SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS

A History of
Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School

An Early Photograph of the school taken from Glen Road,
(Photograph kindly supplied by Mrs. Bessie Ashworth).

PHOTOGRAPHS

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PREFACE

A History of Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School was the brain-child of the recently-retired headmaster, Mr. P.L. Clark. He suggested that its publication should coincide with the School's seventy-fifth anniversary in 1988.

To that end an Archives Committee was set up to collate as much relevant information as possible. A cross-section of former students was circulated personally, in addition to general appeals which were sent out.

The response was not exactly overwhelming, but we wish to express our whole-hearted appreciation to those who did take the time and trouble to contribute. For some it was the second or even third time they had responded to such an appeal.

In 1963, for the special Jubilee edition of "The Squirrel", Mr. R.G. Phillips had used reminiscences of former pupils. In some instances we have received the same or similar information, and we have Mr. Phillips's permission, which we gratefully acknowledge, to reproduce passages from the 1963 magazine.

Similarly, we are indebted to Miss Dorothy Chadwick for permission to use extracts from the "Anthology" of 1973 which was so successfully produced under her aegis, with the assistance of Sixth-formers of that year. Regrettably but inevitably, a few of the earlier contributors are no longer with us for the 1988 effort.

We are particularly fortunate in the generous contribution made by Dr. Milton Ormerod. Not only has he permitted reproduction of his interesting work on Newchurch Grammar School, published in the two Jubilee magazines, but he has sent us valuable information on the development of the curriculum from the Newchurch Grammar School days.

Equally generous have been those who have kindly devoted large amounts of time to typing manuscripts ready for the printer. We thank most warmly Mrs. Jackie Carter, Mrs. Mary Davidson, Mrs. Margaret Hill, Mrs. Susan Ormerod, Mrs. Bobbie Taylor and Mr. Fred Wild for their work.

To all who have helped to collate information, who have themselves contributed or have persuaded others to do so, the Archives Committee gives grateful thanks.

P.L. Clark (Chairman)	J.E. Macleroy (Secretary)	Mrs. M. Abbott
Mrs. J. Booth	Mrs. M. Davidson	Miss D. Hewitt
Mrs. B. Taylor	Mr. J.O. Ashworth	Mr. J.B. Taylor

POSTSCRIPT

Since going to press we have learned of the appointment to the headship of Mr. Martyn Richard Morris, M.A., Deputy Head at Patchway High School, Avon. Mr. Morris will be welcomed in the school and in the area and will, it is hoped, become so involved in the community that his headship will prove as happy and satisfying to him and to the school as were those of his four predecessors.

CHAPTER I

The Origins: Newchurch Grammar School and the Pupil-Teacher Centre

"We are what we are because we stand on the shoulders of those who have preceded us. May we so live that those who follow us may stand on our shoulders." (Old Scandinavian saying, quoted by Mr. PL. Clark, Speech Day, 1980.)

Whilst this purports to be a history of Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School, it would be a gross injustice if we omitted to mention its distinguished precursor, Newchurch Grammar School. Thanks to the indefatigable research of Dr. Milton B. Ormerod, we have a clear picture of that institution from its inception. Readers who had copies of the school magazines of 1963 and 1973 will already have seen his account of the old foundation, which we have his permission to reproduce here. The recently retired Headmaster, in the 1973 "Anthology," has added further detail from his own research, much of it concerning the finances of the old school.

"They lived long beloved
And dy'd bewailed,
And two estates
Upon one school entail'd"

Thus reads the epitaph on the tombstone of John Kershaw and his wife, responsible for the endowment of Newchurch Grammar School in 1702. The sale of certain of his lands enabled the establishment of "a free school for ever" and payment of a schoolmaster "qualified both in learning and good government"

Owing to difficulties arising from the sale of the lands after Kershaw's death, his plans were not immediately carried out, and the school did not open until 1711. Its early history is a rather sad little saga of pinching and scrimping, selling this building, leasing that, to try to raise the money necessary to keep Kershaw's philanthropic project viable. At a time when larger towns were favoured with royal foundations, how fortunate was little Newchurch that one of her sons had been sufficiently far-sighted to found a school at all!

Despite the erection of a new school in 1787, the building was totally inadequate. Yet another was set up in 1889 (the present Roman Catholic Primary School in Turnpike, Newchurch). This building was extended in 1894 to include, amongst other amenities, a fully-equipped gymnasium (which its successor did not boast at the time of its opening!)

