

SIXTY PLUS YEARS AT WILMINGTON

Recording the History of

**Dartford County Technical School
for Boys**

**Dartford Technical High School
for Boys**

and

**Wilmington Grammar School
for Boys**

in

Wilmington

from

1950 - 2017

Edited by Keith B Potter

DARTFORD COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS / WILMINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

This was originally conceived as a record of the school from January 1950 when lessons started at Wilmington Hall through to January 2010 which marked the 60th Anniversary.

However interesting material including comments from Old Boys enabled the history to be extended back to the school's formation in 1941 as a part of the Dartford Technical College.

As we move on beyond that 60th Anniversary, it seems sensible to record new items of interest, which may be useful in years to come.

This is a "history" of the school, through its various incarnations first as Dartford Junior Technical College, then as Dartford County Technical School for Boys, then as Dartford Technical High School for Boys through to the present Wilmington Grammar School for Boys.

Rather than one person writing a full history, here you will find a series of "essays" partly based upon articles that have appeared in school magazines and the newsletters of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association. These have been supplemented by comments from past and present staff and pupils.

It has been designed as an ongoing project; so if you have any memories of your time at the school that you can commit to paper, please do write to the editor.

Main Themes

- A Summary with salient dates and events.
- The school in Dartford at Essex Road and Lowfield Street
- The Move to Wilmington Hall
- The Dartford Technical School Years
- Wilmington Grammar School
- The Future.
- Miscellany including:
 - History of Wilmington Hall
 - Staff snapshots
 - Prominent members of staff including many who have spent over 20 years teaching at this school in all its guises.

Edited by Keith B Potter (1958-64)
Comments to:- treasurer@odwa.co.uk

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Acknowledgements

The “essays” herein have been gleaned from many sources. The archive held by the Old Dartechs’ and Wilmingtonians’ Association (The School Old Boys) is incomplete and any old boys or ex staff with old records is asked to get in touch.

The “official” School Magazine was first published in 1950. Initially it seems to have been edited by staff with the occasional assistance from pupil editorial teams. It contained a mixture of reports on school activities and notes written by pupils. The last edition appears to have been published in 1967.

In subsequent years, boys had a greater hand in the production of magazines and newsletters. Some appear to have been short lived and were produced by fifth and sixth form boys with some help from staff, in particular the school secretaries. The range of titles is interesting.

Unfortunately the archive contains only limited editions rather than complete sets. There may also have been other newsletters that are not held in the archive.

What is available has often contained interesting facts, which have been incorporated within this “History”.

<i>Proboscis</i>	<i>1967 -</i>
<i>Gollum</i>	<i>1971 - 1972</i>
<i>Imperium</i>	<i>1976</i>
<i>The Laurel</i>	<i>1983</i>
<i>Orion</i>	<i>1988</i>
<i>Pulse</i>	<i>1993 -</i>

A Parent Teacher Association was apparently formed in 1975 / 6. The Old Dartechs’ and Wilmingtonians’ Association archive includes several PTA Newsletters, which have contained useful information that has been extracted into this “History”.

The Old Dartechs’ and Wilmingtonians’ Association was established in its present form in 1994. It has produced a newsletter, which has attracted contributions from both old boys and ex staff. This “History” has made liberal use of the articles previously published in those newsletters.

Should you wish to read other comments from “old boys” and staff then The Old Dartechs’ and Wilmingtonians’ Association website at www.odwa.co.uk has an archive of newsletters that can be viewed.

Finally, thanks must go to several old boys and staff who have contributed articles specifically for this “History”.

A Summary of Salient Dates and Events

- 1840 Mechanics Institute (A Possibility)
- 1888 Free Lecture Society and Science and Art Classes
(Established by Lord Hesketh)
- 1902 The Dartford Technical Institute (Essex Road)
(Lectures and classes held in local halls and Schools)
- 1920 Dartford Technical College (Change of name, but the same building in Essex Road, later to Miskin Road)
- 1920 Junior Technical Course
- 1925 Junior Commercial (Commerce) Course
Boys and Girls were freed from work to attend 2-year courses. The intake for full time attendance began at the age of 13 ½. (A small school for Boys and Girls began to develop very slowly)
- 1937 The earliest record of something approaching a School
- 1939 Girls evacuated to Bexleyheath Day Technical School or to Sidcup
- 1941 A Junior Technical course was established within the organisation of the Dartford Technical College for 200 pupils of School age - it was known as the Dartford Junior Technical College
- Mr L V Wall appointed as the Acting Headmaster. This can therefore be taken as the formal establishment of a separate school.
- 1944 Education Act (Technical Education Act) (Technical Education required)
- 1947 Closure of Commercial Course (A three year course begins)
- 1949 Name changed to Dartford County Technical School for Boys
- (26 May) Mr L V Wall appointed Headmaster.
- 1949 (20 December) The Move to Wilmington Hall - a large country house, with magnificent grounds, formally the home of Sir Dudley Gordon
- 1950 Lessons start at Wilmington Hall, although use is still made of sites in Dartford.
- 1956 The first new buildings erected on the site.
- 1957 First year entry of 120 pupils. Only year in which there was a 4 form entry until 1992

- 1961 Last of the 'Ag.' stream students leaves.
- 1962 Dartford County Technical School becomes Dartford Technical High School.
- 1963 (December) Retirement of Mr L V Wall, first Headmaster of the School
- 1964 (January) Mr J A Mogford new Headmaster
- Introduction of 'A' level studies in the Humanities and Languages, thus making the School more like a Grammar School.
- 1964 Building programme commences.
Assembly Hall, Dining Hall and staff offices in use.
- 1965 New Science Laboratories, Staffroom, Library, Classrooms and Gymnasium now in use
- 1967 Reorganisation of Secondary Schooling announced.
The Boys and Girls Technical Schools on either side of the road were to be merged and there would be a substantial building programme to create a mixed comprehensive school catering for upwards of 2,000 pupils.
- 1969 Kent Education Committee now plans four 11-18 comprehensive schools in Dartford. Wilmington will house the boys' school. Strong local opposition.
- 1971 Demolition of Wilmington Hall (except for the stables), in order to commence the first half of an extension to house the new school.
- 1972 Kent Education Committee. (K E C) withdraws its original plan and decides to convert the new buildings for the creation of an 'interim' mixed non-selective school - the Wilmington Secondary School.
- 1974 The new school is opened with Mr J.D. Edgeler as Head of both schools following the departure of Mr Mogford.
- Dartford Technical High School for Boys has access to Wilmington Secondary School Sports Hall
- 1976 Formation of the Parent Teachers Association (P T A).
- 1979 As a result of the falling birth rate, only two forms of entry are available.
- 1980 Joint working of a Sixth Form timetable with Dartford Girls' Tech.
- 1982 K E C announces a plan to change the nature of the school.

1983 Mr Edgeler remains as Head of Wilmington High School (the renamed Wilmington Secondary School).

Mr D B Thomas is appointed Head of D T H S.

1 September - D T H S B, in common with the Kent policy for its many Technical High Schools, is renamed Wilmington Grammar School for Boys.

1984 K E C announces a second plan to change the nature of the School.

1987 K E C announces a plan to close the School.

Formation of an Action Group.

1989 First vote on whether to seek Grant Maintained status-defeated.

Chairman of K E C tells the Staff "please don't let it go - you're safe with us".

1990 K E C announces a plan to close the School.

A mere 23 pupils start in the first year.

Governors recommend seeking Grant Maintained status.

Parents and Staff give full backing. Action Group reaches a peak of lobbying.

1991 (January) Announcement that Grant Maintained status would apply to our School from April 1991.

School roll - 307.

(December) - retirement of Mr D B Thomas as Head Teacher, following the appointment of Mr B N Titterington in September.

1992 School has a four-form entry for the first time since 1957.

1993 Renovation of the Library. Extensive investment in Information Technology (with financial support from the P T A)

1994 Refurbishment of the Science Laboratories with a capital grant from the Department for Further Education

September - 550 boys on roll.

1999 Foundation Status approved

2004 September - School designated as an Engineering Specialist School

- 2006 July - Retirement of Mr B N Titterington (Headmaster since 1991)
- Appointment of Mrs F Cottam as Head Teacher
- 2006 1 November - Opening of "The Evans Building" a new teaching block named in honour of Ken Evans, a governor of the school from 1978 - 2004.
- 2009 July – Mrs F Cottam leaves to take up an appointment abroad.
Mr D Knights appointed Acting Head Teacher.
- 2009 School now part of the Raising Achievement Partnership Programme.
- 2010 January – Mr Andy Williamson appointed Head Teacher.
At the time, the youngest in the County.
- 2010 September – Phase 2 – New Evans Building extension partially opened.
The building includes a new sixth form common centre and a new language suite to accommodate English and Modern Foreign Languages.
The opening of the final section including a new Food Technology room with ten cooking centres is delayed following health and safety concerns.
- 2011 School granted Academy status from August and creates an Academy partnership with Wilmington Grammar School for Girls.
- 2012 Works starts on a complete rebuild of the adjacent Wilmington Academy which is now part of the Leigh Academies Trust. This will result in the physical separation of the two schools for the first time since 1971.
- 2013 The Sports hall is refurbished prior to it becoming for the sole use of the boys at Wilmington Grammar School from 2014.
- 2016 July – Andy Williamson leaves as Head Teacher. He advises that as a prelude to much closer cooperation with the Wilmington Grammar School for Girls, Mrs Donna Lodge has been appointed Executive Head of both schools from September.
- 2017 February – Opening of new English Block to be known as the White Building as a memorial to the late Keith White Assistant Headteacher.
- 2017 April - WGSB formally becomes part of a new Multi Academy Trust (Endeavour MAT), rather than continue to stand alone as a single academy trust. This will not influence the distinct identity of the school and the name of the school itself will remain
- 2017 September 1 – Mr Charlie Guthrie takes up post as Headteacher

Based upon original information prepared by John Daley (Staff 1962 – 1992) and updated by the Editor.

The School in Dartford at Essex Road and Lowfield Street, Dartford.

The School's spiritual beginning can be traced back to the Free Lecture Society and Science and Art classes established in 1888, and possibly to a Mechanics Institute even earlier.

Lectures and classes were held in local halls and schools until the Dartford Technical Institute was built in Essex Road in 1902. In 1920 the name was changed to Dartford Technical College. The building still exists today as Enterprise House.

In 1934 work started on a new Technical College to be built near Lowfield Street on land adjoining the Central Park. This building became the Adult Education Centre but was never completed. Both buildings were used. The old premises in Essex Road catered for the academic studies, whilst the workshops and gymnasium were in Lowfield Street. The latter have now been demolished to make way for future town centre development.

In 1941 a Junior Technical course was established within the organisation of the College for pupils of School age (13+), as a form of introduction and pre-entry.

As a result of the 1944 Education Act, the name was changed in 1949 from Dartford Junior Technical College to Dartford County Technical School for Boys.

An attempt was made to build a new school on the Lowfield Street site (now the Market Street short stay car park), but was unsuccessful due to the presence of a subterranean stream.

After the Second World War both sites were considered too small, and so the new College of Technology was built in Miskin Road. Subsequently that too was demolished and the Technical College moved to a site in Oakfield Lane.

Based upon information prepared by John Daley (Staff 1962 – 1992)



Essex Road, Dartford - One of the sites of used by the school before it moved to Wilmington

Dartford Technical College (1)

Roy Carter (1938-40) - Extracts from a letter printed in the newsletter of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association

I was at the Tech from '38-40, forms T.1.B. and T.2.B. in the days of headmaster Mr. N. Brettnye and Vice-Head Dr. Woolfe, who went on to become Head at Erith Tech.

At that time the workshops, labs and the Gym, were all new in Lowfield Street, with footings dug out ready for the new school buildings. It was never built because of the War, and is now the Market Place Car Park.

As we had lessons in Essex Road and Lowfield Street we had to walk between the two buildings, through the town centre, sometimes four or five times a day, no wonder we were always late for the next period. Always on a Thursday, Market Day, a great attraction for us boys, as at that time they still sold livestock.

Tuesday afternoons for our Form was given over to Football, Cricket or Swimming. The old sports field lay between Burnham Road and the Railway, and is now in the middle of a housing estate. Swimming we had in the old Dartford Open Air Pool in Burnham Road, which is now a Squash Court. *[Now a small housing estate - Editor]*

When the War broke out in Sept. '39 we were on School Holidays. We all received letters telling us not to go back to Essex Road but to report to Uplands Road Junior School, Church Road, Bexleyheath where we spent six to eight weeks before going back to Essex Road just before Christmas '39.

Things were never the same after that, the Workshops were given over to War Work, so there were no lessons and all sports were stopped. I cannot remember any exams being taken, and come July '40 we all left to go our separate ways.

Dartford Technical College (2)

Ray Scott - (1945 - 1948) Extracts from a letter printed in the newsletter of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association

The technical college was a series of buildings in two separate locations, some very old, some still then under construction. New foundations had been excavated and concreted at the Lowfield Street site, but had been abandoned filled with rainwater. Herein lived a terrapin, which somebody with a schoolboy sense of humour had of course named 'Dick Terrapin'. We had to walk through the town to get from the commercial subjects part, known as 'The Annex' in Kent Road, to the workshops and gymnasium in Lowfield Street. This encouraged the more adventurous of us to 'explore' shortcuts and anything of interest en route. In a dilapidated part of some back-doubles, off Spital Street, was a derelict building, which cried out for exploration, particularly the dark basements. In order to investigate these we tore some tarpaper from the collapsed roof and rolled lengths to make flaming torches. Unfortunately the floorboards above us were very old and dry and caught fire from our homemade 'flambeaux'. We had to call the fire brigade and had some explaining to do.

Dartford Technical College (3)

John Edmonds - (1945 - 1948) Adapted extracts from a letter sent to the Editor

In 1945 I arrived at Dartford Tech in Essex Road, Dartford, having survived six years of interrupted education, thanks to our German friends. I had somehow convinced Messrs Wall and Clare at the initial interview that I was worth educating.

There was a motley selection of teachers at that time, some standing in for those on war service. Mr Wall was the Headmaster (he took us for English), Mr Harris (Charlie) sported a bright 'Loughborough College of Physical Education' blazer and took us for P E and football, which required a twenty minute traipse halfway to Slade's Green to a semi ploughed field with a pavilion (Ha Ha!) that today would be closed by the Health & Safety people or under the Hygiene Laws! The area is now a housing estate.

Geography was Mrs Moody (a pleasant matronly person), Chemistry - Mr Brunskill (Anyone remember the H₂S generator - what a pong).

For maths we had a venerable Scot who enjoyed the malt products of his native homeland, Mr McCaskill (nickname VOD for some unknown reason); he must have been into his 80's (he said he was taught by Lord Kelvin); in his mellow mood after 'Lunch', he would give us his 'Pearls before Swine' soliloquy, telling us we didn't deserve his attention. One thing though, we enjoyed his lessons even if we didn't comprehend them.

Maths was taken over by Mr Campbell, returning from the RAF. He gave us a tough time and when he gave us detention (undeservedly) he would make us add up columns of log-tables. (We had slide rules too!). At least I can add up my grocery bill before the till!

Woodwork in (Lowfield Street) was Mr Gregory; I remember he had had a good aim with a lump of wood. Especially if you hit a chisel with a hammer! (Today I could sue and retire a millionaire!). I learnt wood-turning there, which I still enjoy – very therapeutical. Metalwork was in the machine shop with Mr Payne (very nice chap) and Mr Pedley. We learnt the basic skills of turning, machining and generally producing scrap – metal. I least I know how to file properly!

Mr Cutler took us for Engineering Drawing (We made our own T-Squares). The upper gymnasium in Lowfield Street was converted into a Drawing Office.

The end of the war was celebrated with a special school meal (food was still rationed) in Lowfield Street canteen, decked out in flags and bunting. The famous photograph in the old boys 'Archive' shows the staff and pupils dining together. Mr Wall is there, furthest away next to Mrs Mountjoy who I always thought was an excellent teacher and I was sorry to hear of her demise.

The Early History of The School

Written many years ago by Mr. L V Wall, the first Headmaster 1941- 63

As no available records of the School's history prior to 1941 exist, I have attempted in the following paragraphs to set down what I know of it before it is forgotten. Much of the fun and humour I must leave till later when, perhaps, fuller recollections may edify those in School today and refresh those who shared in them.

The School had its origin in the Technical College as a Two-Year Day Technical Course, which commenced in 1920 with some twenty pupils. This was purely a Technical College group with no school organization, a limit of sixty pupils being laid down. In 1928-29, there were 38; in 1929-30 – 47; by 1933 the numbers had grown to 58. Such prospectuses as are extant are undated (even by the printer) and give no information of the small nucleus of a school, which existed precariously inside the Technical College on whose roll were registered 127 day students and 483 evening students. The intake was at 13½, an entrance examination being held each June. Twenty-five percent were granted scholarships and the rest admitted in order of merit as fee-payers (£2 a term).

A Junior Commercial Class started in 1925. In one report at this time it was stated that conditions were no better than in 1914. The Commercial side was recognized in 1934 but not the Technical side.

As a comparison with today's School, we may consider the provision made for technical instruction in 1927 namely: one six-inch lathe, one small bench drill, one seven-inch shaper, one Emery Wheel (double) with 2½ HP. motor, one bench with six vices and hand tools. A report of 1934 stated, "some laboratory work was possible, but that no other development was possible till elementary woodwork was removed". (This was work done by pupils from what is now Dartford West County Secondary School.)

As far as I can trace, the picture is one of a slow growth of classes for both boys and girls till there were about 150 pupils, 80 in the senior year, who attended two-year courses in either Engineering or Commerce, these courses having stemmed from the Junior Commercial and Technical Day Courses for which pupils used to be freed from work. This accounts for the original nomenclature of Junior Technical School, which took years to eradicate.

The earliest record of something approaching a school is the Sports' Programme for 1937/38.

In 1939 came the war and evacuation, the latter being voluntary. The girls went to Bexleyheath Day Technical School or to Sidcup. Of the boys, only three were evacuated.

The year 1941 saw my own arrival to take over the School as a separate entity, while the war grew in intensity. There were about two hundred boys that year. In spite of staffing difficulties, inadequate accommodation, bomb damage, and lessons in shelters below ground, a School was created, which, by 1947, after the closure of

the Commercial side and the lengthening of the technical course to three years, took the Matriculation Examination of London University.

The conditions under which the School existed during these years, and those suffered by the Staff could only be appreciated by those who served then in Essex Road, and I forbear to give these although they might tempt the present School to count its blessings. Naturally there were amusing sides.

By 1947 the School population was 233 boys.

In 1950 (January) we first took over part of Wilmington Hall after alterations. However, we were split between the Hall, Essex Road and Lowfield Street. In part, the serious organisational difficulties caused by such splitting still exist.

The organisation of the move caused much amusement. A chain of some sixty boys was used as a kind of living hose-pipe to siphon books and materials from the top floor of Essex Road, down the stairs and directly into the big pantechicon. They passed into its interior not only books, but any movable property they could seize and one very small boy as well, who was rescued before the books and apparatus covered him. It was a very amusing start, but more was to come, and the written account by boys themselves in old magazines is a better one than this.

At Wilmington Hall, I arranged to reverse the procedure and to siphon the stock upstairs into the stock rooms. I was horrified to see the floors literally bending under the weight of books, and the foreman on the site went apoplectic. The books were as hurriedly spread around, as they had been stacked.

Only once more was I destined to be so frightened of the floors collapsing, which was when unthinkingly we decided to put the School's printing-press up there. The floor bent so far that anything thrown in would roll to the middle! The room was hurriedly evacuated and Mr. Pestell dismantled the press in a world's record time of a number of seconds flat! I then took my second breath!

The "seizing" of property from Essex Road to start the School "off" was a remarkable combined operation of which many stories could be told.

The School grew rapidly from 200 to 400 still in the same buildings. The wear at the Hall was such that the main staircase has had to be shored up twice, and is still shored up while the numbers have passed 500.

In 1952 there was built in the garden the combined Wood and Metal shop, which is now for metalwork only and is soon to become a wood-shop. We also had a kitchen in what is now a cloakroom, until the ceiling fell into the dinners and on top of the cooks! It was taken away in 1953, as was our groundsman, so that boys and Staff prepared their own pitches but not, fortunately, their dinners, which have been delivered ever since to the present dining room built in 1953. This, incidentally, allowed the School to have an assembly for the first time in its history. Unfortunately, growth in numbers has meant having three morning assemblies. The part of the new building we now have was built in 1956.

From 1952 to 1955 all boys took our own S.I. internal examinations in Mathematics, Engineering Drawing, Engineering Science and Inorganic Chemistry. These examinations were moderated by the Technical College and were an invaluable link between Industry, College and School. I regret these are no longer taken and I am sure that more was lost than gained by the newer regulations. Our records over those years show 50 Distinctions - 23 in Mathematics, 8 in Engineering Drawing and the rest in Sciences. Other records of examinations, including the G.C.E. since 1951, are, of course to be found in the files.

I am conscious that this kind of account omits much of the atmosphere of friendliness, the humour, the individual happenings and the changes as well as the people, who have passed some of their lives here, both boys and men.

The School is now poised for the next great stride forward when many new ventures will begin with the completion of the buildings delayed for so many years. The excitement of new and different laboratories and machines, especially electrical; the Hall for musical and dramatic work; the gymnasium at long last, and, the greatest of all gains a place of assembly for the whole School together.



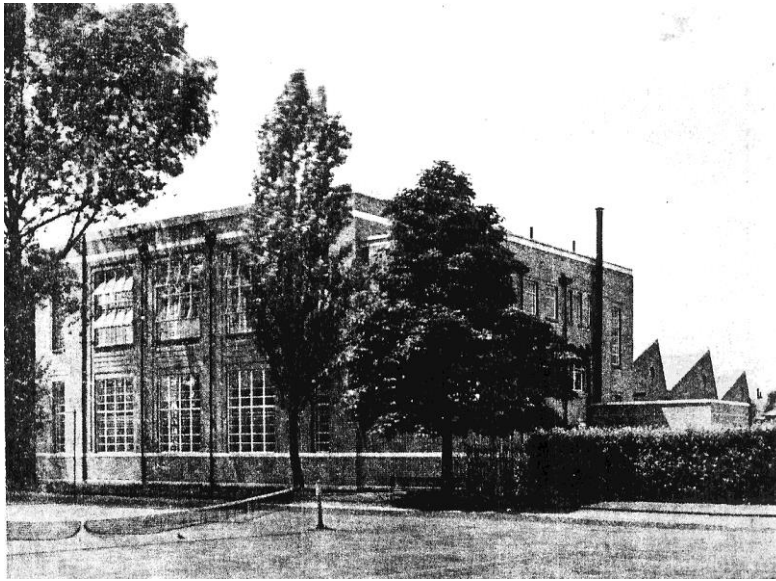
Essex Road, Dartford - One of the sites of used by the school before it moved to Wilmington

The premise in Essex Road has recently been completely refurbished and is now called Enterprise House. It houses offices and a veterinary practice.

