

Friends' School, Great Ayton

1941 – 1991

“Roseberry Review”, the newspaper, came to an untimely end, the societies with their records are no more, and keeping a diary had become a thing of the past.

It seems a pity to me that those at school now can read of the day-to-day life of Ayton for well over 100 years, but by the year 2,000, people will say,

“Did Ayton have no history worth recording for the last 50 years?”’¹

1978

Note on the text:

I have let the words of the sources speak – to let them tell their own story. My sources are all found in the ZFA Collection at the North Yorkshire County Record Office in Northallerton, much of which is uncatalogued. However, the issues of the ‘Beckside’, which was the school’s termly magazine, are available on microfilm: this has been my main source of information. Two other sources deserve a special mention: the two unpublished ‘histories’ of the school by Clifford Morgan and (presumably) Evelyn Nicholson (NB: these have not been catalogued). These excellent works have provided a backbone for the work and given me a greater coherence in understanding events.

Rachael Marsay
2010

¹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1978, p2, 9, 16, ‘Close Up: The School Diaries’, Margaret Alderson, 4056 002747, 50, 52.

Buildings

*'The buildings are the shell in which the spirit lives, the canvas on which the picture is painted... without buildings in which to create it, our vision of a school community could never have been translated into a living thing'*²

1941 - 1950

The decade after Ayton School's Centenary in 1941 saw many changes in the school buildings. Due to the increased number of border pupils during the war years, rising to around seventy boy and seventy girl borders, the dormitory called 'C dorm' was divided into two (half for the girls and half for the boys) in 1941.³ However, the next year, when the school consisted of 152 border pupils, C dorm reverted back to being a boys' bedroom: in order to accommodate all the girl borders, twelve forth-year girls stayed in Cleveland Lodge, the home of Sir John Pease Fry, then Chairman of the school.⁴ In 1945, the 'Beckside' commented that 'quite a feature now was the departure of senior girls in the evenings to their dormitories in Cleveland Lodge, and their arrival in the morning breakfast at 7.30am'.⁵



Figure 1: Girls' Bedroom⁶

With the formation of the new Junior School, consisting of around twenty pupils, the 'room next to the Domestic Science room was set apart for these little folk'.⁷

1944 saw a new innovation: electricity 'supplied from outside school'.⁸

² Evening Meeting, Jun 1949.

³ 'History of School', p5; 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p.2, 'Forward', A. L.S, MIC 4056 0013588; 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p2, 'Forward', A. L.S, MIC 4056 0013588.

⁴ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4; 'History of School', p5; 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p.2, 'Forward', A. L.S, MIC 4056 0013588; 'Beckside', Autumn 1942, p2, 'Forward', A. L. S., MIC 4056 001439; 'History', Morgan, p4.

⁵ 'Beckside', Autumn 1945, p13, 'School News', MIC 4056 001640.

⁶ Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

⁷ 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p2, 'Forward', A. L.S, MIC 4056 0013588.

⁸ 'History of School', p5.

The “Tin Gym”, which had been taken over by the army, ‘was de-requisitioned’ in 1945, ‘and returned to its purpose of gymnastic training, wall bars and ropes’.⁹



Figure 2: The Tin Gym¹⁰

In 1945, parents presented the school with oak tables and a lectern (‘made by Stanley Davis of Windermere’) for use in the Meeting House, which at this time could be divided into two separate rooms by a partition.¹¹ This year hymn singing returned to the Meeting House from the Dining Room and, on 18th May 1946, the baby grand piano arrived, also a gift from parents.¹² At Whitsun 1948, at the annual Old Scholars’ reunion, chairs and benches were presented by the Old Scholars during ‘a short service in memory of the Old Boys who lost their lives during the war’ as a Memorial for ‘those 15 scholars’.¹³ These consisted of ‘four oak benches and two oak armchairs’ upon which their names were carved: ‘beautifully made by Stanley Davis of Windermere, they increased the beauty of the Meeting House’.¹⁴ In 1949, as well as the screens being removed, a clock and more benches were purchased.¹⁵ The oak benches began to arrive early in 1950: they were ‘about half the size of the old ones’ and were made by a firm named “Remploy”, which was ‘composed mainly of disabled ex-servicemen... trying to make a new start in life’.¹⁶ Indeed, during 1949 and 1950, the Meeting House was:

‘completely metamorphosed. Externally, the Meeting House has always been a beautiful building, with its well-proportioned windows, and its roof of lovely, old graduated tiles, but inside, the shutter screen, the patched puce cushions, and latterly, the flaking walls, have suggested the chill of the mission room

⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p9; ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1945, p.13, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001640.

¹⁰ Sports Hall Appeal Booklet.

¹¹ ‘History of School’, p5; ‘History’, Morgan, p10-11; ‘Beckside’, Summer 1953, p4-6, ‘Seven Years at Ayton’, Michael Sweet, MIC 4056 001966-7; ‘History of School’, p5.

¹² ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1945, p13, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001640; ‘Beckside’, Summer 1946, p16, ‘Diary’, MIC 4056 001670.

¹³ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p6, ‘Old Scholars’ Reunion’, David Noyes, Roy Tyerman, MIC 4056 0011761; ‘History of School’, p5; ‘History’, Morgan, p16.

¹⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p16; ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p6, ‘Old Scholars’ Reunion’, David Noyes, Roy Tyerman, MIC 4056 0011761.

¹⁵ ‘History of School’, p5; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1950, p4, ‘Meeting House Improvements’, S. Williams, MIC 4056 001813.

¹⁶ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1950, p4, ‘Meeting House Improvements’, S. Williams, MIC 4056 001813.

rather than the beauty of Jordans or Brigg Flatts. Now, however, Ayton Meeting House has a beauty of its own, and a harmony has been achieved between the traditional style and modern fittings'.¹⁷

By Autumn 1946, the School Hall (which had been in use as the gym), had been re-roofed, 'repaired and redecorated outside and in'.¹⁸ It was 'the considered opinion of those who have known it longest' that it looked 'better than it has ever done before'.¹⁹ The Hall was 're-wired throughout' with 'new electric fittings' replacing 'the shabby old ones'.²⁰ The purchase of 'three hundred tubular steel stacking chairs' completed the refurbishment.²¹

At this time, it was also decided that:

'The Centenary Block built with amazing foresight, three years ahead of its time, was already much too small for the much larger school that emerged at the end of the war. Tentative plans were considered in 1946 for a teaching block which would have included a completely new swimming bath and gymnasium, and one result of this was that the Old Scholars abandoned their swimming bath scheme and concentrated on the idea of a games pavilion. The Teaching Block plans, however, were found to be impracticable, and early in John Reader's time as Headmaster, new plans were devised'.²²

In 1947, 'The Waltons', four houses on Little Ayton Lane, were built to accommodate staff: 'much interest was taken in the cutting of the foundations'.²³ In the summer, the 'Beckside' reported:

'The four staff houses along Little Ayton road have been a source of interest to many boys and a few girls throughout the term. They have moved by aggravatingly slow steps towards completion, and it is not now expected that they will be ready before November. It is some compensation, however, that they are a reality, and will within measureable time be finished, and they offer lovely views in all directions.'²⁴

However, upon arrival back to school in the Autumn that year:

'the long awaited staff houses were nearly finished and, except for a few odds and ends, were ready to be painted... the painters were at work straight after the builders had disappeared, and seemed to complete their job very quickly. For no sooner had they gone than boys, girls, masters and mistresses set about scrubbing, cleaning and polishing. One master was heard to remark that he was going to have no feminine help. I wonder what his wife does?

¹⁷ 'Beckside', Summer 1949, p3, 'School News', E. N. MIC 4056 0011785.

¹⁸ 'Beckside', Summer 1946, p2, 'School News', MIC 4056 001663; 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p.3, 'School News', MIC 4056 001675.

¹⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p.3, 'School News', MIC 4056 001675.

²⁰ 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p.3, 'School News', MIC 4056 001675.

²¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p.3, 'School News', MIC 4056 001675; 'History of School', p5.

²² 'Developments', Nicholson, p11.

²³ 'History', Morgan, p12; 'History of School', p5.

²⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1947, p4, 'School News', E. N., MIC 4056 001670.

The first inhabitants were the Jones family, their house being the first to be completed. Soon after, followed the Dunns and next the Dewars, whose furniture had a very lucky journey from Newcastle-under-Lyne... Lastly, the Connells arrived.’²⁵

‘The Waltons’ were enlarged in 1966.’²⁶

In 1947, a concert given at the end of the Summer Term, which raised over £55, ‘was the first of the School’s efforts to raise money for the Building Development plan’.²⁷

The School returned at the beginning of the Autumn Term in 1948, to redecorated classrooms in the 1938 Teaching Block or “New Block”.²⁸ It was, according to the ‘Beckside’:

‘much improved. It had been painted and although the doors and stairs and balcony took a little “getting used to,” as they are bright brick red, it is certainly very cheerful. The walls of the form rooms and stairs are now pale grey and look much better. The girls’ Leisure Room, too, had been painted and although at first we thought ourselves to be back in the nursery, because of the light blue wainscot and dark blue skirting boards and cupboards, while the top half of the walls is pink and the ceiling and window frames white with a deep cream picture rail’.²⁹

Other improvements in 1948 included the sixth form room ‘upstairs in Rawdon House’, which was ‘enlarged by knocking down a wall and so adding to it an adjoining room. This, too, had been decorated in pale grey and jade green, which makes a big improvement’.³⁰ ‘Another pleasant addition’ was ‘the Reading Room’, ‘a downstairs room in Rawdon House’, which was furnished with ‘tables and chairs and a fire’ and where ‘the daily paper and some weekly or monthly magazines’ could be found.³¹

In 1949, improvements included the changeover of the Old Museum into the Woodwork Room and the refurbishment of the kitchen, taking ‘a leap into modern times’.³² The supply of water was also switched to Tees Valley Water Board, ‘which is softer than local water’ and there was a new supply of ‘hot and cold water in the workroom’.³³ Even the beds were changed in ‘C Dorm’, ‘the old “lats” beds’ being replaced by ‘spring beds’.³⁴

²⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p.2, ‘School News’, Fay Fairclough, MIC 4056 0011712.

²⁶ ‘History of School’, p7.

²⁷ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p8, ‘School News’, E. N., MIC 4056 0011712.

²⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p15; ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p.3, ‘School News’, Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759.

²⁹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p.3, ‘School News’, Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759.

³⁰ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p.3, ‘School News’, Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759.

³¹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p.3, ‘School News’, Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759.

³² ‘History’, Morgan, p17; ‘History of School’, p5.

³³ ‘History of School’, p5; ‘History’, Morgan, p17.

³⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p17.



Figure 3: The Woodwork Shop³⁵

The most enduring myth at Ayton School was that of the ghost of “Tanner Jackson”, who is said to haunt Ayton Friends’ School on the night of Hallow e’en, because he was murdered there’.³⁶ On 31st October of 1950, he apparently, “appeared” in the corridors of the Main School Building on Halloween. The junior girls went to bed early that night!’³⁷

In 1950, a ‘new teaching block’ was ‘considered over Dykes Beck’ and the school began its appeal to enable it to be built.³⁸ The next year saw ‘the formation of The Ayton School Association of Parents, Staff and Old Scholars to look to appeals for funds’.³⁹



Figure 4: Aerial Ayton c.1940s/50s⁴⁰

³⁵ Prospectus, n.d., c.1960s.

³⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1941, p.5, ‘Ghosts’, A. L.S, MIC 4056 0013589.

³⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p20.

³⁸ ‘History of School’, p6; ‘History’, Morgan, p19.

³⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p20.

⁴⁰ Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

1951 - 1960

This decade also saw much change: between '1954 and 1960 some £70,000 was spent on new buildings and the modernisation of the old'.⁴¹ The date is significant: after 1954, building restrictions from the war were lifted.⁴²



Figure 5: Science Laboratory c.1940s/50s⁴³

In 1952, the School laundry in the Mill closed: the laundry being just one of many functions the old flax mill ('the oldest and one of the most picturesque buildings on the school estate') housed.⁴⁴ The next year (1953), a 'well-equipped biology laboratory' and four craft rooms were created in the Mill.⁴⁵ There was now 'accommodation for a wide variety of activities', there being space for 'two pottery rooms', 'one large room for weaving' and 'another room for the individual hobbies such as aero-modelling'.⁴⁶ Around this time, the Mill yard storage was also refurbished and, at the south end of the mill, a boiler house was built.⁴⁷ As Evelyn Nicholson put it, 'the Mill gave room for trunks and bicycles, trumpets and pottery, weaving and biology'.⁴⁸ By the end of the decade, in 1960, biology moved out into the newly built laboratory and 'this peaceful old grey stone building' became 'the home of the arts'.⁴⁹ The school could therefore boast that 'in addition to library, classrooms and science laboratories, and the usual practical rooms for art, cookery, needlework and woodwork, there are also specially equipped rooms for music, weaving and pottery'.⁵⁰

⁴¹ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002192.

⁴² 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

⁴³ Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

⁴⁴ 'History of School', p6; 'Beckside', Spring 1960, p18, 'The Mill', E. N., MIC 4056 0022673.

⁴⁵ 'History of School', p6; 'Building Developments at Ayton School', unknown author (probably E. Nicholson) and date. Uncatalogued, ZFA, NYCRO.

⁴⁶ 'Building Developments at Ayton School'.

⁴⁷ 'History of School', p6.

⁴⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1960, p18, 'The Mill', E. N., MIC 4056 0022673.

⁴⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1960, p18, 'The Mill', E. N., MIC 4056 0022673.

⁵⁰ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002192.



Figure 6: The Mill⁵¹

In 1953, the attics of “Ivy Cottage” and “The Nutshell” (‘the resident mistresses’ house’ adjoining the school and facing the village green) were converted for the use of the female staff.⁵² The conversion in The Nutshell produced ‘three new bed-sitting rooms for mistresses, and additional bathroom accommodation’, giving ‘a total of seven mistresses’ rooms in this house, in addition to accommodation in the main building’.⁵³ 1953 also saw the ‘removal of out houses on [the] road side of Rawdon House’.⁵⁴

Even temporary decorations could improve the buildings: Frederick Gilbert wrote that in the last week of school before Christmas 1953, ‘parties were held in the gym and that hideous building was transformed by streamers and greenery into a lovely room’.⁵⁵ In the next year, ‘a new floor was laid in the gymnasium’.⁵⁶

With the removal of the Wood Workshop into the boys’ schoolroom, the ‘Old Workshop’ was ‘converted into a Crafts Room, where Hobbies and Aero-modelling’ could ‘be carried on in comfort and without the appalling smell... that used to afflict the classrooms in the New Block’.⁵⁷ There were hopes that ‘with the projected new block, to be commenced sometime during 1954’, there would ‘be more space for hobbies’.⁵⁸ During 1955, upon completion of the new block, the old wood workshop became the Music Room: as R. W. F. aptly put it, ‘we now

⁵¹ Prospectus, n.d., c.1960.

⁵² ‘History of School’, p6; ‘Building Developments at Ayton School’.

⁵³ ‘Building Developments at Ayton School’.

⁵⁴ ‘History of School’, p6.

⁵⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1953, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 001981.

⁵⁶ ‘History of School’, p6.

⁵⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1954, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 002009-11; ‘History of School’, p6.

⁵⁸ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1953, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 001981.

have a music room in the chameleon-like museum, alias woodwork shop, alias Room 9'.⁵⁹

During 1954, funds were raised for the New Building: money came 'from staff, parents and old scholars', being 'the result of so much work by John Reader, Evelyn Nicholson, The School Committee and a professional fund raising company'.⁶⁰ One of the events held to raise money was a "Bring and Buy" Sale on 22nd May, held by the Ayton School Association.⁶¹ The 'first sod was turned for the New Block' on General Meeting Day (10th July 1954).⁶² The 'Beckside' noted that 'buildings have dominated the playgrounds this term... the classroom block has crept up steadily'.⁶³ A year later, on General Meeting Day 1955, the block was opened in 'a memorable unveiling ceremony' by Mrs Elspeth Hodgkin and a 'question of names' arose 'between the "New Block" and - what shall we say - the "New-New Block"?'⁶⁴ By Spring 1956, 'the problem of naming the new building' was solved, becoming 'officially the Teaching Block, whilst the boys' side of the school' was given 'the general title of School'.⁶⁵



Figure 7: The Classroom Block⁶⁶

On 5th May 1956, the Teaching Block was officially opened and 'Dr Bosanquet, Rector of King's College, Newcastle, was asked to address us on the opening day and to perform the amusing ceremony of symbolically cutting his way into the building'.⁶⁷ The Teaching Block, with warm and spacious classrooms, was popular with the staff and students.⁶⁸ The curtains in the 'Geography room', however, 'were condemned as too "mathsey"'.⁶⁹ Apart from the curtains, the library attracted much 'attention, and interest with its views of the school grounds

⁵⁹ 'Beckside', Summer 1956, p2-4, 'School Letter', R. W. F, MIC 4056 002087-8; 'History of School', p6.

⁶⁰ 'History', Morgan, p24.

⁶¹ 'Beckside', Summer 1954, p23, 'Diary', MIC 4056 002020.

⁶² 'Beckside', Summer 1954, p23, 'Diary', MIC 4056 002020.

⁶³ 'Beckside', Summer 1955, p2-5, 'Babbings of the Beck', Gillian Hinds, Margaret Wilkinson, MIC 4056 002042-3.

⁶⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1955, p2-5, 'Babbings of the Beck', Gillian Hinds, Margaret Wilkinson, MIC 4056 002042-3; 'Beckside', Autumn 1955, p3-6, 'School Letter', R. W. F, MIC 4056 002059-60.

⁶⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1956, p3-5, 'School Letter', R. W. F, MIC 4056 002074-5.

⁶⁶ Prospectus, n.d., c.1950s/60s.

⁶⁷ 'Beckside', Summer 1956, p2-4, 'School Letter', R. W. F, MIC 4056 002087-8.

⁶⁸ 'History', Morgan, p25.

⁶⁹ 'Beckside', Summer 1956, p2-4, 'School Letter', R. W. F, MIC 4056 002087-8.

and the splendid collection of fiction and non fiction books'.⁷⁰ C. B. D. wrote that: 'with our magnificent new first-floor room, placed centrally in the School, and having beautiful views over the beck and the grounds, the Library is becoming a real centre for quiet study and reading'.⁷¹ With 'another hundred new books' the library grew 'in size and use'.⁷² In 1969, 'Yorkshire Life' commented that the block was 'built in contemporary style, comprising classrooms and a spacious library, which divides the buildings into two courtyards'.⁷³



Figure 8: The Geography Room⁷⁴

In 1956 and 1957, two houses were purchased on the High Green in Ayton: Crook Cottage was purchased for Senior Girls borders and Dixon House for the maids.⁷⁵ By 1957, probably due to the purchase of Crook Cottage, the girls no longer resided in Cleveland Lodge.⁷⁶

Much interior refurbishment occurred in 1958, alongside the replacement of the 110-volt electricity supply with 240 volts!⁷⁷ Colour came to the school: in the spring, the Senior Girls' Common Room was 'converted from the old Leisure Room into a smart, modern "relaxation room" for 5th and 6th form girls'.⁷⁸ The walls were 'covered with one of these exciting, modern design wallpapers'.⁷⁹ The bathrooms, 'fitted with new plumbing and cubicles', were 'painted in a very gay fashion, each partition of each cubicle being a different colour, the walls and ceiling gleaming white, and white nylon curtains, instead of doors, to the cubicles'.⁸⁰

The Chemistry Laboratory was refurbished, being 'gutted and re-equipped': it was 'now splendid, with new

⁷⁰ 'History', Morgan, p25.

⁷¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1956, p22, 'The School Library', C. B. D., MIC 4056 002114.

⁷² 'Beckside', Autumn 1956, p4, 'School Letter', J. M. W., MIC 4056 002104-5.

⁷³ 'Friends School', Yorks Life, 1969, p47.

⁷⁴ Prospectus, n.d., c.1960s.

⁷⁵ 'History of School', p6.

⁷⁶ 'History of School', p6.

⁷⁷ 'History of School', p6.

⁷⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1958, p5-6, 'Roving Reporter', David Simpson, MIC 4056 002169-70.

⁷⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1958, p5-6, 'Roving Reporter', David Simpson, MIC 4056 002169-70.

⁸⁰ 'Beckside', Autumn 1958, p3-5, 'School Letter', Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002204-5.

wooden benches and shining lamps on flexible stalks', which grew 'out from the wall like some odd fungus'.⁸¹ The 'walk to the lab on the outside balcony' was also transformed.⁸² As Sally Burch wrote in the 'Beckside', 'the chemistry laboratory is now reached by a precarious aerial passage-way which has proved far more effective than any prohibition in removing stiletto heels from the school'.⁸³

In 1959, the School bought "Raby" and "Mennell" Cottages, though three cottages with a workshop on Station Road were sold in the same year.⁸⁴ This year also saw 'the erection of the Durham Gates as an entrance under The Arch, near Rawdon House'.⁸⁵ In the spring, the boys were given common rooms: 'the first and second form boys' were given 'the room above the Prefects' Room', while 'the front room of Rawdon House' was occupied by 'the fourth and fifth'.⁸⁶

Work began on the building of a Biology Laboratory in the Mill field.⁸⁷ In the spring of 1960, D. L. Williams wrote, 'at last the roof has been put on, so that what has been familiarly termed the "Dutch Barn" by the villagers, has taken on the appearance of a human habitation'.⁸⁸ The laboratory was opened on Speech Day in the summer of 1960: 'an event of special significance in Ayton's history', for the School could now 'transfer the art room to the old biology lab. and convert the present art room into a physics lab., thereby bringing Ayton's science facilities up to the standard of those in the lavishly endowed state schools'.⁸⁹

So, the function of many rooms changed that year (1960): with the removal of 'the art room and Fifth Form room of the twenties' to the Mill, the old art room did indeed become a Physics Laboratory.⁹⁰ In the original 'mansion', 'the ground floor was given over to administration, and on the first and second floors were created a family house for a Housemaster, and a flat for the Headmistress'.⁹¹

In the Spring of 1960, the 'Beckside' cheekily remarked that 'we are pleased to learn that, at last, Miss Nicholson has moved into her new bungalow adjoining the Waltons, and we hope, despite the fact that she has already managed to hit the door-post with her car, she will be happy in her new home'.⁹²

In the summer:

'About five weeks before the end of term, the school was suddenly descended upon by a gang of

⁸¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1958, p3-5, 'School Letter', Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002204-5; 'History of School', p6.

⁸² 'History', Morgan, p26.

⁸³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1960, p3-4, 'School Letter', Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002298-99.

⁸⁴ 'History of School', p6.

⁸⁵ 'History', Morgan, p27.

⁸⁶ 'Beckside', Spring 1959, p4, 'School Letter', Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002219.

⁸⁷ 'History of School', p6; 'Beckside', Autumn 1959, p3-4, 'School Letter', D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002250-1.

⁸⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1960, p2-4, 'School Letter', D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002265-6.

⁸⁹ 'Beckside', Summer 1960, p2-4, 'School Letter', D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002280-1.

⁹⁰ 'History of School', p6; 'Developments', Nicholson, p11-12.

⁹¹ 'Developments', Nicholson, p12.

⁹² 'Beckside', Spring 1960, p2-4, 'School Letter', D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002265-6.

painters who, placing themselves in all types of precarious positions, began to give the buildings a new look. In place of the blue and cream paint which has been there for many years, pure white and a shade of green that looked suspiciously like the colour that the war department daubs up its buildings with, began to appear. Finally the front of the school, which has so long been the subject of so many pointed remarks, was given a face-lift, part of it being painted salmon pink, a move that has led to comments upon the suitability of the school for use as a canning factory.’⁹³

1961 - 1969

In 1963, “Millfield House” was built for the School’s Headmaster: John and Mary Reader were living there by the summer of 1965.⁹⁴ The ‘house they had left’ in the main building was ‘renovated as a flat for Evelyn Nicholson’, the Headmistress.⁹⁵ A ‘similar one for William Oughton and family - later to be House Master for the pupils in B & C dorms and the girls’ side’ was made in Rawdon House.⁹⁶

The dining room floor was ripped out in 1963 and replaced ‘with a new one on a level with the modernised kitchens’.⁹⁷

In 1964, Rosehill Chapel was purchased: later to be converted into use as a theatre (see Drama).⁹⁸

In 1967, ‘built into [the] lean-to by Durham Gate’, ‘the long-awaited Sixth Form Common Room’ was completed ‘under the eyes, hands and feet of Les Wright’.⁹⁹ The ‘high wall on [the] girls’ playground’ was removed and ‘a new permanent “Tuck Shop”... built near the swimming baths’.¹⁰⁰

The Meeting House was renovated in 1967, being ‘extended into the Burial ground’, increasing ‘capacity to 300 pupils’ and ‘Meeting House cloakrooms and a small kitchen area’ were created ‘at the west side’.¹⁰¹ This enabled the Meeting House ‘to serve equally well as an assembly hall’.¹⁰² The ‘interior however, still retained its Quaker simplicity and friendly atmosphere’.¹⁰³

In autumn the following year, 1968, the ‘Beckside’ wryly commented that ‘this term the school obviously realised the need for someone who could knock some buildings down, stop others from falling down and

⁹³ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1960, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002280-1.

⁹⁴ ‘History of School’, p7; ‘Developments’, Nicholson, p12; ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁹⁵ ‘History of School’, p7; ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁹⁶ ‘History of School’, p7; ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁹⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1963, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, Joan M. Tubmen, MIC 4056 002390-1.

⁹⁸ ‘History of School’, p7; ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁹⁹ ‘The Beckside’, Autumn 1967, MIC 4056 002472; ‘History of School’, p7.

¹⁰⁰ ‘History of School’, p7; ‘The Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1967, MIC 4056 002453.

¹⁰¹ Notes, p1.

¹⁰² ‘Friends School’, Yorks Life, 1969, p47.

¹⁰³ ‘History’, Morgan, p33.

generally organise the destructive and creative urges of staff and pupils; so it engaged Les Wright'.¹⁰⁴ This year saw work on "Acorn Cottage": 'witness the mad exodus of all six Upper girls from there and the consequent invasion of boys' Pre's Room'.¹⁰⁵

Leven Hall

As early as 1961, the Ministry of Education Inspection recommended new boarding accommodation for the school.¹⁰⁶ However, it was not until March 1968 when funds began to be gathered for a co-education boarding hall, which became known as Leven Hall: it aimed to hold 70 borders and 30 day scholars.¹⁰⁷ The 'Beckside' wrote that:

'The School Appeal reached its climax this term with the appearance of that well-known TV personality and part-time headmaster (sorry, principal) John Reader, on B.B.C. T.V.'s "Look North" programme. The fuss, it seems, is over co-education in boarding schools and more to the point, the new dormitory block. The thought of the sexes sleeping in the same block without alarms, barbed wire and mined corridors with guards, seems beyond many people's imaginations. What Mr. Reader tried to tell John Hobb was that Friends' School, Great Ayton have done this for over a century.'¹⁰⁸

By the end of the year, building was underway.¹⁰⁹ Gathering funds for the project was a mammoth task but the School was 'heartened by the donation of £30,000 from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, made in the full belief that parents, Old Scholars and other friends of the school will play their full part in financing the scheme'.¹¹⁰ However, this still meant that 'all parents, Old Scholars, Friends and other well-wishers' would have to give £70,000 in order to meet the projected cost of £120,000.¹¹¹ In the end, this sum was raised within 18 months by 'between 700 [and] 800 donors of whom 330 were Old Scholars' along with 'hours of voluntary work'.¹¹²

The building was designed by architect Oliver Spence, a former pupil of the school, who had been 'accepted as an undergraduate at Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge', in 1959.¹¹³ The important aspect of the design, according to pupil Lynn Burdon was that it was 'meant to provide for both work and leisure'.¹¹⁴

In the summer of 1970, Leven Hall - 'the new co-educational hall of residence for senior pupils' - was officially

¹⁰⁴ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1968, 'Commentary', Colin Wood, p18-20, MIC 4056 002523-4.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1968, 'Commentary', Colin Wood, p18-20, MIC 4056 002523-4.

¹⁰⁶ 'History of School', p6.

¹⁰⁷ 'History', Morgan, p33.

¹⁰⁸ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1968, MIC 4056 002487.

¹⁰⁹ 'History of School', p7.

¹¹⁰ 'Friends' School, Great Ayton', appeals pamphlet, c.1970, p1. Uncatalogued, ZFA, NYCRO.

¹¹¹ 'Friends' School, Great Ayton', appeals pamphlet, c.1970, p11; 'History', Morgan, p33.

¹¹² Evening Meeting, May 1976, p2; 'History', Morgan, p34.

¹¹³ 'History', Morgan, p28, 33-4; 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1970, 'Leven Hall', Lynn Burdon, p28-9, MIC 4056 002551.