Of the dozen or so headmasters in the years following its foundation little seems to be known, but of course the great link with the present school was the redoubtable Mr. T.E. Jackson, who carried out the transition from the old school to the new, and of whom more will be said under a later heading. The school, we are told, flourished under his headmastership.

Its previous vicissitudes, including what must have been alarming fluctuations in

its numbers, were partly due to wrangling over the running of the school, and radical changes in its governing body. From the three local "substantial landowner" trustees of the original foundation the number grew to six. Despite its purely secular origins, the school became strongly influenced by the Established Church, its headmaster being of necessity a member of the Church of England. The so-called "free school" began to charge fees to augment the headmaster's paltry salary and, we are told "in 1864 there were insufficient funds for any help but that of a pupil-teacher."

The Church influence, strongly exerted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had waned by 1890 when a new governing body was set up. "By 1913," Dr. Ormerod tells us, "there were six full-time members of staff besides the headmaster. The growth of the school during this period can be ascribed to the ability and character of Mr. Jackson and his staff, the increasing recognition by parents of the importance of education, and the avoidance of anything in the curriculum which would give offence to non-conformists, so that the school was freely supported by them."

When, as a rather belated result of the 1902 Education Act, the new secondary school at Waterfoot ultimately succeeded the older foundation, the endowments of Newchurch Grammar School finally became the Newchurch-in-Rossendale Foundation Exhibition, which nowadays provides modest amounts of money to assist Rossendale students proceeding to University.

It is regrettable that there is no record of pupil-reminiscence from the early days of N.G. S. Even of its later years we have scant information. In the "Anthology" compiled by Miss D. Chadwick for the B.R.G.S. Diamond Jubilee in 1973 we have reminiscences from Mr. R. Riley, Mr. A. Walmsley and Mr. L.A. Stocks. The last-named has been kind enough to send a further contribution to be included in this publication, and we thank him warmly for his trouble.

From the three afore-mentioned gentlemen we gain a few more personal side-lights on N. G. S. in its later years. Mr. Walmsley came from Haslingden along with a score of others, sometimes on foot (shades of special buses!) sometimes by train or steam tram. The opening of school was marked by the ringing of a large bell operated by a bell-rope.

Mr. Riley describes the rare but ceremonial public canings administered by Mr. Jackson. On the credit side, mention is made of the statutory two half-holidays which were allocated each year to celebrate any local or national event of importance. Failing such an event, a half holiday would be requested by the Head Boy, who had to make out a convincing case for it to the headmaster!

There were no large-scale school lunch arrangements, but lunch was obtainable at Mr. Jackson's own house, under his and his sister's supervision. For the young Leslie Stocks, the school suet pudding was the sole consolation of an otherwise traumatic first day. Abandoned by the youth who had been detailed off to take him to school, but who went to a football match instead, the nervous newcomer was duly ducked in a basin of cold water by older boys, and declared that he was not going back. He did, however, and so enjoyed his short time there that he was, as he puts it, "not so pleased" when the time

came to transfer to the new establishment. He recalls his enjoyment of singing lessons and art lessons and the disappointment he felt on finding no gymnasium at the new school. The "family" atmosphere of the small grammar school, where staff sometimes joined games of football in the playground, must have been sadly missed.

The fact that boys only were catered for at Newchurch Grammar School comes as no surprise. The idea that girls' education is of far less importance has lingered much longer than many people imagine. Even nowadays there are parents willing to pay for a boy's education but hesitating to "waste" their money on a mere daughter. Any young Rossendale female aspiring to higher education had to be despatched to Bury, or presumably sent to boarding-school if funds allowed. Haslingden set up its secondary school fairly soon after the 1902 Act gave local authorities the go-ahead, and after its foundation in 1904 it was possible for girls to go there, just as, in earlier times, Haslingden boys had been admitted to Newchurch.

In the "Anthology" of 1973 Mrs. Emily Taylor (nee Green) tells us how, in 1902, having won a scholarship which would previously have taken her to Bury, she was directed to the pupil-teacher centre as its first full-time pupil. This was presumably the answer to the Education Act, the first provision of secondary education for Rossendale girls. The school had no buildings of it own: it was set up in Bethel Lecture Hall, Waterfoot. It had previously taken only older pupils, girls who wanted to become teachers, and who spent half their time continuing their education and half in the local primary schools doing teaching practice.

The staff was small, the curriculum consequently restricted. Mrs. Green mentions Mathematics, English language and literature, French, Scripture, History, Geography, Needlework and Music. Art and Chemistry lessons took place at what was styled the "Bacup Technical School," which was one room in a Bacup mill. Later, Chemistry lessons were given at the boys' Grammar School on Wednesday afternoons.

