

E.F.WRIGHT(See Staff Photos) REMINISCENCES 1904 - 1955 (Extract from 1955 Mitre)

On the 16th September 1904, a rather nervous little boy, accompanied by another, slightly older and not nervous, arrived at the School gates. The older boy who knew the ropes was kind enough to bring me along on this special occasion when I was to become a Grammar School boy. He is now the Provost of Wakefield.

I suppose there were about a hundred. of us altogether, including a strong sprinkling of Boarders. On a snowy morning day—boys arriving in small contingents stood no chance of entering the School premises. They had. to wait until a sufficiently large number had collected to take the place by direct assault.

The Head Master was the Rev. William Johnson, He had. a great reputation for education in York and District. At the beginning of the century, Science was coming along as a school subject and the School's reputation grew.

We entered the School through the porch, which is now the Memorial Library and reached the Assembly Hall, which is now Rooms 5 and 6. The present Hall is built on the site of the old "little" playground, where we did P.T. with sticks and dumb bells! When "the Rev. William" asked the Governors for a new Hall he asked for one that would hold two hundred, They granted his request but told him that he was mad. And so the present Hall was built. You see how mad he was!

The labs, were separated from the main building and occupied the place where Rooms 1 and 2 now stand. I still remember very vividly the removal of the Chemistry Lab. to the present Room 12. Everything is the same, the same benches, the same accommodation, the same fruitless assault. Those benches have indeed, stood up well to the ravages of time (and boys).

The Common Room is also the same. I remember it, or rather the empty space around. it, as the loneliest place on earth. Why should one go there anyway? Did they not see enough of you in form and did you not see enough of them? The answer is "Yes". There is a story told of a little boy who went to the Common Room and was never seen again. I doubt the truth of this, but we little boys dare not take the risk.

In those days, a man possessed of a University degree but with no training in teaching could enter a school and teach there. It was very difficult for him; it was very difficult for the boys. I remember, when quite a small boy, having read to me Final Hons. Physics notes by a man who thought that was all right. The wastage of this type was high, though occasionally some managed to remain a term.

But, I hasten to say, certain men stand out in my memory as men who really made the School. Those of us who had the good fortune to know these men, hold them in the highest respect and with much affection. There was Mr. Evans who took every step to see that we passed the Northern Matriculation; Mr. Worth (*see staff photos*), the kindest and most lovable of men, who taught Chemistry and, indeed, much more than that. In later years, when Leeds University conferred upon him the degree of M.Sc., *honoris causa*, I can think of nothing that gave greater satisfaction. Then there was Mr. R. B. Newton who taught us Maths., and Mr. Leadley, who taught us English. We were extremely fond of our French Master, Mr. Duchene.

I recall an incident possibly worth mentioning. After we had passed N.U. Matriculation, there was a slight lull. The "Rev.W." came in one morning and found three of us 'out of work'. "We cannot have this," he said, "You'd better take London Matriculation." Just that: and from that day until the day when he sent a congratulatory postcard, he never mentioned the subject again. We had to get hold of a syllabus; we had to get hold of an entry form — and the five pounds fee. Later we had to get the means of travelling backwards and forwards to Leeds for more than a week. Our parents found the money somehow, but in the circumstances it was very necessary to pass. Which we did. I believe there is a moral somewhere in this.

The first World War carried most of us overseas and, when I came back in 1919, I was fortunate enough to be able to join the School staff under Mr. Vinter. He was Head for 23 years and did much for the School. There have been many changes in the Common Room since then, but throughout those long years it has been the happiest of places and I have received nothing but kindness on all sides.

The Memorial Library, the inspiration of Mr. Leadley, was begun and. finally completed. The building fund was in debt and the Old Boys Association, now successfully launched, together with members of the staff and their wives and friends undertook to wipe out this debt. They did so finally as the result of a long series of concerts and dramatic work of all kinds. I look back at those uproarious nights with great pleasure as, I am sure, do the boys of

that time. We played to packed houses which generally used to overflow into classrooms. Mr. Thompson was the business manager. This was, of course, in addition to taking a big part in the play, dealing with properties and still having time to criticise the footlights~ The box-office was a box -(a chalk-box)- and all the business was done from there. All the boys bought tickets. No press-gang methods were necessary. It would happen that some small Boarder, pretending that he wanted a book from Room 3, would steal into the Hall during rehearsal. Trembling with excitement, he would return to his fellows with the news that Mr. Thompson had a wonderful part, - with one of the young ladies! Well, the tickets sold themselves.

You are not to suppose that there were nothing but farces and comedies at this time. Mr. Saunders was doing excellent dramatic work with the boys. He laid the foundations on which the reputation of the School has been built. Under the present Head, Mr. Hodgson, the work has gone on. Young men have joined the staff, bringing great gifts. Plays are now successfully produced which few schools dare attempt.

The period between the wars was full of activity. Money and opportunity were easier and we got about a bit. We took the boys for a week's holiday in London; we visited Edinburgh twice, Liverpool and Newcastle; we went to Aysgarth one morning just after midnight to see the total eclipse of the sun. Mr. F. Sutton inaugurated School camps, still remembered as the happiest of holidays. We climbed well nigh everything that is climbable in the English Lake District and North Wales. The Boarders' Whitsuntide camps in Farndale were also among our happy adventures. I am sure that these camps succeeded in proving what many boys believed to be impossible, and that is that masters are, at any rate, part human.

On the 15th December, 1951, in the School Hall, the Memorial to those of our fellows who were killed in the War of 1939-45, was unveiled and dedicated by the School Chaplain, Bishop Hubbard. It takes the form of a triptych erected by the Old Boys' Association to bear the names of the fallen and to record that the Association obtained the authority of the Earl Marshal of England for the School to use for ever hereafter the arms emblazoned above.

And so the fifty years have passed, bringing with them full measure of happiness and stress. Boys have come and gone, bringing their gifts, taking their reward. Men have toiled long and faithfully. The good intent of the Founder has been ever in mind. Did he ever, I wonder, standing in that little room in Ogleforth, look down the long years and see the slow fulfilling of his dream? Perhaps he did. May the years still to come add to what has gone and in their turn leave the School a little better, the fabric a little richer, and the ideal of the Founder a little nearer.