¹¹⁴ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1970, 'Leven Hall', Lynn Burdon, p28-9, MIC 4056 002551.

opened ‘by Lord Boyle - Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University, and watched by 1,300 scholars, staff, old scholars and parents’.¹¹⁵

‘From that time on, the old boys’ side and girls’ side were no more, and life was structured in junior and senior houses’.¹¹⁶

Leven Hall also provided residence for several members of staff. According to the prospectus:

‘Delia Fay is at the head of the team of resident staff who share responsibility for Leven Hall. Working with her are a married couple, another woman and a young man, all with their own flats or houses in the Hall. Together with the Hall committee of boys and girls and other members of staff that they wish to call in, this team deals with the needs of those who live in Leven Hall’.¹¹⁷



Figure 9: Leven Hall¹¹⁸

The upstairs of Leven Hall was described as follows:

‘The northern end is for girls and the south end for boys, separated by the surgery, the linen room, the emergency stairway and the service hoist... we could not afford to provide single rooms so we had designed double rooms each with the minimum accommodation for sleeping, study and washing; they are not intended to be full study-bedrooms with social facilities. The beds are of wood and are built in with storage space underneath. They have foam mattresses and ‘Slumberdown’ quilts which can be stowed away in the day-time when the bed can be used as a settee. The wardrobe fitment contains hanging space as well as shelves and a large flap which can be lowered on to the end of the bed to form a desk in the day-time’.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p33; ‘History of School’, p7.

¹¹⁶ ‘Developments’, Nicholson, p13.

¹¹⁷ ‘The Friends’ School Great Ayton’, Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

¹¹⁸ Prospectus, c.1970.

¹¹⁹ Leaflet on Leven Hall, c.1972, 4344 0055-57.

In an article appearing in 'The Times', 1974, John Reader (then Principal and driving force behind the build) wrote about the revolutionary new building:

'As a result of extensive discussions, over several years, between governors, staff, parents and pupils, an architect, himself a former pupil, was briefed to design a hall of residence for the fifth and sixth forms.

Certain basic principals were laid down. The building was to house older pupils; it was to be co-educational and not two separate units built into one block; it was to offer a good measure of privacy for staff and pupils, and it was to allow for flexibility of organization so that it did not impose a fixed pattern of social and intellectual activity.

Leven Hall, which was opened in 1970, is much nearer to being a hall of residence than a traditional boarding school house. Four members of staff and just over 100 boys and girls, 20 of whom are day scholars live there. Each member of staff has his own house or flat, attached to the building.

The ground floor is asymmetrical and is not intended to be used by boys at one end and girls at the other. The idea is to provide a variety of rooms which can be used in different ways as new ideas and fresh needs arise. One end is kept primarily as a quiet end and contains day scholar studies, a large reading room and a small room for tutorials, committee meetings and discussions.

The other end is for social activities and contains a large and small common room and a kitchen where food and drinks can be prepared. Each boarder has a large locker on the ground floor and day scholars have space for their own possession in their own studies, one between four students.

Upstairs the arrangement is quite different. One end is for girls and the other for boys, separated by the surgery, linen room, emergency stairways and service hoist. An attempt has been made here to provide some privacy.

Design of the bedrooms is based on experiments conducted during the 1960s in the small rooms in the old buildings. We could not afford to provide single rooms so we designed double rooms which are not intended to be full study bedrooms.

Government is informal and loosely structured. There is no hall council but the head boy and girl, who are chosen jointly by staff and students, can attend the small hall staff meeting whenever they wish. A hall meeting is held once a week for announcements and about three times a term special hall meetings

are held when anyone may bring up a topic for discussion; decisions are usually left to small groups.

Rules have been reduced to a minimum and punishments, in the ordinary sense of the word, have disappeared. On the other hand, informal discussion between staff and students, with general consensus of opinion about the objectives and the limitations of communal life have resulted in a relaxed atmosphere, a respect for other people's needs and a regard for those qualities which a Quaker school aims to uphold.

Leven Hall has transformed the way in which the upper part of the school can be organized and has, we believe, enabled us to help young people to prepare themselves to live in a world of rapid social change in which they will have to form their own judgments and find stability among much uncertainty'.¹²⁰

Richardson Hall 1971

Richardson Hall was created the following year after the completion of Leven Hall, for 'when the school returned in the Autumn Term it found a new interior created Richardson Hall', which 'included the former girls and boys side and dormitories'.¹²¹ Under 'the House Mastership of William L Oughton', who was 'assisted by seven members of staff, who took mixed collects', the Hall 'served as a residential unit for boys and girls, Form I up to Form IV'.¹²² A 'mixed common room', which was 'formerly the girls' school room', was created.¹²³

Richardson Hall was:

'divided into many bedrooms of various shapes and sizes more suited to the needs of the middle and lower school. There are no studies but there are common rooms and recreational features. The residential staff have their flats within the hall. The latter half of 1970 saw the beginnings of developments in the bedrooms and common rooms in which the essential elements of Leven Hall are to be repeated and modified to suit the needs of boys and girls in the first to fourth forms'.¹²⁴

1971 - 1980

Quite understandably, after the changes at the turn of the decade, the 1970s were relatively quiet regarding building projects, though many interior changes took place.

In 1971, the old Nissan Hut, which had been built in 1918 ('as a staff room for the Masters'), was converted into

¹²⁰ John M. Reader, 'Leven Hall: Co-ed school in the making', in *The Times Ed.* 2 Aug 1974. Uncatalogued material, ZFA, NYCRO.

¹²¹ 'History of School', p7; 'History', Morgan, p34.

¹²² 'History', Morgan, p34.

¹²³ 'History', Morgan, p34.

¹²⁴ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

‘the Pet Hut for the pupils’.¹²⁵ During this year, the staff also divided into ‘resident staff and campus staff’.¹²⁶

It was estimated that £7000 was needed to put the Rosehill building into order: the following year, raked seating was added to provide seating for an audience to watch Ayton School’s drama productions (the seats were replaced in 1981).¹²⁷ In the summer of 1976, work had ‘at last started on the Rosehill extensions’.¹²⁸ Later that year the toilets and foyer were ready for use.¹²⁹

In 1974, “Acorn Cottage” was refurbished, becoming the ‘Bursar’s Department and [the] Deputy Heads’ House’.¹³⁰

During the middle of the decade, the old dormitories saw many changes. In 1975, the ‘B’ dormitory was ‘divided into small units’, whilst the ‘A’ dormitory, ‘formerly for senior boys - was converted into a modern language laboratory’, allowing ‘the Science Department to extend their premises on the lower storey’.¹³¹ One pupil complained that though the ‘new French Department actually has carpets’, ‘by the time you’ve staggered up there you’re in no mood to appreciate them’.¹³²

In 1976, the new Physics Laboratory was ‘created in place of rooms 2 and 3’ (the ‘old French rooms’) in the 1938 block, allowing the new ‘General Science Lab’ to be created in place of the old Physics Laboratory.¹³³ In the Spring of 1976, Les Wright wrote that:

‘A few weeks ago the silence was shattered as the builders moved in to start knocking the old French rooms into the new Science laboratories. First to go was the large brick wall that divided the two classrooms. This meant the installation of a large steel girder to carry the brick apex and roof. This went off without a hitch. This was closely followed by the removal of the large chimney breast at the far end of the second room’.¹³⁴

In 1977, ‘it was with pleasure that most people of Ayton received the news during the Summer holidays that the sanatorium and its adjoining land had been sold’ to a builder.¹³⁵ The sanatorium had been built in 1922, ‘as a wooden “temporary building”’.¹³⁶

¹²⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p34.

¹²⁶ ‘History of School’, p7.

¹²⁷ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1971, MIC 4056 002581; ‘History of School’, p7; ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Summer 1981, p4, ‘Rosehill Theatre’, 4056 002828.

¹²⁸ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Summer 1976, p12, ‘Rosehill Theatre’, Les Wright, 4056 002666.

¹²⁹ ‘History of School’, p7.

¹³⁰ ‘History of School’, p7.

¹³¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p36; ‘History of School’, p7.

¹³² ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1975, p32, ‘Remember this?’, Crispin Holman, 4056 002646.

¹³³ ‘History of School’, p7.

¹³⁴ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1976, p1-2, ‘New Look for Teaching Block’, Les Wright, 4056 002650-1.

¹³⁵ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1977, p1-2, ‘Ayton Close-Up Number 6: The Sanatorium’, Margaret Alderson, 4056 002706-7; ‘History of School’, p7; ‘History’, Morgan, p38.

¹³⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p38.

However, by the 1970s, the use of the san had become, so infrequent ‘as to be uneconomic’.¹³⁷ The new sick bay located on the ground floor in Richardson Hall had ‘eight rooms’ branching ‘off from the corridor, including the bedrooms, bathrooms, and surgery’.¹³⁸ Two new bathrooms took the place of ‘the old girls’ washroom’ and the drying room turned into ‘a large bedroom’ (‘for invalid V.I.P.’s’, the writer supposed).¹³⁹

School Health

In the early years of this period (1941-1991), health was much more of an issue for a boarding school. The ‘Beckside’ is full of instances of various ailments and diseases, many of which were later successfully eradicated by inoculation.

In 1941, the ‘Beckside’ reported ‘to our troubles, measles made an attack upon us, but this never assumed the proportions of an epidemic’. However, that year, Mary Hall, one of the pupils, died of Scarlet Fever at home. The next year, mumps and chicken pox were rife. In 1943, ‘German measles first claimed a few victims, and then a “flu” epidemic completely disorganised things’. Scarlet fever returned in 1946 and 1949.

In 1951, the school ‘came back to school quite prepared for a ‘flu epidemic, but not at all expecting what, in fact, we got, - five cases of diphtheria. All were very mild... a long and tedious isolation in West Lane Hospital’. In 1957, there was an outbreak of ‘Asian flu!... the classrooms quickly emptied and the san. filled’.

1960 saw the ‘step. bug’ and everyone was swabbed. The following year, in the autumn, ‘120 people passed through the san., most of them victims of the “flu” epidemic, which temporarily decimated the School population, necessitating the use of “C” dorm. as a sick room’. The term was ‘remarkable for three things: the General Inspection, the ‘flu and the weather’.

However, treatment had improved by the 1970s and use of the sanatorium declined.

Sources (in order): ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p.3, Forward by A. L. S., MIC 4056 001343; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p.4, ‘Mary Hall’, E. N., MIC 4056 001344; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1942, p.2, ‘Forward’, A. L. S., MIC 4056 001402; ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1943, p.1, ‘Forward’, A. L. S., MIC 4056 001493; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1946, p.23, ‘Diary’, MIC 4056 001653; ‘Beckside’, Summer 1949, MIC 4056 0011783-92; ‘History’, Morgan, p20; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1951, p3, ‘Diphtheria’, MIC 4056 001858; ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1957, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, O. R. Spence, MIC 4056 002153-4; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1960, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002265-6; Beckside’, Autumn 1961, p2-5, ‘School Letter’, Duncan B. Hunter, MIC 4056 002328-9; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1947, p.3, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001687; ¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1961, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002313-4.

Two further developments of the decade were the extension of the Mill ‘to accommodate a new Art Room’ in 1978 and the building of a ‘nice’ new First Form room in 1979, ‘depriving the boys of part of their changing-room’.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1977, p1-2, ‘Ayton Close-Up Number 6: The Sanatorium’, Margaret Alderson, 4056 002706-7.

¹³⁸ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1977, p1-2, ‘Ayton Close-Up Number 6: The Sanatorium’, 4056 002706-7; ‘History’, Morgan, p38.

¹³⁹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1977, p1-2, ‘Ayton Close-Up Number 6: The Sanatorium’, 4056 002706-7.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1979, p19, ‘Remember This?’, 4056 002793; ‘History of School’, p7.

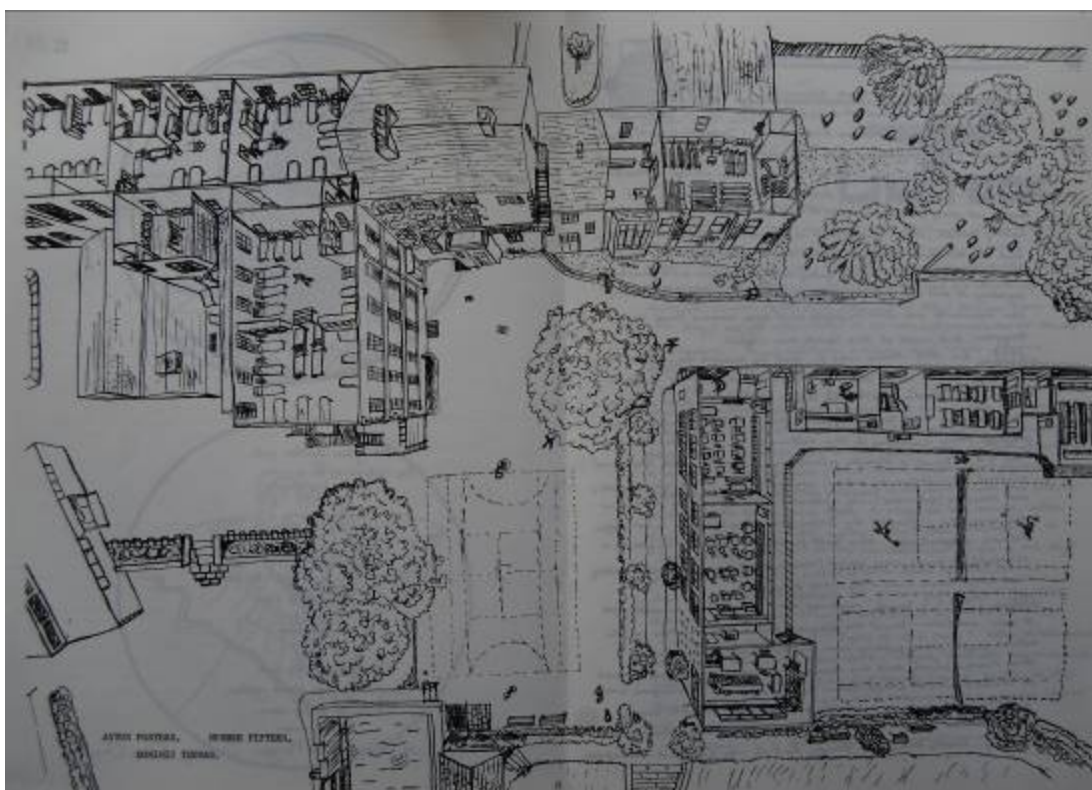


Figure 10: Bird's Eye View¹⁴¹

At the end of the decade, an appeal was launched to build a new Sports Hall, which was estimated to cost £180,000.¹⁴² By the autumn of 1979, the school had received over £60 000 from parents, former parents, committee and staff.¹⁴³ Following this, the professional Appeal Director the school had engaged, Richard Unett, of Craigmyle & Co., approached 'trusts and industry throughout the country'.¹⁴⁴

1980 - 1991

In the Spring of 1980, the foundations were laid for the Sports Hall and building began:

'Firstly the traditional sport at Autumn, playing conkers, was abolished as two men made the antique horse chestnut trees look like young saplings. Next to go was the beautiful green turf, which the gardeners admired so much. Now it is the turn of the duck pond or swimming pool to suffer'.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ 'Beckside', Summer 1979, No.192.

¹⁴² 'History', Morgan, p39.

¹⁴³ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1979, p4, 'Sports Hall Appeal', 4056 002785.

¹⁴⁴ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1979, p4, 'Sports Hall Appeal', 4056 002785.

¹⁴⁵ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Spring 1980, p15-16, 'Remember This?', 4056 002804.

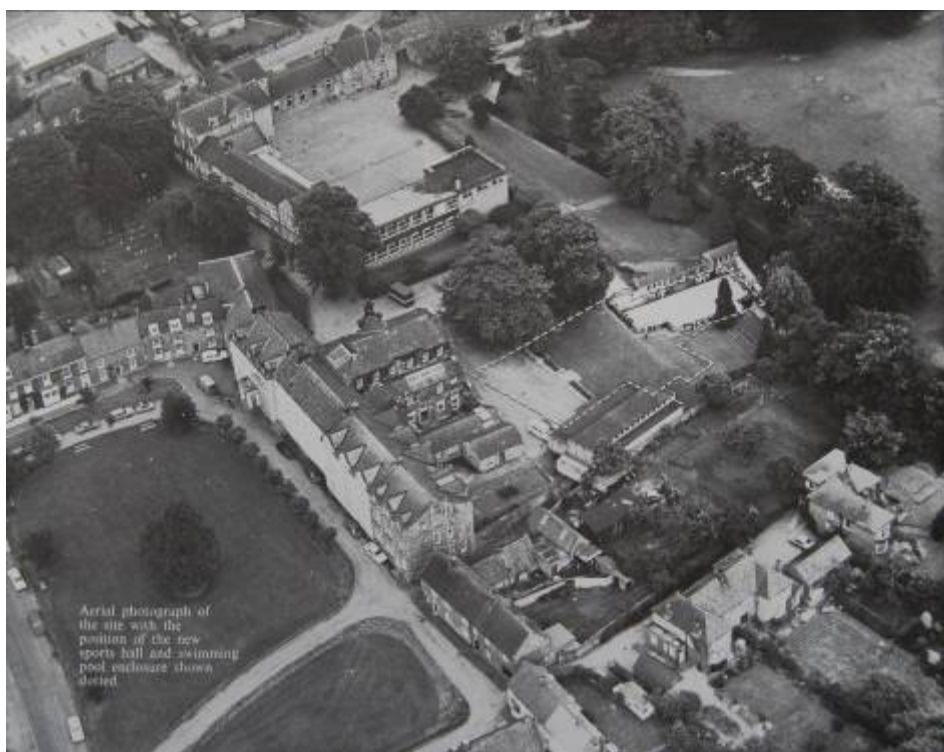


Figure 11: Aerial View Showing location of new Sports Hall¹⁴⁶

However, the work progressed slowly - one student remarked:

‘Will the Sports Hall ever be finished? February is the date so far, and it is only the beginning of winter. Is it February 1981 or 1982? I think they’re “The Cowboys” from ITV’.¹⁴⁷

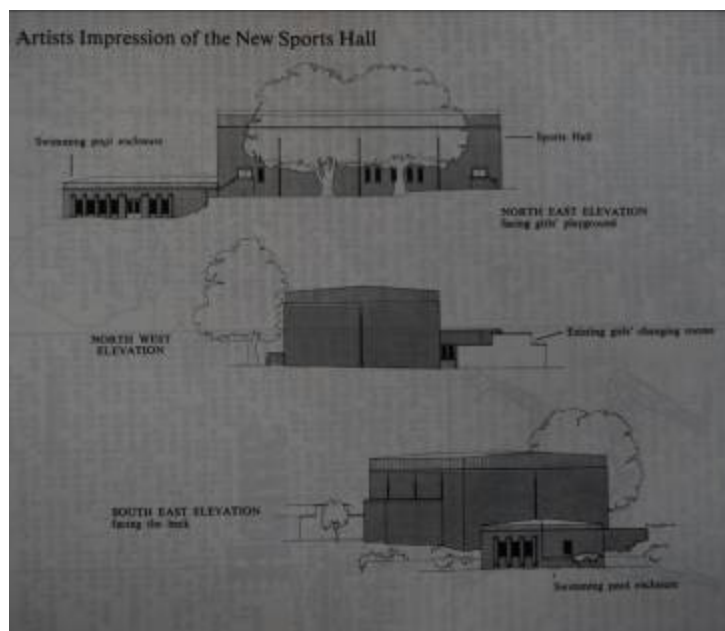


Figure 12: Impression of New Sports Hall¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Sports Hall Appeal Booklet.

¹⁴⁷ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1980, p16, 'Remember This?', 4056 002825

¹⁴⁸ 'Beckside', Autumn 1979, No.193.

The finished Sports Hall was opened by Mr M. McCullogh, the School Chairman.¹⁴⁹ Clifford Morgan wrote that the building:

‘included a large hall in which could be played tennis, badminton, basketball, five a side football and a first class gymnasium. Also as a meeting hall for School and public occasions. It added the final touch to the School’s buildings and amenities. During the holidays the new hall will be available to the village and other bodies’.¹⁵⁰

Evelyn Nicholson had equal praise for the building:

‘The magnificent Sports Hall, initiated by Fred Sessa, the school’s sixth Headmaster, outstrips anything that any of us on this side of the Atlantic could have imagined. Even the weather should not matter now’.¹⁵¹

The latter part of the decade saw buildings being sold rather than built: in 1983, the “Waltons” were sold.¹⁵² Three years later, in 1986, “Crook Cottage” was sold, along with “Raby” and “Mennell” Cottages the following year.¹⁵³ “Dixon House” was sold in 1988 and “Ivy”, “Nutshell” and “Acorn” Cottages were sold in 1991.¹⁵⁴

Perhaps the most momentous sale was the “Tin Tabernacle” or “Tin Gym” in 1986.¹⁵⁵ This was ‘sold to the District Council and was pulled down to make way for a car park. As the dust flew so did many memories, since it was first placed on the site nearly 70 years ago’.¹⁵⁶ The following spring also saw a break with the past, for ‘the pet hut - originally a Nissen War Time Structure - was pulled down and replaced by a lawn’.¹⁵⁷

However, work and refurbishment still carried on: in 1984 and 1985, a computer room (a sign of the times!) was made in the 1938 Teaching Block, the staff room moved into Rawdon House and the old Mill was ‘turned into an art and craft centre’.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p40.

¹⁵⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p40.

¹⁵¹ ‘Developments’, Nicholson, p13.

¹⁵² ‘History of School’, p7.

¹⁵³ ‘History of School’, p8.

¹⁵⁴ ‘History of School’, p8.

¹⁵⁵ ‘The Beckside’, Summer 1986, p17, 4056 002905.

¹⁵⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p45.

¹⁵⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p44.

¹⁵⁸ ‘History of School’, p8; ‘History’, Morgan, p43.



Figure 13: Domestic Science in the 1950s/60s¹⁵⁹

There were also many changes in 1987: the Domestic Science Room was refurbished ('remodelled on very modern lines'), 'after less than 6 months of fund-raising', by 'the newly-formed Ayton School Development Fund', raising a total of £14,000 for the changes.¹⁶⁰ A Sixth Form Centre was created in Richardson Hall, as well as Common Rooms for the Fourth and Fifth years.¹⁶¹ All the borders were moved to Leven Hall.¹⁶² In the same year, a Limited Company was 'formed to oversee lettings of school property'.¹⁶³

In 1988, the entrance and waiting room of Richardson Hall was rebuilt: Morgan reminisced of 'the former hall, and entrance to the Headmaster's house with its Cradle and Thomas Richardson Walking Stick - now to be seen in Swarthmore Hall'.¹⁶⁴

During the next two years, 1990 and 1991, the Textiles Room in the Mill and the Pottery Room were also refurbished.¹⁶⁵

In 1991, the 150th Anniversary of the School, many plans were made for modernisation. The 150th Anniversary Appeal hoped to raise the sum of £300 000 to provide the computer system called CAD (Computer Aided Design) in a new CDT Centre, convert the Woodwork shop into a 'purpose-built' Music Centre, update the boys' changing room and create a new entrance for the Junior school.¹⁶⁶

By the end of the year, a new entrance for the Junior School had been built.¹⁶⁷ The boys had new changing

¹⁵⁹ Prospectus, n.d., c.1950s/60s.

¹⁶⁰ 'History of School', p8; 'History', Morgan, p45.

¹⁶¹ 'History of School', p8.

¹⁶² 'History of School', p8.

¹⁶³ 'History of School', p8.

¹⁶⁴ 'History of School', p8.; 'History', Morgan, p45.

¹⁶⁵ 'History of School', p8.

¹⁶⁶ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991. Uncatalogued, ZFA, NYCRO.

¹⁶⁷ 'History of School', p8.

rooms, which were ‘created in the old girls’ play shed (or even School laundry)’.¹⁶⁸ It was hoped that a CDT Centre would then be established in the boys’ old changing rooms (last renovated in the 1950s).¹⁶⁹ This would house a workshop, drawing station, the CAD computer and CAM (electronic and pneumatic workstations).¹⁷⁰

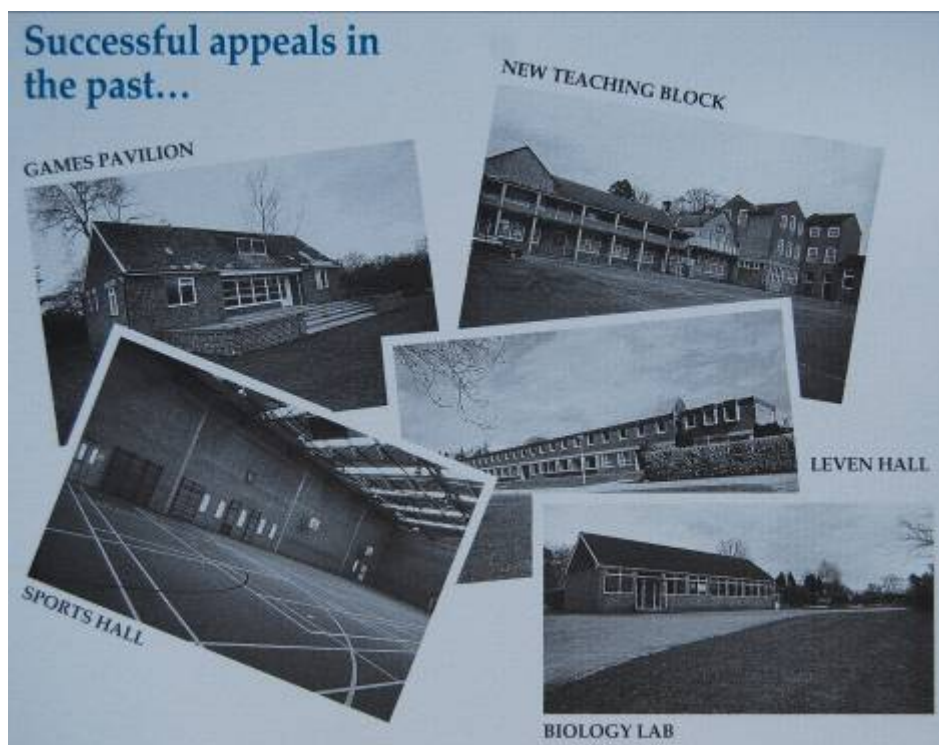


Figure 14: New Buildings¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ ‘150th Anniversary Appeal’, appeals pamphlet, 1991. Uncatalogued, ZFA, NYCRO.

¹⁶⁹ ‘150th Anniversary Appeal’, appeals pamphlet, 1991.

¹⁷⁰ ‘150th Anniversary Appeal’, appeals pamphlet, 1991.

¹⁷¹ Appeal Booklet.

Landscape

1941 began with 'severe wintry weather', which naturally affected the school, already suffering from the shortcomings of war:

'one mistress and three children found themselves stranded in Middlesbrough, and several others were held up at different points on their way back to School. Communication with the outside world grew worse, and our bread supply was only saved by the valiant efforts of some of the masters who brought it from a station six miles away.'¹⁷²

Things were not over yet, for at the end of February:

'another blizzard fell upon us, blocking roads with snow as high as the tallest hedges, breaking off branches and felling trees, wrenching gutters from buildings, destroying telegraph wires and posts, and generally creating havoc'.¹⁷³

The storm severely damaged parts of the school's building and landscape. The Work Squad, which had recently been formed, found:

'plenty to do, either clearing the snow or removing the debris and repairing the damage done. Old Scholars returning will quickly notice alterations in the grounds, where clearances have had to be made owing to the devastations of the storms'.¹⁷⁴

The first job of the newly formed Work Squad was:

'to dig out the tree stumps on the terrace. This proved to be more difficult than was at first anticipated, and we left the biggest stump for Mr. Carr and Mr. Davis to tackle'.¹⁷⁵

This terrace, wrote Evelyn Nicholson, had been 'ruined by the snows of February 1941', but, with the help of the Work Squad, it was:

'cleared and transformed into a beautiful rock garden under the expert direction of Stanley Carr. I can see Clifford Petch backing his father's great carthorse into the area down by the Bath to move the masses of soil and rocks'.¹⁷⁶

However, work was not over for the Work Squad:

'we then joined forces with the newly-formed gardening squad, and set to work to cultivate the land on

¹⁷² 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p2, Forward by A. L. S, MIC 4057 001342.

¹⁷³ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p2, Forward by A. L. S, MIC 4057 001342-3.

¹⁷⁴ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p2, Forward by A. L. S, MIC 4056 001343.

¹⁷⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p24, 'The Work Squad', J. Edward Thomas, MIC 4056 001353.

¹⁷⁶ 'Developments', Nicholson, p8.

the east side of the san... then came the most back-breaking job of all - digging trenches for potatoes'.¹⁷⁷

With spring came renewal and hope, as Clifford Morgan wrote:

'the various squads planted 300 bushes, trees, hedging, plants and bulbs around the Lake area, tennis court surrounds and The Teachers' Terrace... even more satisfying was the work done on the School vegetables "plots" and the careful attention given to 29 hens and ducks'.¹⁷⁸

At the end of spring, however, 'the stroke of the woodman's axe was heard in the "Crow Wood"'.¹⁷⁹ The trees in "Crow Wood" grew 'on a bank and in a narrow strip of land between the lake and the cricket field', and therefore needed 'skilful felling'.¹⁸⁰ Though 'it was heart-rending to see the going of the tall trees', there were 'compensations': the view was 'opened to the hills', where patches of snow could be seen even 'in the third week of May', and hope that 'when the time comes the bank side will be replanted, to give joy to future generations of Aytonians'.¹⁸¹

The beginning of 1942 also saw 'severe wintry weather'.¹⁸² In the autumn, a concrete 'retaining wall' was built 'along the Beck to the Teachers' bridge' in order 'to preserve the grass bank at the foot of the Terrace'.¹⁸³ In front of Rawdon House, more trees were felled and replaced with a rock garden.¹⁸⁴

The following two years (1943-44) saw the extension of the girls' playground, the building of the open-air Greek Theatre and a transformation of the terraces and pool area.¹⁸⁵ In the pool area:

'the lowering of the walls, and the white cement-wash inside the bath have improved the appearance of the place considerably. The water was clearer this year, and the war against the tadpoles seems to have been brought out a successful conclusion at last. Spectators found the walls an excellent grandstand'.¹⁸⁶

In 1943, 'the Teachers' Terrace received three oak seats given by Mrs Dennis - as President of The Old Scholars' Association - and Mrs Maltby, widow of an old scholar'.¹⁸⁷ Further work occurred in 1945 in order to make a rockery on the Teacher's terrace and 'trees were also felled around the lake area'.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p24, 'The Work Squad', J. Edward Thomas, MIC 4056 001353.