Miss Mary Haworth attended the Centre for just a year before the move to the new school. She speaks of two classrooms and three staff - the head Miss Niness, Miss Wrigley and Miss Lord. Apparently there was no science at that time, probably in view of the impending closure. Whatever may have been the feelings of the Newchurch Grammar School boys at their uprooting in September 1913, one can feel sure that the girls, freed from the confines of their inadequate accommodation, must have found the new buildings positively palatial and a very pleasant change.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW SCHOOL OPENS

"I loved the school and was extremely happy there, and I hope the youngsters of today are as happy as I was. "(Mrs. E.M Shuttleworth, nee Whittaker, pupil 1914-21).)

In these times of educational upheaval, reorganisation and re-reorganisation and threat of reorganisation, one can feel much sympathy with the Head, staff and pupils of the then well-established and prospering .Newchurch Grammar School when, in September 1913, the time of uprooting came.

We are indebted, as before, to Dr. Milton Ormerod for background details of the establishment of the Bacup and Rawtenstall Secondary and Technical School. Such was its original rather cumbersome but all-embracing title. Explaining it, Dr. Ormerod writes: "Technical education in the Valley had been hitherto carried on in highly unsuitable premises based on the old mechanics' institutes, but proliferating into old mills for want of space and need for equipment. The hard-headed businessmen of the Valley, who were also prominent in local politics, were very keen to improve this, and almost a third of the new building was devoted to technical education."

Enter into any argument or debate on secondary education these days, and it will rapidly become obvious that many, if not most, people are unaware of the 1902 Education Act which brought in at least the beginnings of secondary education for all. The "equality of opportunity" so clamoured for, was in fact established at the beginning of the century. The trouble was, as always, that some animals were more equal than others. Some local authorities were wealthier, or perhaps more enlightened, or both. Inevitably, therefore, there was great diversity of opportunity according to the number and quality of schools provided in a given area.

We have already seen, in the previous chapter, that whereas boys' education was reasonably provided for at Newchurch, the fuller provision for girls was not really achieved until the new secondary school was set up. Haslingden, on the other hand, opened its mixed secondary school as early as 1904, which must have constituted something of a challenge to its rival boroughs of Bacup and Rawtenstall. Together they contrived a larger, more imposing model.

Even in its original state, before the later extensions, it must have appeared a massive building, and those too young to remember pre- inflation costs will read with incredulity that it was built for about £30,000 - the price of a superior semi-detached private house these days! To quote "The Squirrel" of 1963: "The foundation stone of this 'handsome pile', as the local press described it, had been laid two years earlier(1st July 1911). Using a pair of silver trowels, which were afterwards presented to them, the Mayors of Bacup and Rawtenstall (Alderman Maden and Councillor Grimshaw) had performed this operation jointly - a symbol of municipal cooperation.

"The County Architect, Mr. Henry Littler, had designed the new school, though

not without difficulties. One controversy, for example, concerned the County Council's refusal to have a wider central hall; anything less canyon-like would have cost another £600. This new building provided, at first, a secondary school for three hundred and sixty-two boys and girls, a small preparatory department, rooms for the evening classes of a Technical Institute and facilities for teaching such trades as weaving, spinning, boot and shoe manufacture and plumbing.

"Forty per cent of the pupils would have free places, an allowance towards text-books and, when over fourteen years of age, a maintenance allowance of £5. Those pupils who did not win a free place would be charged fees each term of£1.1sOd. for tuition and stationery and 2s.Od. for games, and they would have to provide their own text-books."

Miss Dorothy Chadwick and her assistant researchers give us, in the "Anthology" of 1973, extracts from the official description of the plans laid down for the new school:

"The school has been planned with a view to providing accommodation as a secondary day school for three hundred and sixty-two mixed scholars, but in addition the building will be used as a Technical Institute, and special provision has been made for the teaching of weaving and spinning, boot and shoe manufacture, painting and decorating, plumbing etc., so that altogether provision will be made for six hundred scholars.

"The ground floor contains four classrooms for thirty scholars each and eight for twenty-four scholars, grouped round a large central assembly hall; also rooms for headmaster, headmistress, assistant masters, assistant mistresses, a waiting room and a secretary's room adjoining the main entrance which is approached from a new street on the south side.

"On the first floor there are three art rooms facing north, accommodating twenty-five, twenty-two and eighteen scholars respectively, a cookery and laundry-room for twenty-five, dining-room for forty, chemistry laboratories for twenty-five each, a lecture-room for fifty and a technical drawing-room for thirty. All these rooms open off a gallery which runs round the upper part of the central hall.