The premise between Lowfield Street and Central Park (See next page) has long been demolished. The site was due to be rebuilt as part of a Tesco store but is now destined to see a major housing development

*Lowfield Street, Dartford
Another early site used by the
school.*

*This block housed the
workshops*



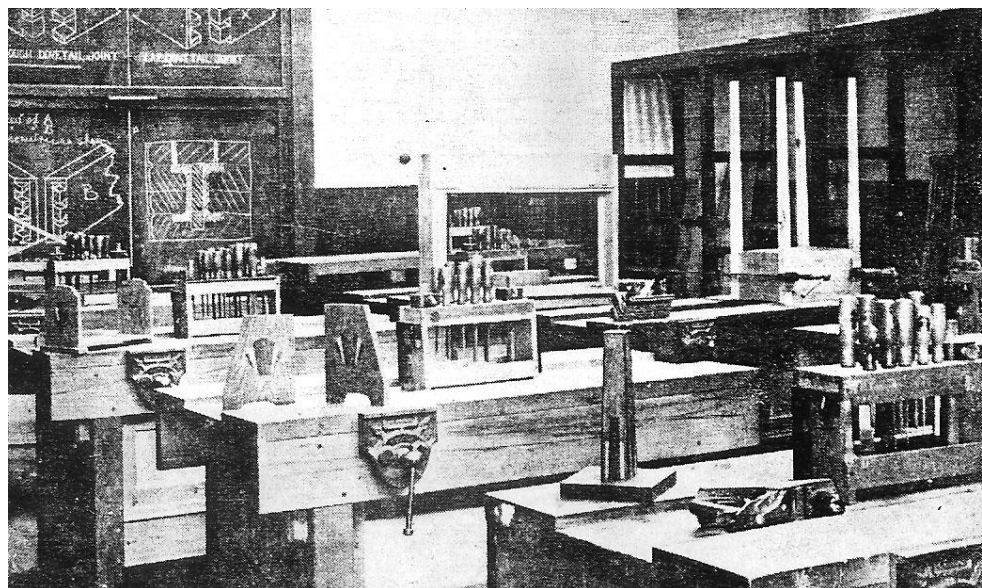
*Lowfield Street, Dartford
Another early site used by the
school.*

*This block housed the
gymnasium*

*The woodwork
shop at
Lowfield Street
Dartford.*

*Mr Gregory's
domain.*

*This continued
to be used by
pupils until the
second phase
of new building
was completed
at Wilmington
in 1965.*



Headmaster's Letter - 1950

Entering on a new life, in a new building and in the most beautiful surroundings makes us contrast our present lot with that during the past years in Essex Road. It is a violent contrast.

Several of the Staff have spent many years in those difficult surroundings including the most trying years of war, while no boy now in the school has spent more than three years there. If the Staff has any regret it is that many fine boys of the past have not had the opportunities now open to you of the present school.

However, we must remember that a school is not made either by fine buildings, grounds or equipment but by the spirit of those who make up its complement of personalities. Life in any community is richer for unselfish effort and we hope that a tradition will be built of public service in a school, which will foster what is best in our way of life.

There are many things needed to complete the School. We have yet to see built the Assembly Hall, the Dining Hall, the Gymnasium and the two workshops for woodwork and metalwork. Whilst the most urgent need is for a Hall where we can all foregather the building of the workshops will unite the Staff and school, ending the isolation at Lowfield Street. I hope many present boys will see these built.

In September, our community begins to grow with the first Pre-Agriculture entry of a form of twenty boys. This three-year course will send our numbers up by sixty when the entry is completed in 1953. For them in particular a combined wood and metal shop is to be built this year continuing the extension of the Physics Laboratory to the west.

By September six to ten acres will be under the plough and 1951 will see the beginning of the School's orchards and horticultural development generally spreading from the walled garden in which the glasshouses are already nearing completion.

The playing fields will also extend between 1951 and 1952 to the south and west, though we have yet to see our pavilion, that relic or wreck from the old Burnham Road Field, re erected under the chestnuts on the West side of Lower Field.

The life of a school is richer for its out-of-school activities, which discover and develop hidden talents often otherwise unrecognised. These interests will now grow. There is much to be interested in and time spent in hobby-study is never wasted. Indeed, the hobby often becomes a man's life's work and the sphere of his fame.

Many interests are obvious such as farming; forestry, the apiary, natural history and botany while some are not so easily seen. There are strong reasons to believe that Roman remains lie below ground and archaeology will find its devotees because there is the never-ending thrill of expectancy that expertly directed digging may produce finds to compensate the diggers and provide the fascination of seeing the past.

These interests are community interests and it is a great pleasure to see the magnificent beginnings of communal effort. The Library has grown by nearly one thousand books since February 20th through the efforts of the present boys.

Autumn Term 1949 and Spring Term 1950 will long be long remembered as perhaps the most trying we have had, but we can now go forward, confident that the worst is over, to build a School here at Wilmington Hall.

L V Wall Headmaster

L V Wall - Puppets

One odd thing, perhaps unknown to most boys who were at the school during his headship, was that he was interested in puppets - the wooden type on strings.

In 1950 he edited and had published by Faber & Faber - *The Puppet Book: A Book on Educational Puppetry*. It was written by members of the Educational Puppetry Association.

The book was updated and reprinted on several occasions. In 1965 it was republished as *The Puppet Book: a Practical Guide to Puppetry* with LV Wall as one of the three editors.

Does anyone recall any puppet lessons?

The Move

Whereas it is generally known that on the 20th day of December in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-nine divers articles of school equipment, to wit, books, furniture, writing utensils, gymnastic equipment and Parsy's chess set were bundled and despatched from the premises of one Dartford County Technical College situated in. Essex Road, Dartford, and whereas it is also generally known that the equipment hereinbefore mentioned duly appeared on the premises of one Wilmington Hall situate in the parish of Wilmington in the County of Kent, but whereas the intervening circumstances between the hereinbefore mentioned despatch from Dartford and the likewise hereinbefore mentioned appearance at Wilmington of the said equipment is not equally generally known, it is herein proposed: -

To cut the preamble, what happened at the Wilmington end of The Move?

(To avoid offence against the modesty of the persons concerned this narration, all names have been suitably disguised).

- 9.30 am - Under the indefatigable (and more) leadership of Messrs. Jock and Frightener, there were assembled out-side the porch at Wilmington Hall some forty boys of Matric.cum-3a forming a team which even without the inclusion of Tony and Brag would justify the epithet, "worthy." Enthusiasm to get down to business was intense.
- 9.45 am - Still waiting - enthusiasm waning
- 10.00 am - Still waiting - apathy setting in
- 10.15 am - Still waiting - spirits drooping
- 10.30 am - Break at the Girls' School opposite -spirits revived
- 10.31 am - Two masters and some four boys still waiting
- 11.00 am - Removal van arrived.

The first item on the agenda was to locate Parsy's chess set, which his over-efficient form-mates had included in the packing. We expected during the search to unearth Stooze as it was felt that 2c could not have failed to seize such a glorious opportunity to dispose of him, but 2c being 2c -(Enough said!)

A request had been received from the foreman on site that boys were not to tramp up and down the staircase. The obvious alternate of hand walking was abandoned as none of the boys volunteered and the feat was too much even for the two stalwarts, Jock and Frightener, to carry out single - or rather double-handed. A grand chain was thereupon formed and books passed rhythmically from hand to hand up the stairway to the occasional refrain of, "Special Care, here come the maths books." All went merrily until, "Hold it, hold it," swelled along the line. The truth of the dictum that the strength of a chain is in its weakest link had been experimentally confirmed (however did Norman get into the team?). But soon the job was under way again and rhythm restored. But alas, the foreman on site drew attention to the danger of collapse of the stock room floor under the weight of books. In defiance of the Law of Moments he required the books to be centrally placed on the floor. That the floor did not thereafter bend, crack or split may be held to confirm the wisdom of the

foreman's advice. But gradually an awful thought dawned upon us. Would the floor support the weight of a form of boys?

And what of 2c with Spud and Rich in the same form? Had not the builders been informed of this? A possible solution would be to allocate boys to A, B and C forms according to avoirdupois instead of ability. (Drink up your milk, boys.)

To the whole of this superhuman achievement only one regrettable incident occurred: Mr. Frightener, rounding a corner, was met full-face by a textbook, a moment previously held by Willet. Now as Willet figured high in the Physics list it must be assumed that the incident was purely accidental and unprovoked. Nevertheless, it is conjectured that Willet will not figure quite so high in the Physics list next term.

Books having been successfully stored, there remained furniture and gymnastic equipment. Disposal of these brought forth great feats of strength of which two only shall be recorded here as representative samples: Pip, struggling manfully upstairs with a large agility mattress on his shoulders and Tubby striding forth with a skittle in either hand. Details cannot unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) be given of the wonders performed in the dark passages and recesses of the basement aided only by one small piece of wax for illumination but sufficient has been said we hope to immortalise this noteworthy occasion.

Extract from the 1950 edition of the School magazine. Authorship unknown.

The Dartford Technical School Years 1950 – 1982

Comments by the then headmaster - Mr L V Wall - suggest that the school started life at Wilmington with a role of about 200.

In the early days, many transferred to the school following examinations at age 13 and it was a few years before it became the norm for boys to start at age 11 following the 11 plus examination.

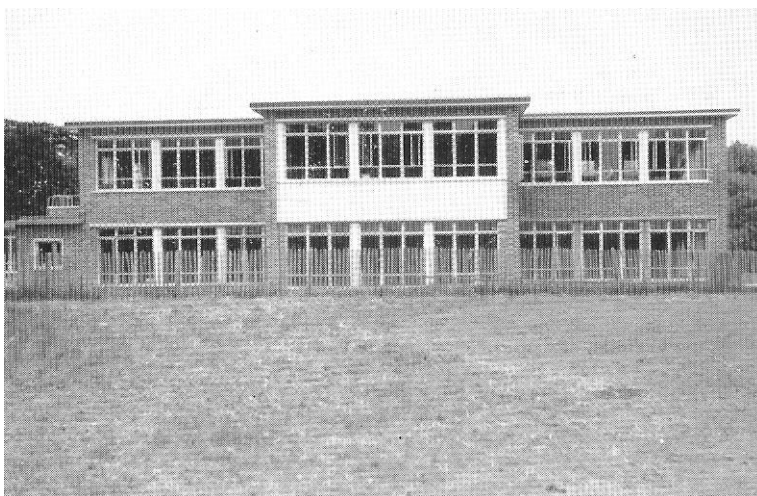
In 1951, the school made good use of the large grounds by starting an agricultural stream (Ag). This continued for ten years. A surprising addition to a technical curriculum.

Initially all lessons took place in the rooms of Wilmington Hall (now sadly demolished). The old stable block (the only part that still remains) was set up as laboratories for the teaching of physics, chemistry and biology, together with the technical drawing office.

In 1952 a prefabricated asbestos clad building was built in the garden and this provided a metalwork shop complete with furnace and forge. Although it had for a long time ceased to be regularly used, the building only disappeared from the site in 2007.

In the following year, a similar building was erected nearby and this became a place for morning assemblies and a canteen for those partaking of the lunchtime food delivered each day to the school.

In 1956 the first brick built “new buildings” were ready for occupation. Set apart from the old Wilmington Hall, now affectionately known as “the old building”, this new block housed laboratories on the ground floor together with 3 classrooms and 3 further classrooms and an art room on the first floor.



New building begun in March 1955 and ready to be occupied from September 1956.

These are the six classrooms with Mrs Mountjoy's room top right.

Headmaster's Letter - 1954

Extracts from Mr L V Wall's comments in the 3rd edition of the School Magazine.

The Staff now numbers twenty, whereas there were only seven before the move to Wilmington. The School has grown considerably, being well over three hundred with a sixth form of over thirty.

We regret the continued separation of the School between Lowfield Street and Wilmington, which makes for many difficulties, although the new building is now in sight, and, should be one-quarter completed by 1957. It will be on the north side of the main field and of a modern style which varies between one and three floors in different parts of the building.

The school has abundantly proved itself in both work and games during these years as subsequent pages prove. Many boys who have left have continued to excel in both study and athletics winning honours, which, while personally satisfying to them as individuals, do the School great service and great credit.

Examination successes, while never the whole story or of supreme importance, yet show the standards to which we have struggled in a main school course of but three years' duration.

Entry at the age of eleven begins in September of this year with two forms. This is another new step the School takes, and, the full development over the next six years, while both difficult and interesting, should see the School end with a population of some 550 boys, a greatly widened course and outlook, and, some claim really to be a Technical High School.

Headmaster's Letter - 1956

Extracts from Mr L V Wall's comments in the 4th edition of the School Magazine.

The School years pass very quickly and the School's growth is, in some ways, just as rapid. In 1950 when the School came to Wilmington the roll was 220 boys, whereas, in this year 1955/56, the School has a roll of 381. In the same period the number of Staff has been trebled and is now twenty-two.

The greatest encouragement this year is certainly the start being made on the new School. About one-fifth will be completed by September, 1956, and this portion will give the School a Metal Workshop and Machine Shop, a Physics and Mechanics Laboratory, an Art and Craft Room and six classrooms, together with cloakroom accommodation.

We all know the relief this will bring after years of cramped conditions in unsuitable rooms. Many Old Boys of the School will be interested to hear of this at long last, one of the happiest features being the strong affection those who have left still have for the School.

An Outline of the Horticulture Being Carried Out at Wilmington Hall

The School and the grounds in which it stands was once the estate of Lord Dudley Gordon. One can well imagine the splendour of the grounds in those days before the war - the formal flower beds around the house, sweeping shrub borders, rose garden, herbaceous borders and fine lawns. The only items left intact today are some fine specimen trees including Cedrus Libani and Liriodendron Tulipifera.

The walled-in garden was in complete chaos when the Kent County Council took the estate over a few years ago which in its hey-day included a fine range of glasshouses along one wall with accompanying frames. Today there is only one glasshouse, a small range of cold frames and a small propagating pit.

One of the courses run at this school is a Pre-Agricultural one. Here the boys will be taught some aspects of vegetable culture, floriculture, fruit growing amongst other subjects as well as pure Agriculture later in. The three-year course, includes both theory and practical work which will take up most of the time spent on the subject.

Today the walled garden is the centre of activity. All the ground has been cleared and the old trained fruit trees around the walls have been grubbed out.

The major part of the land has been divided into four plots. During the autumn term the boys have been busy digging over these plots. On three of them vegetables will be grown. The usual three-year rotation will be used and the cropping plan is based on the Royal Horticultural Society's cropping system.

Vegetables to be grown included:

Peas, Beans, Onions, Potatoes, Carrots, Cabbages, Sprouts, Leeks, Tomatoes, Beet, Swedes, Cauliflowers, Spinach, Kale, Broccoli, Spinach Beet, Lettuces.

The remaining plot will be used as a fruit nursery to demonstrate the raising of soft-fruit cuttings, e.g., gooseberries and blackcurrants; stool and layer beds for raising root stocks for budding and grafting on top fruit such as apples and pears.

In order to get a longer succession of vegetables some 50 Dutch lights and a small range of cloches will be brought into use as well as being used for raising seedlings to be planted out in the open ground. It is proposed to raise a crop of tomatoes in the glasshouse.

As regards the pleasure gardens, the flower-beds in front of the school, it is hoped, will be bedded out with stock raised in the gardens. Two shrub borders have been made during the Autumn - the first one being the right-hand side border in front of the school and the other one on the right-hand side of the drive in which a large specimen Cedar tree stands.

The former border consists of low-growing shrubs. In front will be found several clumps of Erica Carnea varieties (red and white flowers). These heaths, unlike most of the Ericaceae family, can be grown in any loamy soil in an open position despite the presence or absence of lime and flowers right through the winter months.

Extracted from Vol 1, No 2 of the School Magazine 1951

Farm Report, 1955/56

Agricultural training was part of the syllabus during the 1950s and early 1960s with a special stream for those boys either from an agricultural background or who wished to go into farming. The extensive grounds were put to good use.

The following is an extract from the 1956 School magazine written by one of the agricultural students.

Field 207- Cultivation

All 6.8 acres were sown with oats. Harvesting took place during the summer holidays and 350 bales of excellent straw were obtained.

This year it is hoped to grow wheat and barley on the field. The three-quarter acre field by the Dutch barn is lying fallowed for cleaning.

Poultry

This is the first year that we have bred, incubated and reared all our own chicks and no laying stock has been purchased. A £6. 6s. 0d. Rhode Island Red pedigree cockerel was bought and is proving its worth in lower broodiness, higher laying averages and larger eggs from resultant new stock.

There were four hatches with 144 pullets and 95 cockerels reared. 4 birds were lost to predators.

The orchard deep litter was completed in the middle of the Autumn term and 86 pullets were put in it. By the end of 1955 the pullets had laid 1,603 eggs and we had killed 90-plus cockerels for meat. The cockerels realised roughly £123, which nearly pays for the rearing of the pullets. One of these home-reared cockerels, an excellent bird, was saved for breeding purposes.

The 1954 stock laid 15,000 eggs and realised £107 profit over feeding costs, etc. The work on poultry facilities and the absence of a paid farm worker has kept us from work on pig accommodation. This will soon be continued and it is hoped that more pigs will be purchased this year.

Poultry breeding is to start earlier this year and January and February hatches are hoped for. It is possible that a Light Sussex cockerel of good quality may be purchased this year. Both Rhode Island Red and Light Sussex birds will be bred, but with the accent on the Light Sussex.

During 1955 £520 was paid to the office and this represents nearly £100 profit, plus corn unused and present stock worth roughly £200.

It seems strange after the success of this course, that the practical side should be so drastically cut down and we hope that it will soon be put right the practical work being very closely allied to the Biology course.

G. E. Killick, 5Ag.

The School Farm - 1960

Practical agricultural work is carried out on the School Farm. This small, two-fielded farm has the conveniences of commercial establishments; two pig sties, two deep-litter houses containing some 150 hens in all, a large Dutch barn, two stables, a granary, a cow-shed and an oast house but few of these are put to their proper use as they are broken down and badly in need of repair. Indeed, the only agricultural object on the Farm which seems to be in working order is the Ferguson tractor which is used by boys who know how to drive, for ploughing, harrowing and cultivating, even though it needs a new engine. However, valuable experience may be obtained by merely being present on a real farm. Here the few boys who complete the course each year may decide whether they want to take up an agricultural career or not. Here they may learn whether their earlier interest which brought them into the School was justified or not. Here they will have gained a great deal from a deeper understanding of biology and agriculture, and will have lost very little in the assimilation of other subjects.

Last year we left the cultivation of the plots to 3Ag, who grew a large variety of vegetables, some more successfully than others, and spent many dinner-hours curtailing invading weeds. The rest of us tried our hands at conquering the School gardens and toiled on one large vegetable plot hoping to obtain fabulous results, only to find that it was as much as we could do to keep the weeds at bay.

On the farm there was a fairly good harvest, unlike that of the previous year when we had to spend all the available time trying to salvage as many of the damp sheaves of corn as possible. No chances were taken and the grain harvest was reaped by a combine harvester.

The poultry thrived in spite of an earlier outbreak of coccidiosis which was soon brought under control. As usual, the fortnight before Christmas was spent preparing Cockerels for the table. This is not a job that many of us like - although it does mean missing ordinary class-work - but, even so, all members of the agricultural forms seem to work very hard on these occasions.

This year, with an even smaller working force, we are tackling just as much work as ever. On the plots which are now being treated as a whole, the tractor has made it possible for large quantities of potatoes to be planted. Lettuces have been cultivated with great success both in the glass-house and under cloches, while in the smaller glass-house flowering plants to decorate the School are being raised. The poultry are doing as well as ever and producing even more eggs.

Our School has a reputation for providing scope for the most awkward individuals whose ideas of careers are high falutin' and rather far-fetched.

The Farm will undoubtedly be missed. Masters will no longer have their unlimited supply of fresh eggs. The worrying mothers of the Junior School will no longer be able to obtain fresh garden lettuce....

A report taken from Edition 8 - 1960 of the School Magazine.

Jottings from L V Wall

Mr Wall kept a book, which he entitled 'School Annals' and in which he jotted down salient events during his time as the first Headmaster of the school.

He records that he was Acting Headmaster under various Principals for Further Education between 1941 and 1949 when the school was based in Dartford.

He records visits from Old Boys, together with the appointment and resignations of members of staff. He mentions sporting and educational achievements. He notes visits from Kent Education Committee officials and HM Inspectors, together with visits from and to staff at other schools. He also includes a number of press cuttings, several of which include reports of meetings of the NW Kent Divisional Executive of Kent Education Committee, who were responsible for all schools in the area.

The following are but a sample of some of the points that he notes during the 14 year period that he kept this book.

Jan 1949 School Roll – 226

29 Apr 1949 Wilmington Hall being reconstructed for new School premises

26 May 1949 Headship interviews in Council Chamber Dartford. Candidates taken round school and to Wilmington Hall. *(He does not mention how many candidates there were but he records that he was appointed Headmaster on 26 May, so he seems to have been given the job on the day of his interview.)*

June 1949 160 boys taking school meals at Lowfield Street canteen.

28 Jun 1949 Enormous wasp nest (3 feet x 4 feet) taken from under roof of Wilmington Hall.

6 July 1949 School Sports Day in Central Park.

August 1949 Installed my own (bee) hives at Wilmington Hall to serve pre-agric course boys.

19 Sept 1949 Entry to Wilmington Hall delayed.

17 Dec 1949 Interviews re appointment of cook and servers to canteen.

19 Dec 1949 Packing of equipment and books at Essex Road

20 Dec 1949 Lorries to Wilmington- Boys form chain and pass everything into pantechicon and out again at Wilmington Hall.