¹⁷⁸ 'History', Morgan, p4.

¹⁷⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p3, Forward by A. L. S., MIC 4056 001343.

¹⁸⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p17-18, 'The Felling of the "Crow-Wood"', Hugh Colwell, MIC 4056 001350.

¹⁸¹ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p3, Forward by A. L. S., MIC 4056 001343.

¹⁸² 'Beckside', Spring 1942, p2, 'Forward', A. L. S., MIC 4056 001402.

¹⁸³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1942, p3, 'Forward', A. L. S., MIC 4056 001439; 'History of School', p5.

¹⁸⁴ 'Beckside', Autumn 1942, p3, 'Forward', A. L. S., MIC 4056 001439.

¹⁸⁵ 'History of School', p5; 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p.19, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001536.

¹⁸⁶ 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p.29, 'Swimming', MIC 4056 001543.

¹⁸⁷ 'History', Morgan, p5.

¹⁸⁸ 'History', Morgan, p8.

In September 1945, 'the School appointed a full-time groundsman, Reg. Fall', to assist the School Steward Mr J. R. Clayton and the pupils were 'glad of the time thus saved for games or other leisure time activities'.¹⁸⁹ In 1946, the pupils were 'glad to hear that the School had appointed George Williamson as gardener, and even more glad to hear that he is an expert on hard tennis courts'.¹⁹⁰

1946 was a momentous year, for the 'famous copper beech tree' outside the Meeting House was felled on 3rd October in order to asphalt the playground.¹⁹¹ Gill Haslam recalled that 'the tradition was that we could start using the swimming bath once the leaves had turned copper. This was usually about the end of May'.¹⁹²

Work on the Teacher's terrace continued in 1948: the 'retaining wall' of 'the staff terrace at the beck, and used only to extend as far as the staff bridge', was 'extended along to the swimming bath during the course of the term'.¹⁹³ Apparently, 'the object of the work' was 'to tidy up the ground in front of the swimming baths', the 'finer points of the work' being 'left to keep the Fifth Form boys out of mischief after School Certificate examinations'.¹⁹⁴ Alan Burns wrote in the spring of the following year that:

'the wide terrace of steps on the theatre side is both useful and beautiful: it will provide extra space for teaching, or serve as a very pleasant stand for spectators; and it links the theatre with the terrace giving this very beautiful part of our grounds a unity that it has not had before'.¹⁹⁵

In 1948, the girls' gardens, which 'apparently existed for many years' were replaced by a sunken garden.¹⁹⁶



Figure 15: The Sunken Garden¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1945, p13, 'School News', MIC 4056 001640; 'History', Morgan, p9.

¹⁹⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1946, p12, 'School News', MIC 4056 001652.

¹⁹¹ 'History of School', p5; 'History', Morgan, p10; 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p.3, 'School News', MIC 4056 001675.

¹⁹² Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p1.

¹⁹³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p.3, 'School News', Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759.

¹⁹⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1948, p6-7, 'Pro Bono Publico', MIC 4056 0011745.

¹⁹⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1949, p4, 'School Developments', Alan Burns, MIC 4056 0011772.

¹⁹⁶ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p.3, 'School News', Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759; 'History of School', p5.

¹⁹⁷ Prospectus, n.d., c.1950s/60s.

The Work Squad had apparently been abandoned by this time, for at the beginning of the autumn term in 1952, 'Mr. Carr called together those boys in fourth and fifth forms who were not interested in football' and told them 'he would like to start a work squad'.¹⁹⁸ The boys 'could start this term by felling some trees in preparation for the site of the new football field'.¹⁹⁹

The main attraction of 1953 was the drainage of the lake by the groundsmen, which took several years work.²⁰⁰ Barbara Gibson wrote that:

'many eels and fishes were found around the pipe which leads to the beck. Some of the eels were taken to Mr. Rodwell in the Lab. Old tree stumps have appeared and already grass and other weeds have begun to grow. The Lake is to be filled and used for games. Most of us, I think, will miss the lake, although it is to be used for our benefit'.²⁰¹

Almost four years later, in spring 1957, 'Mr. Reader announced, to the amusement of all, that potatoes were going to be grown in the lake, and eventually it was to be turned into a playing field'.²⁰²

The following year, 1958, saw the lake looking 'something like a cross between the muddy end of 3rd game football pitch and a battle field'.²⁰³ Unfortunately (though perhaps to the delight of the pupils), 'the bulldozer did succumb to the lake, and a twin "dozer" had to be delivered in order to pull it out again'.²⁰⁴

In the spring of 1959, the lake was 'a ploughed field, on a level with Botton Field, part of which is also ploughed'.²⁰⁵ Finally, in the autumn of that year, 'the lake area was now thoroughly drained and available for football', whilst 'the banks surrounding the field were planted with daffodil bulbs'.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁸ 'Beckside', Autumn 1952, p4, 'The Work Squad', MIC 4056 001936.

¹⁹⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1952, p4, 'The Work Squad', MIC 4056 001936.

²⁰⁰ 'History of School', p6; 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p5, 'The Lake', Barbara Gibson, MIC 4056 001948; 'History', Morgan, p23.

²⁰¹ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p5, 'The Lake', Barbara Gibson, MIC 4056 001948.

²⁰² 'Beckside', Spring 1957, p3-5, 'School Letter', J. M. W., MIC 4056 002119-20.

²⁰³ 'Beckside', Summer 1958, p2-4, 'School Letter', O. R. S., MIC 4056 002186-87.

²⁰⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1958, p2-4, 'School Letter', O. R. S., MIC 4056 002186-87.

²⁰⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1959, p4, 'School Letter', Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002219.

²⁰⁶ 'History', Morgan, p27; 'History of School', p6.



Figure 16: The New Vista 1959²⁰⁷

Back in the summer of 1953, preparation for building was undertaken by the students themselves:

‘Examinations being safely a thing of the past, it was arranged that the Fifth Form should do manual work round the old mill yard and laundry. Boiler suits were distributed to somewhat dubious girls, but soon we were complete with dust caps and started with great gusto to clean away the dirt which had accumulated through the years. Our work was greatly appreciated and it has given us satisfaction to know that it was the very first stage of clearing before the new building could begin’.²⁰⁸

In 1956, after ‘the opening of the new teaching block at the beginning of this term, people had been talking and whispering about the ford’ and eventually, ‘work started on the permanent ford’, which was made by the School’s sixth formers.²⁰⁹ The ford was located ‘across the beck below the Biology Laboratory’ and enabled access for cars: Morgan wrote that now parents could ‘drive or walk to Bottom Field on dry land!’²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1959, No.139.

²⁰⁸ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1953, p3-4, ‘Highlights of the Term’, Dorothy Forster, MIC 4056 001965-6.

²⁰⁹ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1956, p10-11, ‘The Ford’, Michael Allen, MIC 4056 002091.

²¹⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p25.



Figure 17: Ford and High Dam²¹¹

In 1958 came the felling of more old trees, but during the following year, Bridget Dunn remarked that, ‘the School appears to be getting more and more horticultural’, as along with the ploughing of the old lake, ‘we have put in some baby trees at intervals all over the grounds, to replace those that have been felled’.²¹²

The felling of ‘the splendid Horse Chestnut tree’ in the spring of 1960 caused much controversy:

‘we were astonished to see that part of the playground around the horse-chestnut tree had been dug up, and dismayed to learn that the tree was going to be chopped down, so that the playground could be re-asphalted and two new tennis courts laid out in place of the one rather battered one at present in existence’.²¹³

Though ‘there were protests and placards on the tree’, ‘eventually it was felled’.²¹⁴ A maple tree was planted instead.²¹⁵

There were initial teething problems: the ‘new asphalt covering on the boys’ playground’ had ‘not hardened properly at the beginning of term and was extremely susceptible to impressions made upon it by high-heeled shoes and cricket boots’.²¹⁶ By the summer, however, the outcome was appreciated: it ‘proved a valuable asset to the school, for its two new tennis courts have provided endless hours of enjoyment’.²¹⁷

During the summer of 1962, the ‘Teachers Bridge’ (‘a gift of the Founder, Thomas Richardson’) ‘was repaired’.²¹⁸

In the summer of 1966, an unusual couple took up residence in the school grounds - a peacock and peahen (apparently ‘very vocal at 5am!’).²¹⁹

²¹¹ Appeal Booklet.

²¹² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1959, p4, ‘School Letter’, Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002219; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1958, p5, ‘Roving Reporter’, MIC 4056 002169.

²¹³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1960, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002265-6; ‘History’, Morgan, p28; ‘History of School’, p6.

²¹⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p28.

²¹⁵ ‘History of School’, p6.

²¹⁶ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1960, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002280-1.

²¹⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1960, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002280-1.

²¹⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p30.

²¹⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

In 1968, *Yorkshire Life Magazine* came to take pictures for their feature on Ayton School and the question was raised by the 'Beckside': 'Why were the Sixth Form snapped looking so studiously at home, books in hand, on *Teachers' Terrace*?' ²²⁰

By the summer of 1969:

'All the land within sight of the school now belongs to the Friends. There are acres of playing fields and beyond, the gentle slopes of roughish grass and woodland where the children spend happy leisure hours climbing trees, lighting bonfires, building huts and looking after a variety of pets.' ²²¹

In 1975, the land next to the sanatorium was sold. ²²² Clifford Morgan remembered that the 'grounds of the San became "plots" producing vegetables during the war years - 1939 - 45 and since then in possession of that excellent gardener, Bernard Coates'. ²²³ The san itself was sold two years later (see 'Buildings'). ²²⁴

The school bloomed in 1976, for by then there was an 'avenue of cherries' to the Pavilion, whilst shrubs flowered round the 'tennis courts and lake area'. ²²⁵

There is an unfortunate deficit of information for the next decade regarding the landscape of the School.

1988 saw the establishment of 'the Ayton School Estates Company, whose purpose is to let the School, and its grounds out to conferences during the School holidays', which was 'most successful' (see 'Sport', 1990). ²²⁶

In 1991, 'the sunken garden which was such a delightful sun trap' had 'to be filled in because of safety requirements'. ²²⁷

In the year of the School's 150th Anniversary, 1991, the estate was valued at £7m. ²²⁸

²²⁰ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1968, 'Commentary', Colin Wood, p18-20, MIC 4056 002523-4.

²²¹ 'Friends School', *Yorks Life*, 1969, p47.

²²² 'History of School', p7.

²²³ 'History', Morgan, p38.

²²⁴ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1977, p1-2, 'Ayton Close-Up Number 6: The Sanatorium', Margaret Alderson, 4056 002706-7; 'History of School', p7; 'History', Morgan, p38.

²²⁵ Evening Meeting, May 1976, p.1.

²²⁶ 'History', Morgan, p45.

²²⁷ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991.

²²⁸ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991.

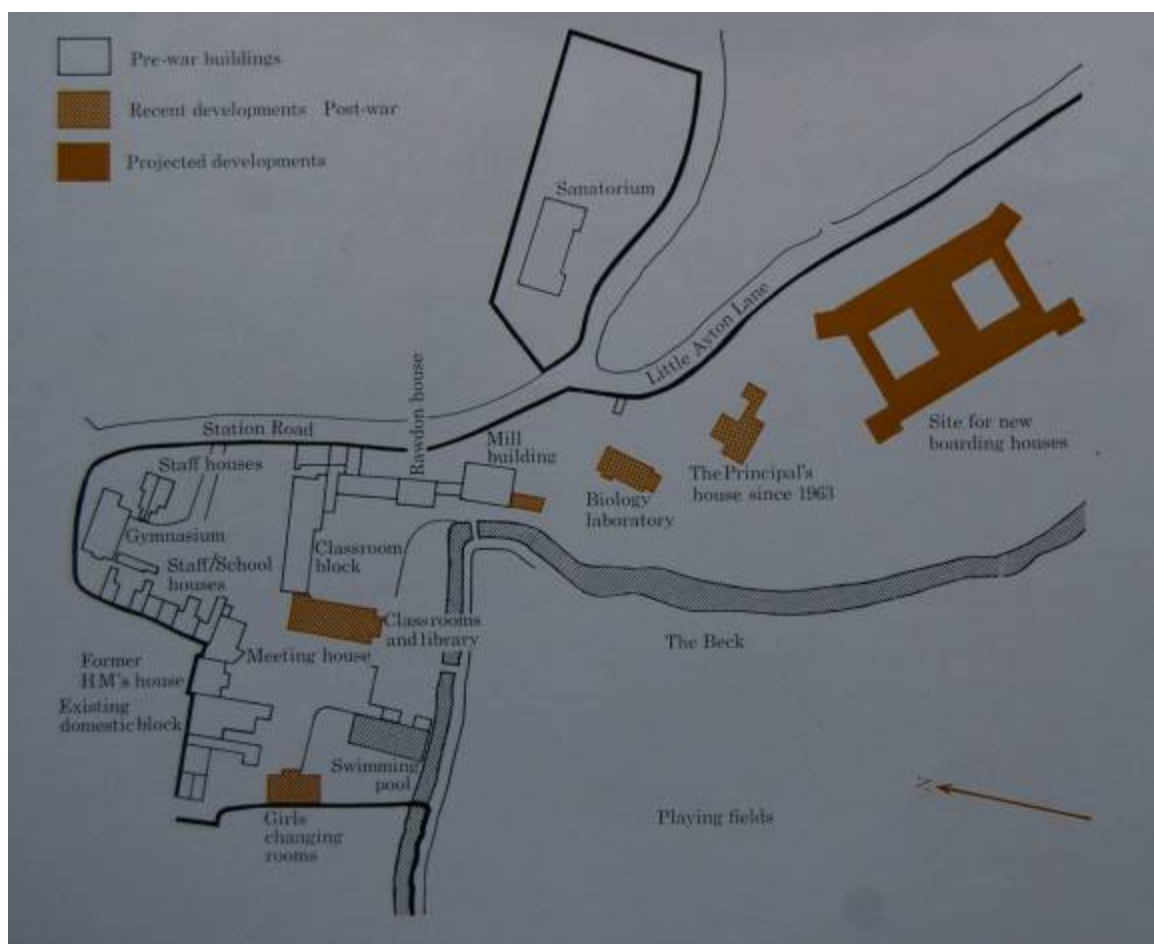


Figure 18: School Building Developments²²⁹

²²⁹ Appeals Booklet.

School Life

*'It is the community built round this village green, under these encircling hills, that draws us and holds us, when the history of our times has done so much, in peace as much as in war, to break up and to scatter the communities of our land and the community of our people'.*²³⁰

School System

At the time of the centenary, in 1941, control of the school was 'in the hands of a Committee consisting of members of the Society of Friends residing in Durham and Yorkshire; one representative of the Old Scholars' Association; and two representatives appointed by the Board of Education'.²³¹

In 1941, the school was in its ninth year of operating a three-house school system. This consisted of:

- ♦ **Firbank**, whose colours were blue and turquoise, headed by staff members Miss Wright, Miss Hartley, Mr Coates, Mr Groom and Mr Reader, and school members Barbara Burrows and E. Pitkethly;
- ♦ **Pendle**, colours blue and scarlet, headed by Miss Nicholson, Miss Helme, Mr Dobbing, Mr Wallace and Mr Mitchell, with girl and boy heads being Joyce Dobbing and E. Steele;
- ♦ **Swarthmore**, colours blue and gold, headed by Miss Wilkinson, Miss Hodge, Mr Stapleton and Dr Pedley, with school members Joyce Hindmarsh and Roger Carr.²³²

There were '15 boy and girl prefects' to help the 'new Head Girl, Marjorie Pearson' in 1947.²³³ That year, 'for the first time in the school's history we have appointed a bursar, Mr. Jeffrey J. Lawn, instead of our usual secretary'.²³⁴

In 1954, 'for the first time Swarthmore... won the House Championship Shield'.²³⁵ This was, according to Clifford Morgan, 'often the main talking point at school', which was 'fought for at the beginning of the Autumn Term until the Swimming Gala on the last night of the Summer Term... the Cups are displayed in the school dining room and - publicly! show who has won the Championship'.²³⁶

The school had prefects until 1965, when the system was stopped.²³⁷ In the autumn of 1966, Philip Lloyd commented in the 'Beckside', 'since the Staff and the VIth Form have agreed to continue the experiment of having no formal prefectship, we are left with only two Officers apart from the Games Captains'.²³⁸

²³⁰ 'The Real Community'.

²³¹ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, p2, c.1942, 4344 002159.

²³² 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p.31, 'House Championship', MIC 4056 0013597.

²³³ 'History', Morgan, p13.

²³⁴ 'Beckside', Spring 1948, p.2, 'School News', Valerie Jordan, MIC 4056 0011712; 'History', Morgan, p15.

²³⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1954, p3-6, 'School Letter', Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 002009-11.

²³⁶ 'History', Morgan, p26.

²³⁷ 'History of School', p7.

²³⁸ 'Beckside', Autumn 1966, p20, 'Commentary', Philip Lloyd, MIC 4056 002446.

However, the three-house system remained. As a school prospectus said:

‘The horizontal division of the school into two halls of residence does not mean that the senior and the junior ends of the school have little contact with each other... As well as giving classes of not more than twenty-five, the fact that there are three hundred boys and girls in all makes it possible to have three ‘Houses’ of mixed ages for the purpose of organising competitions and other activities’.²³⁹

The school which had long held a co-education policy, continued to teach and provide a home for both boys and girls:

‘Our experience at Ayton is that co-education works best when a proper equality of the sexes is demonstrated at all levels’.²⁴⁰

This included, in 1972, an extension even into P.E.:

‘Mixed P.E. classes have now become firmly established in the first two forms as well as in the sixth and this has resulted in benefit to both sexes in that each has learnt from the other’.²⁴¹

In 1974, a new idea was brought forth in the shape of a School Forum: ‘basically a meeting of students and staff to discuss school life together... working to help bring the school closer together’.²⁴² It was ‘thanks to the efforts of Mr Reader and Tom Holman’, that the school forum became ‘an accepted feature of school life’.²⁴³

Margaret Cumbar retired as School Bursar in 1984: she was ‘a former pupil [who] had held the post for 26 years with such efficiency, and an excellent relationship with staff and pupils. Her place was taken by her Deputy - Judith Toon’.²⁴⁴

In 1991, the year of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations, an unprecedented change occurred: on 27th November, the *Herald and Post* reported that ‘Friends’ School, Great Ayton, has changed its name to Ayton School... Headmaster David Cook said it was felt the new name was more appropriate for the 1990s, as well as a little easier to say and remember...’²⁴⁵

²³⁹ ‘The Friends’ School Great Ayton’, Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

²⁴⁰ ‘The Friends’ School Great Ayton’, Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

²⁴¹ Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ending Aug 1972, 4344 002242.

²⁴² ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1974, MIC 4056 002601.

²⁴³ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1974, p15, MIC 4056 002620.

²⁴⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p42.

²⁴⁵ *Herald and Post*, 27 Nov 1991.

Teachers

Headmasters

<i>Headmasters/Principals</i>	
1913	Herbert Dennis ²⁴⁶
1940	J Stanley Carr ²⁴⁷
1953	John Reader ²⁴⁸
1975	Alfred Morehouse Sessa ²⁴⁹
1985	David Cook ²⁵⁰

J. Stanley Carr

J. Stanley Carr was born on 12th January 1893, in Bentham.²⁵¹ Between 1910 - 1913, he was an apprentice teacher at Ayton.²⁵² His degree in History at Manchester University was interrupted by the First World War.²⁵³ During that time, he joined the Friends Ambulance Unit (1915 - 1919).²⁵⁴ When he left, he went back to teaching at Keswick School.²⁵⁵ In 1925, he married Edith Robinson and was appointed Geography Master at Ackworth.²⁵⁶

In 1940, Stanley Carr was ‘appointed Headmaster of Ayton School’: ‘a fruitful and happy time for the school’.²⁵⁷

‘There was a warmth of friendliness throughout the community, and his enthusiasm captured the imagination of its older members. During the twelve years of his headmastership, little could be done in the way of major developments, but numbers increased, the curriculum was broadened and deepened and the Sixth form was established’.²⁵⁸

Evelyn Nicholson remembered him as:

‘a man of great enthusiasm with a capacity for conveying something of his delight to others. Education spilled out of the classroom into the grounds, on to the moors, to Youth Hostelling holidays, and into all our leisure-time pursuits’.²⁵⁹

²⁴⁶ ‘History of School’, p5; ‘History’, Morgan, p32.

²⁴⁷ ‘History of School’, p5.

²⁴⁸ ‘History of School’, p6.

²⁴⁹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring1975, p1, MIC 4056 002623.

²⁵⁰ ‘History of School’, p8.

²⁵¹ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵² ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵³ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵⁴ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵⁵ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵⁶ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵⁷ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵⁸ ‘J. Stanley Carr’.

²⁵⁹ ‘Developments’, Nicholson, p8-9.

Stanley and Edith Carr ('Headmaster and Mistress of the Family') retired in 1952.²⁶⁰

Clifford Morgan wrote that:

'Ayton School had been fortunate to have such - in a Quaker phrase - "a caring couple". They retired to their beloved Lake District, their house "Browfoot", and their boat on the Lake Windermere'.²⁶¹

Stanley Carr died in Scotland aged 75 in May 1968.²⁶² His wife, Edith, died in 1982.²⁶³

John Reader

Evelyn Nicholson described John Reader as 'a Headmaster who combined so much practical ability and energy with so many ideas and so much understanding of young people'.²⁶⁴

In 1953, John Reader became Ayton School's new Headmaster. The 'Beckside' printed a bibliographical account of their new head by David Siddle:

'Mr. Reader is, as he says, "a Southerner who has lived most of his life in the North". He comes, as did Mr. Carr, from farming stock and was educated at the Friends' School, Saffron Walden, taking his B.A. degree at Dalton Hall, a Quaker Hall at Manchester University. He came to Ayton, his first appointment from college, in 1938, specialising in Scripture. He remained here throughout the war, where he met and married Mrs. Reader, who was then Miss Hodge. Mrs. Reader came to Ayton first in 1941, from Homerton College, Cambridge, where she took a two year course with Advanced Art. She taught Art throughout the School and was the form mistress of Junior B - the now extinct class for the eight and nine year olds. Miss Hodge married Mr. Reader in the summer of 1945, and for the rest of their time on the Staff at Ayton they lived in a "flat" at the top of Rawdon House... They moved, in 1946, to Hove, where Mr. Reader became Scripture Specialist at Hove Grammar School, and Mrs. Reader became a housewife and later a mother. Later they moved to Dudley where Mr. Reader was appointed Lecturer in Social Studies at Dudley Training College for Teachers, and from there he came to Ayton'.²⁶⁵

Clifford Morgan remembered:

'in their previous stay at Ayton, John had been Scripture Master, Master I/C Boys' Games and Second in Command of the School Fire Brigade. Mary had been the Art Mistress. They had married in the Summer

²⁶⁰ 'Developments', Nicholson, p8-9; 'History', Morgan, p21.

²⁶¹ 'History', Morgan, p22.

²⁶² 'History', Morgan, p33.

²⁶³ 'History', Morgan, p41.

²⁶⁴ 'Developments', Nicholson, p13.

²⁶⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p7-8, 'Mr. and Mrs. Reader', David Siddle, MIC 4056 001952-3.

of 1945' - 'yet another staff room romance'.²⁶⁶

In 1953, John and Mary Reader were accompanied by their 'three offspring, who cause Mr. Reader "more trouble than all the other two hundred and ten put together"'.²⁶⁷ Jonathon was:

'six... vivacious and boisterous to an embarrassing degree, and divides his time equally between catching current infectious diseases common to all children, piratical excursions... and screaming along the playground at eighty m.p.h. on a tricycle'.²⁶⁸

Nigel, aged three, had:

'already discovered the fact that he can embarrass the teacher and amuse the class by calling a cheery greeting through an open class-room window, and he has captured the hearts, not only of the senior girls, but even the Sixth form and the first form boys'.²⁶⁹

Hillary's age was:

'still accounted for in months... he has an analytical eye which seems to look with mixed feelings of disgust and amazement on any attempt to communicate with him by sign and baby language'.²⁷⁰

Evelyn Nicholson remembered that as:

'no building had been allowed during the war... the result was that buildings were shabby and inadequate, especially as the school had grown in size... John Reader saw it as a first priority to bring the buildings up to date... the period 1954 - 1961 saw the school's greatest expansion since the years of its foundation... the major effort of planning and raising money for Leven Hall, crowned all this effort... £120000 was raised in gifts.... one single donation of £300000 was due entirely to John Reader's power of inspiring people with his vision of the Ayton of the future'.²⁷¹

Clifford Morgan wrote that during John Readers' leadership:

'under his wide guidance, and foresight the School really moved into the modern era. New buildings - including much travelling by him to appeal to parents, old scholars and charitable trusts, included the new teaching block, the Biology Laboratory and Leven Hall, plus alterations to changing rooms, Richardson Hall and the dining room. His influence was far reaching. A superb Scripture teacher, he was also a compelling Evening Meeting speaker, a persuasive appellant for funds for School buildings and above all, a true Christian and practising Quaker. He, and his wife Mary brought up their young family of three boys, Jonathan, Nigel and Hilary in the School to the delight of the pupils - creating a truly family atmosphere. Mary was a really true and practising "Mistress of the Family" and the School, and

²⁶⁶ 'History', Morgan, p8-22.

²⁶⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p7-8, 'Mr. and Mrs. Reader', David Siddle, MIC 4056 001952-3.

²⁶⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p7-8, 'Mr. and Mrs. Reader', David Siddle, MIC 4056 001952-3.

²⁶⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p7-8, 'Mr. and Mrs. Reader', David Siddle, MIC 4056 001952-3.

²⁷⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p7-8, 'Mr. and Mrs. Reader', David Siddle, MIC 4056 001952-3.

²⁷¹ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1975, p9-24, 'John and Mary Reader', Special Supplement, Evelyn Nicholson, 4056 002636-45.

the Meeting House benefitted from her artistic talents'.²⁷²

Nor was Mary the only one of the pair to have 'artistic talents': David Siddle commented that 'Mr. Reader has made much of the furniture in the house himself and it has favourably withstood the critical eyes of some of the senior boys'.²⁷³

In 1967, a new title was 'given to John Reader, formerly Headmaster' and 'now called Principal'.²⁷⁴

John and Mary Reader retired in 1975 and 'went to live at Alne near York'.²⁷⁵

Some memories of his time as Headteacher by his pupils included:

'One Morning Meeting when Mr. Reader stood up to make his announcements, he gave one of his fierce glances at the flowers on the table in front of him, and all the petals of one flower fell off!'.²⁷⁶

'Mr. Reader often looks so strict and unfriendly, yet he is extremely pleasant - except, of course, when someone gets into trouble. The he is strict, and says, "I take a very dim view of this"'.²⁷⁷

'It is wonderful how much this quiet man gets done without anyone realising it. His only outstanding feature is his flashy tie'.²⁷⁸

Alfred Morehouse Sessa

Alfred Morehouse Sessa was born in Darien, Connecticut, USA, on 8th Aug 1935.²⁷⁹ He was educated in Darien School and took his in English Literature from Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, in June 1958.²⁸⁰

In the following years, he gained a 'B.D. in Systematic Theology from Union Theological Seminary, New York City' (1961); was a 'Student Minister at Grace Church Congregational Church, Harlem, New York City' (1958-1960); a Student Counsellor within the Student Christian Movement at Columbia University, New York City (1960-1961) and was 'ordained into the United Church of Christ (Congregational), Darien, Connecticut' (1961).²⁸¹ He became 'a teacher of English and Scripture at Westtown Friends' School, Pennsylvania', a

²⁷² 'History', Morgan, p37.

²⁷³ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p7-8, 'Mr. and Mrs. Reader', David Siddle, MIC 4056 001952-3.

²⁷⁴ 'History', Morgan, p33.

²⁷⁵ 'History', Morgan, p36.

²⁷⁶ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn1975, p9-24, 'John and Mary Reader', Special Supplement, Alan Harvey, 4056 002636-45.

²⁷⁷ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn1975, p9-24, 'John and Mary Reader', Special Supplement, John Coutsworth, 4056 002636-45.

²⁷⁸ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn1975, p9-24, 'John and Mary Reader', Special Supplement, Penny Schofield, 4056 002636-45.

²⁷⁹ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Spring 1975, p1-2, 'Inside: Alfred Sessa', MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸⁰ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Spring 1975, p1-2, 'Inside: Alfred Sessa', MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸¹ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Spring 1975, p1-2, 'Inside: Alfred Sessa', MIC 4056 002623-4.