"Rooms for technical subjects are situated in the basement, which on the west side is above ground level.

"The buildings are of stone faced externally with Yorkshire parpoints with ashlar dressings, and the roofs are covered with best quality Yorkshire slates. The assembly hall, entrances and classrooms have a tile dado, plastered above the same, while the rooms in the basement are faced internally with Accrington brick."

It must be exceedingly difficult for those who have known the school only in the last decade or so to recognise it from the above description. What about those three north-facing art-rooms on the balcony? So far as we can gather, they never fulfilled their intended function, since we are told that art classes took place elsewhere. One of the early students, Mrs. Theobald, in a contribution to the 1963 "Squirrel" recalls that "Mr. Barker had to encourage our artistic skills in the fastnesses of Thistlemount. .. It was incredible how often 'Mr. Barker kept us late, sir,' when mathematics or some equally objectionable subject followed and conversely, how often we had an irrefutable reason for being late at

Thistlemount, if we were no good at art."

The astonishing fact that the new school had no gymnasium and no playing-fields has already been mentioned as a great disappointment to the Newchurch Grammar School boys, who had enjoyed a well-equipped gymnasium at their old school. In the new building, the only facilities for physical education were ropes (in the assembly hall) and a vaulting-horse.

In the early years there was no P.E. mistress for the girls. Though segregated from the boys, they were nevertheless taught by the same Mr. Richardson who was responsible for boys' gymnastics. This state of affairs seems to have continued for the first ten years.

As far as games were concerned, we are told in an article written for the 1963 "Squirrel" by the late Mr. C.S. Duthie: "There were no playing-fields. Some matches were played on the Newchurch school field, which was uneven, muddy and full of holes. At one time, games were played on a field somewhere at Cowpe, hockey at Edgeside, and Sports Day was held on the Rossendale United Football Field."

With all its advantages and disadvantages, and for all the pessimistic prognostication that it would be a "white elephant", the new school was formally opened on Saturday September 20th 1913 "in the presence of a large and distinguished assembly." The opener was the Chairman of Governors, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Craven Hoyle, whose name has been known to generations of B.R.G.S. pupils from the House Shields, still occasionally referred to as the "Craven Hoyle Shields".

A brief mention may here be made of the Rouse system which prevailed for about the first twenty years of the school's existence. Pupils were divided into three houses only, according to the district where they lived: Bacup, Waterfoot and Rawtenstall, the boundary lines being Cloughfold and Stacksteads Stations. The disadvantages which led to a change of system will be dealt with in a later chapter.

It must have softened the blow considerably for the boys of Newchurch Grammar School 'that their Headmaster and several staff were uprooted and transplanted with them. Similarly, the head and assistants from the Pupil-Teachers' Centre were also appointed to the new school. All these ladies and gentlemen, along with others newly-appointed, were present at the grand opening ceremony.

Pupils, however, it is pointed out, were not represented at the official opening, and had to wait until a week later to sample the atmosphere of their new school. Mrs. Martha Heath (nee Thomas) writing for the 1973 "Anthology", gives her impressions:

"Sixty years ago our new school opened. I recall vividly the gleaming, fresh-smelling woodwork, the desks as yet unscored by initial-carving penknives, the leonine head of Mr. Jackson and the trim figure of Miss Niness; our hated black woollen stockings, gym. lessons in the hall, with the climbing-ropes fixed in the lofty roof, and the thrill of walking round the balcony."

In the 1963 magazine, the late Mrs. E.J. Ingham (nee Pickup) who came from the Pupil-Teacher Centre, records her recollections: "After the midsummer holidays the change took effect. There were members of staff and pupils from the two schools, several

new teachers, and some boys and girls drawn from various sources."

"The changes," Dr. M.B. Ormerod informs us, "were carried out as painlessly as possible. They must, however, have caused distress to Mr. Jackson. . . He wished to retire, but was urged to accept the headship of the new school to ensure a smooth start. The existing staff of Newchurch Grammar School - Mr. Tonkinson, Mr. Owen, Mr. Anstey and Mr. Richardson was appointed to the staff of the new school. . . The ladies who had run the Pupil-Teacher Centre, Miss Niness, Miss Wrigley and Miss Lord were also appointed, Miss Niness as senior mistress."