21 Dec 1949 School Carol Service in Gymnasium at Lowfield Street.

9 Jan 1950 Meeting with Road Transport Officer re transport specials 401,423 477 buses for boys.

- 16 Jan 1950 School entered on the converted buildings of Wilmington Hall. There was no furniture and 86 chairs short – no blackboards – no master's desks – no telephone – no cleaning materials. Fire extinguishers were fixed in plaster and brushed off the wall – one exploded.
- 20 Jan 1950 School moved in.
- April 1950 School Roll – 212
- 24 Apr 1950 Science block taken over.
- 9 May 1950 Drawing Office equipment arrives.
- 5 July 1950 School Sports Day.
- Sept 1950 First pre-Agricultural form of 20 boys entered.
- 28 Jun 1951 Police inspection of boy's bicycles
- 18 Sept 1951 KEC - Visit re cramped conditions – especially meals in corridors and classrooms
- 29 Jan 1952 Mass X-ray of pupils – all over 14 years of age.
- 8 April 1952 School Easter Service in Wilmington Parish Church
- 26 Feb 1953 Meeting with Rural and Borough Councillors and officials at Leyton Cross after three years of requesting footpaths for children and road widening.
- June 1953 A spoon with the Sovereign's head was given to each secondary pupil – *To commemorate the Coronation of HM Queen.*
- 14 July 1954 Sports Day. Lt Col Lord Dudley Gladstone Gordon DSO HD presented the prizes.
- 16 Sept 1954 First entry of 11 year olds (55) in two forms. 3rd year (13+) new entry of 77. 4th year total 93. 5th – 88. 6th form – 49.
- 29 Oct 1954 Extra holiday presented at Lord Dudley Gordon's request by the Governors to mark his visit to the school on Sports Day and his old house in which the school is housed at Wilmington Hall.
- 20 Dec 1954 School Carol Service at Wilmington Parish Church.
- March 1954 No national newspapers – strike affected attendance – oddly!
- 11 Jun 1954 GCE scripts from candidates had to be taken by road to Senate House (London) - Post / Rail strike.
- July 1955 Extra day's holiday granted by Governors for excellent examination results.
- School gained its first Distinction at 'A' Level in Engineering Drawing.
- He records success of six Old Boys who left between 1947 & 1949 who achieved B.Sc degree.*
- 24 Jan 1956 School medicals – Dr Fox
- 12 Sept 1956 School photograph – panorama
- 18 Oct 1956 Meeting on founding of Old Boys' Association at School

- 14 Dec 1956 Meeting in Scout's Hall in Bexleyheath. 98 attended at 7.30pm to found Old Boys' Association. Meeting lasted until 10 pm.
- 10 Jan 1957 School Roll – 377 Establishment – Head and 22 Assistants
- 4 Jan 1957 Old Boys' Association. First AGM. Over 100 attended.
- 19 Feb 1957 Conference at Leyton Cross between school and officers of Education Committee and Borough and Rural Councils re road and path for children to School.
- 11 July 1957 Visit by HM Inspector re PE in school and lack of facilities.
- July 1957 Final arrangements for transfer of some woodworking machines to Lowfield Street where canteen is to be altered to woodwork room.
- Sept 1957 School Roll – 454
- Oct 1957 Medicals – TB testing – Dr Fox
- 5 Dec 1957 Dense fog. Bus conductors refused to accept boys' train passes on buses when there were no trains to bring them to school. Boys either paid or were put off further from homes to walk back!
- 9 Sept 1958 School Roll – 488
- 20 Nov 1958 Meeting at school re conditions here in which school has been left by the Committee's (*KEC*) leaving it half built – absence of laboratories, hall, gym, amenities etc. Agreed conditions were bad – not good enough and that something ought to be done about it. I was left with a ? suggestion that school would be completed in 1961.
- Dec 1958 A press cutting refers to the possibility that "the pre agricultural course at Dartford Technical School, which prepared 20 boys a year for a career on the land was in danger of being lost."
- 13 May 1959 Polio injections – Dr Fox
- 1 June 1959 School scheme for training and testing boys on Road Safety on cycles – began.
- Sept 1959 A press cutting reporting on a meeting of the NW Kent Divisional Executive of K E C states that "new buildings for Dartford Technical School for Boys had been included in the 1960 - 62 building programme."
- Summer 1962 176 candidates took 853 London University GCE papers.
425 passes (inc 17 Distinctions) 418 failures. (*maths not his subject*).
28 candidates took 54 A level papers 42 passes (8 Distinctions)
5 awarded O level and 3 failures.

Autumn 1962 Work begins on the School's new buildings. At long last the School will have essential provision, absence of which has made progress in many ways, not least socially, impossible.

18 Jan 1963 School was closed except for examination candidates and staff for the remainder of this week as a result of fuel shortage. The appalling weather conditions since December 26 did not improve matters. There is less than 7 tons of coke which will mean a further closure if stocks do not come or the weather continues bad.

Lowest temperature recorded at Wilmington = 4°F (or minus 20°C).

All building on new school delayed for 3 months by weather.

20 Dec 1963 Mr L V Wall signs off on his retirement.

Mr J A Mogford (new Headmaster) only kept the book going for a few months.

L V Wall and Puppets

One odd thing, perhaps unknown to most boys who were at the school during his headship, was that he was interested in puppets - the wooden type on strings.

In 1950 he edited and had published by Faber & Faber - *The Puppet Book: A Book On Educational Puppetry* . It was written by members of the Educational Puppetry Association.

The book was updated and reprinted on several occasions. In 1965 it was republished as *The Puppet Book: a Practical Guide to Puppetry* with LV Wall as one of the three editors.

Does anyone recall any puppet lessons?

The Headmaster's Letter - L V Wall - July 1963

The time has come to take my leave of the School. I feel the poignancy of this parting after so many years, the more so as I am leaving a pulsating life among you all for quieter and more solitary paths.

The School, after early insignificance, now has some tradition, an honourable past and an exciting future. I shall be happy to remember my share in what has gone before but sad to miss the next tremendous years. One always hopes, of course, to see the next stage and the next; but, however that may be, so long as the School is well served by those who live and work there, what I shall hear in the years ahead will not fail to afford that intense pleasure which is the peculiar portion of those who have had some part in making the School what it is.

A school is not created by architects and builders, but by the efforts and attitudes of those who spend some part of their lives within its walls. A school is enriched or impoverished by its generations, and all must so endeavour that their sojourn there may in its own way add to the stature and not detract from the image.

My thanks must go to the many colleagues who have borne the brunt of difficult times with me, and my sincere good wishes to all, both Staff and boys, whom I leave to carry on the work in which I have had some share.

L. V. Wall.



Vale - A Message from the Deputy Headmaster

The departure of its headmaster is a milestone in the history of any school, but for us it is especially significant since it is our first. Appointed first headmaster in 1941, Mr. Wall is retiring after twenty-two years' service.

These have not been easy years. In fact, when the history of the School comes to be written, they will prove to have been among its most difficult and hazardous. For, when Mr. Wall took over, he found a neglected and ill-equipped school, housed in very poor quarters and existing under wartime conditions of air-raids, bomb-damage and lessons in shelters underground, and with transport difficulties which would dwarf even our present ones. Despite these problems and many others, Mr. Wall, by his example, guidance and untiring efforts, had within six years raised the academic standards from nothing to university entrance. From then, the School has gone from strength to strength, and, when the completion of the new buildings - perhaps his last major aim - is in sight, it is a matter of regret that he will not be with us to enjoy it.

Born in the North Country and educated at Duke's School, Alnwick, Northumberland, and at Durham University, Mr. Wall has spent his entire teaching career in boarding and grammar schools in the South. He first came to Kent to teach at Chatham House Grammar School where he stayed for sixteen years before moving to Dartford. In the early years of his career, he continued with the sporting activities in which he had excelled at the University, and later, he served many years advising on youth work in north-west Kent and in the same connection with the B.B.C.

In conclusion, I would like to express on behalf of us all, Staff and boys, both past and present, our sincere wishes for a very happy and enjoyable retirement, with the hope that, as he will still be in the district, we shall have the pleasure of his company from time to time. The many real gifts and talents which he possesses, the riches of his knowledge and experience - these are the School's loss, but their influence will remain long after Mr. Wall has left.

P. Black.

These two articles appeared in the 1963 edition of the School Magazine. It appears that they may have been slightly premature because later, as a postscript in that magazine, there is the note:

As the Governors have not yet made an appointment, Mr Wall's resignation will not take effect before Christmas. He has thus not been spared the bitterness of learning that the new Assembly Hall has been shortened by twenty feet, so that it will not be possible for the whole school to gather in it.

The 1964 edition of the School magazine noted:

Mr Wall left us in December 1963 and Mr J Mogford M.SC., A.R.C.S., D.I.C., became Headmaster in January 1964. Changes in organisation, timetable and religious offices have followed but for comments on these and for an appreciation of the new buildings - Assembly Hall and Dining Space now in use, flanked by the chimney with its stark dynamic functionalism and crowned by the glass walled tank room floating above the Art room - you must go to another place.

So building work on phase 2 had at last started, but where were the promised sports hall, the laboratories and the additional classrooms?

Leonard Vernon Wall - Headmaster from 1941 - 1963.

After retiring Mr. Wall returned to his native Northumberland and passed away in 1978 in his 76th year.

The House System

The first edition of the School magazine contains reports on the four senior Houses, named so they say to mirror the initials of the four words of the then school title - (Darenth) Dartford (Cray) County (Thames) Technical (School) School.

When, in September 1954, boys joined the school at age 11 rather than 13 as previously, it was decided that there should be two separate Houses for the junior school - East and West. That was brought to an end in 1965, when all boys were allocated to one of the senior Houses. However, by 1977 it is clear from the record that a falling school roll had meant the dropping of School House leaving just three - Darenth - Cray - Thames.

Mr W James included the following in a comment written for the June 1995 edition of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter.

The school has lost the house system. To refresh the memories of some of you and to inform most of you, there were four senior houses, Darent, Cray, Thames and School, the order dictated by the name of the school. Two junior houses, East and West were added, unfortunately not integrated due to lack of large rooms, when the entry changed from 13+ to 11+. Each house had a colour, and the school tie had a central stripe, the colour of which was that of the wearer's house.

It is a pity that reorganisation within the school and a falling roll led to the collapse of the house system. It countered the horizontal one imposed by years of offering a vertical stratification which helped to integrate pupils of different ages, and gave an opportunity to a greater number to assume responsibilities normally available only to prefects and form captains (something else lost). It also gave opportunities for competition.

It has always amazed me that teachers have allowed themselves to be brainwashed into believing that competition is an evil. The outside world is full of competition; and education is supposed to be a preparation for life. Where better to learn how to deal with both the rewards and disappointments of competition than in school where it can be controlled, where the competitive instinct can be used as a stimulus, and the pupils helped to come to terms with the fact that we are not all equal?

The house system offered lots of competition. There were house matches for different years: football matches, cross-country, cricket matches, athletics. Nothing shows what has been lost so much as Sports' Day. I know that diminishing numbers and the absence of fifth and sixth formers are contributory factors, but the day became an extremely well organised but dull event, coming to life only during relays when inter-form rivalry injected some excitement. When the houses existed, the competitors wore numbers and house colours, programmes told spectators what was going on; there were medals, certificates and cups. There was intense and noisy rivalry. There was fun.

Mr James and others would have been pleased to learn that the House system was reintroduced in September 2007. House names have changed and they are now linked to the theme of engineering / science / maths: - Brunel - Darwin - Newton - Stevenson - Telford.

A Pupil's View

Frank Pearson (1957 - 1964)

I was at Dar Tech when the first major development got us a hall. When it came it was reduced in size due to shortage of funds. School dinners were served but tables extended onto the stage. It was a big change, with Mr. Mogford taking over the headship from Mr. Wall and grace was said before meals. The other big difference was that sixth formers were allowed outside school not wearing a school cap.

However, I'd like to start at the beginning. I joined in 1957, when, for the first time, there was a four-form entry, 30 boys per form. All of us were born in 1946. I was placed in Form 1D with form master Mr. Orton. The register was read every day and I can recite at speed thirty surnames from Anderson to Walker. There was a timetable of eight 40-minute periods. Theoretically there were four periods in the morning from 9 until 10.20 and 10.35 to 11.55. The afternoon periods ran from 1.15 to 2.35 and 2.50 to 4.10. The day started with Assembly at 8.55 in the Art room, also known as 6N. Inevitably this encroached on the first period of the day. The last period of the week was known as Form Period.

Subjects were allocated to classrooms numbered with a single digit and followed by an "N" if in the small new building. In the Old Building rooms 1 to 4 were large reception rooms with high ornate ceilings. Room 6 was Mr. Pearce's. His desk was on a balcony which overlooked the playground. The room had two doors allowing direct access to the school library, thus avoiding the necessity for Mr. Pearce to go anywhere near the staff room. Mr. Pearce didn't teach D formers so at this stage I was almost unaware of his existence.

Entry to the Old Building via the front door was not permitted to youngsters. The majority of folk entered via steps next to the coke store. At the top of these steps two prefects were positioned so as to enforce a one way system through wash rooms and cloakrooms. Next to these entry steps were downward steps. Pupils were only allowed down to claim lost property from Mr. Joyce the caretaker. There was a so-called secret passage up from this basement which led into Mrs. Braxton (the school secretary's) office, close by the front door.

Extensive school grounds meant that juniors could complete a cross country without leaving the premises. However, with first years being allocated four periods of games a week, the football pitches took a pounding and on windy days I saw soil erosion first hand. The room allocated for Games was called The Pavilion. In its day it must have been a fine wooden building. It was roomy but lacked showers. 1D took games with 1C. Each had a first and second team. There were no substitutes in those days so potentially there were 8 boys per class left over. Presumably they would be given different games to play.

There were, as I've already mentioned, thirty boys in a form. Evidently this was higher than in previous years and in the Drawing Office there were only 28 purpose built desks with drawing boards. I was not allocated one of these but was given a normal classroom desk with something that resembled a pastry board on top. Terry clips didn't really fit it. In those days allowance was not made for such a disadvantage as my school report for Engineering Drawing for Autumn Term 1957

shows 26% and the following remark from Mr. Austin: "Rough, careless work showing faintly through a façade of grime". Very recently I had this remark read out on a local radio programme and they were unable to find anyone with a school report to trump mine.

Another problem I had was that the prospectus, sent before I started, demanded that my parents supply the following:

- 1 One-foot rule (inches, tenths, centimetres and millimetres)
- 1 Protractor (celluloid).

My father provided me with a 360 degree protractor when all the other boys had a 180 degree one with a straight edge. Also their rulers had eighths and sixteenths of an inch and I was forced to convert fractions to a decimal and use tenths of an inch. Even without these problems I was never going to succeed in areas where Dar Tech aimed to excel and again I quote from the prospectus. This time it's a paragraph that alarmed my father.

"There are two main interests, those of Engineering and Agriculture, which will allow some bias in courses which are of general education. Boys may in their third year transfer to the Pre-Agricultural side."

Close to the drawing office were other outbuildings which remained when the Hall itself was demolished. These included biology, chemistry and physics laboratories, a canteen with adjacent bicycle sheds, a metalwork shop and a potting shed from which pears were sold in season.

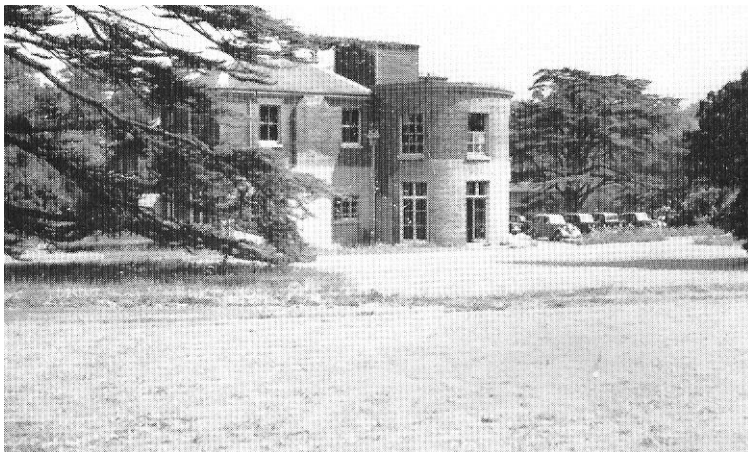
The New Building was tiny. 1N and 2N were metalwork shop and science labs. I learnt mathematics in 3N with Mr. Amess. He was white haired and looked like an Old Testament prophet, especially when reading from Isaiah to the whole school in Wilmington Church. Naughty boys he would send out to stand outside the headmaster's office having previously warned, "I'll send you over the road Pearson". I don't think 1D had lessons in 4N but 5N was Mr. Atkins's nature study room. He was the first master to take us outside the school boundary. On our return we were told to write under the title, "*Signs of Autumn On and Around Dartford Heath*". Certain boys got into trouble for reporting that Peep-Bo Alley was marked in chalk as "The Tunnel of Love". Obviously Autumn was not the season for love!

Upstairs there was 6N (the Art Room but also our form room), 7N was Mrs. Mountjoy's where I was taught French and in 8N I had Religious Instruction with Mr. Edgington before he went overseas as a missionary. In 9N I learnt Geography with Mr. Cartwright but not in 1957.

The winter of 1957-58 was the winter of Asian Flu'. I didn't catch it but most boys seemed to. In the middle of the outbreak I had a short illness. Despite my mother writing a note to this effect, there was reluctance on the part of some of the teachers to allow me back until the due time had elapsed. The prospectus said that for infectious diseases "the written sanction of a doctor" had to be obtained but I suspect that doctors had better things to do.

In the second year I had to have a bib and brace for metalwork and an apron for woodwork at Lowfield Street in Dartford. To get there we were given London Transport bus tickets. The fare from Wilmington Post Office was 2d and for this journey a white ticket was given us. To or from Leyton Cross the fare was an extra halfpenny and for this a more colourful ticket was needed. At lunchtime everyone had to use the 477 Wilmington Post Office route. By 1958 bus conductors had machines to print tickets, so they rarely had a ticket clipper to hand so normally they just ripped our tickets in half. Whereas pupils that had Mr. Gregory told tales of “wood not growing on trees” and timber abuse, I had Mr. Gough who was much more placid. My main memory is looking out the window at ducks swimming over flooded foundations.

I could go on and on but keying this lot into an email is not a happy prospect.



Wilmington Hall in 1955.

Most of these rooms were still in use as classrooms until the 1970s.

Note the staff car park.

Wishful Thinking - Phase 2 of the New Building

The following article appeared in No 8, the 1960 edition of the School Magazine.

We are, according to Authority, to have the remainder of our School by 1962. This phase will include all those amenities from lack of which the School has suffered for so many years.

It is sad to see by the plans that, with all the ground available on this site, the architects have found it necessary to build so far westward towards the old building that the four beautiful sixty-foot Wellingtonias and all the rhododendrons, a yearly mass of colour, will be destroyed.

The provision will include the Hall, Gymnasium, a practical Physics/Mechanics laboratory, two Science laboratories, an Engineering shop, a Woodwork shop, a Metalwork shop, an Electrical shop, an Art/Craft room and the Kitchen/Dining room. The administration rooms and Staff rooms will also be included.

The re-organisation will mean changes too, in the use of the present rooms. The Art room will then become the Library, the present Metalwork room in the new building will become a Woodwork shop, bringing the whole School together on one site for the first time in its history of over thirty-three years.

Sadly, this was not to be, as the editorial in the 1961 edition noted:

The descent upon the school at diverse times of various gentlemen carrying impressive rolls has quickened our excitement; the new buildings have been planned and furnished. It remains to lay the first brick.

The editorial also lamented the end of the agricultural stream.

It was sad to see a pantechicon lumbering away from the farm with agricultural equipment, thus terminating a distinctive feature of the school. We saw no tears; it must be admitted, in the eyes of 5Ag as they assisted with the moving.

The 1962 edition of the School Magazine records:

Unfortunately, at the moment of writing, not a brick has been laid of the new buildings, which, if the schedules are to be believed, are to be ready for occupation in September.

The editorial also records that this was the first year that three boys were successful in gaining places at University whilst still at Wilmington Hall. Previously boys had to transfer to another school or college to complete their "A" levels.

New Building - Phase 2 - almost complete.

The following is extracted from the 1965 edition of the School magazine. At long last, the buildings promised so many years earlier were available for use.

We come to the end of an exciting if harassing year. The new buildings, with the exception of the Drawing Office, are now in use. The Science Department is very handsomely provided with four new laboratories, each with a store room, and with the Division Room for lectures and writing up notes. The old Physics and Mechanics laboratories in the New Building have made splendid Geography rooms. The two new classrooms, however, are very disappointing; single - locker desks jammed ten in a row as in Room 11, or spaced diagonally as in Room 10 to allow for classes of thirty-one boys are reminiscent of Victorian days. It is impossible to teach in them without spraying unfortunate boys with germs or smothering them in chalk dust. Perhaps in Phase 3 the two rooms will be made into one. Nor are the rooms sound-proof. Tears tremble on the eyelids as Lady Macbeth mutters in her sleep-walking: "Here's the smell of blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh! "

Unfortunately, the stage is not yet ready; the lighting is not installed. Though the front, side and back curtains are hung, the tormentors wait upon volunteers. This has tended to frustrate dramatic efforts.

Every boy now has a locker for his books and a further implausible excuse in his quiver for not doing his homework. "Please, sir, I forgot to take Pendlebury ' home." No doubt in time we shall get used to the clicks. The litter is another matter.

The New Buildings

The view of a fourth form pupil.

Although the new buildings have many good points, there are, of course, the bad ones too. These defects, though small, are fairly numerous. There are the birds which find their way into the hall and mark the furniture with their droppings. There are many flimsy hangers in the changing rooms, some of which have broken already. In addition to this, the walls are painted white of all colours, so that they show the slightest mark. Another point is that many fittings in the buildings are so poorly made that the slightest act of vandalism by any stupid boy is greatly magnified. Then the roof over the paths leading to the gymnasium is completely unnecessary as the rain which comes down at an angle goes straight under the roof on to the people walking below.

I was not very impressed with the new physics laboratory. It actually made me feel depressed as it seems rather drab and somewhat old-fashioned.

The majority of the building is made of glass which is nice but rather expensive if one large pane should be broken.

The exterior is of marked improvement with a pond, which will eventually contain fish, as one of the main features. Another of the main features is the hexagonal chimney which was so difficult to build that several workmen were sent to a college to learn how it was to be built.

I like very much the cobbled parts by the new entrance gates and also the small lamp-posts which make the new building appear to be quite modern. In fact, I believe it makes Dartford Technical High School for Boys the best school for a long way around Dartford.

Wally (Jesse) James Reminisces. (1957 - 1989)

The following is a further extract from an article written Mr W James who taught English and PE for many years at the school.

We lost the old building. Only those who taught and learnt there can appreciate with what feelings we saw it come down. There were few greater pleasures on a hot summer's day than to be in Room 2, opening the French windows, and taking one's class out to sit in the shade of the trees around the lawn and grass tennis court.

The school lost caps. And a good thing too. It ended the ridiculous sight of a sixth-former wearing the cap his mother had bought in his first year. But boys have lost the joy of throwing it over the fence or contributing it to a bonfire on their last day at school.

The most important thing the school has lost is time. There used to be eight 40 minute periods and an hour and a half for lunch, with no afternoon break. School ended at 4.10 (To the delight of the boys and the dismay of the affected teachers, Period one began at 9.00 and so did Assembly.) There was time for lunchtime activities. For Mr. Austen, Mr. Gough, me and others, there was time to play cricket at the back of the pavilion, which used to be where the craft block now is. Ignoring the school rule about playing with balls near the windows, a rule we had no hesitation in enforcing when on duty, we would play with a hard ball, once nearly giving Mr. Amess a heart attack when a ball crashed into a window of what was then known as 4N. Later, when the tennis courts were laid, there was time to have lunch, get changed and play tennis before afternoon school. Messrs. Cartwright, Moyle, Dougal, Jenkins, Hollingsworth, all will remember how much time we had.

The good times did not last. German was introduced, causing immense time-tabling problems, compounded when the school day was reorganised and an afternoon break inserted. Some of you will remember the six-day time-table with fixed Wednesdays, fixed because we sometimes played inter-school matches on Wednesdays. Later still, the building of Wilmington Secondary School brought about 35 minute periods and a school day ending at 3.30.

Other factors have affected time. External and internal exams started and finished much later than today; and fifth and sixth formers did not leave school until the last day of term. The gap between the end of term exams and the end of term led to problems, but it was a time when one could hold cricket matches, have two days for standards, another two for heats, organise a soft-ball and stool-ball inter-form competitions - to have fun.