‘Summer Camp Director in Westtown, Game Director at West Cheater State Prison’ and was also an ‘exchange teacher in English and Scripture at The Friends’ School, Saffron Walden’ (1962-1967).²⁸²

Between 1967 and 1968, he ‘taught Scripture at Impington Village College, Cambridgeshire’.²⁸³ For the next few years (1968-1973), he was ‘Head of Human Studies and boys’ House Master, The Friends’ School, Saffron Walden’, as well as a tutor in the Summer School, Geneva.²⁸⁴ He became ‘Headmaster of Wennington School, Wetherby’ between 1973 and 1975.²⁸⁵

In 1976, he officially took up his post at the Friends’ School, Great Ayton.²⁸⁶ This was a break with tradition: ‘He was bearded! All previous Heads had been clean shaven’.²⁸⁷

He brought with him his wife, Erica (nee Pitcher, whom he married in Saffron Walden in 1968).²⁸⁸ He had four stepchildren and two children - Hepzibah and Benjamin.²⁸⁹ Alfred was a ‘Scripture Specialist and keen Sportsman’ and Erica ‘a gifted pianist’.²⁹⁰

Mr Sessa left a lasting legacy, as Brenda Willoughby wrote:

‘It would be difficult for any Headmaster to retire from a school with a bigger and better monument to his service than the Sports Hall at Ayton makes for Fred Sessa’.²⁹¹

David Cook

In 1985, David Cook arrived as the new Headmaster, with his wife Gill, a junior school trained teacher, who would help in the newly created junior department.²⁹² He ‘had been Headmaster of Uplands School - an independent school at Winbourne near Bournemouth - since 1979’.²⁹³

An article in the *Evening Gazette* described David’s arrival, following ‘a varied career of teaching jobs held by this self-confessed nomad’.²⁹⁴ He was ‘born and brought up in Buckinghamshire’, and ‘qualified at Bristol University and Westminster College, before his first post at Mundella Grammar School, Nottingham’.²⁹⁵ He spent ‘three years as a civilian teacher instructing children of RAF servicemen in Singapore’, which ‘left him

²⁸² ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸³ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸⁴ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸⁵ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸⁶ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸⁷ ‘The Beckside’, 1985, ‘Fred Sessa’, p5, Clifford Morgan, 4056 002876.

²⁸⁸ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁸⁹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p1-2, ‘Inside: Alfred Sessa’, MIC 4056 002623-4.

²⁹⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p37.

²⁹¹ ‘The Beckside’, 1985, ‘Fred Sessa’, p2-4, Brenda Willoughby, 4056 002875.

²⁹² ‘History’, Morgan, p44.

²⁹³ ‘History’, Morgan, p44.

²⁹⁴ *Evening Gazette*, ‘David joins in with a Quaker strip’, 7 Oct 1985.

²⁹⁵ *Evening Gazette*, ‘David joins in with a Quaker strip’, 7 Oct 1985.

with some feeling for the Far East'.²⁹⁶ David then moved 'to Priory School, as middle school head, he then took up his last job before Friends as head of independent co-ed establishment Uplands School, Poole, in 1979'.²⁹⁷

David Cook was not a Quaker though his main subject was theology (he was actually a Methodist and 'a lay preacher to boot').²⁹⁸

He was 'a qualified soccer and tennis coach' and was 'keen to keep up his commitment through games lessons'.²⁹⁹

In 1989, the School was saddened by 'the untimely death of Gill Cook'.³⁰⁰ Morgan wrote that 'she had been a valued and loved teacher in the junior department and in the senior school her calming influence was very apparent'.³⁰¹

Staff

During 1972 the staff included:

- ♦ Principal and Deputy
- ♦ Assistant Principal and Head of Leven Hall
- ♦ Bursar
- ♦ Mistress of the Family
- ♦ Senior Master
- ♦ Head of Richardson Hall
- ♦ 3 English Teachers
- ♦ 1 History Teacher
- ♦ 2 Geography and Geology Teachers
- ♦ 1 Sociology Teacher
- ♦ 1 Human Studies
- ♦ 1 Latin Teacher
- ♦ 3 French Teachers
- ♦ 2 German Teachers
- ♦ 4 Mathematics Teachers
- ♦ 1 Senior Science Teacher
- ♦ 1 Chemistry Teacher
- ♦ 1 Physics Teacher
- ♦ 1 Biology Teacher
- ♦ 1 General Science Teacher
- ♦ 1 Laboratory Technician
- ♦ 3 Art and Craft Teachers
- ♦ 1 Construction Projects Teacher
- ♦ 1 Home Economics Teacher
- ♦ 2 Physical Education and Human Biology Teachers
- ♦ 1 Physical Education and General Studies Teacher

²⁹⁶ *Evening Gazette*.

²⁹⁷ *Evening Gazette*.

²⁹⁸ *Evening Gazette*.

²⁹⁹ *Evening Gazette*.

³⁰⁰ 'History', Morgan, p46.

³⁰¹ 'History', Morgan, p46.

- ♦ 1 Typing Teacher
- ♦ 2 Music Teachers
- ♦ 6 visiting Music teachers
- ♦ 5 welfare staff
- ♦ 9 administration staff
- ♦ 2 groundsmen³⁰²

In 1991, there was the equivalent of 26 full time teachers.³⁰³ The Pupil: Teacher ration was 8:1.³⁰⁴

Junior School

In 1941, the school formed a 'new Junior Department formed for 7 to 10 year olds and 10+ year olds'.³⁰⁵ This consisted of around 20 pupils.³⁰⁶

At this time, Mrs Marjorie Stapleton's Rawden House Preparatory School catered for 5, 6 and 7 yr olds, all being day-scholars.³⁰⁷ By 1942, there were 34 pupils.³⁰⁸

In 1984, a new Junior School opened, catering for pupils aged 9 and above, the old Junior Department having been relinquished earlier.³⁰⁹ These:

'4 girls and 3 boys - entered the junior department of the school. Their day began, separately, morning break at 10.30, lunch at midday and their school ended at 3.30pm. Their subjects included all the junior subjects plus craft and computer work'.³¹⁰

The department, with Dennis Goodall in charge, took:

'three of the girls' dormitory rooms in Richardson Hall. The girl boarders previously having moved to Leven Hall. One room would be a classroom, another a music, TV, assembly and general purpose room and the third would be a for art and craft [sic]. Also decided was to take over part of a staff flat as a junior library. The sunken garden outside the dormitories would be a very pleasant play area for these pupils'.³¹¹

By 1986, there were '14 pupils in the junior department - 6 girls and 8 boys - and it was decided to include some seven year olds'.³¹² In the Autumn Term, 'these pupils presented a programme of music and poetry for Sunday Evening Meeting, a Nativity Play for Senior Pupils and parents and they went to see "The Silver Chair" in

³⁰² Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ending Aug 1972, 4344 002245-6.

³⁰³ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991.

³⁰⁴ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991.

³⁰⁵ 'History of School', p5.

³⁰⁶ 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p.2, 'Forward', A. L.S, MIC 4056 0013588.

³⁰⁷ 'History', Morgan, p4; 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p.9-10, 'Rawdon House Preparatory School', M. E. S., MIC 4056 0013592.

³⁰⁸ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p.18, MIC 4056 001429.

³⁰⁹ 'History of School', p7.

³¹⁰ 'History', Morgan, p43.

³¹¹ 'History', Morgan, p42-3.

³¹² 'History', Morgan, p44.

Newcastle.³¹³

The following year, it was decided that 'the junior department should take pupils from the age of 7+. At the age of 11+ they would then pass into the Senior School'.³¹⁴ By 1988, 'the number of pupils in the junior department had... reached 39' and 'were accommodated in four classes under four well trained teachers'.³¹⁵ By 1990, there were 54 pupils.³¹⁶ The pupil teacher ratio was 12:1.³¹⁷

Holidays

There were three terms each year, broken by four weeks holiday at Christmas and Easter, a seven-week summer break and one week in late October.³¹⁸

In 1947, 'it was decided to have a pupils weekend holiday for half-term. Many left after lessons on Thursday to stay with their parents until bed time on Sunday evening. Those, unable to go, were left in the care of four members of staff'.³¹⁹

It was decided that this parent leave, in the autumn of 1966, being 'usually the first began a month after return to school - should begin at midday Saturday, allowing the pupils to stay at home overnight and return in time for evening meeting at 6.30pm Sunday'.³²⁰

Travel abroad during the holidays was encouraged by the school. In 1960, 'one of the School Committee members proposed the idea of a Travel Scholarship' and in the following year, after students submitted their entries, 'Nigel Philpott and Christopher Oldfield were the winners, with Linda Renwick a close runner-up'.³²¹ The scholarship was awarded to a number of pupils each year.³²² They won 'money to cover an unusual journey at home or abroad', having presented 'their proposed journey to three committee members and three members of staff'.³²³

Fees

In around 1942, the fees charged for the education and boarding for the pupils were around £100 a year (£33 for a term).³²⁴ This would obviously be less for day scholars who did not stay overnight.

³¹³ 'History', Morgan, p44.

³¹⁴ 'History', Morgan, p45.

³¹⁵ 'History', Morgan, p46.

³¹⁶ 'History', Morgan, p46.

³¹⁷ Leaflet on Junior School, c.1991, 4344 002298.

³¹⁸ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

³¹⁹ 'History', Morgan, p11.

³²⁰ 'History', Morgan, p32.

³²¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1961, p5, 'The Travel Scholarship', MIC 4056 002329-30

³²² 'History', Morgan, p29.

³²³ 'History', Morgan, p29.

³²⁴ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1942, 4344 002175.

By 1948, the fees had changed to £148 a year (roughly £50 a term).³²⁵

In 1954, the fees changed to ‘£216 per annum for boarders and £82 per annum for [day] scholars’.³²⁶ This had risen by 1958 to around the £300 mark for boarders, making it around £100 a term.³²⁷

The fees charged in 1972 were £696 per annum for boarders (£232 a term) and £417 for day scholars (£139 per term).³²⁸

By 1991, the fees had risen to £6843 per annum (£2281 a term).³²⁹ The fees were broken down into:

Boarders	£2445 - 2555 per term
Weekly Boarders	£2125 - 2250 per term
Day Scholars	£775 - £1185 per term
Music fees	£75 per term ³³⁰

Pupil Numbers

In 1939, there were ‘100 girls and 92 boys pupils’.³³¹

By the new school year of 1942, there was ‘a larger school than ever’, boarders numbering 152 and day scholars, 63.³³² In 1944, the school had ‘a waiting list’.³³³ Three years later, Evelyn Nicholson wrote, ‘we have never before had a form consisting entirely of thirty-two newcomers’.³³⁴

1954 saw the numbers increase to 219 pupils in total: 121 boys and 98 girls (83 boarder boys and 60 boarder girls, 38 day boys and 38 day girls).³³⁵

The School Prospectus in around 1970 stated:

‘the present two hundred boarders and hundred day scholars will form a satisfactory number for some time to come... allows each boarder and day scholar to feel he has a particular place when the school is gathered, and allows staff and parents to see the school as a unity’.³³⁶

³²⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p15.

³²⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p23.

³²⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1958, p2-4, ‘School Letter’, O. R. S., MIC 4056 002186-87.

³²⁸ Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ending Aug 1972, 4344 002242.

³²⁹ ‘150th Anniversary Appeal’, appeals pamphlet, 1991.

³³⁰ Fees, September 1991, 4344 002298.

³³¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p1.

³³² ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1942, p2, ‘Forward’, A. L. S., MIC 4056 001439.

³³³ ‘History of School’, p5.

³³⁴ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p2, ‘School News’, E. N., MIC 4056 0011712.

³³⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p23.

³³⁶ ‘The Friends’ School Great Ayton’, Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

There were '300 boys and girls altogether with a sixth form of 70 and 100 day pupils' in 1974.³³⁷

In 1991, there were 98 girl and 114 boy pupils.³³⁸ Teacher pupil ratios were 'low at about 1:9 for the School as a whole'.³³⁹

Nationalities

The pupils of Ayton School came from all over the world during this period, though the number of different nationalities increased over the period.

There were 192 pupils in 1940, 'which included 34 refugee pupils from Austria, Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia'.³⁴⁰

In 1953, one German pupil:

'Adolf Muthmann was born in Germany in 1934, and so was five years old when the war broke out. He has come to Ayton this term through a chance meeting with Mr. Porter and Mr. Rodwell, who were on holiday in Germany in the Summer. He has joined the General 6th with a view to learning the English language and as much as he can of English life'.³⁴¹

By 1957, the school could write that it 'draws its pupils from all over the world and so visitors to Thailand, Scandinavia, America, Canada, Sweden, Germany and Africa are often met with questions about Roseberry Topping and Cooks' Monument!'.³⁴²

In 1960, pupils included, 'this time, one from Cuba, one from Pakistan (via Africa), and one from Belgium'.³⁴³ The following year, the increase in pupils from different parts of the world was marked: 'this term the number of scholars from abroad was greater than I, and, I think, most members of the School have ever known'.³⁴⁴

<i>Pupil's homeland 1977</i>	
Abu Dhabi	2
Algeria	1
Bahrain	6
Belgium	1
Botswana	1
Brazil	1
Brunei	2
Canada	2
Denmark	2
France	3
Germany	2
Hong Kong	4
India	1
Iran	5
Isle of Man	1
Kenya	2
Lesotho	2
Libya	2
Nigeria	11
Norway	1
Oman	1
Qatar, Arabian Gulf	3
Saudi Arabi	3
Scotland	8
Singapore	2
Spain	2
Switzerland	1
Tanzania	1
The Netherlands	1
United Arab Emirates	1
USA	11
W Malaysia	7
Zambia	2
Lagos	1
<i>'Beckside', Autumn 1977, Jenny Jones, MIC 4056 002706.</i>	

³³⁷ 'Leven Hall', Reader.

³³⁸ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991.

³³⁹ Fees, September 1991, 4344 002298.

³⁴⁰ 'History', Morgan, p1.

³⁴¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1953, p19, 'First Impressions of England', Ed., MIC 4056 001988.

³⁴² 'History', Morgan, p25.

³⁴³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1960, p3-4, 'School Letter', Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002298-99.

³⁴⁴ 'Beckside', Autumn 1961, p13, 'A Scholar from Abroad', Robert Stansfield, MIC 4056 002333-4

One such pupil was Tony Mphahlele who:

‘was born in Johannesburg in 1947... the first school Tony attended was one for coloured children only in Orlando... when Tony was eight years old he and his family moved to Nigeria, they lived in... Ibadan, and his father lectured in Extra-Mural Studies at the University there... Tony was taught at a school for Africans and Europeans... in 1958 Tony’s father received an offer from the New York University to go and lecture.... Tony, his brothers and his sister stayed with an uncle in California... after living in New York for some time, Mr. Mphahlele began to travel around the world giving his lectures, and so Tony was sent here to Ayton, his mother and the rest of the family went to live in Paris’.³⁴⁵

The trend continued. In 1969:

‘By design, Ayton is still a small school so that its 280 scholars (two-thirds of them boarders) are all known personally to the staff. Many are north country children; others have parents who are domiciled abroad; among foreign pupils are Vietnamese and Persians, Siamese and Indians, Canadians and Americans. The school caters especially for these children and for others whose need is a boarding school which is also a home’.³⁴⁶

During the 1970s, a few of the children were from America and one scholar wrote that:

the ‘school is being gradually Americanised. Everyone is skate-boarding; there is a small group of people who are fanatical about Snoopy; certain Fourth Formers are eating peanut butter by the jarful; people are playing basketball and, softball; and there are all new American pupils infiltrating. It’s all part of Mr. Sessa’s secret Master Plan’.³⁴⁷

Uniform

*‘New girl to a senior: “I know what ‘Magna est veritas’ means.”
“Do you? What?”*

*“It’s French for Roseberry Topping.”
So much for the effect of our school badge’.³⁴⁸*

In 1940, the uniform was described by Gill Haslam as:

‘mainly navy blue, though the boys had grey suits for Sundays, and we all wore blazers. Nobody was allowed to set foot outside the school grounds without wearing a hat or cap. The girls wore velour type in winter and panama straw in summer, each hat having a hatband bearing the school crest. The boys caps had a coloured button on top depending on which house they were in. The girls wore plaited girdles in their house colours round their tunics. [N.B. Firbank was blue and turquoise; Pendle, blue and scarlet;

³⁴⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1961, p13, ‘A Scholar from Abroad’, Robert Stansfield, MIC 4056 002333-4

³⁴⁶ ‘Friends School’, Yorks Life, 1969, p47.

³⁴⁷ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1977, p15-6, ‘Remember This?’, 4056 002714.

³⁴⁸ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1956, p12, ‘Babbings of the Beck’, Janet Hall, Fay Rurka, Helen Beale, MIC 4056 002109.

Swarthmore, blue and gold] As the restrictions due to the war increased, clothes rationing in the form of a book of coupons was introduced by the Government. When this happened the boys began wearing brown boiler suits over their clothes for protection and the girls clothing list was reduced considerably'.³⁴⁹

Wartime certainly brought its changes and issues in clothing. In the spring of 1943, it was noted that 'at the moment in this School, uniform is not worn during the afternoon'.³⁵⁰ Rationing was a further problem: in December 1945, 'Miss Nicholson and Mr Coates indulged in a conversation, at shouting distance, over the heads of the school, on the finer points in obtaining extra clothing coupons, in assembly, this morning'.³⁵¹

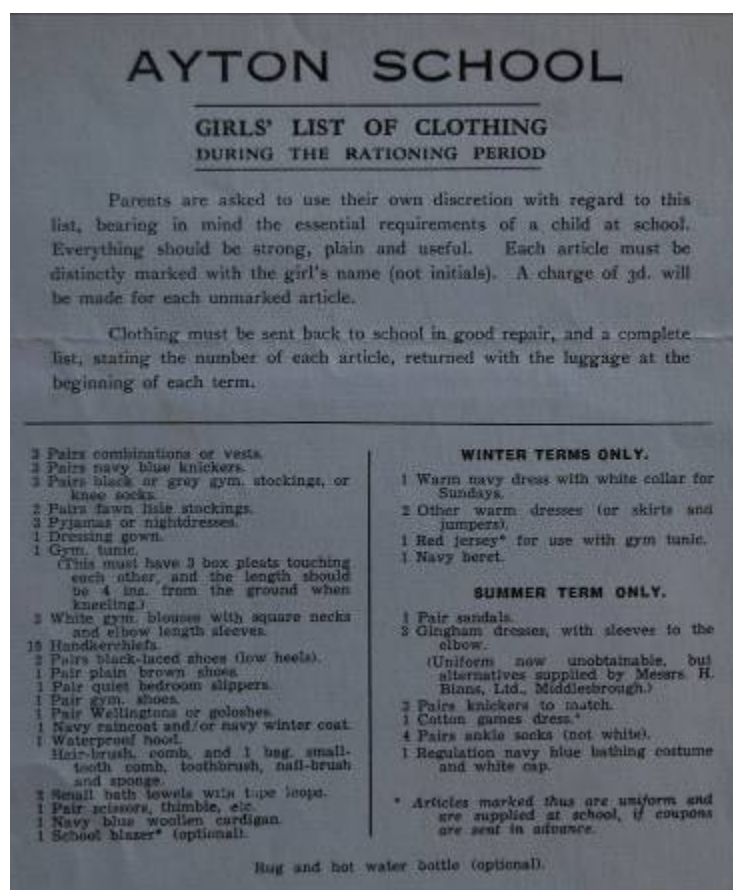


Figure 19: Girls' Uniform during Rationing³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p2.

³⁵⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1943, p10, 'On Uniform', Roger Carr, Freda Lewis, MIC 4056 001453.

³⁵¹ School Diary, 1945 - 49, Doreen S. Sedden, 8 Dec 1945.

³⁵² Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

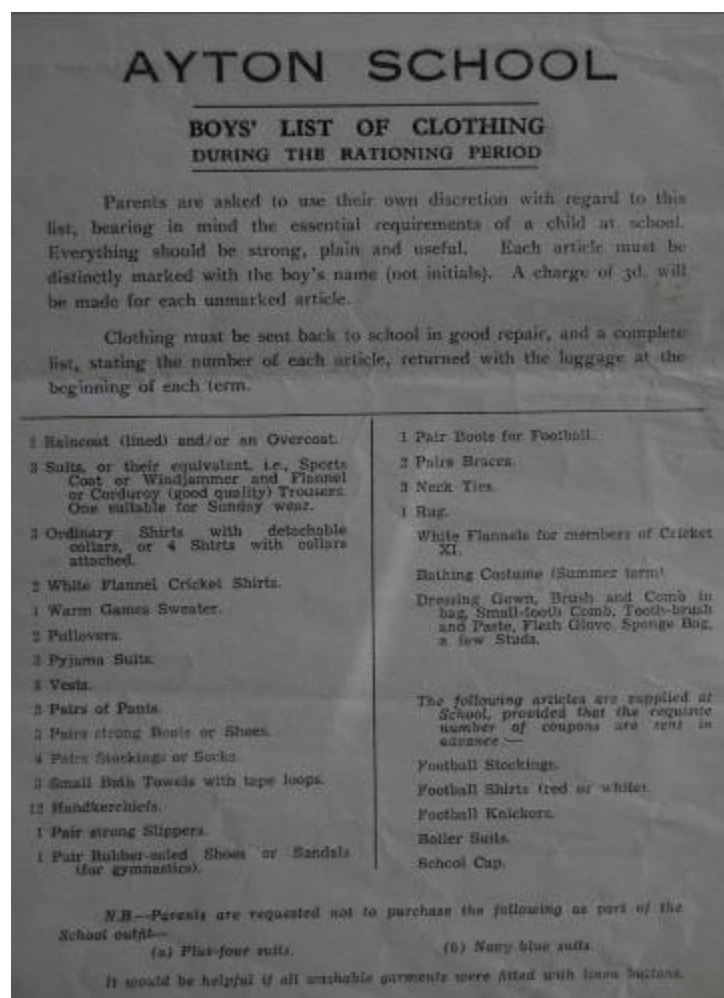


Figure 20: Boys' Uniform during Rationing³⁵³

Cleanliness was also importance in the pupils' appearance: in the 1940s, cleanliness was also emphasised for shoes and nails were inspected regularly.³⁵⁴ Tuesday nights were set apart as the night the girls washed their hair.³⁵⁵

After the war, in 1949, the school brought out a new uniform, which was described in the 'Beckside':

'The school blazers, which were rather dull before this term, are now brightened up by a badge. Because of the cost, these are optional, but about half the school has brought them up to date. The small medallion badge for berets and caps is compulsory and all the girls have got them. The plain navy caps, which are one order for the boys, will be available in the summer, and then, once again, the school will be recognised by its headgear. Bright red and bright blue footer shirts have replaced the old red jersey, and navy stockings with bright blue tops have superseded the many colours that crept in during the war. Lovat jackets or blazers or navy wind-jammers are now "de rigueur" for weekdays, and grey suits for

³⁵³ Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

³⁵⁴ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p2.

³⁵⁵ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p2.

Sundays. A similar variety in the midst of uniformity is being planned in girls' afternoon wear.³⁵⁶

The 1st XI. football team has also had a new outfit this term. Light blue shirts with dark blue collars, hooped stockings and the uniform shorts give the team a more professional appearance. This "rig-out" has been celebrated by the fact that the 1st XI. has only once failed to score in a match this term.'³⁵⁷

In the spring of 1961, there were a few changes: Sally Burch wrote that 'the girls have been promised a few concessions in uniform, and several beefy people are, apparently, going to turn up in very short shorts next term.'³⁵⁸

Whether these changes were ever noticed or not, one change in 1968 certainly was not:

'for any boys who may be interested. I am told there has been a change in girls' uniform this term. If anyone else has noticed this I'd be very pleased to know just what it is'.³⁵⁹

These of course were the times of the 1960s when mini-skirts were in fashion. Delia Fay commented upon them in 1974: 'When I first came, the length of the girls' skirts gave me much cause for concern until I realised there was a limit beyond which they would not diminish'.³⁶⁰

In 1978, the new school uniform was introduced: sweaters with the school logo.³⁶¹ In 1983, the uniform changed to 'blue sweaters and coats'.³⁶²



Figure 21: New School Badge 1978³⁶³

³⁵⁶ 'Beckside', Autumn 1949, p4, 'New Uniform', J. L. Donaldson and Editor, MIC 4056 001801.

³⁵⁷ 'Beckside', Autumn 1949, p4, 'New Uniform', J. L. Donaldson and Editor, MIC 4056 001801.

³⁵⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1961, p2-4, 'School Letter', Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002313-4.

³⁵⁹ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1968, MIC 4056 002487.

³⁶⁰ 'Beckside Broadsheet', 1974, Delia Fay, p15, MIC 4056 002606.

³⁶¹ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Spring 1978, p3, 4056 002722.

³⁶² 'History of School', p7.

³⁶³ 'Beckside', Spring 1978, No.188.

The Junior Department's uniform in 1985 was described as 'attractive but simple, grey skirts and grey trousers, navy blue sweater and the school tie'.³⁶⁴

The School Day

The hours of the school day were marked by the bell (and later, the buzzer).³⁶⁵ As Clifford Morgan recalled:

'Times at Ayton were at first tolled by "The Bell" over the door leading to the school dining room - hence the name "Big Bell Door". When it was removed, the School clock's chimes, and then the buzzer urged all pupils to be punctual. Those times included breakfast, collects, ends of periods in class, evening preparation and Saturday form periods and the arrival of parents' cars for parent leave'.³⁶⁶

The bell and clock were significantly brought back to life after the quietness of the war.³⁶⁷ In May 1944:

'In the course of the term the Big Clock was set striking again, and the Big Bell was moved from its rather dangerous position above the door, to a point above the coal-house, where it swings on a projecting arm, rather like a gallows. The precaution was evidently necessary, for it had not been in use for a week when the casting broke and the bell crashed down'.³⁶⁸



Figure 22: The School Clock³⁶⁹

In 1942, the day for the boarders began at the early hour of 6.40am.³⁷⁰ Before breakfast, students had to wash, make their beds and then read Biblical texts in the schoolroom.³⁷¹ After breakfast, were offices or free time until

³⁶⁴ 'History', Morgan, p44.

³⁶⁵ 'History', Morgan, p36.

³⁶⁶ 'History', Morgan, p36.

³⁶⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p.30, 'Diary', MIC 4056 001544.

³⁶⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p.19, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001536.

³⁶⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1947, No.103.

³⁷⁰ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

³⁷¹ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

they congregated for their assembly.³⁷² There were five lessons in the morning and two in the afternoon.³⁷³ Wednesdays were half-days (the school only worked on the morning), though there were three lessons on Saturday mornings.³⁷⁴

In 1947, 'morning form periods were changed to 8.50am, and then, by forms, [went] into The Meeting House for morning assembly'.³⁷⁵ This year saw much change in policy:

'as a result of the new Education Bill. The age of new scholars entering the school has gradually been raised from eight to eleven and the leaving age is now eighteen - the Higher School Certificate age. The result of this change is that we now have a much larger sixth form, numbering thirteen, twelve girls and one boy. The sixth has been given certain privileges, as it is felt that they need more freedom and scope for their amusements and interests. They have been given the front room of Rawdon House, which is much more private and comfortable than their previous one at the top of the stairs... the Lower Sixth goes to bed at 9 o'clock, and the Upper Sixth at nine-thirty'.³⁷⁶

Clifford Morgan wrote that: 'another famous feature of the school' was 'the evening "prep"'.³⁷⁷

'After tea the whole boarding side turns up in the classrooms to do their preparation for the next days subject lesson... The session is presided over by a prefect, and lasts one hour for juniors and 1 ½ hours for seniors. The VI Form work in their studies or bedrooms'.³⁷⁸

In 1982, 'weekly boarding [was] permitted and the 5-day teaching week' started.³⁷⁹ There would be 'no School in future on Saturday mornings and the former half holiday on Wednesday afternoon would be taken up with lessons'.³⁸⁰

³⁷² Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

³⁷³ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

³⁷⁴ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

³⁷⁵ 'History', Morgan, p13.

³⁷⁶ 'Beckside', Autumn 1947, p.3, 'School News', Margaret Ayre., MIC 4056 0011712.

³⁷⁷ 'History', Morgan, p25.

³⁷⁸ 'History', Morgan, p25-6.

³⁷⁹ 'History of School', p7.

³⁸⁰ 'History', Morgan, p42.



Figure 23: The School Yard³⁸¹

Food and Dining

School food was part and parcel of daily life for the pupils: the Dining Room was where all scholars would congregate for their meals. During the war, food was obviously more of an issue than usual.



Figure 24: The Dining Room³⁸²

On 11th July 1943, it was noted in the 'Beckside', 'a great innovation' was introduced - 'coffee for breakfast!'³⁸³

Michael Sweet remembered 'the days at the end of the war, when the school still used tablecloths... we drank tea poured from aluminium jugs into aluminium goblets'.³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ Appeal Booklet.

³⁸² Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

³⁸³ 'Beckside', Summer 1943, p34, 'Diary', MIC 4056 001486.

³⁸⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1953, p4-6, 'Seven Years at Ayton', Michael Sweet, MIC 4056 001966-7.