Of these early teachers and many who followed in their footsteps, more will be said later. Suffice it now to say that Mr. T.E. Jackson, who had been prevailed upon to ease the transition to the new school, did in fact remain as its Headmaster until 1921. He was succeeded then by Mr. E.H. Holden, who had been appointed in 1913 as Head of the Evening School and teacher of chemistry in the day school. Just as Newchurch Grammar School had flourished under Mr. Jackson's aegis, so the new secondary school was successfully launched. In the first twelve months it increased in size from one hundred and eighty-eight to two hundred and nineteen pupils. Mr. Jackson confidently described it, at the first Speech Day, as "a secondary school... worthy to be compared with any school in Lancashire and perhaps outside that county... a lusty infant" having "all the promise of a vigorous youth and of strong and useful manhood."

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT WAR YEARS (1914-1918)

"I shall always remember Mr. Jackson: what a wonderful person he was!"(Mrs. Margaret Brierley, nee Greenwood, pupil 1915-1920)

The local education authorities had acted just in time. Only twelve months after the school's triumphant inception came the first World War. The threat to civilians was much less at that time than it became during the second war, but the effects were nonetheless considerable.

Mr. Harry Howard, of Bacup, who attended the school in 1916, comments: "The war had taken most of the male members of staff, replaced by (to our minds) very attractive ladies."

"1914 was a milestone in my life," writes Mrs. Bessie Ashworth, "for it was in that year that three classmates and I were awarded Grammar School Scholarships. 1914 was also a milestone in the history of England, because it was on the 4th of August that year that this country declared war on Germany... Four of the six years of my grammar school life were overshadowed by the horrors of that war.

"As the war continued on its dreadful course, some of our male teachers and sixth formers too, had perforce to join H.M. Forces. While on leave servicemen, former pupils at the school, would call to see the headmaster, Mr. Jackson. How different they looked. . . some soldiers in khaki, others sailors in blue with bell-bottom trousers and round caps complete with the gilded names of their ships. I don't remember any boys wearing Air Force blue, though."

In this connection Mrs. E.M. Kershaw (nee Collinge) recalls Mr. Jackson at prayers, announcing casualties or promotions of those in the forces. She also remembers that wartime shortage of metal made it necessary, on Sports Day, to award certificates instead of the customary medals.

Mrs. Ashworth mentions that the Art Teacher was the first to join up. This was Mr. John Barker. Mr. J.G. Anstey volunteered, but was rejected on grounds of poor eyesight. Others who went from the staff were Messrs. Owen and Duthie. All three recruits returned safely to resume their posts when the war was over. Many of the students who joined the forces were not so fortunate: the war memorial plaque in the school's entrance hall bears the names of thirty-seven former pupils who lost their lives in the 1914-1918 war. Amongst them was numbered one Percy Horsfield, whose name has been virtually immortalised for generations of BRGS pupils by a poem, quoted in a later chapter, and written by a survivor of a later war.

It is a measure of the appalling carnage of that first World War that the first memorial carried the same number of names as the second, though the school would be at least twice as large when the 1939-45 casualties were recorded.

At the risk of being accused of "name-dropping" we can add to recollections of

the first World War the following paragraph taken directly from Miss D. Chadwick's 1973 "Anthology." "The Rt. Hon. Lord Francis Williams of Abinger, who was created a life peer in 1962, was a pupil at BRGS for a short time during the war. In his autobiography 'Nothing so Strange' which was published a month before his death in June 1970, he recalls his boyhood in Britannia and a vivid memory of the school during the war. 'My sister and I were by now at a secondary school in Rawtenstall... and I can remember how we all gathered together in the main hall, shortly after I went there, to cheer the captain of the school and four other sixth formers who were leaving to go straight into the army. Within a few weeks three of them were dead, the first names on the school's roll of honour.'"

Incidentally it is claimed that B.R.S.S. may well have been responsible for the publication of the very first writing of the above-mentioned journalist and political commentator. Under the name of plain Frank Williams, his story of a Boy Scout, entitled "His Bit," was published in the first school magazine "Daphnephora" which appeared in 1916.

We are told that this magazine was discontinued quite soon owing to lack of funds. Certainly it is not usual, in time of war, for superfluous items such as school magazines to survive the inevitable shortages and enforced economies.

It seems highly probable that food shortages were partly responsible for the discontinuing of the lunches provided at Mr. Jackson's house. That custom, a legacy of the old Newchurch Grammar school days, prevailed for a time after the opening of the new school. War-time recollections of lunch-time arrangements seem to centre largely on the bringing of various comestibles to school in the fibre "tommy-box", taking food to be heated, then going to claim one's own at lunch-time.

Shortages there certainly were. Mrs. Bessie Ashworth mentions the use of swede turnips instead of potatoes, which were scarce, and wonders if anyone tried to make chips from them.