Reorganisation - 1967

A Pupils View - Extract from the Editorial in Proboscis - July 1967

As we prepare this issue of Proboscis for press the North West Kent Education Officer has just announced proposals for a new system of mixed, comprehensive education in this area, and our school, as such, will disappear and will be replaced by a much larger unit, which will simply be known as 'Wilmington School'.

The Headmaster in this month's leading article has presented these proposals, and we now invite boys, parents and staff to submit their opinions and views for the next edition of Proboscis due out on the 18th July.

These proposals are to be considered by the Divisional Executive in September, before the matter goes on to the Kent Education Committee, the County Council and finally to the Minister of Education.

We, in Proboscis, will be following closely the progress of this scheme and will undoubtedly have more to say about it in the future.

Reorganisation of Secondary Education in North West Kent

The fact that the publication of the proposals for reorganisation on Wednesday, 21st June, has evoked little response in the school leads me to wonder if the full implications of the proposed scheme have been understood.

Most people are aware of the content of Circular 10/65 in which the Minister of Education and Science defines various patterns of Secondary Education which are deemed to be acceptable as Comprehensive Schemes for the future. Most of the Local Education Authorities, including the Kent County Council, have agreed to reorganise secondary education according to the Minister's formulae. Indeed, it would seem that the Kent County Council had made certain tentative steps towards reorganisation of the Secondary Schools before the publication of 10/65.

The marked increase in size of population in the Dartford Rural Area, the likelihood of the London Borough of Bromley and Bexley ceasing to export pupils into the North West Kent area, and the raising of the statutory school leaving age, would have led to significant changes in the provision of local secondary education irrespective of national policy. It is estimated that by 1975 the total population of pupils in Secondary Schools in the Dartford Area will increase from about 5,500, the present figure, to about 8,300. The need exists, therefore, for major building programmes to supply 'new roofs for new heads'.

What about us?

The proposed scheme advocates the establishment at Wilmington of a campus to accommodate about 2,000 boys and girls of ages 11 to 18+ and of all native abilities.

The existing buildings on the sites of the Boys' and Girls' Technical High Schools would form part of the new campus. The junior school - forms 1 and 2, the middle school - forms 3, 4, and 5, and the sixth form would be allocated special buildings on the campus site. The middle school would be organised on a House basis accommodated in purpose-built House buildings. The sixth form would be provided with a special suite incorporating common rooms, study booths and library. It would be expected that the school population would be drawn from a catchment area including the villages and estates around Wilmington, so that it would become a "neighbourhood school" and thus become the focus of all educational and cultural activities in the Wilmington area. Our face would indeed be changed.

Any comments?
Headmaster.

Published in Issue 5 of Proboscis July 1967

Headmaster's Foreword to 1967 School Magazine.

The announcement of the Divisional Education Officer's plan for the reorganisation of secondary education in the N.W. Kent area in June 1967 and the recent decision of the Division Executive to adopt the plan and submit it for approval to the County Council, is likely to lead to a retrospective assessment of the last academic year as being of outstanding significance in the history of the school. Under the proposed scheme the school, and its sister establishment, would form the nucleus of a new, large coeducational "all-through" comprehensive school for Wilmington and neighbouring areas. Thus, if the plan is approved by the County Council and the Secretary of State, much study in depth and planning for the future will engage our attention during the next few years so that the plan is ready for implementation in the early 1970s.

The likelihood of major change in the future should not, however, be allowed to distract our attention from the needs of the present or cause a slowing down in progress during the interim. Academic standards must be raised - developments of curriculum must continue - awareness of the individual's responsibilities to his fellows through membership of a school society must be cultivated so that we may strive for the ideal of the school providing what is best for each of its members and, conversely each member giving of his best for the school. Thus we should aim to build a strong nucleus about which major growth may be expected to flourish and thus we may ensure that all highly valued factors of the past and present may be carried over into a new order.

The increased participation by senior boys in the corporate life of the school, which was manifest in the past year, is a trend which is welcome, to say the least. Certainly I have been looking for this trend since I joined the school. The publication of this new school magazine is one example of this enterprise and I am glad to record my appreciation for the work of the members of the magazine committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. L. Hollingsworth, in producing this journal.

J. Mogford. (Headmaster)

Interesting Comments from the 1967 School Magazine.

That the school has shrunk slightly in numbers is due to the smaller forms lower down the school. In September 1966, Mr. W. Hodgson began his first full year as head of the Junior School (the first two years), and among those in his care several members of 10 were shortly to achieve a form of notoriety by a succession of letters to 'Proboscis', commenting on the running of the school. Far from it being a thing of the past, it seems that the millennium for soap-box orators and barrack room lawyers is close at hand.

In June came the news of the Fogarty plan, which is to change the whole system of education in the Dartford area. It seemed to be accepted, almost impassively, possibly because most people in the school felt it affected only posterity. Nevertheless, early symptoms of integration became apparent during the year. Our choir had for some time past been augmented by our opposite numbers in the Girls' Tech., but with three members of 6L attending Advanced level English lessons over the road, relations became more established. The girls were frequently seen (though, unfortunately, seldom heard) at debates in our library, and co-operated fully in the execution of a local census on the Vietnam War.

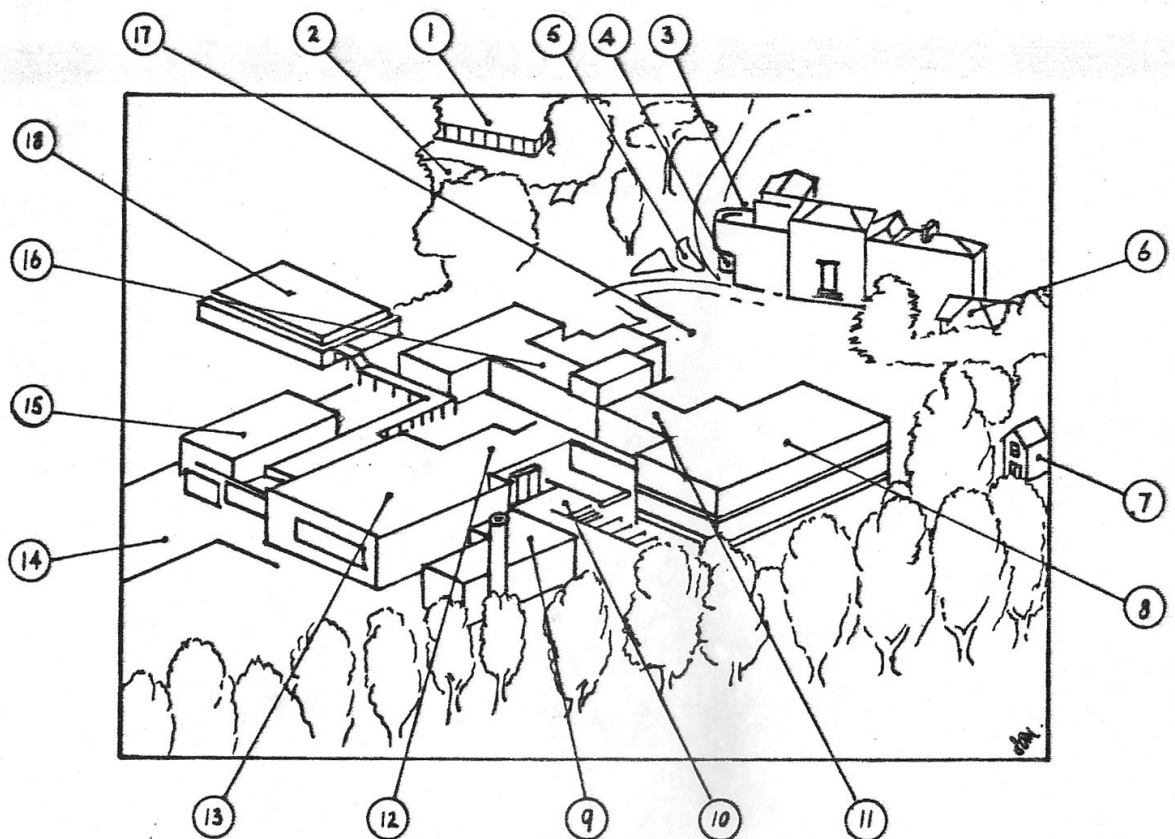
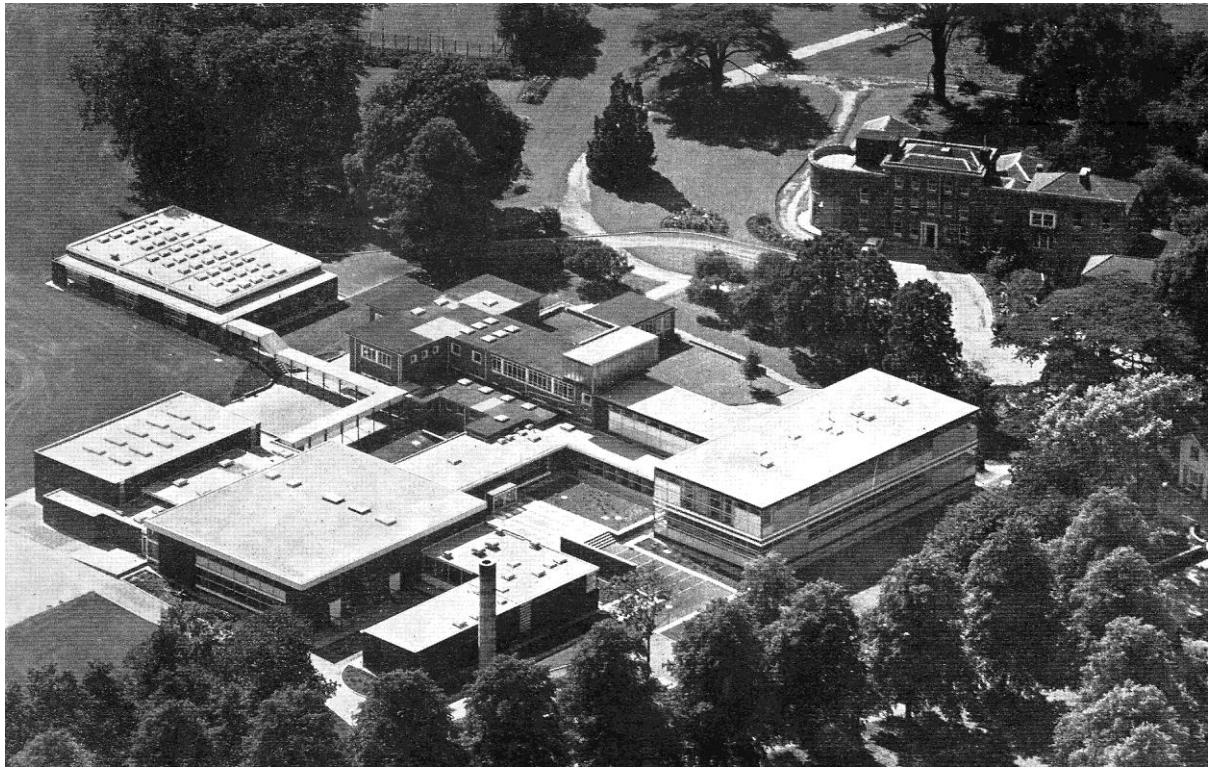
In company with other schools, car park space is now at a premium, with the growth in numbers of Fifth and Sixth Formers motorized. Among the two-wheeled brigade the scooter seems slightly more favoured, although a number of owners have indulged in the seemingly illogical occupation of making their machines look as much like motor-cycles as possible. In fairness, it must be stated that there are some who remain innocent of this practice.

For a while during the Autumn term the school was in the throes of a Goodwill Fund fever, while boys endeavoured to count the number of windows on the school premises, or to estimate the dimensions and specify gravity, etc., of the Staff, the latter also contributing to the pastime by making a mixture of inspired informed criticism and uninformed ribaldries, in their capacity as "Juke Box Jurors".

Common room provision has continued to expand, the different rooms allocated accentuating the hierarchy of the sixth year, who have taken their new-found opportunities to be common together.

The summer holiday, 1966, permitted the grass sown around the hard playing areas and alongside the two grass tennis courts to establish itself, and one wonders how fully some boys appreciate the pleasant surroundings in which the school is situated. The pond is now better stocked and well-guarded, so that no longer can it be mistaken for a large puddle across the approach road to the school. The provision of new jumping pits has facilitated the holding of athletic meetings and the hard strips for the cricket nets are a welcome improvement. A new angle on the buildings was provided by the series of aerial photographs of the school and its immediate environs, taken in August 1966, revealing the school's defences, in the shape of an apparent business-like mortar gun located between the Staff car park and the boiler house.

Dartford Technical High School for Boys - Aerial Photo 1966



Dartford Technical High School for Boys - Notes to Aerial Photo

A photograph taken in the summer of 1966, showing the fullest extent of the buildings of D.T.H.S.B. The additional accommodation for the Wilmington Secondary School had not yet appeared. The original Wilmington Hall was still in use for teaching purposes.

1. Very high quality tennis courts - dug up in 1971.
2. The open-air theatre, more than once the site of excerpts from Shakespeare.
3. Wilmington Hall - pulled down in 1971 to make room for the building of Wilmington Secondary School.
4. The rounded end of what was originally the Honeymoon Suite (ground floor).
5. The Roger Luxton Memorial Gardens, a rose garden set out in memory of a boy who died in his second year at school.
6. The only part of the Hall which now remains:
Originally the stables, they housed the Advanced Level Physics and Chemistry laboratories.
7. The Caretakers' House at the bottom of the drive.
It was badly affected by the floods of 1968 and refurbished, but was never again inhabited and demolished a few years later.
8. The Science block - opened 1965.
9. The kitchens - opened 1964.
10. The patio and approach to the school entrance - opened 1964.
11. The Library - opened 1965.
12. The Administration block and entrance - opened 1964.
13. The School Hall opened 1965.
14. Site of the later extension towards the Sports Hall.
15. The Gym opened 1965.
16. The first extension to the buildings after the original Hall - opened 1956. On the upper floor are the Art Room (marked), Modern Language rooms and R.S. room
17. Site of the later extension towards the Wilmington Secondary School.
18. Craft block - Metalwork and Woodwork - opened 1965.

1967 - 1984

The editor has been able to find little archive material regarding this period of significant change.

The Summary of Salient Dates and Events (pages 5 - 7) indicates that the reorganisation proposed in 1967, with a campus for 2,000 spread across the old Boys and Girls Technical Schools was abandoned, probably as a result of government intervention.

Instead, Kent Education Committee planned an 11 - 18 comprehensive school for boys on the site. There was strong opposition to this and it appears from a note in the Parliament's Hansard - November 1973 - that perhaps the then Secretary of State for Educational and Science - one Margaret Thatcher - had something to do with the rejection of the County Council's proposals.

There can be little doubt that changes to the political colour in both Parliament and at the Kent County Council did cause uncertainty about the future of the school on more than one occasion.

In readiness for the planned comprehensive school, the old Wilmington Hall was demolished in 1971. Many lamented its "wanton destruction", but it was probably clear that it was structurally unsound and could no longer be used for schooling purposes. One must also assume that the costs involved in making the building structurally safe were outweighed by the costs of building something new, which would better suit the needs of a growing school population.

In 1972, the then Headmaster Mr J Mogford was interviewed by the boys who edited the school magazine - Gollum. That interview is published below as it appeared in Gollum.

Construction work started on the new buildings to serve the enlarged school. These included the new Sports Hall tacked onto the west end of the existing school buildings together with a new teaching block on the east side, over towards the original site of Wilmington Hall.

However, with the rejection of the scheme for a single boy's comprehensive school it appears that the County Council decided to continue with the building works and to have two schools existing side by side - The Dartford Technical High School for Boys together with a mixed non-selective school to be known as Wilmington Secondary School. Both schools were to share the same Headmaster.

Wilmington Secondary School opened in September 1974 with 120 first year pupils, and in each subsequent year planned to take in another 120 pupils. By 1984 there were 350 pupils on its roll.

Initially, there appears to have been loose co-operation between the two schools, although both had completely separate teaching staff. A prospectus for 1977 / 8 for the Wilmington Secondary School refers to "Superium" - a newsletter jointly published with articles and other items submitted by pupils from both schools.

From an outsider's point of view, it does seem incomprehensible, given the comments made to support the 1967 reorganisation proposals (see elsewhere) that by 1979, an apparent fall in the birth rate had meant that only a two form entry (60 boys) was possible at The Dartford Technical High School for Boys.

In the late 1950's and early 1960 there was much competition to get into the school. The same applies now. What did happen in the late 1970s that meant that the school roll could fall so dramatically?

1983 saw the two schools separated, with individual Headmasters and the establishment of Wilmington Grammar School for Boys.

Interview with Mr J Mogford - Headmaster - 1972

A few weeks ago we appealed to you for questions concerning the new buildings and plans for the reorganisation of education. We put these to Mr. Mogford in an exclusive GOLLUM interview.

Q. Why do we need to extend the school?

A. Ah, the first reason that the population of this part of division Kent is rising quite rapidly and there is a need to accommodate an increasing number of school pupils. The second reason is that the county has decided that to accommodate this increased population it will ultimately reorganise the division into comprehensive schools, em, and in the case of Wilmington which will be accommodating

Q. Will there be any more playing area?

A. Yes, there will be. It is likely that the playing space near to the county estates depot that will be levelled and pitches will be marked out there and I suppose the land in the lowest level of the valley will be used for organised games.

Q. How many people will the new school accommodate?

A. Well, ultimately about 2,000 pupils but to accommodate that number there must be another building programme beyond the present one.

Q. Will we be going comprehensive?

A. According to the county's plan, yes, ultimately.

Q. Will the new school be single-sex?

A. Well, again according to the county's plan the answer is yes. It will be a boy's comprehensive school. I have a hunch that the plan will be amended before its finally implemented, and in fact the school will be a co-educational school.

Q. How many extra rooms will there be in the new buildings?

A. I. can't answer that, off hand, I wouldn't even hazard a guess.

Q. When will the development be concluded?

A. Well this building programme is scheduled to end in the late autumn of '73 but as I mentioned a moment ago, there is a further phase to complete the accommodation for the comprehensive School and precisely when that second phase takes place is still not fixed and the money for that has not yet been voted.

Q. What is the cost of the development?

A. Well the programme, which is taking place at the moment, will cost about £650,000.

Q. Will the new school be a secondary school?

A. Yes, the County's stated plan to accommodate in the interim period in between now and the establishment of a comprehensive school to use the new buildings for a modern school

Q. Will the present teachers work in both schools?

A. Well again, as far as I know, the aim is to run the two schools quite independently so the answer is no. But I think that in fact if we assume that the County's stated plan does carry through and we had modern school children coming into these new buildings, that inevitably there must be a significant amount of co-operation between staff of the two schools and this might well mean ultimately that there will be a certain sharing of staff.

Q. Will any teachers be leaving if so who?

A. Well I think that there's no clear evidence to indicate that teachers will be leaving because of the developments on the site, but there will be teachers going and coming year by year as a normal event, anyway.

Q. Will new teachers be coming?

A. Oh yes, of course, yes.

Q. Will the mobile huts remain after the building is completed?

A. Well, some of the new building which is going up, will become ours. That part of the building which will be an extension of the teaching block accommodating the Geography rooms and Maths rooms, part of that extension will become ours and the intention is that that accommodation will replace that which we lost when the old building was demolished. Therefore, the County's intention, I suppose, is that the mobile classrooms will go when this replacement accommodation is available for us. I'm hoping that the County will be open to persuasion to leave at least one of the mobile classrooms for us in addition to the permanent replacements.

Q. Will there be easier access to the fields after building completion?

A. Oh yes, the building programme, as you probably realise consists of a number of detached blocks so they are creating here a complex of building and there will be access, of course, between these blocks of buildings, in fact the access to the playing space will probably be just as easy as it was before the building began on the site.

Q. Will there be any new Biology, Chemistry and Physics Labs?

A. Erm, not in the first phase of buildings, that is for our use but in the ultimate plan the science block, our science block, will be extended and those rooms in the science block which at the moment are not science rooms, library for example, these will be laboratories, so that the science block will contain only and all of the science accommodation in the ultimate plan. Well in fact, a new library will be built. The new library in the school in the ultimate plan will be in that part of the building which is the extension of the 1N, 2N, and 3N teaching area now. The new library, on the plan of the new library shows that it is a very much larger room than our present one.

Q. Will there be a new gymnasium or changing rooms?

A. Well, er, there will be, I am again speaking in the ultimate form, there will be a games hall built alongside our existing gymnasium on the playground area, in the interim period the games hall will be subdivided into two gyms for the modern school children but in the ultimate form this will become a large game hall which together with our large gym, of course, the assembly hall will comprise the covered accommodation for physical education.

Q. Will there be a swimming pool?

A. Well I think the answer to that is an emphatic "No". The only way in which we could obtain a swimming pool under existing financial arrangements would be through raising monies by our own efforts and the cost of installing a pool of sufficient size for competitive swimming to take place, and the cost of providing filtration plant and putting a roof over the top of the pool so that it could be used throughout the year, the cost of that would be £20,000 at current prices, and the County is just not prepared, to spend that amount of money on providing a swimming pool and all of that money would have to be raised through our own efforts.

Q. At the moment it seems that there are few workmen at the site, will there be any more coming?

A. The answer is "Yes": the number of workmen on the site is determined principally by the work taking place and the maximum number of workmen expected to be on the site at any given time during the building programme is about 100.

Q. Will new electrical machinery be installed?

A. I assume you are thinking of the electrical laboratory, the answer to that is "no" but the electrical laboratory will form an integral part of the new science block when it is finally completed.

Q. Why is there a fence around the playground before it is needed?

A. Well under the terms of the contract, drawn up between the K.C.C. and the building contractors and the insurance cover, which is concerned primarily with the safety of the people on the site, it was necessary to fence off completely the entire area in which the building is to take place and since the new sports hall is to be built on the old playground this is obviously included in the total building site.

Q. Why was one of the bicycle sheds dismantled? Will there be a replacement?

A. Well the answer to the first question is the highways department of the K.C.C. has insisted that as part of the new building programme the boundary line is to be moved back from the original position to provide for possible road widening at some future date and the new boundary line cuts across the old cycle shed and that's the reason for the demolition of part of the cycle shed. Ultimately, I suppose, there will be new cycle sheds accommodation provided on the site.

Q. Will any more of the grounds than is fenced off at the moment be taken up for buildings?

A. Not under the existing phase of building, no!

Q. Will there be any provision in the near future for a 5th and 6th form car park?

A. Well the answer to that Question is ultimately "yes". In the ultimate plan the parking space provided on the site will be increased, we have tried to persuade the architect to build this new parking space early in the building programme and then hand it over to us, but the time when the parking space is built is determined primarily by economic factors and it looks at the moment as if parking space is one of the last items to be included in the building plan.

Q. If there are going to be two schools, why was it decided to build the new one right next to ours rather than over the other side of the fields? Won't the nearness of the two schools cause friction?

A. Because the building programme is designed to provide the comprehensive school in its ultimate form and the two separate schools, and the running of two separate schools on the site is an interim arrangement. I think the answer to the second part is that it is possible if not likely certainly if two separate schools are to co-exist reasonably there must be a great deal of co-operation between the two schools.