In 1945, according to the 'Beckside':

'the whole of our "Table System" in the Dining-room was revolutionised. For a great many years boys and girls have sat at table with those of their own age, and members of staff and prefects have "moved around" week by week. Now, each table is a family unit, with boys and girls ranging from 11 to 16 years all mixed up together (the youngest still sit at Table 5)'.³⁸⁵

That year, Doreen Sedden, wrote that 'Miss Crosby must be congratulated on improving school meals enormously, although food rationing is still very tight'.³⁸⁶

The new system lasted until 1950, when 'a new arrangement for dining room places' was introduced:

'we were all given set places on our tables, which are kept throughout the week. Then, every Sunday morning we all move round one place to the right... At the beginning of term the Prefects at the other end of table didn't move round, but it was later decided they should move like the Staff'.³⁸⁷

During that term, one feature was 'the pictures on the dining room wall painted by pupils in their art room lessons'.³⁸⁸

In 1957, the dining room 'received new chairs and oak tables with cream-coloured formica tops and is completely transformed. The final effect has been gained with the addition of green salt and pepper pots, and the whole room looks lighter and larger'.³⁸⁹ Clifford Morgan also remembers there was also 'a new clock and a wireless set - for the news at various meal times'.³⁹⁰

1967 was a momentous year: it was written that 'the standard of school food has achieved an all-time record'.³⁹¹

It was necessary to remind parents in 1972 that:

'the school diet is adequate and it is unnecessary... to seek to supplement it by sending children large quantities of "tuck". However, children are allowed to buy what they wish in the village with their pocket money and they may have a limited amount of food of their own. For the purpose of storing the above, boys below the Fifth Form should be provided with a tuck box approximately 18" x 12" x 12". Lockers are supplied at the school for girls below the Fifth Form at 15p per term'.³⁹²

Why was there a difference between the sexes?

³⁸⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p.16, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001588.

³⁸⁶ School Diary, 1945 - 49, Doreen S. Sedden, 5 Nov 1945.

³⁸⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1950, p3, 'Dining Room Places', Beryl Goodfellow, MIC 4056 001813.

³⁸⁸ 'History', Morgan, p18.

³⁸⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1958, p3-5, 'School Letter', Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002204-5.

³⁹⁰ 'History', Morgan, p27.

³⁹¹ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1967, MIC 4056 002453.

³⁹² 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Info For Parents, Jan 1972, 4344 002232.

The choice of food in 1991 included: a 'Choice of Cereals, Croissants, Fresh Fruit, Tea and Coffee' for breakfast, 'Homemade Soup, Wholemeal Rolls and Ham Salad' for lunch and 'Chicken Casserole with Broccoli and Rice, Fresh Fruit, Apple Pie and Custard' for the evening meal.³⁹³

Pocket Money

Throughout the period the children did indeed wish to buy food in the village with their pocket money to supplement their diet.

Clifford Morgan remembers in 1947, 'the Saturday form period when pocket money was given out by the form staff to buy at Cockerills, Petchs, Worthy Pearson and Suggitts!'³⁹⁴

In 1952, the 'Beckside' aptly described the scene:

'Just before two o'clock on a Saturday afternoon is the time when shopkeepers prepare the shops and themselves for the fray. When the collects are released there is an instant rush for money, and then the village...'³⁹⁵

In 1961, 'trips to the "chipper" have been legalised for a select few, in order that the rest may have chips on the boys' playground after prep. on Mondays and Fridays'.³⁹⁶

However, in 1963:

'a rapturous reception was afforded to the opening of the Tuck Shop, with its luxurious new fittings and brigade of helpful assistants. £250 in all has been spent there this term, both on the excellent range of stock and novelties on special offer - like ice cream complete with its own built-in coca-cola stalagmites!'³⁹⁷

In 1967, it was as popular as ever and 'a new tuck shop was built on a site near the swimming pool - a popular venue during mid morning "break" (instead of the usual house lines for bread slices)'.³⁹⁸

The amount of pocket money was 'recommended as a reasonable amount' of £4 to £6 a term by the School: 'a member of staff acts as banker'.³⁹⁹

³⁹³ '150th Anniversary Appeal', appeals pamphlet, 1991.

³⁹⁴ 'History', Morgan, p12.

³⁹⁵ 'Beckside', Autumn 1952, p4, 'Money to Spend', MIC 4056 001936.

³⁹⁶ 'Beckside', Spring 1961, p2-4, 'School Letter', Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002313-4.

³⁹⁷ 'Beckside', Summer 1963, p18, 'Babbings of the Beck', MIC 4056 002398.

³⁹⁸ 'History', Morgan, p32.

³⁹⁹ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

Sixth Form

In 1947, the school's Sixth Form was becoming ever more popular, being 'the biggest sixth form we have ever had, consisting of eight people'.⁴⁰⁰ Margaret Ayre wrote:

'next year the Sixth Form is going to be larger than it is already, and where they are going to have their lessons is a great problem, but Ayton will find a solution to this, as it has to so many similar problems in the past'.⁴⁰¹

Though accommodation was also a problem, Ayton, of course, found a solution and in the autumn of that year, the sixth formers were enjoying certain privileges not granted to the lower school:

'the stove in the form room is a great asset to the life of the Sixth Formers... we have been given free access to the village, later bedtimes, occasional town leave and we are allowed to have our bicycles.'⁴⁰²

This growth continued. By the 1970s, the 'development of the Sixth Form which began during the Second World War... has expanded to the point where a wide range of 'A' level and general courses are offered'.⁴⁰³

In 1991, the school could boast: 'a new Sixth Form Centre was recently opened and includes study and common room accommodation'.⁴⁰⁴ Teacher pupil ratios were around 1:5.⁴⁰⁵

Religion

In a Quaker based school, the teaching and observance of religion was an important part of life, as well as in class based Scripture lessons. In the 1940s:

'The Meetings of the Society of Friends are attended on Sundays. On Thursday mornings, in the middle of the week's busy routine, the whole community assembles for a short Meeting for Worship. Every morning, after breakfast, the whole School meets for a brief devotional period'.⁴⁰⁶

On 16th July 1944, 'History [was] made! Inauguration of First Meeting for those under 14 years, and Second Meeting for those 14 and over... [there were] new seating arrangements in the Meeting House'.⁴⁰⁷ Pupils over 14 years old ('Forms IV, V and VI') were expected to attend 'Sunday Quaker meeting' and those under 14 ('Forms I, II and III'), to attend 'First meeting'.⁴⁰⁸ The First Meetings 'on Sunday mornings - 9.45 - 10.15 - came into its

⁴⁰⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1947, p4, 'School News', MIC 4056 001688.

⁴⁰¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1947, p3, 'School News', Margaret Ayre., MIC 4056 0011712.

⁴⁰² 'Beckside', Autumn 1947, p3, 'School News', Audrey Rogers, MIC 4056 0011712.

⁴⁰³ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

⁴⁰⁴ Fees, September 1991, 4344 002298.

⁴⁰⁵ Fees, September 1991, 4344 002298.

⁴⁰⁶ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, p2, c.1942, 4344 002159.

⁴⁰⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p.30, 'Diary', MIC 4056 001544.

⁴⁰⁸ 'History of School', p5; 'History', Morgan, p7.

new form of Hymns, Bible Readings, short address and silence' in 1944.⁴⁰⁹

As a Quaker school, there was no corporal punishment. In the 1950s, punishment for misdemeanours included: deprivation of Village Leave, Detention on Wednesday afternoons (when, at this time, there were no taught lessons) and Saturday morning form period, work in the grounds and "timed" runs to 'Cooks'.⁴¹⁰

In the 1960s:

'All boarders attend Friends' Meeting for Worship on Sunday mornings and a school service on Sunday evenings. The whole school attends a short Meeting for Worship on Thursday mornings. School and House Assemblies take place on other days'.⁴¹¹

In 1962, 'Miss Parkhouse started a religious-discussion group for Third and Fourth formers in her room in "The Nutshell"'.⁴¹²

'Hymn Singing and Meeting' by 1967, were 'compressed into a single shorter service' meeting 'with the approval of the school'.⁴¹³

In 1969, 'on Sundays first meeting at 9.45 was now open to the whole school not for juniors only as previously - and second meeting became voluntary'.⁴¹⁴ In that year, only 9% of pupils (around 25) had a Quaker parent.⁴¹⁵ However, 'because the school is relatively small many feel they can quite easily be absorbed into its life'.⁴¹⁶

By 1972, though 'Sunday Meeting attendance [was] not compulsory', the pupils had to 'attend either first meeting or Quaker meeting'.⁴¹⁷

Lessons

Ayton was innovative and consequently new subjects were always being introduced into the timetable, partly to keep up with an ever-changing world and its demands on young people.

In the autumn of 1948, one such new subject was introduced:

'On the first day of term our form, 4b, clustered round the time-table, and we saw that Wednesday morning's lessons were entitled "Field Work," and we all wondered what that was!... Mr Carr explained

⁴⁰⁹ 'History', Morgan, p7.

⁴¹⁰ 'History', Morgan, p19.

⁴¹¹ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002192.

⁴¹² 'Beckside', Summer 1962, p11, 'The Discussion Group', Charles Shaw, MIC 4056 002362.

⁴¹³ 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1967, MIC 4056 002453.

⁴¹⁴ 'History', Morgan, p33.

⁴¹⁵ 'Friends School', Yorks Life, 1969, p47.

⁴¹⁶ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1970, 4344 002217.

⁴¹⁷ 'History of School', p7.

the scheme, and he said that most Modern schools were trying the same idea... Mr. Carr told us about two practical jobs that we could do. One was to start a Hen Club and the other one was to make a Sunken Garden... each of us is making a study of his special interest and collecting all the information he can and putting it in his folder. There are also a series of practical tests. The most favoured are Camper and Mountaineer Tests. The others are Handyman, Woodman and Naturalist Tests'.⁴¹⁸

In the 1960s, the School Prospectus explained the subjects system in the school:

'During their first three years, all children study the subjects usually taught in Grammar Schools, including Mathematics, Science and French. Latin is added in the Middle School and German in the Sixth Form for those who show linguistic ability. In certain subjects children are taught in "sets" instead of forms, so that they may be grouped according to ability and thus be given better opportunity for progress'.⁴¹⁹

'At the beginning of the fourth year each child chooses the subjects which are to be his main studies in the Upper School and which he will offer as examination subjects in the General Certificate of Education. The choice is based upon the ability and achievement of the child assessed over a period of three years, and on career requirements and parents' wishes. Those who leave school at the end of the fifth year will take these subjects at the Ordinary level in the General Certificate of Education'.⁴²⁰

'In the Sixth Form a more intensive study of a smaller number of subjects is possible. The full academic course lasts for two or possibly three years and prepares pupils for Advanced Level and Scholarship Examinations. Those who take a one-year course spend some time on subjects of general educational value and the remainder on improving their career qualifications'.⁴²¹

By 1969, by virtue of the turn of the decade building projects, science had 'its own self-contained department where the new Nuffield scheme, a sort of do-it-yourself type of lesson, has been introduced, while for languages audio-visual methods have been adopted in the lower part of the school'.⁴²²

In 1971, 'the academic side was enlarged when sociology was added to the VI Form syllabus'.⁴²³ Five years later, in 1976, economics was also added.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁸ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p15, 'A New Venture', Fabian Wiklinson, MIC 4056 0011765.

⁴¹⁹ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002201.

⁴²⁰ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002201.

⁴²¹ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002201.

⁴²² 'Friends School', Yorks Life, 1969, p47.

⁴²³ 'History', Morgan, p35.

⁴²⁴ 'History', Morgan, p37.

The Junior Department was ‘introduced to lessons in Woodwork and Needlework and Recorder playing’ in 1985.⁴²⁵

By 1991, the school offered the teaching of creative and practical subjects (which included Craft Design, Music, Drama, Home Economics, Textiles, Ceramics, Fine Art, Photography, Typewriting and Word Processing), as well as music: ‘students can prepare for City and Guilds, R.S.A and the Royal Schools of Music qualifications’.⁴²⁶

Sport

Ayton School was fortunate (or, perhaps, unfortunate for some people) that one of the features of the sporting year was outdoor swimming. Gill Haslam recollected that, around 1941:

‘In really hot weather we sometimes managed three swims a day though the water was always cold and often brown coming in from the beck. It wasn’t unusual to see tadpoles clinging to the edges of the pool... As well as a set of diving boards there used to be a springboard from which we perfected the “Ayton Dive” - instead of running along and diving off the front of the board, we ran in a diagonal direction, gave as big a bounce as possible onto the diving board then took the plunge into the icy depths. If you had learned to swim during your first term the girls got a shilling for swimming a breadth and the boys six pence for doing a length!’⁴²⁷

This was perhaps one consolation for those non-swimmers who numbered ‘as many... as swimmers’ when compulsory swimming lessons were introduced in the summer of 1941.⁴²⁸

As we have seen, the spring of 1941 brought horrendous weather conditions: this ‘gave very little encouragement or even opportunity to train for Sports’.⁴²⁹ Even when ‘the actual Sports Day’ dawned, ‘no events were possible’.⁴³⁰ However, ‘the Sports were completed before the end of term, and even two new records were set up’.⁴³¹

1941 also saw the formation of ‘The Games Committee’, which, ‘according to the terms of its constitution “shall be responsible for the financing and governing of all organised games approved by ‘Staff Meeting’”. This marks a great change in the conduct of our games, and particularly in the administration of games subscriptions’.⁴³² The group also administered and looked after all games equipment, encouraging responsible use of (then valuable)

⁴²⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p44.

⁴²⁶ Fees, September 1991, 4344 002298.

⁴²⁷ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p2.

⁴²⁸ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1941, p30-31, ‘Swimming: Boys’, MIC 4056 0013582.

⁴²⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p31-35, ‘Athletic Sports’, MIC 4056 001357-8.

⁴³⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p31-35, ‘Athletic Sports’, MIC 4056 001357-8.

⁴³¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p31-35, ‘Athletic Sports’, MIC 4056 001357-8.

⁴³² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p3, Forward by A. L. S, MIC 4056 001343; ‘History’, Morgan, p3.

assets.⁴³³ In 1948, their termly meetings ‘included representatives of boys and girls from each year, games staff and the Headmaster and Headmistress’.⁴³⁴



Figure 25: The Games Room⁴³⁵

In the summer, there was opportunity for tennis: however, the reporter of the ‘Beckside’ commented that ‘far too many people seem to imagine that provided a ball arrives in the right place, it doesn’t much matter how it does so’.⁴³⁶ However, in the summer of 1945, ‘tennis had to be very seriously curtailed’ due ‘to the inevitable shortage of tennis balls’.⁴³⁷ Nevertheless, ‘owing to the curtailment of tennis, stoolball was introduced as a very popular alternative to Rounders’.⁴³⁸ By 1957, however, ‘the grass tennis court’ was ‘being made ready’ and tennis was back on the menu.⁴³⁹

Cricket was also played in the summer: in 1942, the Ayton cricket team (‘a weak and inexperienced side’) ‘had the unique triumph of achieving the first cricket victory over our great rivals, Guisborough, for many years’.⁴⁴⁰ A win over Guisborough Grammar School (the “auld enemy” as Clifford Morgan termed them) was one which was always specially noted.⁴⁴¹

On 18th February 1946, ‘the cricket pavilion was pulled down’.⁴⁴² However, it did not go to waste (as nothing did in the post-war years), as ‘out of the best of the wood, a hut has been built for the storage of equipment’.⁴⁴³ It was hoped ‘that a better and bigger pavilion’ would ‘soon be built’.⁴⁴⁴ The cricket field was extended during the following year.⁴⁴⁵ That year (1947):

⁴³³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p3, Forward by A. L. S, MIC 4056 001343; ‘History’, Morgan, p3, p16.

⁴³⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p15.

⁴³⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, No.106.

⁴³⁶ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1941, p28-29, ‘Tennis’, MIC 4056 0013581.

⁴³⁷ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1945, p30, ‘Tennis’, MIC 4056 001624.

⁴³⁸ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1945, p31, ‘Rounders and Stoolball’, MIC 4056 001624.

⁴³⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1957, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, J. M. W., MIC 4056 002119-20.

⁴⁴⁰ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1942, p23, ‘Cricket’, R. P., MIC 4056 001431.

⁴⁴¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p6.

⁴⁴² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1946, p12, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001652.

⁴⁴³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1946, p12, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001652.

⁴⁴⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1946, p12, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001652.

⁴⁴⁵ ‘History of School’, p5.

‘everyone visiting the School... remarked upon the excellent condition of the field, and the truly rural surroundings which add “atmosphere” to the cricket square, the Marquee in the corner (the cricket pavilion has not yet been replaced) and the practice nets alongside the 2nd XI. football pitch... The early part of the season was marked by heavy defeats until the side settled down and new talent was revealed’.⁴⁴⁶

In 1948, ‘Mr Charles Spence, B.A., A.R.I.B.A., of Newcastle... was asked to plan, not merely a replacement of the old cricket pavilion, but a Sports Pavilion in keeping with the dignity of the School, and the beauty of its setting’.⁴⁴⁷ Note that this was prior to building restrictions being lifted in 1954.

Football was played at the school, though the reporter in the 1946 spring issue of the ‘Beckside’ commented that ‘it is a great temptation to draw a veil discreetly over the season just past and to allow it to be forgotten as quickly as possible’.⁴⁴⁸

During 1947, the swimming pool was re-vamped:

‘One day we saw Mr. Fall and Mr. Williamson begin to take the tiles off the roof of the swimming bath. By the end of two days the whole of the roof had been taken down and they had begun to take down the walls and the dressing room... the object to all this is the long-awaited improvements to the swimming bath’.⁴⁴⁹

There were ‘new dressing rooms’ and ‘steps opposite, on which spectators - often on Sisters’ list - could sit and watch’.⁴⁵⁰ At the end of term, the swimming gala took place, ‘when the House Championship is decided between Firbank, Pendle and Swarthmore’.⁴⁵¹ In 1948, ‘brick changing rooms and pergola’ were ‘built on [the] pool site’.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁶ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1947, p16, ‘Cricket’, C. M., MIC 4056 001670.

⁴⁴⁷ Ayton Old Scholars’ Association, Centenary Games Pavilion, Building Appeal, Pamphlet, 1949.

⁴⁴⁸ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1946, p21, ‘Football’, MIC 4056 001656.

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p4, ‘School News’, J. Spearman, MIC 4056 0011712.

⁴⁵⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p13.

⁴⁵¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p12.

⁴⁵² ‘History of School’, p5.

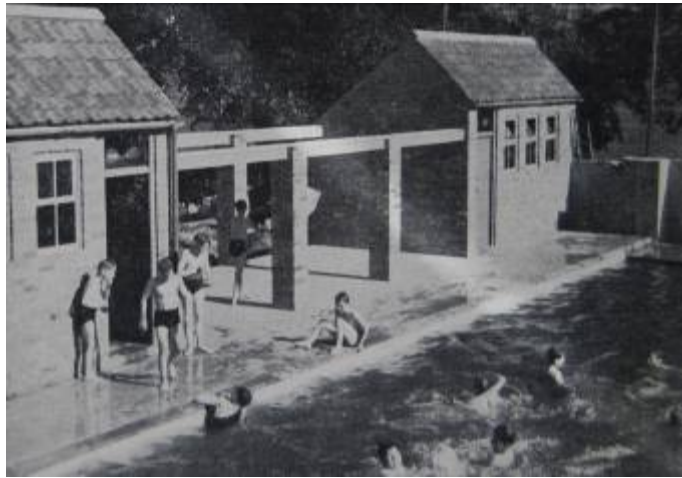


Figure 26: The New Dressing Rooms⁴⁵³

The spring term of 1948 saw ‘the first cross country race since 1943’.⁴⁵⁴ Clifford Morgan wrote that:

‘Not so pleasurable was the extended cross country race in the Spring Term - 4½ miles - for senior boys, and won by Mr Derek Downey on the first occasion. The route to Easby Water Splash and return via fields below Cooks monument’.⁴⁵⁵



Figure 27: Cross Country⁴⁵⁶

Until the spring of 1953, ‘the Senior [Cross Country] race’ was:

‘a compulsory event for all those boys passed physically fit. The murmurings of discontent which have heralded the approach of the training period in past years, and which have always died away as the day of the race drew near, seemed this year to be organised and directed towards democratic expression

⁴⁵³ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1948, No.105.

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, p.9, ‘The New Cross-Country Race’, Geoffrey B. Easton, MIC 4056 0011717.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p14.

⁴⁵⁶ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, No.104.

through the Games Club. The result... [was that] the Games Club decided that each House should enter only seven runners, but that training should continue on the same basis'.⁴⁵⁷

This created 'a better race by cutting out the stragglers'.⁴⁵⁸ The times of the 1953 race broke the previous records with R. Pearson completing the course in a record 24 minutes 28 seconds in the Senior race and B. Pither, 19 minutes 52 seconds in the Junior.⁴⁵⁹ However, the following year, the records were smashed again: 'David Pidd broke the Senior Cross Country record, making a new time of 24 minutes 15 seconds for the four mile course'.⁴⁶⁰

Hockey was a popular winter sport: in the autumn of 1948, the School made 'an excellent full-size hockey pitch'.⁴⁶¹ The 'Beckside' reported that 'the pitch which used to be the best is now "pitch 2", while the new lies parallel to the lake and has even fewer bumps'.⁴⁶² In the autumn of 1951, Shirley Rushton, an Ayton scholar, gained a place in the Junior [Durham] County XI Hockey team, playing centre half.⁴⁶³ On 7th March 1953, a large party from the school was treated to a visit to watch 'the International Hockey Match, England v. Wales, at Sunderland'.⁴⁶⁴

In 1948, table tennis was played inside - Ayton style:

'Playing table tennis in the Nissen [hut] is a game in itself. When one had finally got "acclimatized" to the peculiar odour that the Nissen derives from a breeding tank of paramecium, and one has reduced the length of the light flexes (a great cut in the number of light bulbs broken was thus obtained), one gets a rough idea of what the game is to be like... a blessing in disguise during some of the bad weather following School Certificate'.⁴⁶⁵

Other indoor sports included badminton. The Badminton Club was formed in the autumn of 1949, 'performing in the "Tin Gym"'.⁴⁶⁶ The 'Beckside' reported that 'about thirty enthusiastic members of the senior school attended the first meeting, called together by Miss Harwood'.⁴⁶⁷

Ten new athletic records were set in the summer of 1949.⁴⁶⁸

It was carefully noted that the football team on 3rd November 1950 beat 'our old rivals, Guisborough Grammar School... to the tune of two goals to one... the last time Ayton beat Guisborough at Football was in the Spring

⁴⁵⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p23-4, 'Cross Country', MIC 4056 001960-1.

⁴⁵⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p23-4, 'Cross Country', MIC 4056 001960-1.

⁴⁵⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p23-4, 'Cross Country', MIC 4056 001960-1.

⁴⁶⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1954, p3-6, 'School Letter', Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 001994-6.

⁴⁶¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p3, 'School News', Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759; 'History of School', p6.

⁴⁶² 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p3, 'School News', Anne Dickinson, MIC 4056 0011759.

⁴⁶³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1951, p4, 'School Letter', MIC 4056 001888.

⁴⁶⁴ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p20, 'Diary', Angela Bradbeer, MIC 4056 001959.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1948, p6-7, 'Table Tennis - Nissen Style', MIC 4056 0011744-5.

⁴⁶⁶ 'History', Morgan, p17.

⁴⁶⁷ 'Beckside', Autumn 1949, p4, 'The Badminton Club', S. J. Rushton, MIC 4056 001801.

⁴⁶⁸ 'Beckside', Summer 1949, p15, 'Athletics', MIC 4056 0011792.

Term, 1939'.⁴⁶⁹ Success also came in the following year: Ayton 'beat Guisborough 3-2... our most ancient and deadliest enemy'.⁴⁷⁰



Figure 28: Football Match 1948⁴⁷¹

In 1954, building restrictions were finally lifted and the new Cricket Pavilion could be built. It was noted:

'In March this year a building licence for a Games Pavilion was granted. The pavilion will be on Top Field and will be for all games, but, perhaps, especially for cricket, tennis and hockey. It will give accommodation for entertaining visiting teams - changing rooms, showers, and a tea room, besides storage space and a cricket scoring box'.⁴⁷²

On the 5th June, 'the first sod for the New Games Pavilion was turned'.⁴⁷³ In the May of 1955, at the Whit Reunion, the 'fine Games Pavilion, the gift of the Old Scholars' Association to mark the school's centenary, was opened'.⁴⁷⁴

The summer of 1954 was a successful one for sports:

'David Siddle smashed the twenty-year-old Senior Long Jump record by jumping 20ft. 1in. thereby adding 9ins. to the previous jump of 19ft. 4in. Altogether, by the way, fourteen records have been broken in the Swimming and Athletic Sports this season'.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁶⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1950, p6, 'Football', Henry R. Pickering, MIC 4056 001847.

⁴⁷⁰ 'Beckside', Autumn 1951, p4, 'School Letter', MIC 4056 001888.

⁴⁷¹ 'Beckside', Spring 1948, No.104.

⁴⁷² 'Building Developments at Ayton School'.

⁴⁷³ 'Beckside', Summer 1954, p23, 'Diary', MIC 4056 002020.

⁴⁷⁴ 'The Friends' School Great Ayton', Prospectus, c.1960, 4344 002192; 'History of School', p6; 'Developments', Nicholson, p11; 'History', Morgan, p24; 'Beckside', Summer 1955, p8-9, 'The Pavilion', Valerie Davison, MIC 4056 002045.

⁴⁷⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1954, p3-6, 'School Letter', Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 002009-11.

Twenty boys and forty-two girls also 'took examinations for Life-Saving'.⁴⁷⁶

In 1955, the girls were treated to new changing rooms: it promised 'showers after hot games, dry clothes after rain and snow, and room to move!'.⁴⁷⁷

New athletic sports were introduced at the end of the decade: in 1956, the 'Beckside' reported:

'Miss Laverick kindly started a vaulting club on Friday nights for the more energetic females. This club seems to be thriving very well - no broken legs so far'.⁴⁷⁸

In 1957, the 'special pit and run-up' could 'be seen behind the pavilion' for the pole vault, which had followed the introduction of 'some new field events', which included 'the shot, discus and javelin'.⁴⁷⁹

In 1960, in the swimming baths, 'a filtration and chlorination plant' was 'installed during the Easter holidays through the generosity of two parents'.⁴⁸⁰ No more swimming with tadpoles!

However, elsewhere on the sports' scene, it was just as wet, though 'the rain-soaked pitches seemed to inspire the school teams to almost unprecedented feats'.⁴⁸¹

1960 saw new records in the sprints: the 100 yard boys' sprint was run in 10.4 seconds by N. Philpott in the senior boys' race (A. Sumitra came second despite also beating the record) and in the girls heat A. Court beat the record with a time of 11.8 seconds.⁴⁸² In the junior girls' race, L. Putman broke the record by a time of 12.2 seconds.⁴⁸³

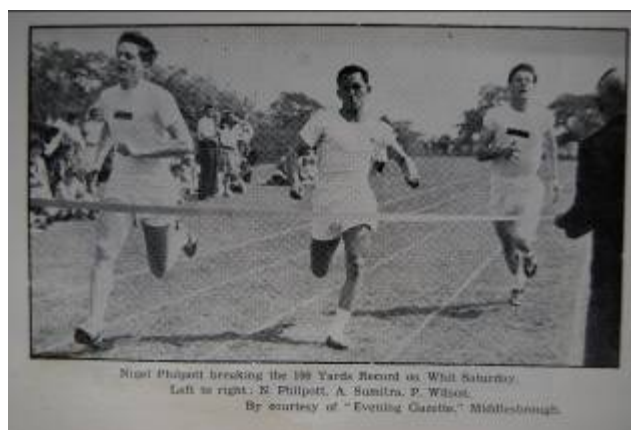


Figure 29: Record Breaking Sprint⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁶ 'Beckside', Summer 1954, p28, 'Life-Saving Examinations', MIC 4056 002023.

⁴⁷⁷ 'Beckside', Summer 1955, p2-5, 'Babblings of the Beck', Gillian Hinds, Margaret Wilkinson, MIC 4056 002042-3; 'History of School', p6; 'History', Morgan, p24.

⁴⁷⁸ School Diary, 1949 - 58, Joyce Bell, 26 Oct 1956.

⁴⁷⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1957, p3-5, 'School Letter', J. M. W., MIC 4056 002119-20.

⁴⁸⁰ 'Beckside', Summer 1960, p2-4, 'School Letter', D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002280-1; 'History of School', p6.

⁴⁸¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1960, p3-4, 'School Letter', Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002298-99.

⁴⁸² 'Beckside', Summer 1960, p20, 'Athletics', MIC 4056 002290.

⁴⁸³ 'Beckside', Summer 1960, p20, 'Athletics', MIC 4056 002290.

⁴⁸⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1960, No.141.

Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, in the summer of 1962, 'eight boys were chosen to take part in the North Riding Athletic Championships at Malton... the most notable of these performances was that of Christopher Oldfield, who set a new "best performance" jump for the School of 5ft 5¼ inches. Oldfield, Philpott and Moffatt reached the required standard for North Riding team honours and, in consequence, gained North Riding Colours'.⁴⁸⁵

In 1963, 'enthusiastic sixth formers... spent much [of their] spare time in the School hall playing badminton - a privilege granted to them for the small fee of 1s. 6d per term'.⁴⁸⁶ This enabled 'boy members' to enjoy 'a victory over Sir William Turner's School, Redcar, beating them 15 games to 3 in the only match' of 'the season'.⁴⁸⁷

Other sports also did well: in 1963, the 'Beckside' reported 'for the first time since 1947, the 1st XI has not lost a match during the hockey season'.⁴⁸⁸

The year of 1963 also saw the introduction of the 'Gymnastics and Modern Dance Competition'. This had 'proved itself worthy of continuation' by 1966.⁴⁸⁹

In 1965 and 1966, W. L. O. reported:

'We are optimists at Ayton for cricket - we can afford to be!- and so look forward to another good season next year - and also to that NEW CHANGING ROOM'.⁴⁹⁰

Ten years after the refurbishment of the girls' changing rooms and after receiving 'numerous comments about the Changing Rooms, which have been in a state of "being altered" since July 1966', the boys changing room was ready for use by the following year.⁴⁹¹ There 'were now lockers instead of the old ancient cages, to receive games clothing'.⁴⁹²

In 1967, there was more good news for cricketers (including Mr. Morgan): 'concrete cricket practice pitches and nets appeared on the reclaimed lake area - a valuable boon for better "strokes"'.⁴⁹³

The 'introduction of fencing and league cricket for the boys on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons' in leisure time, occurred in 1973, 'under the supervision of William Oughton - a Chemistry Master'.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1962, p22, 'Athletics - Boys', MIC 4056 002368.

⁴⁸⁶ 'Beckside', Spring 1963, p10, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 002379.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1963, p10, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 002379.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1963, p20, 'Hockey', MIC 4056 002384.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Beckside', Reports Supplement 1965-6, p5, 'Gymnastics and Modern Dance Competition', N.C., MIC 4056 002423.

⁴⁹⁰ 'Beckside', Reports Supplement 1965-6, p5, 'Cricket Report', W. L. O., MIC 4056 002428.

⁴⁹¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1966, p15, 'Bubbles from the Beck', MIC 4056 002445; 'History', Morgan, p32; 'History of School', p7; 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1967, MIC 4056 002453; 'The Beckside', Spring/Summer 1967, MIC 4056 002453.

⁴⁹² 'History', Morgan, p32.

⁴⁹³ 'History', Morgan, p32.

⁴⁹⁴ 'History', Morgan, p36.

By 1974, however, things were changing: Delia Fay wrote that 'Slave Drives (compulsory walks for girls in forms 1 to 3) have disappeared forever, which is probably a good thing.'⁴⁹⁵ Table tennis and trampolining were added to the various more traditional sports.⁴⁹⁶

The big build at the turn of the decade was the new Sports Hall. This had been first considered in 1978, work started in 1980 and was opened the following year (see 'Buildings').⁴⁹⁷

In the 1980s, new luxuries were added to the sporting features: in 1984 came the 'refurbishment of [the] pool and heat exchangers [were] added'.⁴⁹⁸ A 'new toilet block for girls' was created 'within [the] girls' changing room' in 1988.⁴⁹⁹ In 1991, the boys gained new changing rooms as part of the 150th Anniversary appeal (see 'Buildings').

In 1989: 'former pupils of the Friends' School, Great Ayton... raised nearly £30 000 in their Centenary Appeal for four new tennis courts and netball courts'.⁵⁰⁰ Mr Roy George, 'the president of the Ayton Old Scholars Association', formally presented the new courts 'to the headmaster, Mr David Cook'.⁵⁰¹

In 1990, Ayton School was in the news for an unusual football match on 17th July:

'England, represented by a team of local lads, took on Italia, in the shape of a team taken from a group of Italian students on a three-week language course in Britain... the 120 students, most from the Tuscany area... [were] sharing accommodation at the Friends School with a smaller group of Spaniards, all in Great Ayton to improve their English'.⁵⁰²

This was part of a move to use the School, whilst it was empty during the holidays.⁵⁰³ The score was England, 9: Italia, 5.⁵⁰⁴

Extra-Curricular Activities

Many subjects were extra-curricular, done as optional extras, such as music. One popular extra-curricular activity throughout this period was life saving. In the summer of 1948, 'six members of the School, from the age of fourteen upwards, were examined by the Royal Life Saving Society' who said that they were 'the best team of life-savers that they had examined'.⁵⁰⁵ At the beginning of the autumn term:

⁴⁹⁵ 'Beckside Broadsheet', 1974, Delia Fay, p15, MIC 4056 002606.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Spring 1975, 'Sports', p10-134056 002629.

⁴⁹⁷ 'History of School', p7.

⁴⁹⁸ 'History of School', p8.

⁴⁹⁹ 'History of School', p8.

⁵⁰⁰ Unknown newspaper clipping, n.d; 'History', Morgan, p45; 'History of School', p8.

⁵⁰¹ Unknown newspaper clipping, n.d.

⁵⁰² *The Evening Gazette*, 17 Jul 1990.

⁵⁰³ *The Evening Gazette*, 17 Jul 1990.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Evening Gazette*, 17 Jul 1990.

⁵⁰⁵ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p4-5, 'Life Saving', Shirley J. Ruston, MIC 4056 0011760.

‘a notice was pinned in the playroom, and we found that our life-savers had won “The Rachael Brown Schoolgirls’ Life Saving Shield” for being the best team in the North and East Yorkshire Branch of the Royal Life Saving Society’.⁵⁰⁶

This continued a popular activity: in 1963, the school’s ‘hard work and great effort was recognised this term when the School was awarded the “Rachael Brown Perpetual Life Saving Shield” for receiving more life-saving awards than any other girls’ school in the area’.⁵⁰⁷

Personal survival was also popular: in 1975, 29 pupils gained ASA Awards for Proficiency in Personal Survival.⁵⁰⁸

The Wider World

In 1951, ‘there had been for some time a growing feeling... that the School... had not much idea of what was “going on” in the world... [so] in return for our subscription of £2 2s, Ayton School became a member of the Tees-side branch of the Council for Education in World Citizenship’.⁵⁰⁹

The school was much aware of events outside its own locus in 1954:

‘The most alarming thing, though, is that everyone seems to be getting used to the idea of a third world-war, and to the idea of employing H-Bombs as a means of winning it... the less said the better, the wires between Moscow and Washington are hot enough’.⁵¹⁰

In the 1960s, the school was also well aware of the Vietnam war.

The school often contributed to charities by raising money or sending home-made items. In 1956, the school contributed to the Refugee Fund to aid refugees fleeing to Austria from Hungary.⁵¹¹ In 1962, money was directed to the Kenya Relief Fund and the World Wide Fund for nature.⁵¹² During that year, clothes were collected for Oxfam.⁵¹³ In 1967, many pupils took part in an Oxfam March with 400 others, marching 25 miles from Ormesby: one pupil, Louise Davis, was the first girl back and six out of the first ten back were from Ayton School.⁵¹⁴ For the NSPCC, in 1984, the school played ‘hockey and football “marathons”, and [held] a magnificent fete on the School’s playing field. The final sum amounted to £700’.⁵¹⁵

⁵⁰⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p4-5, ‘Life Saving’, Shirley J. Ruston, MIC 4056 0011760.

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p10, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 002379.

⁵⁰⁸ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1975, p6, ‘Congratulations!!!’, 4056 002631.

⁵⁰⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1951, p3, ‘Diphtheria’, MIC 4056 001858.

⁵¹⁰ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1954, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 002009-11.

⁵¹¹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1956, p18, ‘The Refugee Fund’, D. William, MIC 4056 002112.

⁵¹² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1962, p6, ‘Kenya Relief Fund’, Elizabeth McAdam, MIC 4056 002345; ‘Beckside’, Spring 1962, p7, ‘The World Wildlife Fund’, Charlie Shaw, MIC 4056 002345.

⁵¹³ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1962, p7, ‘Oxfam Clothes Collection’, M. G. Chambers, MIC 4056 002360.

⁵¹⁴ ‘The Beckside’, Autumn 1967, MIC 4056 002472.

⁵¹⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p42.

Long Walks

Long walks were treats for the whole school (for most pupils, anyway). Kathleen Chapman remembered that, in 1942, 'about once a term an excuse was found for the whole school to walk on the hills for the whole day'.⁵¹⁶

This involved 'missing morning school', Gill Haslam recalled:

'We didn't have them very often but when we did we would meet under the copper beech tree and off we'd go. First stop usually being at Gribdale Gate then on and on and back to school by 12.30 for lunch.'⁵¹⁷

On 27th February 1953, the school went on a Long Walk to 'celebrate the birth of David Morgan and John Watson's Ph.D'.⁵¹⁸

School Trips

Ayton was imaginative in the range of school trips and visits it provided, both during and out of school (i.e. during the holidays), even during the war years. These are just a sample of the various visits the children enjoyed.

In the spring of 1941, whilst the boys went hitchhiking with Mr Pedley and Mr Carr, the girl prefects had a holiday in the Lake District with Miss Nicholson.⁵¹⁹

Miss Nicholson took pupils Youth Hostelling in Whitby, Scarborough and Goathland in the summer of 1949.⁵²⁰ In 1953, the fourth form girls 'went for a Youth Hostelling holiday at the Lakes, with Miss Carter, Miss Barker and Miss Lund'.⁵²¹

In the autumn of 1955, part of the school visited the 'Mouse Man' in his woodwork shop in Kilburn.⁵²²

In 1961 began 'a venture to take a party of climbers to the Lake District at half term under the Readers [John and Mary] and to stay at the Quaker Hostel Glenthorne in Grasmere'.⁵²³

School trips could involve hard work, such as the work camp at Botton Hall during December 1961.⁵²⁴

Neither did they always stay in the country: in 1962, 'during the Easter holidays a group of twenty-eight seniors,

⁵¹⁶ 'A Quaker School in Wartime'.

⁵¹⁷ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p2.

⁵¹⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1953, p20 'Diary', Angela Bradbeer, MIC 4056 001959.

⁵¹⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p13-14, 'The Lighter Side', D. S. Holden, MIC 4056 001348; 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p.15-16, 'Back to Nature', Joyce Dobbing and Joyce Hindmarsh, MIC 4056 001348.

⁵²⁰ 'Beckside', Summer 1949, p13, 'Youth Hosteling', MIC 4056 0011790.

⁵²¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1953, p15-16, 'Youth Hostelling in the Lake District', MIC 4056 001986-7.

⁵²² 'Beckside', Autumn 1955, p10, 'Visit to the Mouse Man', Sonia Dunn, MIC 4056 002063.

⁵²³ 'History', Morgan, p29.

⁵²⁴ 'Beckside', Autumn 1961, p10, 'The Work Camp', Various, MIC 4056 002332

and four staff, under the leadership of Mr. Eden, spent ten days in France'.⁵²⁵ In 1965, there was the 'usual trip abroad, this time skiing in Austria'.⁵²⁶

Some trips were more academic: in the Spring of 1966, the sixth form visited Wrea Head for a week-end conference on India.⁵²⁷ In 1985:

'ten Sixth form students from The Friends School, Great Ayton took part in a two day course at The CADCAM Centre on Thursday and Friday. This is the first time a school has taken part in such a course which gave the students and understanding of how computers increased the competitiveness of industry and how they helped to resist the thrust to Britain from Japanese, Americans and the rest of Europe. The initiative, started by the physics master, Mr David Fathers and enthusiastically supported by the headmaster, Mr David Cook, also examined the interaction between people and computers, as well as industry and computers'.⁵²⁸

Leisure

Outside leisure time

The pupils of Ayton School, unlike many schools, were lucky to be located right on the doorstep of North Yorkshire's wonderful countryside. This meant that during their leisure time they could enjoy the fresh air and all the country has to offer, even if they didn't leave the School grounds.

In 1941, a very cold and wintry start to the year may have been disruptive for the school and village, but, despite the cold, the pupils enjoyed much of their free time outside. Gill Haslam recalled that a 'huge slide would be made by sprinkling water in a path across the boys' playground'.⁵²⁹ Nor was this the only skating rink. Florence Maw wrote in the 'Beckside':

'We arrived back to School extremely excited to find that the lake was frozen and that we were allowed to skate... Most boys and girls delight to think of ice skating and its joys, but it is not many who are lucky enough to be able to enjoy it in their own school grounds'.⁵³⁰

Even when the lake was finally drained, it did not mean the end of skating: in 1975, the School started trips on Wednesday afternoons 'to the Forum at Billingham', where 'they swam, skated on the ice rink, played five a side and indulged in weight lifting and keep fit in the gymnasium'.⁵³¹

⁵²⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1962, p4-6, 'The French Tour', Jasper Kay, MIC 4056 002358-9.

⁵²⁶ 'History', Morgan, p31.

⁵²⁷ 'Beckside', Spring/Summer 1966, p2-5, 'Commentary', Gillian Parkinson, MIC 4056 002407.

⁵²⁸ Unknown newspaper clipping, n.d. NYCRO.

⁵²⁹ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p3.

⁵³⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p11-12, 'Skating', Florence Maw, MIC 4056 001347.

⁵³¹ 'History', Morgan, p35.

In 1947, ‘an interesting and very enjoyable innovation’ during the pupil’s leisure time, ‘were the riding lessons given to the school by Mr. Hall, an Old Scholar’, who lived at Tree Bridge Farm and had established a riding school there.⁵³² He ‘came into school on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons to give riding lessons to those interested’.⁵³³

Another innovation, Clifford Morgan wrote, was that, in 1950:

‘the School was allowed to go to Little Ayton - Fletchers’ Farm - to watch the annual Point to Point Races... the Headmaster gave a stern warning of “of course no betting”. These races were to be a feature for many years to the scholars’.⁵³⁴

Clifford Morgan recalled that, of the leisure time activities in the 1940s:

‘by far the most interesting was fishing for trout in the beck. The Headmaster, Stanley Carr, was a true countryman who believed the only way to fish was fly-fishing. The boys and girls took to it so naturally, and there was no finer sight to see the line being cast on the water - the trout was taken to the kitchen and appeared on the proud caster’s breakfast plate!’⁵³⁵

In the summers, the beck was a popular destination for free time: in 1951, ‘the appearance of a boat upon the lake excited a great deal of curiosity, and when the news spread round that the boat had been given to the Boat Club, interest in rowing and sailing increased amazingly’.⁵³⁶ The boys began to canoe on the beck using “jettison tanks” that aircraft used to carry petrol in on long trips, and which they jettisoned when empty’.⁵³⁷ This must have been a popular activity for, according to Mr. Morgan, in 1965, ‘canoes floated on the beck, built under supervision by boys and girls in the upper forms’.⁵³⁸

Inside leisure time

However, it was not always possible, or desirable, to spend the hours out of doors. The School provided ‘common’ and ‘hobbies’ rooms for the pupils when not in lessons. The school went through various fashions, fads and fazes in what leisure time was spent doing.

⁵³² ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p.8, ‘School News’, Judith Crossley, MIC 4056 0011712; ‘History’, Morgan, p14.

⁵³³ ‘History’, Morgan, p14.

⁵³⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p18.

⁵³⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p14.

⁵³⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1951, p4, ‘School Letter’, MIC 4056 001888.

⁵³⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1951, p4, ‘Canoes’, John Fothergill, MIC 4056 001873.

⁵³⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

In 1947, the Sixth Form was granted the privilege of ‘a new common room in the front room of Rawdon House’.⁵³⁹ In 1963, the room was much improved:

‘with the addition of six easy chairs, the sixth form room has been made more comfortable. This is largely through the effort of Miss Nicholson... There are now facilities for making coffee and snacks, which are consumed in comfort’.⁵⁴⁰

1947 also ‘saw the beginning of the Boys’ Hobbies Room which, without a doubt, has long been needed’.⁵⁴¹

In spring 1948, it was announced in the ‘Beckside’ that:

‘a new game has grown popular in Ayton this term - chess. Though it is thought to have commenced 1300 years ago, it is the first time it has been played consistently here in recent years’.⁵⁴²

A group was formed:

‘after the enthusiasm shown for this battle of wits last term, it was generally agreed by all persons interested to have a Chess League. Mr. Connell arranged the division of the nineteen members into two leagues - League I. of eleven members and League II. of eight members’.⁵⁴³

In the spring of 1954, ‘it was decided that eight chess sets be purchased at the expense of the Games Committee’ and noted that ‘both our foreigners, Adolf and Thavorn, enjoy chess’.⁵⁴⁴

However, the popularity of chess must have phased out again, for in the autumn of 1967, ‘the battle of wits over a chess board has been re-introduced under the leadership of Mr. Morgan’.⁵⁴⁵ In 1972, ‘Leven Hall inhabitants were taught not only to play chess but bridge in their free time’.⁵⁴⁶

During leisure time, the boys and girls showed more inclination to avoid gendered stereotypes than many schools did at that time: Clifford Morgan noted that boys took ‘up domestic science’ and girls used ‘the woodwork shop for their leisure activities and hobbies’.⁵⁴⁷ In the autumn of 1950, Judith Hall wrote, ‘at first, when it was suggested that a few girls should learn woodwork in the Hobbies Group, some of the boys laughed, and said: “You’ll be no good”, or “You should be pleased you don’t *have* to learn it”’.⁵⁴⁸

Crafts were also a popular hobby. At the end of 1952, ‘nearly everyone was getting interested in weaving’.⁵⁴⁹

The school was fortunate to have a variety of looms, which began with Miss Harwood’s loom and two school

⁵³⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p13.

⁵⁴⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p10, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 002379.

⁵⁴¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1947, p3, ‘School News’, MIC 4056 001687.

⁵⁴² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, p4, ‘School News’, Dennis R. Yare, MIC 4056 0011714.

⁵⁴³ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p4, ‘The Chess League’, Henry R. Pickering, MIC 4056 0011760.

⁵⁴⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1954, p10-11, ‘Chess’, Oliver R. Spence, MIC 4056 001998.

⁵⁴⁵ ‘The Beckside’, Autumn 1967, MIC 4056 002472.

⁵⁴⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p35.

⁵⁴⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p26.

⁵⁴⁸ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1950, p6, ‘Hobbies Club’, Judith Hall, MIC 4056 001846.

⁵⁴⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p5-6, ‘Weaving’, Joanna Nicholson, MIC 4056 001948-9.

looms.⁵⁵⁰ As its popularity increased, five more were bought and some students bought their own.⁵⁵¹ Then, a 36” loom was bought ‘on which you could do pattern weaving’, and ‘some girls’ brought ‘big pattern looms of their own’ and finally, ‘a big foot power loom was bought’.⁵⁵²



Figure 30: The Weaving Room⁵⁵³

Not all crafts required so much equipment. In 1955, there was an outbreak of knitting: the ‘Beckside’ announced that ‘the School has been gripped by a desire to knit, that is, the whole School... we have succeeded in knitting six blankets’.⁵⁵⁴ These blankets were sent to refugees in war-torn Europe.⁵⁵⁵

In 1957, pottery ‘at last got well under way’, after the building of the two pottery rooms in 1953 and provided ‘a great deal of scope for all the imaginative minds’.⁵⁵⁶ In the other room in the Mill that year, making ‘model aeroplanes’ was a popular past time and ‘the noise created by the engines travelling at phenomenal revs. is absolutely unnerving’.⁵⁵⁷

Pupils could attend a variety of lectures. In 1972, Clifford Morgan wrote:

‘an unusual series of lectures took place in the Meeting House on many Saturday evenings, including one on Falconry - with live falcons - and on reptiles - including a “pass along” python! - by the zoo man’.⁵⁵⁸

Television had arrived ‘in the common room’ in 1954 and ‘viewing took place on Saturday and Sunday

⁵⁵⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p5-6, ‘Weaving’, Joanna Nicholson, MIC 4056 001948-9.

⁵⁵¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p5-6, ‘Weaving’, Joanna Nicholson, MIC 4056 001948-9.

⁵⁵² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p5-6, ‘Weaving’, Joanna Nicholson, MIC 4056 001948-9.

⁵⁵³ Prospectus, n.d., c.1950s/60s.

⁵⁵⁴ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1955, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, R. W. F., MIC 4056 002059-60.

⁵⁵⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1955, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, R. W. F., MIC 4056 002059-60.

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1957, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, J. M. W., MIC 4056 002119-20.

⁵⁵⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1957, p3-4, ‘School Letter’, J. M. W., MIC 4056 002138.

⁵⁵⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p35.

evenings'.⁵⁵⁹ By 1976, pupils listened to radios and watched television in the evenings and at weekends.⁵⁶⁰

In the autumn term of 1974, 'for the first time, every year in the school' had 'its own Common Room'.⁵⁶¹

In the autumn of 1979, "Dungeons and Dragons" 'spread like a plague, and siege and counter-siege have taken place in the dungeons on boys' side in Leven Hall'.⁵⁶²

Groups

Many of these activities, however, were funnelled into organised groups in which the students could join. These were encouraged and often set up by enthusiastic teachers who would lead the group. Other groups were initiated and led by the students themselves. We have already encountered some of groups such as the Work Squad, Fire Brigade and Games Squad, all of whom provided a valuable service to the school, as well as to the pupils' development and awareness.

1941 saw the formation of four groups focussing on music, brains, chickens and flowers. "Musical Evenings" occurred on Sunday Evenings when pupils gathered to listen to 'Gramophone Records'.⁵⁶³ This was 'instituted by pupils John Watson and David Holden' and 'when these pupils left Herbert Dobbing I/C French, later Scripture and Senior Master - took over the venture'.⁵⁶⁴

In the autumn of that year (1941), 'a Junior Association was started', who called themselves "The Brains Club": 'the Forms II., IIR, and III. were allowed to join, and the Club had forty-two members. Mrs Carr was asked to be our president'.⁵⁶⁵ Their 'first proper meeting took the form of a Mock Trial and 'after this we had meetings in which different members recited, gave lecturettes, played, sang, and read stories which they had written'.⁵⁶⁶

The 'Poultry Club' was also established that year: 'twelve Khaki Campbell ducks and eighteen White Wyandotte hens were bought'.⁵⁶⁷ Girls 'volunteered to look after the poultry, and were responsible for feeding, including the cooking of food, cleaning out the hen and duck houses, keeping egg records and accounts'.⁵⁶⁸ By March, the group had collected a total of 226 hen eggs: between October and July, the total number of hen eggs collected was 814.⁵⁶⁹ Between March and July 1942, the girls collected 316 duck eggs.⁵⁷⁰ In 1943, 'the Poultry Club

⁵⁵⁹ 'History', Morgan, p24.

⁵⁶⁰ 'History', Morgan, p37.

⁵⁶¹ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1974, MIC 4056 002613.

⁵⁶² 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1979, p19, 'Remember This?', 4056 002793.

⁵⁶³ 'History', Morgan, p3.

⁵⁶⁴ 'History', Morgan, p3.

⁵⁶⁵ 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p16-17, 'The Brain's Club', R. Stephenson, E. Geary, MIC 4056 0013595.

⁵⁶⁶ 'Beckside', Autumn 1941, p16-17, 'The Brain's Club', R. Stephenson, E. Geary, MIC 4056 0013595.

⁵⁶⁷ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p16, 'The Poultry Club', E. N., MIC 4056 001428.

⁵⁶⁸ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p16, 'The Poultry Club', E. N., MIC 4056 001428.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p16, 'The Poultry Club', E. N., MIC 4056 001428.

⁵⁷⁰ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p16, 'The Poultry Club', E. N., MIC 4056 001428.

reported over 800 eggs for the Spring Term'.⁵⁷¹ The 'Poultry Club supplied the School with 2067 eggs during the period April to September' 1944.⁵⁷² This must have been much appreciated during those hard war years. In 1948, the school bought 'eight Rhode Island Reds and twelve Brown Leghorns' in a revival of the club.⁵⁷³

Despite the war and all the blackouts, the girl pupils were involved in bringing colour to the school, by providing flowers to decorate the various rooms. The Flower Squad was 'started and organised by Miss Wright'.⁵⁷⁴ One of the girls wrote that:

'when the wild flowers were over, we started to buy flowers from Easby Hall, and also people have very kindly offered to give us some... we are allowed three shillings a week for the flowers, and of this we try to save as much as we can, so that we may buy plants for the winter terms'.⁵⁷⁵

In 1942, Country Dancing took place on Saturday evenings with Ann Hartley, the Gym Mistress, for the energetic.⁵⁷⁶ These were recommenced in 1948.⁵⁷⁷

Alternatively, one could join the 'newly-formed Film Club' in 1942, which 'proved itself the most popular feature of the term. Besides providing entertainment, the varied films shown were very instructive'.⁵⁷⁸ This was held monthly in the Meeting House on Saturday evenings.⁵⁷⁹ However, during 1947, there was 'rather a feeling of disgust among some juniors concerning the films we have been seeing recently. According to these people, there is "too much love in the films and it is Mr. Morgan's fault"'.⁵⁸⁰ The resolution of this problem was aided by the Old Scholars, who in 1947 gave a generous '£25 to help hire films for the talkie projector'.⁵⁸¹ On 20th September 1947:

'the long awaited "Talkie" had arrived. It was a "Gaumont British" projector... the programme ["The Singing Sherriff"] started with about half a dozen breakdowns, but everyone enjoyed it in spite of this fact... We must not forget to thank Mr. Morgan for getting the films and operating the projector'.⁵⁸²

In 1943, the Social Studies Group was formed.⁵⁸³ The following year, in October, 'the Historical Association was reborn'.⁵⁸⁴ By 1945, dancing for beginners occurred on wet Saturday afternoons.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷¹ 'Beckside', Spring 1943, p26, MIC 4056 001461.

⁵⁷² 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p20, 'Babbings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001537.

⁵⁷³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p15, 'A New Venture', Fabian Wiklinson, MIC 4056 0011765.

⁵⁷⁴ 'Beckside', Summer 1941, p21, 'The Flower Squad', Freda Lewis MIC 4056 0013576.

⁵⁷⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1941, p21, 'The Flower Squad', Freda Lewis MIC 4056 0013576.

⁵⁷⁶ 'History', Morgan, p5.

⁵⁷⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1948, p3, 'School News', Eva P. Jordan, MIC 4056 0011713.

⁵⁷⁸ 'Beckside', Spring 1942, p26, 'The Film Club', P. Crowther, MIC 4056 001414; 'History', Morgan, p5.

⁵⁷⁹ 'History', Morgan, p11.

⁵⁸⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1947, p4, 'School News', Ruth Coates, MIC 4056 001688.

⁵⁸¹ 'Beckside', Summer 1947, p3, 'School News', Audrey Rogers, MIC 4056 001670.

⁵⁸² 'Beckside', Autumn 1947, p4, 'School News', Esla Kennedy, MIC 4056 0011713.

⁵⁸³ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p24, 'Social Studies', MIC 4056 001593.

⁵⁸⁴ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p20, 'Babbings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001618.

⁵⁸⁵ 'History', Morgan, p11.

The Science Club was not limited to projects and lectures at the school: on 19th March 1947, they visited the Acklam Steelworks, then run by Dorman Long and Co. Ltd.⁵⁸⁶

The arts were also well represented. In the spring of 1948, David S. Artiss reported:

‘the Senior Arts Association takes a large share in giving us three very interesting, informative and humorous performances by the Arts and Crafts, Industrial and International Groups - the three latest additions to the Association’.⁵⁸⁷

That year, ‘when Miss Harwood announced that the Junior Arts Association was to begin again after several years interval, all the members of the junior school experienced a feeling of excitement’.⁵⁸⁸

In 1952, ‘the Senior Literary and Senior Science Societies... combined to form the Debating Society’.⁵⁸⁹

Two groups were launched in 1957: ‘Miss Smith, the Domestic Science teacher, introduced the Guides to a handful of keen girls’.⁵⁹⁰ The Nomads Klub was formed: in their first meeting sixteen members and four staff visited the Wainstones.⁵⁹¹

In 1960, the Climbing group, ‘worked out’ new climbs on Botton Head (Ingleby Greenhow) ‘during the Summer Term, under the leadership of Maurice F. Wilson’ to ‘eventually appear in the new edition of the Cleveland Rock Climbing Club’s handbook’.⁵⁹²

In the spring of 1961, on ‘every Friday night’, Mr. Whillis and Sister taught First Aid: Christine Williams wrote, ‘we are a fairly small group, mainly consisting of boys and girls in fourth and fifth form’.⁵⁹³

Among ‘many useful jobs’, groups of ‘Fifth Formers and Fifth Removers’, built ‘a Pet Hut (it is proposed to form a Pet Club in the School) beside the Biology Lab’ in 1963.⁵⁹⁴ However, in 1970:

‘First and Second Form boys and girls had to evacuate the surviving pets from the Pet Hut at the end of last term as a wave of negligence - and a plague of rats swept in... no more pets should be brought back next term until the whole place had been cleaned out and made rat free’.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁸⁶ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1947, p9, ‘The Science Club’, MIC 4056 001690.

⁵⁸⁷ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, p5, ‘The Senior Arts Association’, David S. Artiss, MIC 4056 0011715.

⁵⁸⁸ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, p5, ‘The Junior Arts Association’, Shirley Rushton, MIC 4056 0011715.

⁵⁸⁹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1952, p21, ‘Senior Societies’, MIC 4056 001944.

⁵⁹⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p27.

⁵⁹¹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1957, p10-11, ‘Nomads Klub’, Harry Reid and T. C. W., MIC 4056 002158.

⁵⁹² ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1960, p7, ‘Climbing on Botton Head’, MIC 4056 002300.

⁵⁹³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1961, p6, ‘First Aid Group’, Christine Williams, MIC 4056 002315.

⁵⁹⁴ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1963, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, Joan M. Tubmen, MIC 4056 002390-1.

⁵⁹⁵ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1971, MIC 4056 002561.