Mrs. Ashworth and several other correspondents remember the Belgian refugees billeted at Barcroft Hall in Edgeside Park. Pupils collected for the Belgian refugees, for the Jack Cornwell fund. They also knitted for the Rossendale Voluntary Workers' Association, collected eggs for the hospitals, sent magazines to the soldiers in the trenches. Ground at the front of the school was dug over and vegetables grown.

The pupils adopted a prisoner of war and sent him food parcels and money through the medium of the Red Cross. At Christmas the school sent cigarettes and chocolate to all home-serving former students and cigarettes and tobacco to all serving abroad.

It was a hard inauguration for the new school. A sports field had been acquired but could not be made usable until several years later. It was, therefore, the present Rossendale United football field which was the background for the historic and joyful occasion which Mr. Leslie Stocks describes in his "History of John Maden & Son Ltd.," which we have permission to quote:

"I well remember the day when war ended on Monday 11th November 1918.

The school was on half-term holiday, but we were playing a house match... when all the mill hooters in the Valley were sounded to announce the end of hostilities. We completed the match but had some trouble getting home as the trains and trams had ceased to run, and everyone had decided to take a holiday. We went to school the following morning and were given the rest of the week as a holiday, most of which was spent collecting wood for a bonfire."

CHAPTER IV

CONSOLIDATION: THE INTER-WAR YEARS

'7 really believe that R.R. G. S. students have a special quality. I wonder how many other people feel the same way... There was a happy, wholesome atmosphere in the school" (Mrs. Ralph Collinson, nee Eveline Firth, pupil 1932-1937, staff 1947-1954.)

Peace brought with it a period of stability, of loyal and long-serving staff the nucleus of whom was still the faithful few who had come from Newchurch Grammar School and the Pupil-Teacher Centre. Several of these would still be there when the second World War came in 1939.

The inevitable economies followed the expense of conflict and victory: there could be no major additions to buildings, despite growing numbers. By 1918 there were 266 pupils in school, fifty more than at the beginning of the war. The late Miss Mary Dodds, a former pupil and former Senior Mistress, starting school in 1917, had found it extremely large to one who had come from a small elementary school," but points out that it was "much smaller than it is now. It consisted almost entirely of the central hall and surrounding classrooms, with of course the rooms on the balcony."

There was still no real dining accommodation. The happy family custom of lunching at Mr. Jackson's home must have survived the removal from Newchurch for only a short time. Mrs. E.M. Shuttleworth (nee Whittaker) remembers taking lunch at Mr. Jackson's house when she first went to school (in 1914) but adds "I seem to remember it was discontinued after a year or two." Former pupils of the immediate post-war period seem to have clear recollections of the arrangements that Miss Dodds describes:

"Two rooms on the balcony, connected by a small kitchen-like room, were set aside, one for boys, one for girls, where we took our dinners to eat. We could have a hot drink by paying a halfpenny for the hot water to brew our tea or cocoa, and could have a pie warmed for another halfpenny. The caretaker came round while we were eating to collect the money."

One is mildly astonished to gather that these somewhat primitive eating arrangements were carried on under the aegis of the caretaker. He it was, too, who magically produced eggs cooked to each owner's requirements, though all boiled in the same container. It would appear that, in those days, constant supervision by teaching staff was not considered such an absolute necessity. It has frequently been a source of wonder also that the custom of "throwing to the lions" (i.e. pushing down the coalshute) of each unfortunate new boy, continued apparently unchecked for so many years. No-one seems to have suffered as a result of it, but these days it would probably result in Press headlines or even legal action!

"The seniors," writes Mr. H.A. Howard, "made one stand on the steel scraper mat, which was then suddenly pulled from beneath the feet: then came the forced journey down the coal-shute into the boilerhouse." Some tell of being compelled to sing a song

before this particular torture perhaps more of an ordeal than ever. After it, however, as Mr. Ernest Willetts cheerfully remarks: "We were members of the school, looking forward to the next newcomers!" Mercifully, perhaps, history does not record what the female of the species perpetrated by way of initiation!

The physical training side of the curriculum was still very restricted by lack of facilities. The absence of young men during the war had enabled the School to make use of Rossendale United's Dark Lane ground for its football, but once peace came the ground had to be restored to its rightful owners. One of the earliest highlights of the post-war years was the effort made to raise money for the draining and preparation of the fields opposite the School. A "do-it-yourself" attempt had been made, but it had been abandoned as too arduous. Mention of this will be made later: let it suffice to say that a substantial sum was raised, enough to encourage the local authorities to complete the work and enable the fields to be used.