School Activities 1980

The following additional information was provided to pupils considering joining the school in 1980.

Dartford Technical High School for Boys is a three form entry boys' selective school in Wilmington, some two miles from the centre of Dartford. The School campus, which consists of modern buildings, occupies a site of about thirty-five acres and is shared with Wilmington Secondary School. The site was originally the private estate of Wilmington Hall. The spacious grounds offer facilities for games and athletics which are unrivalled amongst local schools.

The school provides a broadly based curriculum of academic and technical subjects. The description 'Technical' in our title is now a misnomer dating back to the 1944 Education Act when Kent implemented the tripartite system of secondary education. The present roll is 454 of whom 60 pupils are in the sixth form studying various combinations of Ordinary and Advanced level subjects. The lower school is mainly taught in unstreamed classes. All boys except the VIth form are expected to wear school uniform.

Most of the G.C.E. subjects are taken through the University of London, but some examinations taken are those set by the Associated Examining Board. A list of subjects studied appears elsewhere in this booklet.

As the boys move further up the school advice on future careers and higher education is given by the Careers Officer for the area, by our own Careers Master, Form Tutors and the Senior Sixth Form Tutor, in addition to the Deputy Headmaster and the Headmaster. On leaving school our young men, preparing to enter many professions and careers, go on to University, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Colleges of Further Education, the Civil Service, Banking and Insurance, Accountancy, Architecture Engineering, Computing, the Services, the Merchant Navy, the Post Office, Telecommunications, Advertising, Printing - to name but a few.

In addition to the excellent facilities offered by the grounds for outdoor sports we have the use of a new indoor Sports Hall.

Extra-curricular activities range from an Astronomy Club to the Weight-lifting Club. Music is playing an ever increasing part in extra-curricular activities and includes individual tuition, group work, a choir and an orchestra. Meeting times vary between lunch time and after school as well as evenings and weekends. Recent school journeys have travelled as far as Greece; France, Belgium, Italy, the Canal's, North Wales and a cruise in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is also a flourishing Parent Teacher Association.

We are very proud of our 'Goodwill Week' results, an off-shoot of Religious Education. For one week, our pupils give their spare-time raising money for charities by various activities such as competitions, sponsored walks, discos and even boxing and wrestling matches.

In 1977, over £500 was raised and two guide dogs for the blind were trained as a result.

In 1978, over £1,000 was raised and we presented a cardiac monitor to Dartford West Hill Hospital.

The school owes much of its good reputation to a hard-working and experienced staff whose stability over the years has meant an uninterrupted education for a vast majority of boys entering this school.

Subjects studied:

'O' level: Art, Biology, Chemistry, *Design and Technology, English Language, English Literature, *French *German, Geography, *History, Mathematics, *Metalwork, Physics, Religious Studies, *Technical Drawing, *Woodwork: Astronomy, Economics and Geology are available in the VIth form. Subjects marked* can be taken in C.S.E.

'A' Level: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, German, Government and Political Studies, History, Mathematics (Pure, Applied, Statistics) Physics, Design and Craft, Technical Drawing. Religious Education and Computer Studies are also available.

Monitoring Progress.

In addition to checks and tests held through the year, there are formal examinations at the end of each year for the first four years. The fourth year has an additional formal examination half-way through the year. "Mock" G.C.E. examinations are held for the fifth and for the Upper Sixth.

Two reports are issued a year for each pupil. One of these is given directly to parents at "at-homes" when, once a year, parents are invited to visit the school in the evening to discuss their son's progress with his form tutor and subject teachers.

Our Approach.

We hope that the following outline of some of our departments' policies will give some idea of how we see and approach our task in education.

English. In English, language and literature are studied, each aspect of the subject supplementing the other. The department's main aim in language is to concentrate on accuracy in the fields of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Emphasis is also placed on paragraphing. 'Trendy' free expression work is not encouraged. When accuracy has been obtained, students are encouraged to write imaginative and factual work.

Literature, as well as providing pleasure for the boys is used to stimulate them in their writing by having drawn to their attention the fiction, imagery and rhythm of sentences. Most of the literature studied up to the end of the third year is from the 20th century to help students become acquainted with the language of their times. In the first three years, for each term, the class studies a play, an anthology of poetry and a prose work; it also reads three home readers.

Each term has a theme. As an example, in the first year, boys during one term study the following books on animals: Animal Farm (Orwell); Toad of Toad Hall (Milne); Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats (T.S.Eliot); The Red Pony (Steinbeck); Old Ramon (Schaefer) and White Fang (London).

A wider range of books is studied for 'O' and 'A' level work in the upper school.

W.L.Jacob.

Mathematics

All pupils in the school follow a mathematics course for the first five years, leading for the majority to a G.C.E. ordinary level or in a few cases to C.S.E. The syllabus followed is a combination of both traditional and modern mathematics. The boys are taught in their form units in the first year at the end of which they are sorted according to their ability. Wherever possible we try to make the teaching groups as small as possible.

Mathematics is a thriving subject at Sixth form level, where we offer a varied choice of courses as Advanced level.

C. Prickett

Science

The three sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics are studied by all boys for the first three years.

The study of Physics as a common core subject continues for all up to the Ordinary Level of the G.C.E. examination.

A system of options operates from the beginning of the fourth year in which it is possible to continue to study either or both of Biology and Chemistry. Special provision is made for those who experience particular difficulty in Science subjects.

Most boys who proceed to the Advanced Level follow Science-based courses and we are proud of the number of our Sixth-formers who proceed to further education.

All Science lessons are taught in laboratories well equipped with apparatus to ensure the maximum amount of individual practical work to aid understanding. A written comment by the Inspector for Science is worth repeating..."Boys were found to be interested in their Science and were able to talk sensibly about what they were doing".

J.R. Williams

Technology

The Department of Technology exists to provide all pupils with opportunities to explore a range of material including wood, metal and plastics, and associated craft techniques in interesting and creative ways. Design/problem solving is being increasingly taught from the first year as a means of learning decision-making through the pupils experiencing the whole process from the thinking, planning and

communicating of ideas to finally making an artefact. Technical Drawing is taught as a related subject, its aim being to enable pupils to communicate ideas in a refined graphical form. The vocational nature of the department should not be thought of as an aim in itself but rather as a link with the outside world, which is becoming increasingly a technological society with obvious implications for our pupils.

R.F. Campbell.

Geography

The department follows courses leading towards 'O' level and 'A' level of the G.C.E. A sixth form group is also entered for the 'O' level examination in Geology.

The rapidly changing nature of geography in recent years has resulted in our having to change the approach to the subject with a greater emphasis on the interpretation of information. Although facts about the world remain important, students even in the early part of the school curriculum are required to show that they can understand and use data to make decisions.

Field work especially in the upper part, of the school is an essential part of the subject.

I.M. Smith

Modern Languages

All pupils study at least one modern foreign language throughout their school career, with the possibility for the more able of a second, and it is the policy of the Department to enter the majority of pupils for the G.C.E. 'O' level. A number of pupils progress to do 'A' level languages.

French is the first modern language, taught from basics in Year One. From Year Three those boys who have impressed staff in English and French may also study German to G.C.E.

For younger pupils a regular pattern of daily single lessons is aimed at, whereas older pupils have at least one double lesson for intensive examination practice. Throughout the courses the pupils are encouraged always to be accurate in their work: in written work much grammar has to be learned, and in spoken work fluency and accent are improved by use of foreign language assistants and the language laboratory.

Various aspects of the life and culture of European Civilisations are promoted in Modern Language teaching in the school, and books, tapes, songs, slides, films, exchanges, penfriends and visits (of one day and longer) are regularly used to stimulate pupils' interest.

G.C. Nicholls.

History and Economics

The aim of the History Department is to equip the pupils with a body of information which will permit them to be more aware of their own values and attitudes at the present time and in this country, while bringing out the skills which the study of history can uniquely contribute to the curriculum.

All pupils study the subject in the first three years and during the Third Form much attention is given to Twentieth Century history so that pupils should be able to make more sense of the forces that have shaped and continue to shape, the times in which they live.

It is necessary, for those who have opted for History in the Fourth Form, to reconcile these aims with the demands of the 'O.' level G.C.E. examination in British Economic and Social History, for which the pupils are expected to prepare. Those who find their aptitudes and abilities are more suited to the C.S.E. will be entered for that examination.

The Department aims to make pupils into students responsible for their own progress and does not believe that orderly presentation and the use of imagination are irreconcilable.

In the Sixth Form pupils may continue to study History at 'A' level: the study of Economics to 'A' level is a popular option and also falls within the responsibility of the Department.

L. Hollingsworth

P.E. and Games

Activities covered: Gymnastics, Basketball, Volleyball, Handball, Track and Field Athletics, Cricket, Hockey, Soccer, Rugby, Badminton, Archery, Softball, Cross Country, Weight-training, Circuit-training.

Our Aim: For the boys to experience (and gain basic knowledge of) a wide range of physical activities. All boys will have opportunities in formal and informal situations to try most of the above activities and will have the chance to take some to a high level within the school organisation or with guidance towards some outside organisation best suited to their interests.

Soccer: The main school sport with representative matches against other schools every week - with A, B and even C teams fielded when we can find opposition for them. The school also plays in District and County Cups and our boys represent their District and County - this year for example we have 10 district players and 3 county players.

Outdoor activities: (Not the sole province of the P.E.Dept) We run a 'Mountain Activities Course' at the Mountain Centre in North Wales each year, when boys can gain experience of orienteering, map and compass work, camping, hill-walking and climbing. We are hoping to be able to bring many of these basic skills to more boys back in our home environment.

M.G. Wesson

Farewell - Dartford Technical High School for Boys

Amid the uncertainty brought by the proposed changes to the school, one change will definitely take place. As stated in the last issue, Dartford Technical High School for Boys will cease to exist on August 31st and Wilmington Grammar School for Boys will start life on September 1st.

As also stated, the consequences of this change have not become fully clear, but at least the history of D.T.H.S.B. can be written. The origins of our school can, in some ways, be traced back to the late 19th century, but in 1943 the Norwood report spoke of "the various kinds of technical schools, which were not instituted to satisfy the intellectual needs of an arbitrarily assumed group of children, but to prepare boys and girls for taking up certain crafts - engineering, agriculture and the like. Nevertheless, it is usual to think of the engineer or other craftsman as possessing a particular set of interests or aptitudes by virtue of which he becomes a successful engineering or whatever he may become".

The Butler Education Act of 1944 permitted local authorities considerable autonomy. Many did not have a 'tripartite' system (grammar, technical and secondary modern), but Kent went for the Technical School according to the letter of the law. Furthermore, these schools were invariably single sex, and usually recruited their entrants from the lower end of the 'selective' band (as measured at the age of 11). Admission was at first at the age of 13, but later at 11. Dartford County Technical School was set up, its initials suggesting the names of four houses it contained - Darent, Cray, Thames and School.

But changes were afoot. By the early 1960s the Agriculture stream was abandoned and the farm on our site no longer served a purpose in the curriculum. It became known that influential people in the K.E.C. would have like the technical school concept abandoned. In 1962 the school's title was changed to Dartford Technical High School. With the appointment, in 1964, of Mr Mogford, the previous Head teacher, the school developed courses in Humanities in the Sixth Form, and the differences in the curriculum between Technical and Grammar Schools became marginal.

As early as 1969 there were fewer than 150 Technical schools in the country. With the continued convergence of the curricula in the two selective schools of recent years it 'became plain that the word 'Technical' in our title was misleading, especially to foreigners.

The decision to change the title of our school was taken quite independently of any plans for reorganisation - It will not change some things - it will not affect the value of the pound in your pocket, to quote Harold Wilson. Nor will it automatically increase your son's I.Q. as a Fourth Former hoped. The infant which emerges on September 1st 1983 may have an uncertain future. It will probably be rather noisy: it will certainly be well nursed.

This was published in the PTA News 5 (Spring 1982) and announces the change of name to Wilmington Grammar School

The School's Computer - Progress So Far

Programming a computer is achieved by a number of simple statements, which it is possible to use in an infinite number of permutations giving a versatility in a number of ways a single programme can be written. These different ways can increase or decrease the time the programme takes to run, a factor which must always be present in the mind of the programmer, since the minimum time must be used to make long programme practicable, and also in everyday life time costs money. At first when learning to use a computer only the barest number of statements need to be learnt to programme it. These are built upon as one continues to use the computer over a period of time. Up to now we have only used the computer for a limited number of hours. In this time we have managed to plot simple graphs; more complex ones with higher definition (also three dimensions representations of data and information) cannot be plotted accurately, unless a High Resolution Circuit is coupled to the computer. Methods of approximation in which an approximation is used to find another more accurate approximation answer to an equation and this process while laborious and lengthy for a human, can be done in few seconds with the computer, and of course invariably games have been worked out.

The lack of blank floppy discs has so far prevented us from storing partly finished and finished programmes.

Learning to use the computer without adequate manuals, with which to teach the inexperienced learner is at first easy, but it is extremely hard to understand how to use more advanced statements in the context of the programme and their placement.

Applications in the school would include help with administration and visual demonstrations of data relationships etc. for different branches of teaching. Administrative uses could be storing of information on a floppy disc, which takes up comparatively no room in comparison to file-cabinets. It can help in stock-taking, sorting of records either into an alphabetical or chronological order, classifying specific groups of information, and many other uses.

Our progress so far, as outlined above, is only a beginning in what is now an important and extremely wide topic.

This article appeared in PTA News 5 (Spring 1982) Along with the next note taken from PTA News 6 (Autumn 1982) and written by a member of the sixth form, it is an interesting reminder of the past when computers were new. Compare that with the present, when most staff and pupils now use computers every day, for work that was inconceivable 25 years ago.

The School's Computer: A Progress Report

Initially, programming the school's computer for simple games was a good way of learning programming language and techniques. Now we try to develop programmes for useful and more educational purposes; one such programme was very helpful for the analysis of experimental results which were gained from lessons. With the results fed into the programme the computer was able to draw straight line graphs, bar charts etc. Besides helping us to learn and use some of the work taught to us in mathematics, the programme permits the calculation of results quicker and more accurately provided the original experiment was performed reasonably well.

At present we are learning how to store information on the disc drives and how to handle this data. When fully understood and given enough time the development of programmes to perhaps evaluate stock for the school or any other information that needs to be stored and up date from time to time can be attempted.

With the arrival of a printer unit, will come easier programming and displaying of computer results.

Lee Sach 6U

Another Reorganisation

The following comment appeared in PTA News 6 (Autumn 1982) in a report of the AGM held in September 1982.

Mr. Edgeler outlined the position following the decision of the Department of Education and Science to reject the K.E.C.'s proposals regarding the organisation of secondary education in the Dartford Division. The future is very uncertain, a situation which we must live with. News may come through to us via the local press but the information given out by the K.E.C. is to be taken as official.

The following comments are taken from P T A Newsletter No 8 (Autumn 1983)

Comment from the new Headmaster - Mr D B Thomas

This term marks an important moment in the development of the School, for we can look forward to a considerable period of stability. The appointment of two Heads to the Girls' and Boys' Grammar Schools and the separation of leadership on our Wilmington Hall site means that we now know where we stand and each school can forge ahead with renewed confidence that it is needed and appreciated in the community.

We in the Boys Grammar have reached the stage where we can proudly say that the academic opportunities offered are unsurpassed. Let me explain why this is the case.

1. Our Technical High School heritage gives us a better, broader, curriculum - a wider range of subjects - which is really useful for life in the 1980s and 1990s.
2. Our cooperation with the Girls' Grammar School at Sixth Form Level means that we can offer as many as 18 'A' level subjects (with a further 5 if we count an alternative syllabus in certain subjects). This is something a small school might not be able to maintain on its own.
3. We have the sort of staff that is willing to give, as it were, 150% - in terms of time, effort and dedication.

My aims, my hopes for the School? Simply that a boy will go one step better than might be expected:

- the university boy will go on to do research;
- the boy who by nature's endowments might expect an 'A' level or two, will go on to university or polytechnic;
- the lad who might struggle for 4 or 5 'O' levels will work really hard and obtain 7 or 8;
- the player who makes it to the first team will go on to play for the County.

It is easy to be confident that this process will occur, for the best reason in the world: it is already happening.

D. B. Thomas

Mr D. B. Thomas BA

A Biographical Note about the Headmaster

The Headmaster is a South Londoner who lived in Battersea and East Sheen and was educated at Emmanuel School, Wandsworth. He gained an exhibition (entrance scholarship) to study French and German at Jesus College, Oxford, of which University he holds an M.A. degree. He went on to further study at the University of Rennes in France, while teaching as an 'assistant' for a year.

His first post was at Bedford School, a boys' Public School of which half the pupils were boarders and half dayboys. He became Head of Modern Languages, ran a Community Service Unit and did a lot of rowing coaching (he had been rowing captain at his Oxford College).

Then he moved back to South London, to teach at Hayes School, a mixed comprehensive, where he was Director of Sixth Form Studies for six years.

From 1979 to 1983 he was Deputy Headmaster at Maidstone School for Boys, an Upper School which, like ours, was previously the Technical High School of the town. This was the school our First XI met in the final of the county soccer last December.

On the way he qualified with the Institute of Linguists as a French Interpreter and did an Open University course in Educational Management. He has spent nine years as a Chief Examiner for the Oxford and Cambridge Board in 'O' level French and thirteen as Moderator in 'A' level French for the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

He is married - his wife teaches French in adult education - and they have two daughters. His main spare-time interest is in music; at weekends he is an organist and choirmaster. He regrets that his reading these days is largely confined to indigestible books on education. He does not travel much, but likes to maintain contact with friends in France.

Reorganisation - 1984

Published in PTA News 10 (October 1984) - It is a comment from the Headmaster upon the 1984 proposals to reorganise the schools at Wilmington.

The position so far is that the P.T.A.s, staffs and governors have submitted their views to the County. All have firmly rejected the amalgamation proposals. Voting was: 618 for the P.T.A.s rejection of the County's proposals; 50 against; 4 'don't mind'; = 672 total.

In percentage terms this becomes 92% for, 7.4% against and 0.6% 'don't mind'. We estimate the response as 90% of those eligible to express a view.

This represents an overwhelming rejection of the proposals, although there may well be a variety of reasons for so doing. Two points have stood out in my mind: first, the friendliness between the two schools (rejecting amalgamation has not meant that we have thrown mud at one another) and second, the clear support for the School from parents (which we as teachers have much appreciated).

May I make two further points: if amalgamation were to take place, the education of boys in the school and of new boys in 1985 would be untouched; and if it occurred, there would still be the same teachers with the same ideas, energies and expertise.

But we think our case is strong and that the two schools should be left alone. When shall we know?

The Governors, P.T.A.s and staff have made their submissions. The Schools sub-committee will consider these on November 21st and their recommendation will go to the Education Committee early in December. I shall ensure that parents are kept informed if there are any further steps in the process.

D. B. Thomas - Headmaster

W G S B - The Area Music Centre

Wilmington Boys Grammar is now well and truly in the centre of the Dartford area's music scene. Not only does it house Dartford Youth Music courses and social events, the society has now moved its headquarters to the site. Last year it was decided that there were so many pupils from W G S B learning instruments and joining the Dartford Training Band that the group should be moved from Dartford Girls Grammar to Wilmington. The school also has ten members in the Dartford Schools Concert Windband including their playing representative. We also have five members in the Wilmington Stage Band. Last month, Dartford Youth Music chose W G S B to hold their "Music is fun" day, at which musicians from all over the country came to join in with Dartford Bands. D Y M also hopes to hold a sponsored all night concert at the school towards the end of April.

Published in "Orion" Issue 1 - March 1988

1984 - 2010

Another lengthy period when the editor had been unable to find much archive material to include within this history.

However, Mr. Keith May, a long serving School Governor, has submitted a very helpful synopsis entitled "Horror of Horrors - The Spectre of Closure" which deals with the period leading up to the school becoming a Foundation School.

The period started with another proposal from the Kent Education Committee to change the nature of the school. The school's reaction is noted in the previous report from the Headmaster. The opposition saw off the proposals but K E C seemed to be determined that the school should not remain as it was. Therefore, three years later it announced plans to close the school.

Many opposed such a plan. They liked a small school, where everyone could be an individual. The formation of an Action Group assisted the opposition and the school remained open.

Proposals were then submitted by factions within the school to apply for Grant Maintained status, whereby the school would be freed from some of the shackles placed upon it by the K E C and the K C C. However, the proposal was defeated after the Chairman of the K E C urged people to vote against the scheme.

Not surprisingly, a year later K E C again indicated that they wished to close the school. By now, probably because of uncertainty, the school roll was falling dramatically. In 1990 a mere 23 pupils started in the first year.

Once again, the Action Group promoted a proposal to seek Grant Maintained status and this time they gained the support of governors, staff and parents. Therefore, there must have been overwhelming relief tinged with knowledge of the substantial efforts that would now be required, when it was announced that Grant Maintained status would apply from April 1991 and no longer would the school be directly tied to the County Council.

Mr D B Thomas, who had been Headmaster through this long and troubled period, decided that it was time for him to go and in his place, the governors appointed Brian Titterington as the new Headmaster.

Under his guidance, the school set out to improve both its standards and its results. On his appointment the school roll was a little over 300, so the following year, the first year entry was set at four forms - 120. Compare that with the 23 only two years previously. This was the first time that there had been a four form entry since 1957 when allowance had been made for the war bulge.

With financial support, the following years saw the refurbishment of some of the, by now tired, buildings. In 2006 the first major building work started with the construction of the new Evans Building, named to commemorate Ken Evans, who had been a school governor between 1978 and 2004, latterly as chairman of the governors.

Sadly, Brian Titterington decided that year, that having spent 15 years at the school it was time to move on. Therefore, he did not witness boys being able to use a building, which was as much a testament to him.

His place, the governors decided, should be taken by a Head Teacher and Mrs Fiona Cottam started in that post in September 2006.

[As an aside, the editor does wonder with some surprise at the number of female teachers on the staff. When he was there between 1958 and 1964 the only females were the famous Maggie Mountjoy and the school secretary - Mrs. Norman. Now, a majority of staff at the school seem to be female. Does that say something at a Boys School?]

In 2009, Mrs Cottam announced her intention to resign at the end of the summer term and the governors appointed Mr Andy Williamson as Head teacher from January 2010.

Horror of Horrors - The Spectre of Closure

Like many parents the first encounter I had with the school was when we had to make a choice for our son. This is a stressful time for all parents and eventually the friendly and caring attitude at Wilmington prevailed. Although it was a 3 form entry school (90 pupils a year) it was suffering from falling roles and when our son entered in 1987 he was one of only 63 that year.