January 1970 saw the formation of the Astronomy Group.⁵⁹⁶ In March, the following year, Night Orienteering was introduced.⁵⁹⁷

In 1975, the Leven Hall Film Society was formed: it comprised of 105 members who, by each paying a pound, enabled the society to be self-supporting.⁵⁹⁸ Among the early films shown were “Klute”, “Cabaret”, “Sleeper”, and “M*A*S*H”.⁵⁹⁹

The 1970s saw the introduction of a number of different clubs, including the Electronics Group, Table Tennis, Bridge, Young Ornithologists Club, a new Debating Society, The Exploring Society and, in 1980, the Archaeological Society.⁶⁰⁰

Literature

Literature was also popular outside lessons. The ‘Beckside’ was Ayton’s long running magazine, but in 1942, came the idea from Evelyn Nicholson of a wall newspaper, which was named “‘Roseberry Review’”. Published ‘weekly and posted in two glass-fronted cases on the wall outside the Meeting House, Roseberry Review carried world news and political comment as well as local items and was a source of information and interest to all its readers’.⁶⁰¹ Miss Nicholson wrote that:

‘It was reading a book about education in Russia that set me thinking about a wall-newspaper and so ‘Roseberry Review’ came into being. Press Meetings in the Art room after tea on Saturdays, settled the contents and illustrations for the ensuing week’s edition, and we typed late into Tuesday night to get it out on Wednesday. Much of the inspiration of this wealth of activity derived from Stanley Carr’.⁶⁰²

In 1945, changes occurred in the production of the “Roseberry Review”: sub-editors were appointed for ‘departments’ such as News, Literature, Fine Art, Nature and Agriculture, Sciences, Local History, Sport and Special Features.⁶⁰³

However, in 1947, it was ‘a matter of great regret to many of us that the wall newspaper which first appeared on February 10th, 1943, and was produced with so much energy and enthusiasm for two or three years, has gradually “died” during this last year’.⁶⁰⁴ In 1949, the newspaper revived somewhat.⁶⁰⁵

⁵⁹⁶ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1970-1, MIC 4056 002561.

⁵⁹⁷ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1972, MIC 4056 002591.

⁵⁹⁸ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p2, Chris Scott, Graham Burns, MIC 4056 002624.

⁵⁹⁹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p2, Chris Scott, Graham Burns, MIC 4056 002624.

⁶⁰⁰ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1976, p4, ‘Societies’, 4056 002672; ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1976, p7, ‘Leven Hall Debating Society’, Matthew Crosby, 4056 00253; ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1978, p11, ‘The Exploring Society’, The Jones Family, 4056 002738; ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Summer 1980, p4, ‘Archaeological Society’, Debbie Cleary, 4056 002806.

⁶⁰¹ Recollections, Kathleen Taubman, p1; Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p5; ‘History of School’, p5; ‘History’, Morgan, p5.

⁶⁰² ‘Developments’, Nicholson, p8-9.

⁶⁰³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1945, p.15, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 001587.

⁶⁰⁴ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p.2, ‘Editorial’, MIC 4056 0011712.

⁶⁰⁵ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1949, p2, ‘Editorial’, MIC 4056 0011785.

In the 1950s, with help of Old Girl Mavis Holdsworth (who had worked at Middlesbrough Library), the students re-classified and re-catalogued the library with the Dewy Decimal System and a “Librarco” 6 drawer cabinet with 6 000 cards.⁶⁰⁶ That year ‘many of the older books, mostly dictionaries and reference books’, were ‘rebound by the firm of “Remploy”’.⁶⁰⁷ There were ‘134 new library books’ added to the collection, being ‘an attempt to cover the demands of the boys and girls where an adequate supply has not previously been available’.⁶⁰⁸ At this time, ‘quite a considerable proportion of the new books now in the Centre Library are gifts from certain of our friends’.⁶⁰⁹ There was also a new junior section.⁶¹⁰ By 1976, there were ‘1122 new books in the Accession Register’ in the library.⁶¹¹



Figure 31: The Library⁶¹²

In 1961, the newer newspaper, the “Stop-Press Weekly” had ‘obviously been badly hit, either through staff shortage or production costs, and now hobbles along as “Stop-Press Half-Termly”’.⁶¹³ That year, ‘a serious competitor to the Beckside has emerged from the ranks of the Second Form (a lower class newspaper?)’.⁶¹⁴

There was also the Book Club (1962), which was ‘a means of ordering a variety of paperback books at published prices, by post’.⁶¹⁵ The following year, the Sixth Form Reading Club began.⁶¹⁶ By 1966:

⁶⁰⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1950, p13, ‘The Centre Library’, Gillian Tulip, MIC 4056 001849.

⁶⁰⁷ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1950, p13, ‘The Centre Library’, Gillian Tulip, MIC 4056 001849.

⁶⁰⁸ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1950, p4-5, ‘Centre Library Developments’, Gillian Tulip, MIC 4056 001813.

⁶⁰⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1950, p4, ‘Meeting House Improvements’, S. Williams, MIC 4056 001813.

⁶¹⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1950, p4, ‘Meeting House Improvements’, S. Williams, MIC 4056 001813.

⁶¹¹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1976, p16, ‘The Library’, Agnes Bradbury, 4056 002679.

⁶¹² Prospectus, n.d., c.1960s.

⁶¹³ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1961, p2-5, ‘School Letter’, Duncan B. Hunter, MIC 4056 002328-9

⁶¹⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1961, p13-15, ‘Face to Face’, Bruce Portus, David Wyatt and Douglas Crowley, MIC 4056 002315-6.

⁶¹⁵ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1962, p21, ‘The Paperback Book Club’, P.W., MIC 4056 002352.

‘the Third Form now, too, have their Reading Club and they chose “Lord of the Flies” and “Seeds of Time” for their first meeting. These two groups and the Play Reading Group prove very popular in school and give a much appreciated and satisfying opportunity of enjoying literature together for the sheer delight of doing so’.⁶¹⁷

1984 saw the ‘200th edition of “The Beckside” - the School’s magazine begun in 1910’.⁶¹⁸

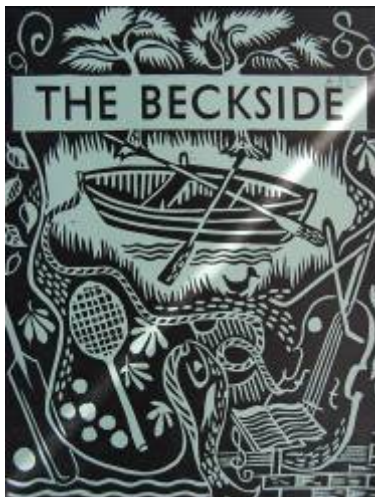


Figure 32: The Beckside⁶¹⁹

Language

It is perhaps interesting that words of approval used by Ayton scholars were, according to Miss Nicholson: ““super”, “neat” and (Ayton alone knows why) to “trock”. Some say “we had a ‘neat’ long walk this term,” and others say it was “trock”. What the 1941 Ayton swearword is, the staff doesn’t know!”⁶²⁰ ‘And, of course, the whole School signifies acquiescence by “O.K.,” and scepticism by “Oh, yeah.”’.⁶²¹

Drama

The realm of drama was a popular one for many students - whether in acting, lighting or producing scenery and costumes. This made it a concerted effort by the whole group, class or school. Plays were performed in concerts and by themselves, sometimes to the school, at other times to the public and there were drama competitions held between the houses, which started in 1954: ‘an inter-house Dramatic Festival was arranged with the dual purpose of fostering House spirit and supplying the end of term entertainment’.⁶²²

⁶¹⁶ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p19, ‘The Sixth Form Reading Club’, MIC 4056 002382.

⁶¹⁷ ‘Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1966, p2-5, ‘Commentary’, Gillian Parkinson, MIC 4056 002407.

⁶¹⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p42.

⁶¹⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, No.119.

⁶²⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p10, ‘English as she is spoke’, E., MIC 4056 001347.

⁶²¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p10, ‘English as she is spoke’, E., MIC 4056 001347.

⁶²² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1954, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 001994-6.

A selection of Ayton plays	
1942	“The Leper” A Miracle Play, by James Langstaff (Form II. Remove) ⁶²³
1947	“Riders to the Sea” (J. M. Synge) and “The Boy Comes Home” (A. A. Milne) ⁶²⁴ “Kings in Normania” (Percival Wilde) and “Sad About Europe” (Philip Johnson) ⁶²⁵
1949	Gilbert and Sullivan’s “The Pirates of Penzance”. ⁶²⁶
1953	Saki’s “Miracle Merchant” by H. W. Munro. ⁶²⁷ Third Form - T. S. Eliot’s “The Pokes and the Pollicies” ⁶²⁸ Staff - ‘The Dear Departed’, by Stanley Houghton ⁶²⁹
1954	“Tobias and the Angel” ⁶³⁰
1957	Bernard Shaw’s “Arms and the Man,” (‘the biggest production since “Tobias and the Angel” in 1954’) ⁶³¹
1963	“Twelfth Night” (‘the Fifth Form Play’) ⁶³²
1965	“The Tempest” ⁶³³
1966	Jean Anonilh’s “Antigone” (in English - played in the Rosehill Theatre) ⁶³⁴
1968	“The Game” (Mr. Whittle) ⁶³⁵
1975	“Much Ado About Nothing” ⁶³⁶
1976	“The Princess and the Goblins” ⁶³⁷
1979	“Tom Sawyer” ⁶³⁸
1982	“Look Back in Anger” by John Osborne ⁶³⁹
1990	“Twelfth Night”

By 1944:

‘as a result of the work of the Stagecraft group during the past two years, the School stage can now

boast a switchboard of 14 circuits, carrying a maximum load of 50 amps... the lighting is three-coloured throughout, apart from the floods for the back-cloth, and there are nine dimmers’.⁶⁴⁰

In the autumn of 1949:

‘it was decided to have a drama group, that could included people interested in lighting, stage management, dressing the actors, besides those who were interested in the actual acting’.⁶⁴¹

At other times, the students were fortunate in being taken to see plays: on 10th July 1953, ‘some of us were lucky enough to attend an

⁶²³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1942, p11-16, ‘The Leper’, James Langstaff, MIC 4056 001406-9.

⁶²⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p12.

⁶²⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1947, p.9, ‘The School Concert’, A. Herbert Dobbing, MIC 4056 0011712.

⁶²⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p16.

⁶²⁷ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p14, ‘End of Term Plays’, Anne Williamson, MIC 4056 001956.

⁶²⁸ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p14, ‘End of Term Plays’, Anne Williamson, MIC 4056 001956.

⁶²⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1953, p14, ‘End of Term Plays’, Anne Williamson, MIC 4056 001956.

⁶³⁰ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1954, p4-5, ‘School Letter’, Malcolm Ellis, MIC 4056 002028.

⁶³¹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1957, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, O. R. Spence, MIC 4056 002153-4.

⁶³² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p4, ‘School Letter’, Joan M. Tubmen, MIC 4056 002376.

⁶³³ ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁶³⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁶³⁵ ‘The Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1968, ‘Commentary’, Colin Wood, p18-20, MIC 4056 002523-4.

⁶³⁶ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1975, p27, ‘Rosehill Theatre’, 4056 002646.

⁶³⁷ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1976, p1-3, ‘The Princess and the Goblin’, 4056 002671-2.

⁶³⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p40.

⁶³⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p41.

⁶⁴⁰ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1944, p21, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 001566.

⁶⁴¹ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1949, p5-6, ‘The Drama Club’, Margaret Featherstone, MIC 4056 001801-2.

open air performance of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Ormesby Hall.⁶⁴² The following year, they also saw “As You Like It” there.⁶⁴³ In 1954, ‘one hundred of us went to see this year’s performance of the York Mystery Plays in St. Mary’s Abbey’.⁶⁴⁴ Some lucky sixth formers went to see “Othello” at the National Theatre, in 1968, starring Laurence Olivier and Maggie Smith.⁶⁴⁵

In 1960, the ‘House Drama Festival, with its bustle and keyed-up excitement for producers and players, and its sense of pleasurable anticipation for the audience, gave us all one of the most delightful evenings of the term’.⁶⁴⁶ Each house performed a sequence from “Macbeth”: ‘it is expecting a good deal of a school of some 130 seniors to find three Macbeths, three Lady Macbeths and three sets of producers, besides lords, soldiers, witches and ghosts, but the school rose to the occasion’.⁶⁴⁷

A ‘small group of Fifth and Sixth formers have been meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Whittle’ in 1962, ‘to take part in the Sunday evening play readings’.⁶⁴⁸

In 1966, was:

‘the School’s production of Jean Anouilh’s “Antigone” in translation, the first major drama production to be held in Rosehill. It offered a very high standard of acting ability, and gained the respect of all who saw it, for its depth of sincerity and professional atmosphere’.⁶⁴⁹

Mr Whittle, in 1968, ‘decided to have more than his usual hand in School Plays: he wrote and produced one himself, and with the help of all fully paid-up members of his Drama Group, presented the school and public with “The Game”’.⁶⁵⁰

In 1969, drama ‘mostly took place out of timetable time and with groups smaller than a whole class. In that year the organ was demolished and the end stage established on two levels, incorporating what was left of the choir platform from its chapel days’.⁶⁵¹ This year was:

‘a fallow year when Rosehill lay as if abandoned, stripped inside to its plaster-covered brickwork... Oliver Spence had produced a fine design for the building, to the brief that had been complied after much discussion... once the depressing period of no progress was past, thanks to the generosity of Old Scholars, the development of the theatre and its continuing use proved the soundness of the basic

⁶⁴² ‘Beckside’, Summer 1953, p3-4, ‘Highlights of the Term’, Dorothy Forster, MIC 4056 001965-6.

⁶⁴³ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1954, p23, ‘Diary’, MIC 4056 002020.

⁶⁴⁴ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1954, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 002009-11.

⁶⁴⁵ ‘The Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1968, MIC 4056 002487.

⁶⁴⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1960, p4-7, ‘The House Drama Festival’, E.N., MIC 4056 002299-300.

⁶⁴⁷ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1960, p4-7, ‘The House Drama Festival’, E.N., MIC 4056 002299-300.

⁶⁴⁸ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1962, ‘The Play-Reading Group’, Nancy Hirst, MIC 4056 002360.

⁶⁴⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1966, p2-5, ‘Commentary’, Gillian Parkinson, MIC 4056 002407.

⁶⁵⁰ ‘The Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1968, ‘Commentary’, Colin Wood, p18-20, MIC 4056 002523-4.

⁶⁵¹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Autumn 1975, p1-4, ‘Rosehill Theatre’, Peter Whittle, 4056 002631.

design'.⁶⁵²

180 children performed in "All the King's Men" later that year.⁶⁵³

1975 marked Rosehill's 10th Anniversary and the school started the 'campaign to raise funds to build a foyer and lavatories'.⁶⁵⁴

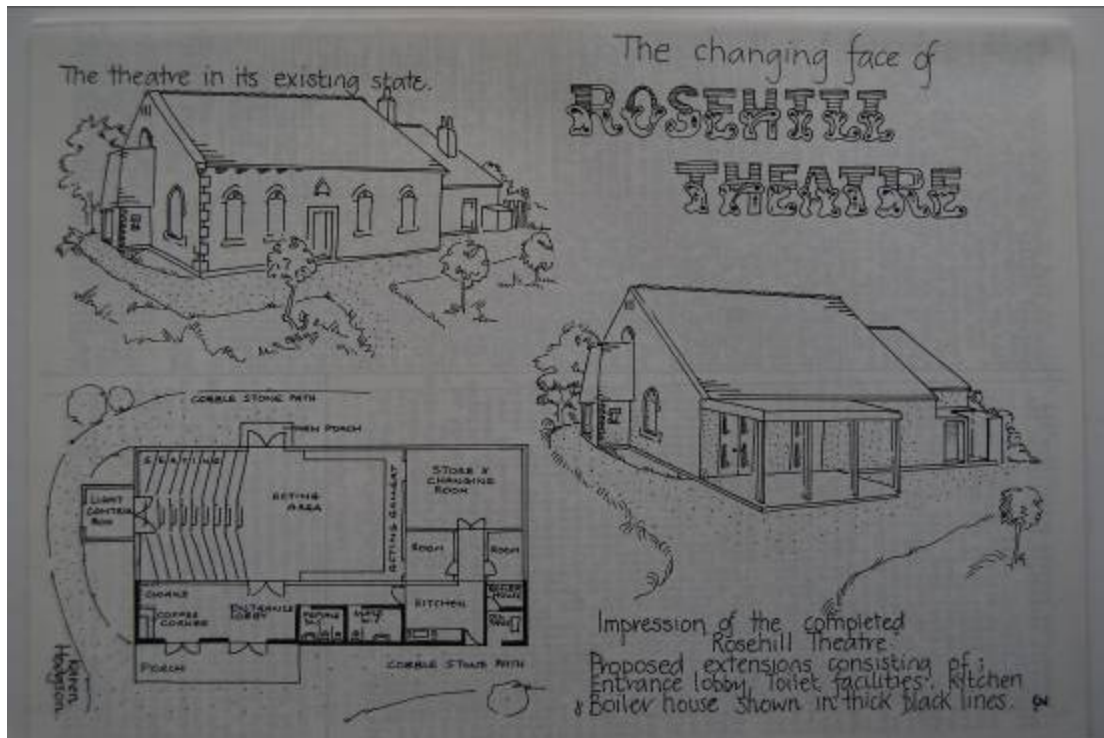


Figure 33: Rosehill Theatre⁶⁵⁵

In the 1990s, the School produced a distinct version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", which was 'set in the 1960s war zone' of Vietnam: 'with the forest becoming a jungle, and camouflage nets and sandbags as props. It's a novel idea but regulars at the school's productions are well-used to expecting the unconventional. Last year, The Merchant of Venice was set in money-minded 1980s Britain... English teacher Larry Clennell... adapted the play'.⁶⁵⁶

On 12th December, 1990, 'as part of their 150th anniversary celebrations, the pupils and staff are putting on Shakespeare's Twelfth Night in the school's Rosehill Theatre'.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵² 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1975, p1-4, 'Rosehill Theatre', Peter Whittle, 4056 002631.

⁶⁵³ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1975, p1-4, 'Rosehill Theatre', Peter Whittle, 4056 002631.

⁶⁵⁴ 'Beckside Broadsheet', Autumn 1975, p1-4, 'Rosehill Theatre', Peter Whittle, 4056 002631.

⁶⁵⁵ 'Beckside', Autumn 1975, No. 181.

⁶⁵⁶ Unknown newspaper clipping, n.d.

⁶⁵⁷ *Evening Gazette*, 'Break a leg! Stage set at school', 12 Dec 1990.

MUSIC

*‘On one memorable occasion at a practice this term, the Choral Society were told by an enthusiastic member of staff to “Open your mouths and throw yourself into it”’.*⁶⁵⁸

Music, concerts and musicals were loved by much of the school.



Figure 34: School Orchestra⁶⁵⁹

In 1941, though it was ‘the first time Ayton School has been without an orchestra’, the school was ‘very grateful to Mr. W. Bustard for the gift of a Flute, a Piccolo and a C Clarinet’ and ‘to Mr. B. F. Milner, of Bradford, for the gift of a violin to the School’.⁶⁶⁰ Other gifts included ‘several fine records’, which were ‘handed in for “gramophone listening”’. We should like to start a record library, and would welcome gifts of records and also suggestions for their use’.⁶⁶¹

However, that year:

‘with the School Hall still not available, the Entertainments Committee found it very difficult what to arrange for the programme of the “Beckside” Concert and where to house the large company... it was decided to keep the programme on similar lines as in previous years and to give the concert in the Dining Room on two successive nights - once for the children and once for parents and visitors’.⁶⁶²

In the end, the concert included “Elfin Hall”, “A Brahms Sonata”, “A Percussion Band” and performed “Sad About Europe”.⁶⁶³

In 1942, the School Orchestra restarted, ‘which, though small, lacks nothing in enthusiasm’.⁶⁶⁴ However, the

⁶⁵⁸ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1951, p5, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, David Siddle, MIC 4056 001859.

⁶⁵⁹ Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

⁶⁶⁰ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1941, p21-23, ‘News From the Music Wing’, E. W., MIC 4056 0013577-8.

⁶⁶¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p23, ‘News from the Music Wing’, E. W., MIC 4056 001353.

⁶⁶² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p24-26, ‘The Beckside Concert’, Jane Hales, MIC 4056 001354-5.

⁶⁶³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p24-26, ‘The Beckside Concert’, Jane Hales, MIC 4056 001354-5.

⁶⁶⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1942, p23, ‘News From the Music Wing’, M. G. W., MIC 4056 001412.

school still 'WANTED - Half-a-dozen keen pupils for the piccolo, flute or clarinet'.⁶⁶⁵ The appeal was successful and eight boys and three girls took up woodwind: 'every Saturday evening the orchestra meet for practice, and performed at General Meeting and in Hymn Singing at the end of term'.⁶⁶⁶ By 1945, the Orchestra numbered eighteen members and the following year, the Senior Boys Choir was formed.⁶⁶⁷

The school also hosted concerts by visiting musicians, 'who gave recitals in The Meeting House to the pupils on Saturday evenings'.⁶⁶⁸ Clifford Morgan remembered, 'Mary Casson, daughter of Sibyl Thorndike, who played exquisitely on the Virginal'.⁶⁶⁹ In 1950, the Durham Youth Orchestra visited the school.⁶⁷⁰

In 1948, 'there was a marvellous response to a suggestion for a Senior Choral Society [by Mr Porter], and now nearly all the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth are members'.⁶⁷¹ Also, 'Woodwind and violin classes were... suggested if instruments could be obtained, and we should like to thank all the parents who responded to the appeal for instruments so marvellously'.⁶⁷² Furthermore, 'Mr. Porter has also started senior and junior gramophone clubs, which are much appreciated, mainly because we can all choose our own records, and we have a small committee to write down the requests and run the group generally'.⁶⁷³

Twenty-six pupils 'passed in subjects of the Associated Board of The Royal Schools of Music' in 1949.⁶⁷⁴

The 'Spring Term of 1949 will always be remembered as 'the term when we did "Pirates" [of Penzance]'.⁶⁷⁵ This musical was most popular by all who took part and who watched the production on the 24th to 26th March:

'I believe the idea originated with Mr. Porter last term. On his arrival at Ayton, he started to organise the musical life of the school on a more democratic basis, with numerous committees of boys and girls to help him... the hired costumes arrived late on Tuesday evening, from Brighton, and you can imagine the fun we had seeing other members of the cast - especially staff - walking around in piratical dress... one rather nervous woman, after seeing the pirates going down to a performance, remarked that "it wasn't safe to be out on these dark nights"'.⁶⁷⁶

'Pupils [taking part] included Raymond Newbegin, Derrick Smith, Judith Crossley, Jean McNeil, Isabel

⁶⁶⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1942, p23, 'News From the Music Wing', M. G. W, MIC 4056 001412.

⁶⁶⁶ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p18-19, 'News From the Music Room', M.G.W., MIC 4056 001429.

⁶⁶⁷ 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p4, 'School News', MIC 4056 001676.

⁶⁶⁸ 'History', Morgan, p14.

⁶⁶⁹ 'History', Morgan, p14.

⁶⁷⁰ 'Beckside', Summer 1950, p7, 'Durham Youth Orchestra', Clifford Weschenfelder, MIC 4056 001832.

⁶⁷¹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p6, 'Music', Joan D. Gatty, MIC 4056 0011761.

⁶⁷² 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p6, 'Music', Joan D. Gatty, MIC 4056 0011761.

⁶⁷³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1948, p6, 'Music', Joan D. Gatty, MIC 4056 0011761.

⁶⁷⁴ 'History', Morgan, p17.

⁶⁷⁵ 'Beckside', Spring 1949, p2, 'Editorial', MIC 4056 0011771.

⁶⁷⁶ 'Beckside', Spring 1949, p7, 'The Pirates of Penzance', MIC 4056 0011773.

Wardle, Margaret Featherstone and Marjorie Wilson.⁶⁷⁷ So many other pupils made up the operatta, and also had to cope with school work, matches and “mocks” exams. Surely one of the musical achievements of Ayton School’.⁶⁷⁸

And, ‘after production costs of about £60 have been paid, we shall have a profit of approximately £57 to hand over to the School Committee for the Development Fund’.⁶⁷⁹

The Music Society was started in 1950:

‘its aim is not only to listen to music... but to find out something about the music and to discuss the records played’.⁶⁸⁰ In 1951, it consisted of ‘nine scholars and two permanent members of staff’.⁶⁸¹

On 5th March 1961, the third form visited Middlesbrough Town Hall to hear the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra play.⁶⁸²

By autumn 1951, ‘the Choral Society, which has improved vastly over the past two or three years, so much so that it was able to give a performance of Haydn’s “The Heaven’s Are Telling,” in the Village Church’.⁶⁸³ That year, the ‘keenly-anticipated Staff Concert’ included ‘the eight-hand waltz for two pianos, by Moszkovski’.⁶⁸⁴

At the end of 1953, came the departure of ‘Mr. Porter, our Music Master’:

‘a man who has done more than anyone else to make his subject so interesting and successful... No more will C. Dorm. get up at twenty-five past and dive dishevelled into breakfast, and no more will the Choral Society be conducted with a baton held together with Selotape’.⁶⁸⁵

‘Mr Porter’s reputation was built on the solid foundations of “The Pirates of Penzance”. On this adamant base flourished The Choral Society, his own creation at Ayton. Visitors to the school are impressed by the co-ordination and achievements of the Choral Society... with the advent of their new conductor, a revolution began to take place in the orchestra’.⁶⁸⁶

In 1955, ‘the Choral Society did very well in its performance of the “Messiah” at Great Ayton Church, the church was packed... Mr Addison deserves real congratulation for his perseverance throughout the term to gain a success’.⁶⁸⁷ There was also praise for ‘the orchestra, whose growing strength has been marked with pleasure

⁶⁷⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p16.

⁶⁷⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p16.

⁶⁷⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1949, p2, ‘Financial Statement’, E. N. MIC 4056 0011775.

⁶⁸⁰ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1950, p6, ‘Music’, Gillian Cornforth, J. Michael Hendry, MIC 4056 001846.

⁶⁸¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1951, p7, ‘The Music Society’, J. Michael Hendry, MIC 4056 001860.

⁶⁸² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1951, p5, ‘The Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra’, Mary Fletcher, MIC 4056 001859.

⁶⁸³ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1951, p4, ‘School Letter’, MIC 4056 001888.

⁶⁸⁴ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1951, p4, ‘School Letter’, MIC 4056 001888.

⁶⁸⁵ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1953, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, Frederick Gilbert, MIC 4056 001981.

⁶⁸⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1953, p6-7, ‘Farewell’, David Siddle, MIC 4056 001982.

⁶⁸⁷ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1955, p3-6, ‘School Letter’, R. W. F. MIC 4056 002059-60.

during the last few years... this term we welcome our first string quartet consisting of scholars only'.⁶⁸⁸

A new fashion and culture, however, had invaded Britain by this time:

'Let's face it, even the staff appreciate Rock 'n' Roll! If they don't do it, they split their sides watching other people's feeble efforts at doing it. A music teacher, who shall be nameless, has actually admitted, - yes,-admitted, that some modern swing music isn't too bad!' ⁶⁸⁹

In 1958: 'Great Ayton people must have created a precedent on Sunday, March 9th, when worshippers from the Quakers, Anglicans and Methodists all congregated at the Parish Church to sing and listen to Handel's "Messiah"'.⁶⁹⁰ They actually did it twice, because of the bad weather!⁶⁹¹ However,

'the highlight of this term's music was the small choral's success at the Stockton Music Festival... twenty-four members, both staff and scholars... we came away with a cup, a cheque, the highest marks of the evening and high spirits'.⁶⁹²

The choral society also sang for the Old People's Party in the village and at Poole Sanatorium.⁶⁹³

The following year:

'the most important musical events this term were the Choral Society's production of "Ruddigore", one of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas, and Small Choral's rendering of Schutz's "St. Matthew Passion" in the Parish Church'.⁶⁹⁴

The 'performance of Bach's "St Matthew Passion" in Guisborough Parish Church' took place in 1960: 'the conductor was Richard Addison and consisted of choirs from school, Guisborough Grammar School, Great Ayton Village and a combined orchestra. This was a splendid effort'.⁶⁹⁵ Furthermore:

'under the guidance of the untiring Mr. Addison, the School Choir has managed to get itself on the air, and will be... heard on December 27th, at 7 o'clock, in the programme "Choir Night," on the B.B.C.'s North Home Service... the Choir has further distinguished itself by singing carols in Ayton and winning the Madrigal section of the Musical Festival in Stockton'.⁶⁹⁶

In 1960, it was also announced that 'there are now two groups in the Recorder Club'.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁸⁸ 'Beckside', Summer 1955, p6-7, 'The Term's Music', M. R., MIC 4056 002042-3.

⁶⁸⁹ 'Beckside', Autumn 1956, p17-18, 'Rock 'n' Roll', Oliver Spence, MIC 4056 002111.

⁶⁹⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1958, p9, 'The Messiah', MIC 4056 002172.

⁶⁹¹ 'Beckside', Spring 1958, p9, 'The Messiah', MIC 4056 002172.

⁶⁹² 'Beckside', Autumn 1958, p8, 'Music', Sarah E. Spence, MIC 4056 002207.

⁶⁹³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1958, p8, 'Music', Sarah E. Spence, MIC 4056 002207.