The School Hall was still being used as a gymnasium, and until 1923, when a P.E. instructress was appointed, the girls still did such P.E. as there was with the boys' instructor.

In the first five post-war years the event which must have affected the school most was the retirement in 1921 of Mr. Jackson. As mentioned earlier, this much-respected and well-loved headmaster, having served Newchurch Grammar School for 21 years, had wished to retire when the school closed. Persuaded to remain and oversee the transition, he had steered the new secondary school through its initial stages and through the years of war.

As with all such personalities, Mr. Jackson was regarded by those who knew him as irreplaceable. His name was to become a legend. Staff who had taught with him, some as far back as the Newchurch days, were still there to tell newcomers stirring tales of Mr. Jackson's days at the helm. His successor did not date back to Newchurch, but was from the original staff of the new school.

Mr. E.H. Holden had been appointed in 1913 to teach Chemistry in the day-school and also to be head of the Technical Institute housed in the new building. Anyone who served under Mr. Holden would expect him to succeed, and to keep the school heading in the right direction. This present work deals with the day-school side only, but it is worth mentioning that Mr. Leslie Stocks, a former pupil of Newchurch Grammar School and B.R.G. S., speaks with great enthusiasm of the success gained by those who, like himself, prepared themselves for work in industry by attending night-classes at the Technical Institute while Mr. Holden was its head.

Of the Spinning and Weaving classes he says: "It was a good course. We had some capable teachers and some very good machinery. It was a most interesting way of spending the winter. The school also turned out some extremely capable managers." From his class alone he lists nine students (including himself) who went on to take up key positions in industry.

The new headmaster, then, was of proven worth. As a teacher of chemistry he was already very highly thought of. Former pupils recall his lessons with an enthusiasm

exemplified by this extract from a letter from Miss Mary Haworth, who started at B.R.G.S. after a year at the Pupil-Teacher Training Centre.

"There was no science taught, so I started afresh with Chemistry under Mr. Holden... It was due to Mr. Holden's enthusiasm for his subject that I went on to do a degree in it at Manchester University later. In our year Annie Earnshaw, W. Watson and I all went together - two women and one man - to do Chemistry Honours. We were two out of only about six women at Manchester in that year, so that speaks well for Mr. Holden's drive. This was 1917."

The new school was already establishing itself in the forefront of secondary education, where it was destined to stay. There was no likelihood that Mr. Holden would allow the standards to fall. His examination results in Chemistry had been consistently outstanding. Public examinations taken in Mr. Jackson's time had been the Cambridge Locals, and in its Chemistry results the school had been first in England for seven years, recording twice the number of distinctions achieved by the next school on the list. Nor was it only in Chemistry that such results were attained. Miss Mary Haworth, quoted earlier, also speaks of a Geography examination in which the late Ronald Y. Digby (destined to become in later years a teacher at B.R.G. S.) came first in all England.

Mr. Holden took over the headship of a school which now numbered about 350. Some of these pupils (probably a mere handful by that time) would be in the Junior School: for until the mid-1920's the School took a limited number of eight to ten year olds. That was the reason for the nomenclature of the lower forms, retained long after the demise of the kindergarten Lower and Upper Thirds.

Initially the fees paid at the new secondary school were comparatively low (about £4 a year all-told) and they continued fairly reasonable. Again we are indebted to Dr. Milton Ormerod for information supplied to us about early arrangement of forms and inter-war curriculum. In the 1930's, he tells us, the fees were £9 per annum. There was, as one would hope, an entrance examination: fees alone did not secure a place. The 1944 Education Act, doubtless very well-meant, put an end to the possibility of securing a grammar-school place without negotiating the usual 11 + hazard.

Rather naively, one feels, it seems to have been assumed that the fee-payers would automatically be less academically gifted than the scholarship winners. Dr. Ormerod tells us that for most of the period 1920-44 there was a three-form entry. Two forms, A and Alpha, contained the scholarship pupils, whereas the B form was composed of fee payers. "As they progressed up the school there was some mixing," he adds reassuringly. The A and sometimes the Alpha form took Matriculation/School Certificate after four years, while the B form (non-Latin!) took five years.

Referring to curriculum in the inter-war years, Dr. Ormerod writes:

"The secretary to the Board of Education appointed an additional team of young inspectors to assist the local authorities in the creation of the new secondary schools. These inspectors were by and large Oxbridge graduates with public-school backgrounds who tended to mould the average secondary school in the public-school image... The set-up at Haslingden and Waterfoot and some other Northern industrial areas, with its links

with technical education and resultant staffing, to some extent thwarted the pattern. The appointment in 1921 of Mr. E.H. Holden, M.Sc., as headmaster continued to ensure that there was more emphasis on science in the curriculum than was typical of the country as a whole. This does not imply that the Arts side was weak."

