrived, the boys said, “Here's another one from Auntie”, as we always spoke of Miss Beatrice Whitby, and I was never more surprised in my life when I went to the Comforts Office, on reaching home, and found, not the venerable lady we had always imagined her to be, but a young (she was in her mid-twenties) and tireless friend of Nottingham's sons. Everyone in the camps that we were in gave pride of place to our parcels, and it has been a real pleasure to us to have a chance to work for the fund to-day.’



Polly Russell (op. cit.) noted that at the war’s end, the officer commanding the South Notts Hussars depot wrote to Miss Whitby to commend her and her helpers for their efforts. ‘If you had seen how much these gifts were appreciated, it would have, to some extent, repaid you for all the strenuous work and long hours you devoted to this cause during the four and half years of war.’

Beatrice met my grandfather Thomas Gee who was a disabled WW1 veteran) when Gee’s Pork Butchers shop on Radford Road, Nottingham replaced the firm of Wagner’s as suppliers of sausages to Armitage’s (because of the association between the name Wagner and Germany). They married in April 1923, and had four children and nine grandchildren. Beatrice and Tom retired from the Radford Road shop to Ruddington in the 1950s, where she lived until her death in 1977.

My mother Alice Caulton (née Gee) was Beatrice’s eldest child. We displayed many of the embroidered postcards sent from POWs on the walls of our family home in Sherwood. We also had an illuminated manuscript given to my grandmother in gratitude by the Sherwood Foresters after the war, and this now proudly hangs at my current family home.

Tim Caulton