As can be seen from the Summary Wilmington had a history of proposed reorganisations and changes of status. It was as if the Local Authority could not pursue a viable and long term stable plan. A document was circulated by the Local Authority in 1990 entitled "Towards 2000"; it set out their vision for ongoing education in North West Kent. Wilmington was given 3 choices, 1, merge with the Girls' Grammar, 2, become a 2 form entry, 3, closure. This was like a slap in the face with a kipper. My immediate reaction was that they were telling me that I was a fool for making the choice in the first place. As true blooded Englishmen we put up with a lot in life until our backs are against the wall and I especially hate having the mickey taken. No way would the Girls entertain a merger, this was like their worst nightmare, let our girls join that mob down the road, never! Option 1 therefore a no brainer. Option 2, all of us could see this was unsustainable. Option 3 the boys would have to go to Dartford - unacceptable, after all this was the reason why we chose Wilmington in the first place.

The first public consultation was at our school. The hall was packed with parents who were very vocal and irate at the Local Authority options. However the Governing Body at that time was backing them. Towards the end I got on my soap box and vigorously demanded that we keep the status quo. This was greeted with almost hysterical support from the parents and the meeting descended into chaos whereby the Local Authority members and the Governing Body left. What to do now? The parents decided to form an action group and, since I seemed to have the biggest mouth, they asked me to lead it. The group consisted of a gang of five - all of us hooligans. We went to every consultation meeting at other schools and made a thorough nuisance of ourselves, shouting down the Local Authority at every opportunity and causing disruption. Our mantra became "preserve the status quo". Some of the meetings were abandoned and they must have been sick of us.

As vocal as we were it got Wilmington to the fore but little else - such is the way with politicians. They think they have a God given right to know best. We had to change tack; our target therefore became the Governing Body who had supported the Local Authority plans. Most resigned and a new Governing Body was formed including the gang of five. We set about altering its position and finally passed a resolution to keep the status quo. Some Local and Kent Councillors together with our MP, Bob Dunn, God rest his soul, were brought onside with us and pressure was applied in the Kent Council meetings when the time came for a decision to be made, all to no avail. I attended these meetings and two things became clear, Kent had already made up its mind and we were being stitched up in that Kent seemed to have been fiddling the Grammar School entry criteria year on year so as to make it appear that there was no demand for a second Grammar School in the area. Impressed we were not, outraged we were. It very much looked as if we were doomed.

Enter into the fray Central Government who had come up with Grant Maintained Status, a system whereby a school could opt out of Local Authority control and be centrally funded. At the time, this was a new radical idea, and Local Authorities hated it. We, of course, embraced the idea and grasped it as a last ditch method of possibly saving the school. We had to ballot parents and the Local Authority countered our argument with one of "don't go, you are safe with us". Unsurprisingly the parents voted to stay with the Local Authority. Sometime later the Local Authority announced that a 2 form entry school was not viable, surprise, surprise! We carried out a second ballot to go Grant Maintained and this time we carried the parents. I remember us spending over 3 weeks writing the proposal with nothing to go on except the conviction that we were right. Shortly before we submitted our proposal I was called to a one to one meeting with a member of Kent Education who had caught wind of what we were doing. He told me in no uncertain terms that if we went ahead he would immediately issue a closure notice on us! I, in return, told him precisely where he could stick his closure notice. There was no hope of reconciliation and our bridges were well and truly burnt. I remember thinking that our actions could have been disastrous for both students and staff alike, I suppose there comes a time when one self belief wobbles and doubt sets in. However on reporting back, the Governing Body fully supported my stance and they asked me to take over the Chairmanship and push ahead with the Grant Maintained application.

Sure enough the Local Authority, as promised, issued the closure notice. This was a very big mistake on their part; I think they were so enraged by our actions that they completely lost the plot. In those days any school having had a closure notice issued had the right of a personal hearing with the Secretary of State for Education. We, of course, grabbed this opportunity with both hands. We dealt with the closure notice in 10 seconds flat and went on to plead our case for becoming Grant Maintained despite the Minister's protestations that we could not discuss that. Never the less we ploughed on anyway and ended up discussing it for 45 minutes. We knew the Government was pushing the idea but, up to that time, only one or two schools had applied and they were very keen on establishing the idea. We came out of the meeting hopeful but only rated our chances 50/50. The whole school was now on tenterhooks. The closure notice was still in force and counting down whilst we waited on the Minister's decision. What would come first? It was quite simply be blown away or stay in the game. One month and counting and then shortly before closure we got the call. We were to become Grant Maintained! Relief, celebration, it was as if we had won the lottery 100 times over. At last we felt vindicated that our long fight had been right. The school officially became Grant Maintained in April 1991.

They say that ignorance is bliss and in our case that that proved correct, all of a sudden this group of well meaning amateurs had to run a school under a brand new system, talk about lost at sea, we did not have a clue. Many meetings went on late into the night trying to get the organisation up and running. And I have to say with not too much help from the Department of Education since they did not seem to know much about it either. We simply made up the rules as we went along. However our entry the following year went up to 120 students and this has been maintained ever since - such is our popularity that in some years we have had to take 150. Grant Maintained status hit the dirt in 1999 and we are now a Foundation School which by and large keeps us out of the clutches of the Local Authority.

In 2009 our role was 885 including 250 in the sixth form of which 25% can be girls. We continue to go from strength to strength, so much for the Local Authority stating all those years ago that there was not sufficient demand for our school. In that there is a salutary warning. We must be mindful of the vagaries of politicians and always be on our guard to ensure that we do only the best for our students, staff and the community. Each threat we must meet head on with resolve and determination that we can and will succeed.

Keith J. May.

(School Governor)

Wilmington Grammar School in 2009

The number of boys on roll is 889 (as at January 2010). The acquisition of Grant Maintained Status in April 1991 offered the School tremendous opportunities for development for the future. This opportunity is being further developed with Foundation Status from 1 September 1999. Traditionally, most of the students have come from Dartford and the rural area to the south: some from Bexley and from the area to the south-east. Currently, the area from which students come is expanding substantially - due entirely to parental demand.

We are delighted that the School has been designated as a Specialist School with Engineering College status from September 2004. More importantly, on 1 November 2006, a £1.35m teaching building, called the 'Evans Building' was officially opened. The building incorporates 12 teaching rooms equipped with state of the art whiteboards and built in computer terminals. There is also a purpose-built engineering suite for design teaching. An exciting new chapter in the School's history has opened and ensures that all students are taught in a vibrant, contemporary environment to meet their learning needs. Additionally, funding for Phase 2 is substantially in place.

Admission to the School is via the Kent 'PESE' Admission Procedure.

The Curriculum

The curriculum at WGSB is both traditional and flexible. Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced, giving students exposure to a wealth of different subject areas with an accelerated delivery suitable to our intake. This allows boys to complete the normal three year Key Stage 3 in two years.

An enrichment programme attempts to capture the best of innovation in education. There is a strong emphasis placed on the development of independent learning skills with elements of project based exploration and learning used in Year 9. GCSE courses are stated in the core subjects of English, Maths, Science and for choices at Key Stage 4, students and parents are advised on option subjects in consultation with staff. As a Specialist Engineering College, all boys are required to take a design technology subject to GCSE level.

In Years 10 and 11, there is a degree of choice whilst the option structure ensures that National Curriculum Key Stage 4 requirements are met. Boys study English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science (Dual Award), a Technology-based subject, Religious Education, Personal, Social and Health Education (including Citizenship), and Games. Within the options boys are offered further choices within Modern Languages and the Humanities, as well as Art, Music, PE, IT and Media Studies.

A structured Tutor programme ensures support to enhance student learning. All boys in Year 10 enjoy the benefits of a 2-week Work Experience placement. Since 1995 the School has been involved in the Kent and Medway Training Consortium of schools providing English, Science, Technology and Mathematics teaching opportunities within the SCITT scheme.

Links are well developed with a number of outside agencies, including the North West Kent Business Education Partnership, the local Neighbourhood Engineers Unit, Young Enterprise, and local and national charities.

In the Sixth Form we benefit from excellent working relationships with neighbouring and partner schools ensuring a real breadth of choice. In addition, at KS4 the partnership schools will offer a choice of diploma from September 2009.

Basic details about the School in 2009

1. Wilmington Grammar School for Boys is a Foundation School
2. The number on roll is 885, and is divided as follows:

Year 13	119
Year 12	121
Year 11	119
Year 10	122
Year 9	124
Year 8	143
Year 7	137
3. The Leadership Team consists of: one Deputy Head teacher and three Assistant Head teachers
4. There is a teaching staff of 61, of whom 10 are on part-time contracts.
5. There are 44 Support staff
6. The school was last inspected in September 2007
7. There is an annual budget of £4.5 million
8. It is hoped that Phase Two of the new building plan will commence shortly

[The above details are based on texts taken from the web and related to the search for a new head teacher in 2009]

2010 to the Present

Building Developments

In July 2010 work started on a modular extension to the Evans Building that has provided a new Sixth form centre and a new Language suite.

The Sixth form centre includes the silent study centre where students are expected to work very quietly and upstairs is a large study centre which doubles up as the common room before and after school and during break and lunchtimes. The whole design and ambience reflects the new sixth form ethos of a small corporate business and students are expected to value the resource and treat it respectfully. The common room opens out onto the south facing balcony which, when spring arrives, features a stainless bistro tables and chairs.

The Language suite accommodates English & Modern Foreign Languages and features seven classrooms. There is cinema room which does not feature desks and chairs like most classrooms but instead, sofas, bean bags and clipboards in order to create a learning environment with versatility for some literary creativity. One of the classrooms is equipped with European satellite television to allow access to French, German and Spanish channels.

The final part of this development was the Food Technology room with ten cooking centres each featuring electric fan ovens and gas hobs and a linked food theory room for written work and an adjoining Food Prep room. Students in the early years have Food Technology included in their studies, whilst older students have the opportunity to develop their culinary skills in a range of enrichment and after school clubs that on offer.

Divorced after Forty Years.

Forty years ago, a major building programme in the early 1970's saw the demolition of the old Wilmington Hall and the construction of new buildings connected to the 1956 school buildings. For eight years, they formed a unified school on the site but then they split in 1982, although the two schools were still physically linked and had to share a sports hall.

In 2013 having been taken over to become part of the Leigh Academies Trust, the neighbouring Wilmington Academy was almost completely rebuilt and the 1970's extension was demolished. The sports hall has refurbished and is now for the sole use of Wilmington Grammar School. So, although the two schools remain on the same site, they will now be physically separated after forty years.

Academic Progress

As recorded elsewhere in this history, the school saw a low point in the early 1990s when the school role had fallen to a little over 300 pupils and attempts were being made to close it down.

Fast forward twenty plus years and what a change. There are now 889 pupils on the school role with 241 in the sixth form.

In August 2011, the school converted to Academy status and created an Academy partnership with Wilmington Grammar School for Girls with whom it had had a strong relationship for many years. This led to the creation of a Joint Board that includes the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Headteacher from each school. The core purpose of the Joint Board is for both Schools to work together to improve the quality of provision and hence achievement for all the students.

The exciting WG6 venture is a great example of this philosophy already generating results.

Wilmington Grammar School for Boys is in the GCSE league table of top 100 performing schools with 100% of students taking GCSE in 2012 attaining 5 x A* - C grades including Maths and English with over 40% of all grades being at A*/A.

Sixth Form Progress

In the early days of the school at Wilmington, fraternising with the girls across the road was positively discouraged. Now after more than 15 years of close co-operation between Wilmington Grammar School for Boys and Wilmington Grammar School for Girls, a full co-educational sixth form has been developed

From September 2013, Wilmington Grammars' Sixth Form - WG6 – brings year 12 and 13 students together in one, co-educational Sixth Form. WG6 offers a wide curriculum choice; more than 30 subjects at A level, and the AQA Baccalaureate, incorporating an extended project and AS Critical Thinking.

Specialists in Engineering

From its earliest days as a Technical High School, engineering has been part of the curriculum. Woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing were subjects studied by most students in the 1950s and 1960s.

The school was designated as a Specialist School with Engineering College status from September 2004 followed on 1 November 2006 by a £1.35m teaching building, called the 'Evans Building' being officially opened. The building incorporates 12 teaching rooms and a purpose-built engineering suite for design teaching. In September 2010, this was extended to twice the size housing the new Sixth Form centre including a veranda, the Languages Specialist Area and new Food Technology facilities. These developments are being linked with a refurbishment of the remaining site to allow the opportunities for Innovative Learning Environments to be modelled and developed across the school.

The school places particular emphasis on the skills and areas of study required for Engineering, such as Design and Technology, Mathematics, Science, and the key skills of communication, team-working and problem-solving.

The School has a long history of excellence in Design and Technology and a tradition of sending students to study Engineering subjects at university. There is also the knowledge that this country's prosperity is due in no small measure to the excellence of the Engineers it has produced in the past.

2016 / 17 Bring Yet More Changes

In June 2016, seven years after his appointment, Andy Williamson announced that he would be stepping down as Headteacher at the end of the school year.

At the time, he spoke of the increasing collaboration between Wilmington Grammar School for Boys and the Wilmington Grammar School for Girls. Whilst WG6, the fully collaborative sixth form was the most recognisable feature of the joint work, there had been far more successful work taking place behind the scenes.

Discussions took place and Mrs Donna Lodge, who was then Head of Wilmington Girls School was appointed Executive Headteacher of both schools, supported by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure continuity.

At the same time, there were discussions regarding a proposal for WGSB to become part of a new Multi Academy Trust (Endeavour MAT), rather than continue to stand alone as a single academy trust. The formal process was completed so that as of 1st April 2017 the management of WGSB was transferred to Endeavour MAT.

This completed the formalisation of the closer organisational working of the two Wilmington Grammar Schools. This will not influence the distinct identity of the school and the name of the school itself will remain.

On 12th April 2017, Endeavour MAT was formally notified that it has been selected to open a new secondary school in Dartford. Stone Lodge Academy will be the first non-selective school within the Trust.

22nd February 2017 saw the formal opening of the new English block. It will be known as 'The White Building' as a memorial to former Assistant Headteacher, Keith White, who is remembered with great fondness and respect for being the kindest and most approachable man when he worked at the school from 1978 to 2011.

At the same time, the school finally vacated the last part of the old Wilmington Hall. For older pupils, the stable block housed science rooms and the drawing office. Later it became a music studio and a sixth form common room.

The recent new buildings and refurbishment of the older buildings has enabled a steady increase in the school roll to over 900 pupils, more than three times the number on the school roll in 1991.

1 September 2017 – Mr Charlie Guthrie takes up the position of Headteacher of the boys school.

Miscellany

The Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Book of Records

By Mr. J. Daley, staff, 1963-92

For your information and amusement, the following entries have been made so far:

Mrs. M.E. Mountjoy, staff, 1942-79

The longest serving member of the teaching staff in the history of the school.

Mr. G.A. Gough, staff, 1953-85

Thirty-two years of teaching without a single day's absence.

Mr. Keith Richards, 1954-59

The school's most famous "old boy" - lead guitarist in "The Rolling Stones" band.

Mr. Nicholas South, 1981-88

The last pupil to be caned on 10th October, 1985.

Mr. A.M. Lawson, staff 1962-80

The highest number of days absent for any member of the teaching staff in the entire history of the School.

Mrs. S. Holden, staff, 1968-96

Longest serving school secretary and nurse.



Wilmington Hall - circa 1920

Wilmington Hall

Written by Stan Stringer

Wilmington Hall, adjoining Common Lane, was built in 1743 by Edward Bathurst the son of William and Anne Bathurst of Barn End Lane. Anne Bathurst gave St. Michael's church a silver communion cup in 1697 (this was stolen in 1992 with other silver ware); her memorial is in the north wall of the sanctuary of St. Michael's.

Edward came into the inheritance of Finchcocks near Goudhurst, which he rebuilt and is still in existence to the present day, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Burnett and is now well known for its collection of pianos and like instruments. Edward sold Wilmington Hall to Thomas Motley of Beckenham who bequeathed it to his daughter on her marriage to Mr. Francis Austen of Sevenoaks. According to Edward Hasted writing about Wilmington in 1797, the son of Francis Motley Austen.

During the first half of the 19th century the Hall was owned by the Russell family. George Russell was Vicar's Warden of St. Michael's from 1845 to 1855; he died in 1856 and the Hall passed into the hands of William Cosier. In 1889 the Hall was occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd, and in 1907 George Whitehead, son of Sir James Whitehead of Wilmington Manor took possession. On the death of Sir James in 1917 George Whitehead became the second Baronet and assumed the title of Sir George. Sir George recorded details of all the graves in the churchyard and the memorials in the church; he had three copies bound, one was kept by the Whitehead family, one was presented to St. Michael's and the third was sent to Balliol College, Oxford where Sir George had been an undergraduate. Sir George and his family moved to Oxford and the Hall was occupied by Lord Dudley Gordon in 1920. When the Wilmington Scout Group was re-formed in 1934, Lord Dudley allowed the group to use the Gordon tartan for their scarf.

In the second world war Wilmington Hall was used mainly as a drawing office by Vickers and in 1950 became the home of Dartford Technical School. In 1971 the Hall was demolished to make way for further extensions to the school to enable it to become a comprehensive school. This did not materialise but part of the extension became Wilmington High School and the old Technical High School was redesigned as Wilmington Boys Grammar School.

The History of Wilmington Hall

(Formerly known as 'Common House')

This article was written by George Whitehead (1950 – 1953) and first appeared in the newsletter of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association. George said - . Unfortunately, for me, I am not a descendant of Sir James. My Thanks to Iris Heddle for the help she gave me when I started this project.

The origins of *Wilmington Hall* have been traced as far back as 1678. It is recorded that John Dynes, a Gentleman, owned 8 acres of land to the South of Wilmington Common. This land was later to become the site of Wilmington Boy's Grammar School and part of the playing fields.

Edward Bathurst, (1680 – 1772) the son of William and Anne Bathurst, of Barn End Lane, was a London Barrister and Master of the Bench of the Middle Temple. In 1718 he inherited a house called Finchcocks from an Uncle. Then - following his marriage to a local heiress, Elizabeth Stringer he re-built the house at great expense, £30,000. It was finished in 1725. Edward later sold the house to his second son. His eldest was occupied with their estates in Jamaica.

Finchcocks House is still in existence today and is owned by Mr and Mrs Burnett.

In 1734 Edward Bathurst built *Common House*, situated in Common Lane, Wilmington. He lived to the ripe old age of 92 and outlived all of his sons. Edward subsequently sold *Common House* to Thomas Motley of Beckenham who bequeathed it to his daughter on her marriage to Mr Francis Austen, the son of Mr Francis Motley Austen of Sevenoaks.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the Austen family (distant relatives of Jane Austen) owned a large amount of land. They had bought it from the Bathursts'. The Austen's made considerable additions to the property and in 1837 they sold the entire estate.

George Russell bought part of this estate, about 35 acres, which included '*Common House*'. George Russell was Vicar's Warden of St. Michael's from 1845 to 1855. He died in 1856.

Details of the Russell family as taken from the 1841 census will give some idea of the grandeur of '*Common House*' as it was still called then.

George Russell	47	Gentleman	Jane Russell	47	Wife
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Jane Russell	20	Daughter	Mary Russell	18	Daughter
Emily Russell	10	Daughter	Fanny Russell	8	Daughter
Harriet Russell	6	Daughter			

If there were any sons in the family they were obviously away from home on the night of the census.

Also resident in the house were;

James Russell	36	Gentleman	Jane Russell	36	Wife
Henrietta Russell	14	Daughter	Lydia Russell	6 mths	
Harriet Penser	45	A lady of Independent Means			

The live-in servants were;

William Pawley	21	Hugh Dougal	14	Eliza Atkins	24
Mary Atkins	22	Saphra (sic) Staples	23	Eliza Staples	23

None of these servants were born in Kent so one assumes they accompanied the family when they moved to Wilmington.

Another live-in servant was;

Mary O'Reargan	25	Born in Ireland.
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George Russell died in 1856 and the House was taken over by William Cosier.

Two relevant entries have been found in the Richard Combe Miller diaries. The first records that the name of the building known as *Common House* has been changed to *Wilmington Hall*.

The second entry states that on "Friday Jan. 22nd 1875. Bessie and Stella drove in an open carriage in the afternoon and called on the Herveys' at *Wilmington Hall*". This family could possibly be related to Lord Hervey who, at some stage, leased Darenth House.

In 1875 Mr Tasker laid gas mains to *Wilmington Hall*.

In 1889 Mr and Mrs Lloyd became the owners of the *Hall*.

Sir James Whitehead was born in Sedburgh, Yorkshire in 1834. He made his fortune in London and retired at the age of 47 years to live in Wilmington. In 1896 he purchased both *Wilmington Hall* and another building on the opposite side of Common Road known as *Heathside*. He changed the name of *Heathside* to *Wilmington Manor* and he assumed the title, 'Lord of the Manor'. Boys had to touch their caps to him and girls had to curtsy.

Shortly after WWII Wilmington Manor was used by Bexley County Technical School for Girls in their first year. They completed the remainder of their curriculum in the school at Townley Road in Bexleyheath.

Sir James lived in *Wilmington Manor* with his wife Lady Mercy Whitehead. Their son George Whitehead and his family lived in *Wilmington Hall*. George had two sons both of whom died during the First World War. He was succeeded by his brother, Sir

Rowland John Rathbone Whitehead, 5th Baronet who lived at *Highfield House*, Kent and he continued the family line.

Sir James established a modern farm in the grounds of *Wilmington Hall* and he had a foot-bridge built over the road for the family to use when they visited each other. (The bridge was still there when I was attending the school from 1950 -1953 and the footings survived until sometime in the 1970s.)

Sir James died in Wilmington in 1917 at 83 years of age. His title and *Wilmington Hall* passed to George Whitehead. Sir George and his family moved to Oxford in 1920.

Lord Dudley Gordon purchased *Wilmington Hall* in 1920 and remained the owner until 1950.

During the Second World War *Wilmington Hall* was used mainly as a drawing office by *Vickers Engineering Company*, and in 1950 it became *Dartford Technical School for Boys*. The Agricultural Section of the school used the surviving parts of the farm that had been established by Sir James.

The 1950 intake was the first to complete their full course at *Wilmington Hall* so it has always occupied a special place in my memory. The magnificent old building with sweeping staircases, open fireplaces with marble mantle shelves and a huge main door that added to its grandeur. None of us lowly pupils were allowed to use this entrance; it was 'staff only'. We had to use what had probably been the servant's entrance; we knew our place.

Mr Wall, the Headmaster, used to drive his beautiful Wolesley car up the driveway and park by the main door. One could perhaps imagine past owners being driven up this sweeping driveway in their horse drawn carriages. Mr Wall was one of the few who drove to school in those days. I wonder how many pupils drive to school now? How times have changed!

In 1971 *Wilmington Hall* was demolished, supposedly to make way for extensions to the school to allow it to become a comprehensive school, which were never built. I always remember *Wilmington Hall* as a magnificent, historical old building and when I heard that it had been demolished I was aghast. In my mind this was an act of sheer vandalism. When it is remembered that the *Hall* was 228 years old and that *Finchcocks House* and *Wilmington Manor* are still in existence it makes the decision to demolish the *Hall* even worse. I wonder what happened to all those beautiful marble mantelshelves and stone blocks. Were they just dumped?

Without doubt the *Hall* may have required a lot of money to restore it to its former glory but beautiful old buildings such as this deserve better treatment. With the amount of land available on the site to build extensions to the school the *Hall* should have been retained for some other worthwhile use, such as a Library or maybe a Museum. Edward Bathurst must have turned in his grave!