The well-developed Science side of the school was deficient, as were most schools, in that no Biology was taught. The subject was not regarded as essential. Dr. Ormerod speaks of a drive in the early 1930's to train Biology teachers, and tells us that the subject, once introduced into the school, rapidly grew in regard, particularly for aspiring students of medicine and dentistry.

Reminding us that at that time entry to University depended in the first place on Matriculation, which was granted only to those whose School Certificate (present "0" level) results were of an all-round creditable standard, he recalls taking the examination after four years, in 1937 "with a surprising lack of any options: maths., physics, chemistry, French, Latin, history, English language and literature."

At that time the range of subjects offered to sixth-formers was also far more limited, and the sixth-form of course very much smaller. "The typical science sixth-former," writes Dr. Ormerod, "took pure-with-applied maths., physics and chemistry to Higher School Certificate (Advanced Level) and on the Arts side the standard fare was English, French, and History. The science sixth also took subsidiary (something like the OA of today) French-with-German in which optional passages of translation were of a scientific nature to help us, at university, with the compulsory translations from German scientific literature. This was balanced on the Arts side by subsidiary Latin."

Mr. Holden firmly believed in keeping noses to the grindstone. No "resting on one's laurels" was permitted in the Lower Sixth, for the subjects to be taken as "Principal" (normally three in number) were normally offered at "subsidiary" level at the end of the Lower-sixth year, just to keep the candidates (not to mention their teachers!) on their toes. As Dr. Ormerod points out, the classes at this time were considerably smaller, since it was then possible for pupils to leave at 14, but there were full-scale school examinations and reports every term, also half-term tests, with lists in order of merit on each occasion. Never a dull moment for the staff!

In a magnificent contribution (would there had been many more on this scale!), Mrs. Mary Holt (nee Taylor) recalls her memories of schooldays from 1924 to 1931.

"In 1926," she writes, "there was a coal strike which developed into a General Strike. Trains and trams did not run, so we made our way to school by walking or begging a lift on any passing vehicle." The strike seems to have had little effect on the life of B.R.G. S., and is rarely mentioned by pupils of that period. Mrs. Holt gives us a clear picture of the annexe. "Thistlemount House (now demolished, though the stables and coach-house still stand) was in Trickett's Memorial Gardens. Boys were taught woodwork there, in rooms on the groundfloor... Mr. Barker used the first floor rooms." Describing her last year, whilst awaiting entrance to training College at eighteen, she recalls: "We spent much time in the Art Room, for the new extension had been added and we assisted with the removal from Thistlemount House. The building had been extended

out into the boys' playground."

So farewell to Thistlemount, and a great stride forward in improvement to accommodation. A timely improvement, too, for by the early 1930's the total on roll had increased to 406, about 100 more pupils in five years. "Squirrel", 1963, speaks of these 1931 extensions which, it says, provided new classrooms, rooms for Art, Woodwork and Metalwork. The new classrooms, three in number, open from the corridor which is still, after over 55 years, called "The Extension"!

The School's name was changed, in 1928, to "Grammar School", yet it is interesting to note that more technical subjects were eventually introduced into the curriculum. Even in 1926, recalls the late Mr. Walter Fielden, writing for the Anthology of 1973, his own appointment was intended to introduce metalwork to the school. He describes the difficulties of trying to teach technical subjects in the restricted conditions of Thistlemount, and the relief when the 1931 extensions allowed travelling to and from Thistlemount to cease. "The original woodwork room was now available, and one of the basement rooms was extended to form the first metalwork room. Thus we were able to start many forms of metalwork: hammered copper and brass, bent ironwork and elementary forge work." Shortly before World War Two, Mr. Fielden was to take over the headship of the Technical Department, once held by Mr. Holden, and later by Mr. Hirst (rather surprisingly the Senior Language master!)

Were these inter-war years, one wonders, the halcyon days of the school? "The Journal", first produced in 1926 by the much-respected English master, former pupil Mr. Harry Proudfoot, testifies in its successive issues to the full and varied life of the school at that time. Old Students' recollections of the period are full of enthusiasm. The student population had expanded and the accommodation had improved, with further improvements pending.

Mrs. Jessie Lunt (nee Hewitt), writing for the Anthology of 1973, says: "to me it was an ordered and secure world. . . There were many influences which made those B.R.G.S. days so happy and rewarding."