⁶⁹⁴ 'Beckside', Spring 1959, p4, 'School Letter', Bridget Dunn, MIC 4056 002219.

⁶⁹⁵ 'History', Morgan, p28; 'Beckside', Spring 1960, p2-4, 'School Letter', D. L. Williams, MIC 4056 002265-6.

⁶⁹⁶ 'Beckside', Autumn 1960, p3-4, 'School Letter', Sally L. Burch, MIC 4056 002298-99.

⁶⁹⁷ 'Beckside', Autumn 1960, p14, 'Junior School Music', W. Arnold, MIC 4056 002304.

The following year brought more success: ‘the choir won second prize in the Stockton Music Festival, and their activities seem every bit as extensive as last year’.⁶⁹⁸ They performed the “Messiah” in Ayton Church (the conductor was reported to have said once, ‘Now this rehearsal is really important. We’ll be running into the “Messiah” if we’re not careful’).⁶⁹⁹

In 1962, the choir was large enough to ‘split into two groups; one constituting the select and chosen few, has performed in hymn-singing, and assists the orchestra with the hymns; the other, larger group, meets only on Wednesday evenings, and has been working on a “Benedicite,” by Vaughn Williams’.⁷⁰⁰ There was also a number of musicians, for ‘besides the orchestra, there are two string quartets, one of which performed in the concert which took place shortly after half-term’.⁷⁰¹ That year, a group went on a trip to Stockton’s Globe to see “The Barber of Seville”.⁷⁰²

The “Messiah” was performed again in 1963.⁷⁰³ The same year, a jazz band began, lead by Mr. Barley (who had played in the “Brass Monkeys” - Reading University’s jazz band).⁷⁰⁴ That term, Mr. Jones also: ‘endeavoured to arouse in the breasts of the younger, more impressionable members of the school a sympathy for classical music through the medium of his “78 club”’.⁷⁰⁵

The school performed “Noyes Fludde”, ‘a music drama by Benjamin Britten’ in 1964: ‘most of the school was involved under the direction of the Music Master Douglas Jones and the English Master Peter Whittle’.⁷⁰⁶ The following year, Bach’s “St Matthew’s Passion” was performed in Rosehill.⁷⁰⁷

Bach’s “Mass in B Minor” was performed in 1969, ‘under the baton of the Music Master, Douglas Jones’ in the Parish Church.⁷⁰⁸ Benjamin Britten’s “St Nicholas Cantata” was performed in Christ Church the following year, under Music Master Matthew England.⁷⁰⁹

In 1972, a recital of the “Nelson Mass” by Haydn was given.⁷¹⁰ That year, the choir of the Germantown School (a Quaker School from America) visited and performed to their guests in the Meeting House.⁷¹¹

⁶⁹⁸ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1961, p2-5, ‘School Letter’, Duncan B. Hunter, MIC 4056 002328-9

⁶⁹⁹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1961, p11-12, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 002315.

⁷⁰⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1962, p4-5, ‘Music’, Dick Bye, MIC 4056 002344.

⁷⁰¹ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1962, p4-5, ‘Music’, Dick Bye, MIC 4056 002344.

⁷⁰² ‘Beckside’, Spring 1962, p4-5, ‘Music’, Dick Bye, MIC 4056 002344.

⁷⁰³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p4, ‘School Letter’, Joan M. Tubmen, MIC 4056 002376.

⁷⁰⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p15, ‘The Jazz Band’, MIC 4056 002381.

⁷⁰⁵ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1963, p10, ‘Babblings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 002379.

⁷⁰⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p30.

⁷⁰⁷ ‘Beckside’, Spring/Summer 1966, p2-5, ‘Commentary’, Gillian Parkinson, MIC 4056 002407; ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁷⁰⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p33.

⁷⁰⁹ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1971, MIC 4056 002581; ‘History’, Morgan, p34.

⁷¹⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p35.

⁷¹¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p35.

A double musical bill was given in 1975, consisting of “The Demaon of Adachigahara” and “All the King’s Men”.⁷¹²

March 1977 saw ‘the School choir - 60 vocalists - under Music Master, Martin Essex was rehearsing for a performance of Verdi’s “Requiem” in York Minster. The performance took place, and all the nine Quaker Schools sang so well’.⁷¹³

The following year, the School Choir visited America, as Clifford Morgan recalled:

‘27 members and 4 staff departed from Gatwick on 28 Oct and returned on 17 Nov. During their sojourn they visited, and sang in, eleven Friends’ Schools on the East Coast. They stayed with families, and in addition visited Brooklyn, Manhattan, New York, Philadelphia including Westtown where Fred Sessa had taught before returning to England’.⁷¹⁴

On the 8th, 9th and 10th February 1979, came the performance of “The Boy Friend”.⁷¹⁵ In 1980, came “The Wizard of Oz”.⁷¹⁶ The choir also performed in ‘Colston’s Hall Bristol, where with other Friends’ schools they sang in the Oratorio “Elijah”’.⁷¹⁷

December 1981 saw the performance of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat”.⁷¹⁸

Handel’s “The Messiah” was performed in Durham Cathedral, along with in the ‘Nine Quaker Schools’, in 1983, with Martin Essex conducting.⁷¹⁹

In 1985 “Oliver”, by Lionel Bart, was the school musical, performed ‘in the School’s Rosehill Theatre. The Director was Christopher Scaife and the music under Martin Essex’.⁷²⁰

The musical “Godspell” was staged in 1986.⁷²¹ “Dido and Aeneas” was performed in Rosehill, 1990.⁷²² Later that year, the school performed the popular “The Pirates of Penzance” in Rosehill, where ‘the school choir, [was] under the direction of Martin Essex’.⁷²³

⁷¹² ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1975, p6, ‘All the King’s Men and The Demon of Adachigahara’, Rachael Slade, 4056 002624.

⁷¹³ ‘History’, Morgan, p38; ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1977, p1-3, ‘Verdi, The Requiem’, Jane Holt, Margaret Jackson, 4056 002682-3.

⁷¹⁴ ‘History’, Morgan, p39.

⁷¹⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p39; ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1979, p1-3, ‘The Boyfriend’, Harry Pearson, 4056 002757-8.

⁷¹⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p40.

⁷¹⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p40.

⁷¹⁸ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1982, p23, 4056 002849; ‘History’, Morgan, p40.

⁷¹⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p41; ‘The Beckside’, 1983, p4-5, ‘The Messiah’, Helen Jackson, 4056 002857.

⁷²⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p42.

⁷²¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p44.

⁷²² Unknown newspaper clipping, 1990.

⁷²³ ‘History’, Morgan, p46.

War

The School at Ayton during the period of the Second World War was undoubtedly different from any other time in its history. In these years that the School celebrated its centenary, though in those dark hours it must have often been difficult at times to imagine that the war would ever end and life return to normal. We are lucky to have descriptive accounts about the wartime school, including detailed recollections by Gill Haslam and Kathleen (nee Chapman) Taubman.⁷²⁴

Air raids could occur at any hour - day or night - during the war. Therefore, practices for precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the pupils would be taken at any hour as well: the children were taken to the cellars under the kitchen.⁷²⁵ Gill Haslam wrote that:

‘Last night at 11 o’clock we had an air-raid drill. I was fast asleep. There are magnificent cellars. We had to put on our knickers and red jerseys over our pyjamas, then our slippers and dressing gowns and take our rugs and hot water bottles with us’.⁷²⁶

The “Tin Gym” was ‘commandeered by the Army’, sometimes being used by Prisoners of War.⁷²⁷ This meant that ‘our school plays and ‘Pops’ during the war took place in the dining room on a temporary stage which was erected for the few days when performances took place’.⁷²⁸ According to Clifford Morgan, this also meant that ‘800 soldiers drilled on the High Green outside The School’.⁷²⁹ One of the Italian Prisoners of War called Serafino Nasca actually played a clarinet in the school orchestra.⁷³⁰

It was a visibly and audibly changed landscape for the School, for not only were soldiers marching on the green and PoWs playing in the orchestra, but the School Bell was silenced and all the windows were blacked-out as precautionary measures.⁷³¹ Lessons for the day-scholars were done before the blackout.⁷³²

‘Other wartime restrictions meant that we had to do more maintenance work about the school. The boys helped in the school grounds and to grow vegetables on the plots in the Sanatorium garden. The girls helped with cleaning the brass taps and the wash basins, sweeping the dorms and classrooms. Also we did the washing up.’⁷³³ (See also ‘Landscape’ for work by the various school ‘squads’ during the war.)

⁷²⁴ Evening Meeting Address given by Gill Haslam, February 11th 1990. Uncatalogued material, ZFA, NYCRO; Recollections and Reflections 1941 - 48, by Kathleen (nee Chapman) TAUBMAN. Uncatalogued material, ZFA, NYCRO.

⁷²⁵ ‘History’, Morgan, p1.

⁷²⁶ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p1.

⁷²⁷ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4; ‘History of School’, p5; ‘History’, Morgan, p1.

⁷²⁸ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

⁷²⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p1.

⁷³⁰ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1945, p.17, ‘Babbings of the Beck’, MIC 4056 001589.

⁷³¹ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p3-6.

⁷³² Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p4.

⁷³³ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p3.

The war could bring excitement and anxiety: 'once a land-mine was dropped at Little Ayton - there was great consternation about this and some of the boys retrieved bits of shrapnel from it as souvenirs'.⁷³⁴

As a Quaker school, there were some unusual aspects to the school during wartime. Quaker schools 'were given this extra dimension by the German and Austrian children often sent by Quaker agencies giving help to refugees. Some had been sent to England by their families and were living with foster parents'.⁷³⁵ Being 'a pacifist community in a village' also 'brought its own tensions, especially when the D-Day landings brought hopeful anticipation to many'.⁷³⁶

However, there was rejoicing all round when the war ended. On 22nd April 1945, the 'Beckside' reported that 'all black-out has been removed from the buildings'.⁷³⁷ On 5th May, noise returned to the school: the 'Big Bell could be tolled again', the school clock struck 'after four years' silence' and, 'More bells!', as the Ayton Town-Crier later reappeared.⁷³⁸ The school celebrated on the 8th May 1945, for it was 'V.E. Day, a holiday; a service of thanksgiving and dedication in the morning; form picnics in the afternoon'.⁷³⁹ There was a letter posted up in Great Ayton by the Prisoners of War to thank the village and the school for their kindness.⁷⁴⁰

Fire Brigade

One interesting aspect of the Quaker school during the war was that they:

'even had an official auxiliary fire brigade formed by some of the masters and senior boys. There was a truck and National Fire Service trailer with hoses. They were always 'at the ready' in case of emergencies and definitely once they were called out to Aireyholme Farm to extinguish a fire there'.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁴ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p3.

⁷³⁵ 'A Quaker School in Wartime'.

⁷³⁶ 'A Quaker School in Wartime'.

⁷³⁷ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p.33, 'Diary', MIC 4056 001625.

⁷³⁸ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p6; 'Beckside', Spring 1944 Supplement, p.30, 'Diary', MIC 4056 001544.

⁷³⁹ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p33, 'Diary', MIC 4056 001625.

⁷⁴⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p17, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001589.

⁷⁴¹ Evening Address, Gill Haslam, p3.



Figure 35: Fire-Service Exercise⁷⁴²

The Fire Squad was formed in 1940, but in the spring of 1941, it had ‘grown into the School Fire Brigade, as it has taken on a junior squad, and has, itself, been attached to the local A.F.S’.⁷⁴³

The original squad consisted of six boys (being Hunter, Pallister, Thomas, Walker, Jacobs and Battye) and the junior squad of eight boys (Carr, Colwell, Cresswell, Nicholson, Steele, Pitkethly, Potter and Wilkinson).⁷⁴⁴

The Fire Squad were more than once required in the line of action. In 1941:

‘The usefulness of our fire-fighting appliances was again demonstrated on Good Friday evening, when an urgent call came from the Primitive Methodist Chapel, where the heating apparatus had set fire to a part of the building.’⁷⁴⁵

In 1942, during the night, there was a ‘fire in the Junior Form room... [that] might have demolished the whole of our new block if it had not been for the prompt and efficient work of the School fire brigade’.⁷⁴⁶

In the summer of 1942, ‘a second-hand Vauxhall “16” [fire engine] was bought from the Friends’ Ambulance Unit... it was decided to renovate it’.⁷⁴⁷ This occurred ‘under the supervision of Bernard Coates and John Reader’.⁷⁴⁸ Later that term, ‘the N.F.S [National Fire Service] supplied us with a trailer pump, and our unit was

⁷⁴² Prospectus, undated, c.1940s/50s.

⁷⁴³ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p30-31, ‘The Fire Brigade’, B. C. C., MIC 4056 001357; ‘History of School’, p5.

⁷⁴⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p30-31, ‘The Fire Brigade’, Jane Hales, MIC 4056 001357.

⁷⁴⁵ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1941, p30-31, ‘The Fire Brigade’, B. C. C., MIC 4056 001357.

⁷⁴⁶ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1942, p2, ‘Forward’, A. L. S., MIC 4056 001402; ‘A Quaker School in Wartime’.

⁷⁴⁷ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1942, p10, ‘The Fire Brigade’, J. R. R., MIC 4056 001424.

⁷⁴⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p4.

complete'.⁷⁴⁹

Nor was it only a service dedicated to the school: when not fighting fires, the squad undertook 'the cleaning and painting of all the hydrants in the village, and this has considerably increased our knowledge of the byways and street names of the village'.⁷⁵⁰ J. R. R. reported that 'on one occasion we joined the local N.F.S unit in extinguishing imaginary fires when Ayton was "invaded"'.⁷⁵¹

During the summer of 1945, the 'Beckside' reported on the squad:

'The School Fire Brigade has rejoiced this term in a new Fire Car, a 30 h.p. Fordson V8, which draws a Standard Gwynne 8 h.p. light pump. Both of these pieces of equipment are the property of the N.F.S., but are on loan...

Four shrill blasts on a whistle brings Mr. Reader, struggling into his boiler suit as he runs, pell-mell to the driving seat; the boys tumble into the back of the van, and off she goes, swinging the trailer round the corner of the New Block. The whole thing takes a minute - a minute and-a-half. "Pretty quick that," says one of the row of envious small boys standing watching from the wall of Rawdon House'.⁷⁵²

Rosehips

An interesting initiative was taken up by many schools during the war and post-war years: the collection of rosehips. In Autumn edition of the 'Beckside' in 1944, a contributor wrote that:

'In answer to an appeal to schools to collect Rose Hips in the Autumn, Miss Harwood took on the organisation, and the School collected 262lbs., for which we were paid at the rate of 2d. per lb. At the end of the season hip-gatherers were able to hand over £2 5s 2d. to Friends' Relief Service'.⁷⁵³

The following year:

'we were again asked to help in the collection of rose hips, and a total of 587 lbs was realised (more than double last year's yield)'.⁷⁵⁴

Even more were collected in 1946, reaching the grand total of 640lbs.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁴⁹ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p10, 'The Fire Brigade', J. R. R., MIC 4056 001424.

⁷⁵⁰ 'Beckside', Spring 1941, p30-31, 'The Fire Brigade', J. R. R., MIC 4056 001357.

⁷⁵¹ 'Beckside', Summer 1942, p10, 'The Fire Brigade', J. R. R., MIC 4056 001424.

⁷⁵² 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p20, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001618.

⁷⁵³ 'Beckside', Autumn 1944, p.18, 'Babblings of the Beck', MIC 4056 001565.

⁷⁵⁴ 'Beckside', Autumn 1945, p.16, 'School News', MIC 4056 001642.

⁷⁵⁵ 'Beckside', Autumn 1946, p.4, 'School News', MIC 4056 001676.

Extraordinary Events

In 1941, the school celebrated its Centenary by producing a Pageant on the Greek Theatre.⁷⁵⁶ That summer, they also received a special visitor: 'Jack Hatfield, the Olympic Swimmer and proprietor of the Sports Shop in Middlesbrough, came to give an exhibition of his swimming prowess'.⁷⁵⁷

The HMI School Inspection took place in 1945: the school was 'last inspected in 1928 and should have been done again in 1939, but the war intervened'.⁷⁵⁸ Their 'judgements arrived in a report in 1947 giving full recognition of efficiency to the School'.⁷⁵⁹ The school also had HMI inspections in 1961.⁷⁶⁰

The Swimming Gala was held in the summer of 1945 ('as usual on what appeared to be the coldest day of the whole term'), but it was at this occasion the engagement of Miss Hodge and Mr Reader was announced.⁷⁶¹ On November 5th that year, the school gathered round the first bonfire for six years.⁷⁶²

Though this later became an annual event, in the summer of 1947, for:

'only the second time since the beginning of the war that the blind people from Thornaby and Stockton have visited us. A few of us who helped to entertain last July recognised old friends, but most boys and girls met with complete strangers who became, before long, close friends'.⁷⁶³

Clifford Morgan remembered that:

'pupils take the men and women for walk in the grounds; help at the tea tables, and sit with them at the music in the Meeting House, and finally cheer them on to their buses. This began in 1921'.⁷⁶⁴

That year, during half-term (21st June), members of the school walked to Stokesley Cinema to see "The Overlanders": 'the projector behaved better than expected, and broke down only twice. From first-hand information we found that the usual number of breakdowns during a performance was six'.⁷⁶⁵ Other visits that term included: a visit to see "Macbeth" at York, a visit to the Kilburn wood workshops, the Eileen Joyce Recital at Middlesbrough, the Sixth form girls saw the film "Nicholas Nickleby" at Middlesbrough, a lecture on Atomic Energy at Constantine College, Middlesbrough, Junior excursion to Marske, III form trip to Grosmont and Beckhole, IV form Egton and Glaisdale, V and VI form to Whitby on the train.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁵⁶ 'History of School', p5; 'History', Morgan, p3.

⁷⁵⁷ 'History', Morgan, p4.

⁷⁵⁸ 'History', Morgan, p10-11.

⁷⁵⁹ 'History', Morgan, p11.

⁷⁶⁰ 'History', Morgan, p29.

⁷⁶¹ 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p27, 'The Swimming Gala', MIC 4056 001622; 'Beckside', Spring 1945, p.27, 'The Swimming Gala', MIC 4056 001622.

⁷⁶² 'History of School', p5.

⁷⁶³ 'Beckside', Summer 1947, p3, 'School News', Eileen Inniss, MIC 4056 001670.

⁷⁶⁴ 'History', Morgan, p12.

⁷⁶⁵ 'Beckside', Summer 1947, p6-7, 'School News', MIC 4056 001670.

⁷⁶⁶ 'Beckside', Summer 1947, p6-7, 'School News', MIC 4056 001670.

Whitsun was the time when the Old Scholars arrived for the weekend, with, as Clifford Morgan recalled:

‘the usual cricket and tennis matches - school v old scholars - frequently too football! Then the Saturday evening “pop” which included various acts and the singing of “Forty Years On” and “The Canny Old School”’.⁷⁶⁷

General Meeting or Open Day usually took place:

‘at the beginning of July. Beginning with Meeting for Worship. Then walks with parents in the grounds. Lunch, often a picnic, followed by the Open Meeting and the presentation of prizes to successful pupils. Into the sunshine for the play on the open air theatre, and frequently a swimming display in the pool. Finally a concert by the school musicians in The Meeting House, and then farewell to parents as the cars leave the playground’.⁷⁶⁸

N.B. Open Day was called Speech Day until 1963.⁷⁶⁹ In 1965, there were so many people, they had to have a ‘marquee on Bottom Field... since the Meeting House was now too small to hold the school, old scholars, parents and visitors’.⁷⁷⁰

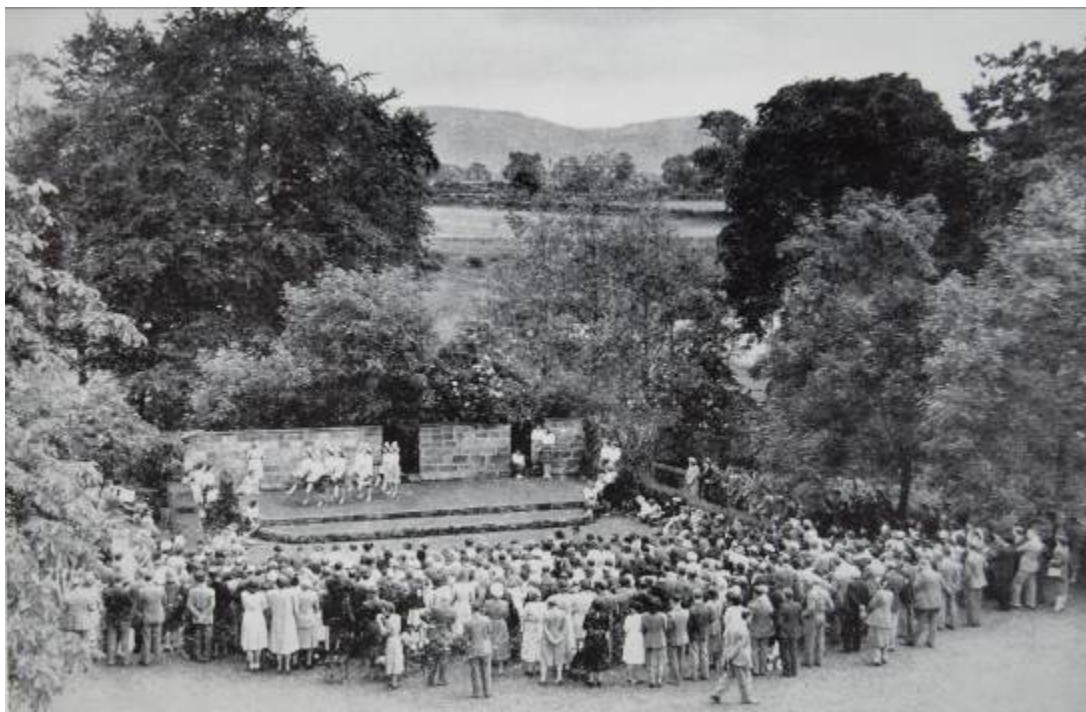


Figure 36: Open Air Theatre⁷⁷¹

1947 saw the school entertaining ‘40 German prisoners from Undercliffe’, playing cricket or walking in the

⁷⁶⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p12.

⁷⁶⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p12.

⁷⁶⁹ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1963, p3-5, ‘School Letter’, Joan M. Tubmen, MIC 4056 002390-1.

⁷⁷⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p31.

⁷⁷¹ ‘Beckside’, Summer 1948, No.105.

evening before a concert was given.⁷⁷² The next year, the school ‘had two German Students to visit us. They told us about the atrocious conditions in Germany and especially among the school children’.⁷⁷³

On 20th November 1947, there was also a special occasion: ‘Princess Elizabeth’s Wedding Day’.⁷⁷⁴ The school had a ‘bonfire and fireworks’ to celebrate.⁷⁷⁵

However, in 1948, the school held Bonfire Night ‘on November 4th this year, because most of the staff were going to a ballet the following night’.⁷⁷⁶

In 1957, the ‘BBC celebrity Wildred Pickles’ arrived in Great Ayton ‘to hold his radio show “Have a Go” in the Meeting House’, spending ‘the afternoon in the school itself’, according to Clifford Morgan.⁷⁷⁷

Many scholars attempted to achieve badges for taking less than 24 hours to complete the Lyke Wake Walk with Mr Armitage.⁷⁷⁸

The School was shocked to hear on the News, in January 1971:

‘that a plane flying from Bahrain via Beirut to London had been hi-jacked - the first to take place - by the PLO.⁷⁷⁹ On board the plane were two pupils, Malia Staveley 14, and her brother Justin 11. The hi-jack was a response to the imprisonment of a PLO member Leila Kahled, and lasted from Tuesday to Friday... Malia described it so vividly in “The Beckside”, and especially her brother who played football with the hi-jacking guerrillas! The affair ended with no casualties, but the school buzzed with excitement at the twosome related their experiences’.⁷⁸⁰

A General Election took place in 1974 and the School held ‘a mock election, with speeches and voting took place. The Conservatives easily won in [the] school’.⁷⁸¹

The whole village celebrated the Queen’s Silver Jubilee in 1977.⁷⁸² On a procession in the village:

‘the school’s float showed the cosmopolitan nature of the school, as the majority of the costumes (with some doubtful cowboys and Indians) were the national costumes of nationalities represented in the

⁷⁷² ‘Beckside’, Summer 1947, p4, ‘School News’, Joyce M. Kirk, MIC 4056 001670.

⁷⁷³ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p5, ‘German Relief’, Jean Manship, MIC 4056 0011760.

⁷⁷⁴ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, p24, ‘Diary’, Patricia Clark, MIC 4056 0011712.

⁷⁷⁵ ‘Beckside’, Spring 1948, p24, ‘Diary’, Patricia Clark, MIC 4056 0011712.

⁷⁷⁶ ‘Beckside’, Autumn 1948, p5, ‘Bonfire Night’, Derek M. Downey, MIC 4056 0011760.

⁷⁷⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p25.

⁷⁷⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p29.

⁷⁷⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p34.

⁷⁸⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p34; see ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, 1971, MIC 4056 002581.

⁷⁸¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p36.

⁷⁸² ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Summer 1977, p1-3, ‘Silver Jubilee’, Les Wright, 4056 002691-2.; ‘History’, Morgan, p38.

school'.⁷⁸³

However, in December 1977, the school was shocked by tragic news. David Holden, who in 1939 had come to Ayton School as a pupil, left in 1943 to go to Emmanuel College, Cambridge and in 1956, been appointed Middle East Correspondent for *The Times*, had been murdered for political reasons.⁷⁸⁴ Evelyn Nicholson wrote:

‘during the Suez crisis, that he found himself with other journalists, a temporary prisoner in a Cairo hotel. From this point onwards, David became a national and international figure... David had gone out full of hope to report on the new peace initiative between Egypt and Israel, but on Wednesday, December 7th, his body was found on a road outside Cairo. He had been shot at close range from behind, and the bullet had gone through his heart’.⁷⁸⁵

Clifford Morgan remembered that ‘he often returned to the Old Scholar’s reunion’.⁷⁸⁶ In his will he left a sum of money for a prize to be awarded annually to the best Fifth Former in English Literature’.⁷⁸⁷

The year of 1978 saw a Royal visit:

‘the Prince of Wales paid a visit to the village to inspect the Schoolroom Museum of Captain James Cook. In charge of receiving the Prince, and showing him round the Museum was John Reader’.⁷⁸⁸

In 1983:

‘a party left school to join with the other Northern Quaker Schools on the Quaker Pilgrimage. This consisted of visiting the notable places connected with George Fox in the 17th Century’.⁷⁸⁹

Similarly, in the summer of 1987, there was:

‘a Northern Quaker Schools “Olympic” at the Clairville Athletic Stadium in Middlesbrough. 150 children took part in 37 track and field events’.⁷⁹⁰

1988 saw the ‘Centenary of the Foundation of the Ayton Old Scholars Association with Roy George as its President’.⁷⁹¹

The 150th year of the School’s foundation was celebrated in 1991.⁷⁹² In the March of that year:

‘Staff, students and old boys are all doing their bit and the giant fruit cake is the contribution of the home economics department... will bake the six-foot by four-foot... monster in three sections. It will be

⁷⁸³ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Summer 1977, p1-3, ‘Silver Jubilee’, 4056 002691-2.

⁷⁸⁴ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1978, p8, ‘David S. Holden’, Evelyn Nicholson, 4056 002736; ‘History’, Morgan, p38.

⁷⁸⁵ ‘Beckside Broadsheet’, Spring 1978, p8, ‘David S. Holden’, Evelyn Nicholson, 4056 002736.

⁷⁸⁶ ‘History’, Morgan, p39.

⁷⁸⁷ ‘History’, Morgan, p39.

⁷⁸⁸ ‘History’, Morgan, p39.

⁷⁸⁹ ‘History’, Morgan, p41.

⁷⁹⁰ ‘History’, Morgan, p45.

⁷⁹¹ ‘History’, Morgan, p45.

⁷⁹² ‘History’, Morgan, p46.

decorated with the dates 1841 - 1991 and the school's logo, a picture of Roseberry Topping'.⁷⁹³

In June, the main festivities started. There was 'an exhibition of old photographs... most taken around the turn of the century were gathered together by Mr Christopher Scaife, the deputy head'.⁷⁹⁴ Pupils took 'part in a re-enactment of the arrival, 150 years ago, of the first children to enrol': Mr Leslie Martin and Mrs Margaret Cumbor, both living in the village, played the parts of the original schoolmaster and mistress, George and Alice Dixon'.⁷⁹⁵ Other celebrations included: 'an open day today... followed by a ceilidh, and a reunion of former scholars all weekend. Junior pupils present a Victorian music hall on July 4 and 5 and a performance of Mozart's Requiem on July 6'.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹³ *Evening Gazette*, 'Icing's on the cake for birthday bash', 19 March 1991.

⁷⁹⁴ *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 'Northern Notebook', 29 June 1991, p3.

⁷⁹⁵ *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 'Northern Notebook', p3; Unknown newspaper clipping, n.d.

⁷⁹⁶ *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 'Northern Notebook'.

Friends' School Great Ayton

Primary Sources

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE, NORTHALLERTON

Friends' School, Great Ayton Collection, ZFA

Including:

Microfilmed Sources

The *Beckside*: The Ayton School Magazine 1911 - 1987, MIC 4056.

Ayton School Prospectuses: C19th – 1991, MIC 4344.

Uncatalogued Material

Various 'histories', articles, appeal leaflets and booklets.