Wilmington Hall

Wilmington Hall

Written by L G Hollingsworth – Staff 1960-1999

In 1950 Wilmington Hall became the home of Dartford County Technical School. Expansion in the following ten years saw the site change.

It was a tragedy that in the 1960s the superb grass tennis courts and distinctive open-air theatre were done away with. In the early 1950's the site was extended with the construction of a brick-built block, designed to house the group of Students now staying on at School beyond 15 or 16, and still an important part of the Grammar School. In 1961 the part of the site provided for the agricultural course was given over to the Estate Department and its use as a farm was terminated.

In 1971, as a part of the LEA's plan to make all Secondary Schools in the area Comprehensive, a start was made on part one of a two-part extension (a change in organisational intentions prevented a start being made on the second part). This extension was said to be the first Metric School in the County and unfortunately resulted in the demolition of much of the grandeur of the Hall - nevertheless it was said that the cost of necessary repairs to the Hall was prohibitive, making its demolition inevitable.

Those who remember the Hall in its glorious days - of floorboards offering unlimited hiding places, of rooms with rounded ends and, in Gerard Hoffnung's famous words "French windows affording excellent prospects", the Roger Luxton Memorial rose garden, the trees under which smoke from Mr. Lawson's cigarette would languidly curl from the driver's window of his '1100', the frosted glass in the staff toilet which proclaimed to the whole school his endless sedentary occupation, will find a different sort of character now.

All that remains is the old "Stables" block, complete with "dungeon". It acts as a home to the Music Department, Business Studies, and, perhaps most surprisingly of all, the youngest people on site who attend Freckles, the Schools day nursery. In that we find a hope - a sort of promise, a continuity and future for the building. Those who need their memories refreshed and who suffer withdrawal symptoms might ask the Head for permission to look at the large photograph of the Hall in its original state, which hangs on the wall of his study.

A Comment by Mrs M Mountjoy written in 1995.

(Maggie) Staff 1942-79(84)

My association with the School approaches half a century. I was on the staff when it opened in the nineteen-forties, and, indeed, visited the site with Mr. Wall. There were large, dome-shaped conservatories on the outside of the old building, whose walls were covered in wisteria. The classroom I chose as mine had been the nursery and I recall the varnished brown wallpaper with its scenes of children. There was an abundance of snow-drops on the lawns and the woods near the bridge over the road and by the old Summer house were full of wild daffodils. Happy times!

Of course when the new (1956) building was erected she "acquired" one of the new classrooms and to this day, it is known as Maggie's Room by many who have passed through its doors.

The Trees of Wilmington Hall

The Committee have done Wilmington a great service in establishing our School at the Hall, for it means that the great work of yesterday in establishing the lovely setting of copse and meadow and garden will not be wasted.

It has taken many years to bring to perfection the trees and gardens which we now enjoy and a great deal of forethought and patient effort on the part of our planners and gardeners had to be exercised in resurrecting that which had been neglected during the war years. For gardens, as they become established, demand constant attention to keep them within bounds and allow the sun and wind to reach all that grows therein.

The immediate purpose of these short articles is not to talk so much concerning the gardens but more particularly of the trees. The pleasing skyline and general contour of the ground early lent itself to the building of a Hall and Manor on their present sites and although silviculture has always been practised, it is to Sir James Whitehead and to Lord Dudley Gordon, that we are most indebted for the wealth of standing trees in the grounds.

These two men, both former owners of the Hall, had a great affection for trees and rejoiced to see them growing naturally and without restraint. They, moreover, loved to find different varieties of the same sort of tree and sometimes "sports " or oddities of trees.

In Turn-penny meadow for example there are three copses of trees planted for cattle shade. Two of them are of Beech and the third, of Lime. A peculiarity of the Beech is that by cross-pollination many "cut-leaf," *i.e.*, leaves deeply indented, and coloured leaf varieties are grown. The Beech too is an accommodating tree in that it does not mind a certain amount of shade. It is, in fact, known as a "Shadeendurer." The Limes, however, have no sports and demand as much sun and air as possible. These are known as "Light demanders."

In these copses, planted by Sir James Whitehead, every Beech tree is different. All are growing well with this year showing a good crop of mast, the fruit of the tree. With the Limes, however, the outside trees are fine but the lower portion of the central tree is bare of foliage, indicating a lack of sunshine and wind.

Dotted about the two estates are many varieties of conifers giving us as they do a wealth of sombre colour and odorous beauty to the general grouping. Two kinds only need now be mentioned as they will all be dealt with in later articles. The first are the Cedars. There are three varieties of this lovely tree, the Atlas, the Deodar and the Lebanon Cedar. Each of these varieties is in the grounds. The Atlas is the big fellow to the right of the Driveway from the front gates. The Deodar is the tree with the drooping branches and the first to be seen upon rounding the school.

In the meadow beyond the lawns is a Sequoia Pine or Californian Redwood, the famous big tree of California. In their native country these trees grow to more than 300 feet in height and 30 feet across at the base above the buttresses. Some of them are known to be more than 2,000 years old and are protected by an Act of

Congress preventing them from being damaged in any way. These trees can easily be recognised by the fibrous and spongy bark and the habit of the tree which grows in a rounded cone with the branches nearly to the ground. The specimen in the meadow has unfortunately had a die-back in the growing point but a top branch is now attaining an upright position and will give the tree an upwards trend again.

To mention a few of the many trees in this introductory article there are on the left side of the drive-way and behind the Rhododendron and Azalea bushes, three Sequoia Pines with a forked Cypress beside them. The group of smaller trees bordering the lower field and under whose shelter bicycles are stored, are two magnificent Horse Chestnuts, while in the field itself is a Lime immediately facing the entrance and to the right by the fence a very fine Walnut.

Returning to the drive there is a Copper Beech behind the Horse Chestnuts, a line of Poplars forming a wind-break to the tennis courts, while to the front of these courts are two beautiful groups of flowering trees including Crabs, Plums, Cherries, Syringa and Maples. To the right of the courts is a young Tulip tree, pairing with a further one in the hedge rather lower down and evidently planted to carry on the work of beautifying that part of the grounds when the parent tree on the lawn behind the school finally passes on. To the front of the flowering trees are two Birches, a weeping variety and an upright. They are both very graceful and live up to their name of "Lady of the Woods." As an aside here, woodmen do not favour them very much and call them the "Cinderellas of the Woods" as the sweeping branches whip and slash the adjoining trees, bruising and damaging them.

Upon the lawn too is a very fine group of Cypress trees, planted for their rich colouring and pungent odour.

Mention must be made of the long line of Cornish Elms and Lime trees that border the whole estate and form a fitting boundary and wind-break to a beautiful place.

First published in Volume 1 No 2 - 1951 - edition of the Dartford County Technical School for Boys magazine. Authorship unknown.

Corporal Punishment

By J. Daley, Staff, 1963-92

The following information on this subject was discovered in the School's punishment book. It is a survey conducted by a former Headmaster to determine the effectiveness of caning:

October '83 - October '85

	Occasions
Richard M.	2
Alan H.	2
Ian B. *	2
Nicholas S.	2
Scott H.	2
18 Others	1
	<hr/>
	28

	Incident	Boys
Misbehaviour on bus	1	3
Dangerous fooling about/fighting	4	6
Smoking	2	6
Disobedience	2	2
Fighting (outside class)	1	2
Misbehaviour/disruption in lessons	2	2
Truancy	1	1
Rudeness	4	5
5 detentions	1	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	15	28

*The only case where a similar offence was reported - so only one boy - on one occasion - repeated the offence. For the rest it can be claimed, therefore, that the cane was beneficial.

	Incidents	Boys
1981-82	13	18
1982-83	16	24
1983-84	11	19
1984-85	6	8
1985-86	2	2

The following entries appear in the Punishment Book:

- | | | |
|----|--|------------|
| 1. | Repeated misbehaviour in a series of lessons - | 2 strokes. |
| 2. | Having five detentions in a term - | 2 strokes. |
| 3. | Shooting flaming gas from a bicycle pump in laboratory - | 2 strokes. |
| 4. | Obscene language after messing around in a lesson - | 1 stroke. |
| 5. | Dropping a bag down a stairwell - | 1 stroke. |
| 6. | Swearing at a Member of Staff - | 2 strokes. |
| 7. | Truanting (after warnings) - | 2 strokes. |
| 8. | Smoking and having a lighter - | 1 stroke. |

Headmaster's Letter - 1950

The following letter appeared in the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter. It was apparently sent by the then Headmaster - Mr. Wall to parents of all new Boys in 1950. It was contributed by Geoff Sinclair (1950-54)

COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS
Wilmington Hall, Wilmington, Dartford, Kent.

Dear Sir/Madam

Because so many serious matters are initially caused by small omissions I take this opportunity of asking your co-operation on four points of training.

Firstly, all boys in this School do homework. They have generally a maximum of three subjects per night which are set. In the first year these homeworks are of twenty minutes each, in the second of twenty-five minutes each and in the third year of thirty minutes each. In the fourth year they are at the discretion of the Staff responsible for the Examination subject and in this year all boys should do at least two hours. Please try to see the homework is done and is not allowed to accumulate towards the week-end which results in poor work and examination failure.

Secondly, because I am convinced that much delinquency has its origin in truancy I beg parents not to keep a boy away for trivial causes, which tend to make him think his schooling may give way for pleasure at your bidding. A boy may not be absent unless he is himself ill. Also it is essential that after absence he returns with a note written and signed by you or an excuse 'phoned by you. Even the latter has been 'arranged' by later delinquents. A parent allowing a boy to write his own excuse note (this is very common) is encouraging a boy's later forgery of notes of excuse for truancy. I cannot be expected to accept a boy's verbal excuse, which would mean an encouragement of truancy,

Thirdly, may I beg parents to look askance on any materials or articles a boy takes home on any plea of gift or exchange. Please insist on their immediate return. You would be horrified, I know, to be subsequently told they had been stolen, and, that your boy was knowingly a receiver of stolen property.

Fourthly, if your boy is not to take the normal school dinner, but is either to go home or to have sandwiches, I would be grateful for a letter each term to that effect. This is to prevent a boy's taking money for dinners from you, going without, and spending this money frivolously. This too, is a frequent cause of subsequent serious trouble.

Yours sincerely,



Headmaster.

School Prospectus 1956

The following is a copy of the School Prospectus that was sent to the parents of Michael Ashpool prior to his start at the School in September 1956

Kent Education Committee
Dartford Technical School for Boys
Wilmington Hall, Wilmington, Dartford
Headmaster: L. V. Wall, B.A.

School Organisation

The School has a five-year course to General Certificate Level of the University of London and a subsequent one or two year sixth-form, course.

There are two main interests, those of Engineering and Agriculture, which will allow some bias in courses which are of general education.

The curriculum gives a sound general education to Certificate level with an increased proportion of time allocated to handicraft, science and technical subjects as compared with normal secondary courses. This is a practical approach to subjects of normal education, the examinations taken being eventually the same as in other secondary courses.

The School therefore offers a liberal education combined with sound technical training stressing essential good craftsmanship, while the first-hand knowledge of industrial conditions and requirements, which the technical Staff have through industrial experience, is invaluable to those pupils who intend to make a career in industry or commerce.

Although the curriculum is not arranged for any specific external examination, pupils may take during their course such external examinations as those for R.A.F. and R.N. entry of various grades, Ministry of Supply Studentships, Civil Service examinations and General Certificate of Education of the University of London at both Ordinary and Advanced Levels.

A good pupil would be expected to offer eight subjects at Ordinary Level and to continue with sixth-form work at Advanced Level. The standard reached offers opportunities for advanced study by University entrance or through the courses offered at Colleges of Technology.

Careers

Careers open to pupils are extremely varied and by no means confined to Industry or Commerce. Half the pupils leaving school enter professions, and courses of study leading to other occupations.

All boys before leaving school are advised on their careers and discussions are arranged with employment officers to which parents are invited.

The School occupies premises at Wilmington Hall in some thirty acres of beautiful parkland with an additional craft block in Lowfield Street. The new School building, already started, will be at Wilmington and part of the new School will be ready in September, 1956.

New, well-equipped laboratories for Physics and Chemistry have been constructed at Wilmington Hall, and there are additional laboratories in the new School buildings. The gymnasium is on the Lowfield Street site, but all games and athletics and some periods of physical education are taken on the School grounds at Wilmington Hall. Ultimately all school buildings will be on this site.

Apart from ten acres of playing fields, five acres are cropped, and other land is devoted to course work in horticulture and agriculture. In addition poultry and pigs are kept in the buildings of the School Farm. Eventually cattle also will be kept some five acres being reserved for hay and grazing.

The School is situated in delightful rural surroundings with much interesting timber growth and opportunities for nature study almost unrivalled among school sites.

Admission

Entry to the School is in September each year on the results of the County's examinations.

The School year is of three terms, Autumn, Spring and Summer of approximately thirteen weeks each.

The parent or guardian of every pupil who is admitted to the School is required to sign an undertaking to abide by the regulations and to keep the pupil at School for the whole course.

Withdrawal

No pupil shall be removed from the School without the consent in writing of the Kent Education Committee, before the end of the School year in which he completes his five year's course of study, except for the reason of his illness or other circumstance which the Committee considers sufficient.

No pupil shall be removed from the School at or after the completion of the normal course of study without notice in writing being given by the parent or guardian at least six weeks before the end of the term.

For the purpose of these provisions the School year begins on the first day of the Autumn Term and ends with the last day of the Summer Term in the calendar year following.

School hours are as follows :-

Morning	8.55 a.m. to 11.55 a.m.
Afternoon	1.15 p.m. to 4.10 p.m.

The subjects taken include:

Religious Knowledge, English, History, Geography, French, Mathematics Pure and Applied. Sciences: Physics, Chemistry Biology, Botany. Woodwork: Carpentry and Joinery, Cabinet work, simple pattern-making. Metalwork: Fitting, Benchwork, Turning, Drilling, Planing, Shaping, Milling, Soldering, Brazing, Forging, machine repair and tools. (Boys are taught to use power-driven machines in both Wood and Metal shops) Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing, Engineering Drawing, Art. Agriculture/Horticulture - Theory and Practice - machinery. Games and Physical Education.

All boys are expected to take part in P.E. and Games unless specially exempted by doctor's certificate or at the written request of the parents or guardian.

Music. In addition to musical appreciation and choral work, instrumental classes are arranged for which a small terminal fee is payable of approximately ten shillings. There is a school Orchestra and Choir.

Equipment

- 1 Fountain pen (not ball point) or pen and nibs.
- 1 ' and 1 3H pencil.
- 1 sandpaper block (made at school)
- 1 set coloured pencils.
- 1 One-foot rule (inches, tenths and centimetres)
- 1 India rubber.
- 2 Set squares (60° and 45° celluloid)
- 1 Protractor (celluloid)
- 1 Pair ordinary pencil compasses.
- 1 Steel rule 6 inches.)
- 1 Armstrong scale (graduated in 1/8ths)) In
- *1 pair compasses) "Temple" recommended) Third
- *1 pair spring bows) for Engineering Drawing.) Year
- 4 Terry steel drawing board clips)

*A set of drawing instruments in a case should be provided especially for examination work.

Personal Property

The Committee disclaims liability for the safe custody of the property of any pupil. Pupils are warned not to leave valuables about or in coat pockets but to hand them in for security. All clothing should be properly marked with the pupil's name.

School Property

Each pupil is responsible for the school books and property lent to him, from the time they are given into his charge to the time that they are returned by him, and he must pay for any loss or damage during the time he is responsible.

Damage to school buildings, machinery or furniture must be made good by an approved contractor at the expense of the pupils causing such damage. In subjects involving laboratory work, students must pay for damage to apparatus due to lack of care in use.

Sickness And Absences

Every pupil must be in attendance on all school days unless prevented by his own ill-health, of which the parent or guardian should immediately notify the School by letter stating the cause of absence. The rule also applies to unpunctuality and the omission of homework. Verbal excuses cannot be accepted. The number of half-days absent is noted on the terminal report.

No pupil may return to school after suffering from an infectious disease other than the common cold until due time has elapsed, and the written sanction of a doctor has been obtained. Parents or guardians are asked, should any infectious disease occur in their house, to give immediate notice to the Headmaster and not allow the pupil to return to School. They will then be informed whether it is necessary or not for pupils who have come in contact with the disease to be excluded from School for a time.

Detentions

Boys may for extra study or additional work be required to attend on Saturday morning if their lack of progress warrants this. Unsatisfactory conduct may similarly be a reason for detention.

The right to exclude any pupil on account of conduct prejudicial to discipline, or of unsatisfactory progress, is reserved.

School Meals

Hot dinners are provided in the school canteen at Wilmington Hall. The cost is nine pence per meal, payable in advance on Monday mornings. For those pupils holding dinner grants the meals are free.

All boys are expected to take School dinners unless they receive written permission to go home, which is given if the distance is reasonable, or if the parent or guardian has made a written request for the pupil to have sandwiches or other meal which, however, must be taken in the dining-room.

This permission must be requested each term by letter.

School Clothing

All boys are required to wear the School blazer, grey trousers or shorts and the School cap and tie, or a grey flannel suit with the School badges. Boys may wear open-necked white shirts in the Summer. Dark blue mackintoshes are requested.

The following articles of clothing are required for work in the School:-

Football and cricket clothing outfits, light canvas shoes with rubber or crepe soles, a pair of dark blue shorts with elastic top, singlet (white), blue overalls for engineering workshops and white apron for the woodwork shops. An apron should be worn in the laboratory. For agriculture work from the third year onwards it is essential to have at School (1) a bib and brace overall and (2) a pair of gum boots.

School clothing, including navy blue blazers, are obtainable at most outfitters, and the School badges from Messrs. Buck, High Street, Dartford. Senior caps and Prefects' badges are only issued on written authority from the School. Boys are advised of their Houses so that the correct cap badge may be obtained.

School Houses

The School is organised into six houses two Junior and four Senior. Generally a boy will be notified of the house in which he is placed before his first day at School.

Physical Education

Only medical reasons will excuse a pupil from participation in physical exercises and all are encouraged to take a full share in the corporate life of the School. Proper clothing and footwear for Physical Education and Games must be provided.

School Societies

Pupils pay three-and-sixpence a term into the School Voluntary Fund for the purpose of providing equipment for their own interests, which cannot be met by public funds. Many activities are run including Science, Photography, Games and Athletics, Aeronautical modelling, etc., while the subscription also covers certain travel expenses.

School Farm

Routine work must be continued obviously beyond school hours and terms. All boys must do their duties in turn even during week-ends or holidays. Neglect in stock-feeding is serious enough to warrant a demand for withdrawal or exclusion. Application for maintenance grants in necessitous cases towards defraying costs of clothing and travel may be made to the Education Officer of the area in which the pupil lives.

Dartford Technical High School for Boys - Prospectus - 1977 / 78

The following are extracts from the Prospectus given to parents interested in enrolling their son in the school for the School year 1977 / 78. Compare this with the previous document, issued some twenty years earlier.

Brief History and Academic Organisation

The school, which began as a department providing pre-apprenticeship training in the Dartford Technical College, was founded in its present status as a result of the 1944 Education Act. Since that time the curriculum and general school organisation has evolved on a broadening basis so that the description 'Technical' is now probably a rather misleading title. Certainly the school is no longer a vocational training establishment in the strictest sense and many boys in the school do not eventually follow courses of study with a scientific or engineering bias. The aim of the school is to provide a broad general education which can form the basis of a successful career in a wide variety of vocations. The practical subjects, still available for study and which constitute an essential part of a complete education, stimulate interest in the academic work in classroom and laboratory.

All boys follow a five year course of study to 'O' level standard of G.C.E. or C.S.E. Subsequent one, two or three year courses in the sixth form leading to Advanced Level of G.C.E. are available.

A good pupil would be expected to offer six to nine subjects at 'O' level and to continue his studies in the sixth form to 'A' level.

The standards reached enable boys to proceed to higher or further education at Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education.

Premises

The school campus, most of which consists of new buildings, occupies a site of about thirty-five acres of beautiful timbered parkland, and is shared with Wilmington Secondary School. The site was originally the private estate of Wilmington Hall. The spacious grounds offer facilities for games and athletics which are unrivalled amongst local schools.

Admission

Entry to the School is in September each year on the results of the County's 11+ transfer arrangements, except for boys (transferred from other schools) who have achieved the necessary standard later and are recommended by the Heads of these schools.

Curriculum

Subjects taken include:

Religious Education, English, French, German, History, Economics, Geography, Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Woodwork, Metalwork and Engineering, Engineering Drawing, Design and Technology, Arts and Crafts, Music, Physical Education activities.

Boys in the Junior School, i.e. first and second years, follow a common broad curriculum which contains most of the subjects listed. Certain choices of subjects and allocation to particular subject sets occur in the curriculum for subsequent years.

Each boy's courses of study may be varied in accordance with his particular ability and aptitudes.

All boys are expected to take part in Physical Education which includes games, unless specially exempted a doctor's certificate or temporarily, as a result of illness, at the written request of parents.

The following games and sports are played in the school: Soccer, Rugby, Hockey, Basketball, Badminton, Cricket, Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball, Golf, Swimming, Sailing and the full programme of Athletic events, including Cross Country Running.

Boys are expected to play in representative matches when selected.

Music is available for study and as an extra-curricular activity, including a choir, orchestra and jazz group. Instrumental classes, arranged by the Kent School of Music, can be attended by boys in the school, as can a Saturday morning music school run by Wilmington Secondary School.

Homework

Homework is set so that boys may gain

- a) practice in academic work essential for their eventual success in G.C.E. and C.S.E. examinations;
- b) experience in the discipline of private study which is essential if they are to be successful students in further education.

Each boy is issued with a Homework Diary in which he records the work set by Staff.

Parents are requested to co-operate with the School in ensuring that adequate arrangements are made at home for homework to be done and in informing the school if they feel that their son is doing insufficient Work.

Times

School hours are as follows:

Morning	8.50 a.m. to 11.50 a.m.
Afternoon	12.50 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Cycling to School

Boys in their first few months here are not permitted to cycle to school. Boys must pass the R.O.S.P.A. cycling proficiency test before they use a cycle for journeys to and from school.

Parking Spaces

5th and 6th form students who travel to school by car, motor-cycle or motor-scooter must obtain permission to park their vehicles on the school site. Parking spaces are limited and we cannot guarantee to meet demand.

Motor cyclists must pass the Kent Constabulary course, the RAC/ACU course or the DOE driving test before riding vehicles to school.

Parents meeting boys in cars should wait away from the school gates and should not wait in the school grounds.

Careers

The school does not provide training for specific trades or vocations so that the careers open to pupils are extremely varied. Half the pupils leaving school enter professions and establishments for further education.

Up-to-date information and advice may always be obtained by boys in the school from the Careers Master. Each boy, before leaving school, is advised on careers by a Youth Employment Officer.

School Journeys

Parties of boys and staff in the school visit Continental countries. Other residential visits to places and events of interest in this country are arranged.

School Property

Each pupil is responsible for the books and property from the time they are given into his charge to the time they are returned by him, and he must pay for any loss or damage during the time he is responsible.

Wilful damage to school buildings, machinery or furniture must be made good by an approved contractor at the expense of the pupils causing such damage. In subjects involving laboratory work students must pay for damage to apparatus due to lack of care in use.

The County Council disclaims liability for the safe custody of the property of any pupil. Pupils are warned not to leave valuables about or in coat pockets but to hand them in to the school office for security.

All clothing and personal property brought to school should be properly marked with the pupil's name.

School Houses

The school is organised into three houses, Cray, Darent, Thames. Generally a boy will be notified of the house in which he is placed before his first day at school. His house tie forms part of his school uniform.

School Societies

Pupils pay £1.50 a year or 50p a term into a School Voluntary Fund for the purpose of providing equipment which cannot be met by public funds and for the increasing number of societies and clubs that function in the school. The subscription also contributes towards travel expenses for many extra-curricular activities.

Sickness and Absence

Every pupil must be in attendance on all school days unless prevented by his own ill-health, of which the parent should immediately notify the school stating the cause of absence. This rule applies also to unpunctuality and the omission of homework; verbal excuse by the boy cannot be accepted. Unsatisfactory conduct or work may preclude a pupil from entering an examination form.

No pupil may return to school after suffering from an infectious disease until due time has elapsed.

Parents' Holidays

In exceptional circumstances parents may take their son to accompany them on an annual holiday up to two weeks in any one calendar year. The practice is to be discouraged but if it is absolutely necessary for the pupil to be absent for this reason a form of request must be obtained from the school office and duly completed before the holiday commences.

Detentions

Boys may, for extra study, additional work, or unsatisfactory conduct, be required to attend at the end of the afternoon school if their lack of progress warrants this.

Clothing and Equipment supplied by Parents

All boys in the first five years are required to wear the school uniform

Uniform

- Navy-blue single breasted blazer with the school badge on the breast pocket with plain buttons.
- House tie
- White, grey or pale-blue shirt
- Navy-blue, black or grey raincoat, overcoat, anorak or duffel coat.
- Plain black leather shoes.
- Plain grey trousers
- Grey V-necked pullover or cardigan
- Plain grey or black or navy-blue socks.

Physical Education and Games Kit

- White shorts with elastic waist Black shorts with elastic waist
- School football jersey - gold with black on reverse side
- White vest with gold chest band White canvas shoes (not black soles)
- Football boots
- Football socks- black with gold-tops.

Protective clothing in Workshops and Laboratories

- Blue bib and brace for Engineering Workshops
- White apron for Woodwork shops
- A coat should be worn in the Laboratories in the upper forms.

Equipment

- 1 Fountain pen
- Pencils (HB and H)
- 1 set of coloured pencils
- 1 India rubber
- 1 pair ordinary pencil compasses (Helix)
- 1 x 1ft, ruler (inches, tenths, centimetres, millimetres)
- 2 set squares (60° and 45° Celluloid)
- 1 protractor (celluloid)

Pupils will be advised when to bring these and other drawing instruments to school. Expensive drawing instruments need not be bought in the early years.

School Meals

Hot lunches, cooked in the school kitchen, are provided in the school dining hall. Boys buy dinner tickets, usually five at the beginning of each week. For those pupils holding dinner grants the meals are free. Boys, other than those in the Upper VI having lunch (either cooked or packed) must remain on the school premises during the lunch hour.

School Rules

General

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during school hours, except with permission from the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster or Teacher on duty.

School Grounds and Premises ,

- a) The only entrance into the grounds is via either of the two main gates in Common Lane.
- b) Pupils in the junior and middle schools must use the doors leading into the cloakrooms to enter the main school building except when officially entering via the gym block door.
- c) On stairways and in the corridors keep in single file and to the left-hand side. Do not run.
- d) Smoking, gambling and card-playing are forbidden
- e) Avoid leaving litter anywhere in school premises
- f) Entry into Wilmington Secondary School should be official only and via the outside unless by permission of a member of staff or under supervision.

Use of buildings and grounds outside of lessons

- a) At the beginning of break, boys should leave the buildings and not re-enter until the outside bell has been rung.
- b) Marked pitches, jumping pits, etc. are out of bounds. In areas adjacent to the buildings pupils should use the paths and roads.
- c) Car parks, the farm area and the woods are out of bounds.
- d) Ball games should be played only in unmarked grass areas or in fenced hard areas and in no circumstances against walls with windows.
- e) During wet breaks, the procedure as laid down shall be followed. At no other time should boys be in class rooms during breaks except under supervision.

Cyclists, Motor-cyclists and Motorists

- a) Pupils may cycle to school only with permission
- b) When it is necessary to turn right to enter or leave the school premises, cyclists must walk across the road.
- c) Bicycles must be stored in the racks. There is to be no cycling within the school boundaries.
- d) The cycle sheds are out of bounds during school hours.
- e) Senior boys must have written permission to use cars, motorcycles, etc. and must follow the rules laid down for their use.

School property

Great care should be taken of all furniture, School property and the surrounds of the buildings. Breakages or damage must be reported at once to a member of Staff.

Uniform

School uniform is to be worn by all boys in the first five years whilst at school and during journeys to and from school and on such other occasions as the Headmaster shall deem it proper.

Personal Property

All property should be clearly marked with the owner's name. There must be no buying or selling of anything at any time. Valuable personal property, e.g. portable radio sets, must not be brought to school without permission.

Nothing which could be termed dangerous as weapons, e.g. knives, catapults, fireworks, may be brought to school.

The most important rule is to show courtesy and to use common sense at all times.

Members of Staff

Headmaster	J.D.Edgeley B.Sc.,F.I.M.A.
Deputy Headmaster	
Senior Master	G.Gough, Master i/c Woodwork
Master in charge Lower school	W.Hodgson, Dip.L.C.
Master in charge Middle School	P.G.Boxall, B.A.
Mr R. Campbell	Head of Technology Department
Mr. A. Costar B.A.	German & History Departments
Mr. J. Daley N.D.D.	Head of Art Department
Mr. A. Hamerschlag B.Sc.	Head of Biology and Chemistry
Mrs. E. Hinkley B.A.	English and Modern Languages Dept
Mr. L. Hollingsworth B.A	Senior Sixth Form Tutor /
	Head of History and Economics
Mrs. P. Howell B.Sc.	Head of Mathematics Department
Mr. W. Jacob B.A.	Head of English Department
Mr. W. James	English Department
Mr. I. Jenkins	Department of Technology
Mr. R. Ladell A.R.I.C	Science Department

Mrs. J. McKay B.Ed
Mr. K .McNally B.Sc
Mr. S. Message
Mr. B. Mohamed B.Ed.
Mr. A. Moore H.N.C. A.Inst.P.
Mr. C. Newberry M.A. L.T.C.L.
Mr. G.Nicholls B.A.
Mr. I. Smith M,A
Mr. D. Stelling M.Sc.
Mr. M. Wesson Dip.P.E.

Mr. K. White B.A.
Mr. J. Williams B.Sc.

School Secretaries
Laboratory Technicians
Workshop Technician
School Caretaker

Mathematics Department
Science Department
Master i/c Technical Drawing
Mathematics Department
Careers Master; Science Dept.
Head of Music Department
Head of Modern Languages Dept
Head of Geography Department
Science Department
Head of Physical Education Dept;
Mathematics Dept
Master i/c Religious Education
Head of Science Department

Mrs. S. Holden, Mrs. J. Barrett, Mrs. M. Frankton
Mrs. M. Miller, Mrs. D. Burman, Mrs. H. Turner
Mr. V. Harper
Mr. R. C. Curtis

First School Trip to Switzerland – 1959

Michael Ashpool has kindly submitted this reminder regarding the first school trip arranged in 1959. A twelve day holiday in Switzerland including travel to and from home for under £25.

KENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DARTFORD TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

Telephone :
Dartford 23090.
Nr. Dartford, Kent,

Wilmington Hall,
Wilmington

Dear

The time is now approaching for our Swiss holiday and so that you may make necessary preparations we have set out below as much information as we have available at present,

Our two centres are Seewen in the Lucerne district and Aeschi in the Bernese Oberland, both quiet villages within easy reach of towns. The addresses of the hotels will be sent to you as soon as we have them from the Travel Agency.

Costs.

Your boy will have told you that the cost of hotel and travel was £23.17. 6d under 16 and £24.15. 0 over (London back to London) but there will be a slight reduction in this as we shall be travelling from Dartford to Folkestone and back by coach, so that the cost will be £23.15.4d for under 16 and £24.12.10d for over and this will cover insurance in addition to travel and hotel. The addition about £2 will be required for excursions (but see note at the end of this letter). From the £30 suggested as a maximum this leaves between £4. 5. 0d and £3. 7. 0d, depending on age, as pocket money - a more than ample sum for normal requirements and indeed £2 would be sufficient. If however you wish your boy to purchase expensive presents you should increase his pocket money accordingly.

Customs .

All goods entering this country are liable to customs or excise duties and while sometimes small items are admitted freely, such things as watches, cameras and musical boxes are almost invariably charged for. It is also advisable to carry a receipt for a camera of foreign manufacture if purchased in this country. If you wish your son to purchase a watch or musical box please ensure he has enough in English currency to pay the duty, which may be up to 50%, on returning.

Clothing

We shall be away from home for 12 days so make allowances for shirts, underclothing, socks and night clothes accordingly.

School uniform will be worn for travelling and in addition the following should be brought:

- 1 pair stout shoes;
- 1 pair plimsolls and/or light sandals for indoor wear;
- Bathing costume;
- Casual clothes including spare flannels and/or shorts;
- Raincoat (a plastic one is most suitable);
- Sweater;
- Soap and towels.

The Journey.

We shall leave School at about 11.30 a.m. on Monday 18th July and our first meal will be breakfast next morning at Basel. Therefore sufficient packed food and drink should be taken to provide for lunch and tea / supper on the 18th.

Note on Excursions:

The £2 allocated will cover the following type of excursion:

1. From Seewen:

Visit to Lucerne.

Ascent of the Rigiby mountain railway

Visit to Brunnen and Fluelen.

2. From Aeschi

Visit to Thun.

Visit to Interlaken

Ascent of the Schynigge Platte or Brienzer Rothorn.

However for a further £1.10. 0d to £2 (under 16) and £2.10. 0d to £3 (over 16) it will be possible, provided 15 boys wish to go, to undertake two longer ones:

1. From Seewen.

To Lugano, in Italian Switzerland via the St. Gotthard route.

2. From Aeschi

To Montreux via the Bernese Oberland Railway: a most magnificent ride.

Travel and hotel money should be paid in by the middle of this month and excursion and pocket money by 1st July so that foreign currency may be obtained.

Finally as this is the first time that a party has travelled abroad from our School please impress upon your boy that we shall expect the best possible conduct at all times, for any lack of thought will reflect strongly on the boy himself and on the School and may jeopardise such school journeys for future years.

School Milk

Do I remember?

For the sake of posterity I would like to start some discussion on the all important part of our education, namely school milk. For the younger members of the association, that is those who attended school after the reign of Maggie, no not Mountjoy but Thatcher, we were provided with 1/3 pint bottles of milk each day.

There was some discussion at the last annual dinner over the arrangements for this. I seem to remember from my primary school days that the milk was already in the classroom at the start of school having been put there by the caretaker. There was also a supply of straws and a plastic knitting needle to pierce the milk bottle caps.

The milk had been delivered to the school by the local Co-op milkman. Then there was a change, and the deliveries were made by Wickens Dairies of Maidstone, who had got the contract for the whole of Kent. Were there occasions, when because of bad weather 'the milk didn't get through' or was late. In the cold weather the milk would freeze and force the cap off the bottle, so we could have milk ice lollies.

When I arrived at Dartech the milk was supplied from a shed/store near the bottom of the pupils' stairs into the old building, next to the windows to the boiler room, where the coke was shovelled through, much to the annoyance of RDWH whose classroom was just above. I have recollections of all of the boys getting their bottle of milk from the caretaker, but I also remember the milk monitors going to the shed before the end of period 2 to collect an almost crate full of milk and straws and the milk being consumed in the classroom. I say almost crate full because although the crate held thirty bottles there were some boys who did not drink milk. What happened to these non consuming wimps, I expect they turned out to be teachers or accountants.

For those boys who did woodwork at Lowfield Street in the morning, they could go to the shed during afternoon break and get their milk. In the sixth form I have recollections of having the milk in the prefect's room, this gave rise to a game called 'crates', a version of draughts, played with the milk bottles. In the upper sixth we organised ourselves with a kettle and were able to use the milk in our tea and coffee.

Contributed by Chris Portwine - (1957-65) to the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter.

The Old Canteen

By Frank Pearson (1957-64). Adapted from an article that first appeared in the newsletter of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association

I am encouraged to share some reminiscences of the Old Canteen from 1957 to 1962. During my Sixth Form days (1962-1964), Mr. Mogford took over and the Canteen was superseded by the School Hall with adjacent dining area. The Old Canteen was just not big enough to assemble the whole school of some 550 pupils but shortage of funds for the New Building caused the dimensions there to be cut so that dinner tables appeared on the stage and assemblies tended to spill into the dining area. Nevertheless, the improvement was considerable. A prefect said grace to a seated assembly and food was served to our seats by whoever was head of the table. Furthermore, it was decent food.

Contrast this with the old system where we had queued up outside in the cold trusting that the left-overs from some other school had arrived and would prove sufficient. Prefects herded us in onto wooden forms placed end to end in front of a series of collapsible tables, which became semi-collapsible by the loosening of a wing nut. At crowded times, it was possible to cause adjacent tables to move to and fro in opposite directions, whereby the boy sitting at the join might see his plate crash to the floor, just before the tables returned to their original place. All but one diner would look both innocent and seemingly enjoying their food. I'll share none of the tales of the numerous other goings on at mealtimes as such misdemeanours tend to be shared regularly at the reunions. What is often omitted from the tales is that retribution invariably followed. Mr. Sant was renown. A single culprit would be taken by a short hair on his neck and whatever Sant did he caused excruciating pain. It was worse if there were two of you, when taking slightly longer hairs, he would swing the boys knocking their heads together. Such punishments were far worse than merely having the living daylight shaken out of you.

In the First Year most people ate in the canteen although you could avoid it by bringing sandwiches to eat in an Old Building classroom. More difficult to avoid was the occasional lesson, often music, which appeared in the timetable as being held in the Canteen. Whole school assemblies were virtually impossible so the daily act of worship there was not a regular occurrence until the third year. GCEs, always taken in stifling heat, were something to look forward to in the Upper school but the junior forms were summoned to the canteen for assembly and dismissal at the beginning and end of each term. We sang there, what will always be for me the school song, namely No. 333 "Lord behold us with Thy blessing, Once again assembled here" finishing the term with "Lord dismiss us with Thy blessing".

In stark contrast to the hymn, was what Chas Wall also rattled through to finish the term, which was to reveal the class results, prior to the issue of the dreaded sealed reports. Like "Miss World", results were given in reverse order.

The old canteen is still there I believe but no longer sandwiched between the bike sheds and a kitchen garden. I'm not sure why the kitchen garden was there because the school did not cook for itself. Perhaps this is why one year cabbages were left to rot in the plot.

The Journey to School (1)

Adapted from an article by Trevor Rigg (1957 - 62) first published in the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter.

One of my most enduring memories of DTHS was the journey there and back; buses being infrequent and crowded, I very often got home not much before 6 p.m. Not only did school finish at ten past four [for some mysterious reason, those who left the "other way" via Leyton Cross left a full 15 minutes earlier] but there was then an invigorating run to Wilmington bus stop, the only occasion when I participated in sport with any relish, and then the queue and endless wait for a bus that wasn't already so crowded that it passed without even stopping. Bus-conductors, fresh from the brutality of the Korean war or Suez, imbued with heartless inhumanity to the lesser of their kind, rarely showed any forbearance towards we short-trousered wretches, who, despite our obvious piteous state and very cold red knees, were counted on meticulously until the magic number five-standing-only had been reached. To compound our misery, our travel passes were interpreted as strictly as legal documents. A pass to Orpington meant that far and no less. Buses to Crockenhill were twice as numerous as those to Orpington but to change at Crockenhill constituted a contravention of traffic regulations which was only rarely sanctioned.

Otherwise, the journey was not unpleasant, long enough to check your homework, or long enough to write it from scratch on some occasions. The favourite seat was the back-seat upstairs; getting this required either extraordinary luck or studied and persistent manoeuvring from less favoured positions forward. To sit there conferred on the proud occupant an importance and status that compensated somewhat for the otherwise inferiority of his position. Well, it was comfortable, had arm-rests but most importantly and bizarrely it was sought after!

The best day, though, was when, once fortnightly, we had woodwork! This was practically akin to being AWOL. First, the excitement of getting a special bus ticket from the school office, then leaving school at midday long before everyone else, and, on my part at least, going to a lesson I really enjoyed. If this wasn't enough, there was then the supreme pleasure of getting on a near empty bus in Dartford town centre and skipping the dreaded queue at Wilmington.

No wonder, that, come the infamous bus strike of 1958 which lasted several weeks, I was forced to adopt a more rigorous form of transportation, the bicycle, which, in turn, imposed other hardships on we hard-pressed students. We had text-books then, (imagine!), ring-binders, (several), and P.E. kit that was always subjected to military scrutiny. It was scarcely possible to fit all this into one bag, let alone then strap it to a two-wheeler.

Who else, I wonder, remembers the hardships we endured then?

The Journey to School (2)

Adapted from an article by Martin Salmon (1959 - 1966) first published in the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter.

Dartford Tech! My most vivid memory of the School was going home!

The steep hill up to the edge of Dartford Heath seemed to incline sharply as the days in the week progressed. Text books seemed to get heavier, legs seemed to get shorter, arms seemed to get longer and eventually, by Friday, my bloated school case would scrape on the uneven asphalt to the top of the hill. Then it levelled out. Somehow, it was Heaven just getting away. Except Heaven was the hellish Leyton Cross Bus Stop!

It was notorious. The general public would often complain about the unruly behaviour. And rightly so. There were far too many pupils for one bus, the giant green double decker, 4.10 p.m., 401 to Bexley. Too many bums - not enough seats, and as the next bus was in 40-50 minutes - that's if one bothered to appear. It wasn't surprising that the 'orderly' queue rapidly had a mind of its own. Just the sight of a distant rooftop reflection would activate onslaught positions. An amorphous mass would edge slowly forward, engulfing the prefect that tried to discipline the impending renegade revolt. It was hopeless.

We knew, and they knew, they hadn't a hope in this hell, you see they too knew the irregularities of the foreboding 401, it was us, them and it.

Often the bus knew. Usually it would slow-crawl around the corner towards the bus shelter. A belch of black exhaust fumes enveloping us all - just to let us know. The prefects would do their best to allow the young, child-laden mothers to step off. Shopping would fly in all directions - packets of Persil and 'Gollywog' Jam would be trodden underfoot in the mind-squelching puddles. And then there were the oldies, the odd OAP - perhaps an old woman, bespectacled, slow on her feet, gingerly steadying herself as she tried to venture off. She didn't stand a chance!

The prefects (and they know who they are) would sneakily, smugly-smile and hop on. Right that's it! Mob rule followed. Well it wasn't really mob rule, there was no rule, it was everyone for themselves. The old lady would be pinned to the ticket collector as a throng of testosterone-charged boys would force them, stair-wards, in an unstoppable wave of determination to find a seat. Another surge would fork off into the lower deck, and still more bodies followed. One after another, after another. Outside, heads were down, caps off, elbows out, it was mayhem! One of the most successful tactics was to run around the front of the bus, into the road and reappear at the rear, the pincer attack. Running around behind the bus shelter to find a weak gap nearer the front was another favourite of mine. The only approach I didn't try was abseiling from the bus's roof, I often wonder why? Every day was different. Every opportunity had to be assessed in a split-second. Every move meant success or failure.

Aspects of School Organisation.

How Many Form Entry?

Discussion about the number of forms or new boys entering the school each year is complicated by the year or age of entry. Generally, transfer from primary to secondary school occurred at eleven. Technical schools were different, their transfer was at thirteen. So, these pupils completed two years at a secondary modern school before transferring to a technical school for a three course. Pupils in prep schools who did not get access to a public school would also transfer at 13.

The policy for technical schools changed in the 1950s. The boys' schools were the first to transfer pupils at 11, followed later in the decade by the girls' schools. Dartford Technical School further complicated this issue by having an Ag (agricultural) stream, which started in the third year.

Dartford Technical School was 2 form entry in the late 1940s starting at the age of 13. The Ag form was added when the school moved from shared sites in Dartford to Wilmington in 1949. In the early 1950s the change from 13+ entry to 11+ entry happened. By 1956 there was a two-form entry at 11+ and one form (Ag) at 13+.

In 1957, the school had a four form entry at 11+ and the Ag form at 13+. The increase to four form entry was to cater for the bulge that occurred after the Second World War. Children born in parts of January and February 1946 were known as 'Victory Babies'.

In 1958, there was a three form entry at 11+ and an Ag form at 13+. In 1959, there was a three form entry at 11+, the Ag form was phased out. There was a casual entry for prep-school boys at 13+ if there was space. So, from 1959 the school was three form entry.

The general class size was 30. Occasionally this could be 31 if a new pupil applied for a place and it was known that a current pupil was to transfer out in the near future. The 11+ classes were streamed on entry based on 11+ exam results. These classes generally remained fixed until the end of the second year when boys would be moved up or down dependant on results in the previous year. Changes of class could then occur at the start of each school year, including the fifth year when Ordinary Level (O'levels) public exams would be taken in the summer

The school day.

The school day was divided into eight forty minute periods.

Period 1	9.00 – 9.40	Period 2	9.40 – 10.20
Morning break	10.20 – 10.35		
Period 3	10.35 – 11.15	Period 4	11.15 – 11.55
Lunch	11.55 – 13.05		
Period 5	13.05 – 13.45	Period 6	13.45 – 14.25
Afternoon break	14. 25 – 14.40		
Period 7	14.40 – 15.30	Period 8	15.30 – 16.10

Assembly took place at 9.00 am so took its time out of the first period. In 1957 there were three assemblies because there was no space in the school that could accommodate all the pupils. The first years were in the Art Room and the assembly was lead by the Deputy Headmaster, Mr French. The sixth form were in the New Physics Lab lead by Mr Lewis, since there was no piano in the NPL they did not sing a hymn. The main school assembly was in the canteen lead by the Headmaster, Mr Wall. The assembly took the form of a reading from the bible, a hymn and prayers including the Lord's Prayer. The boys stood throughout the assembly. The whole of the assembly was conducted by staff.

The registers were taken by the teacher taking the first period in the morning and afternoon sessions. In the morning session both the attendance register and the dinner register had to be taken. In addition, on Mondays, or the first day back after a holiday the dinner money had to be collected and tallied by the teacher. Dinners cost one shilling (5p) per day from the middle of the 1950s into the next decade. A pupil, designated 'Register Monitor', was responsible for collecting the registers in the black hard backed covers from the table at the bottom of the main staircase in the Old Building. These were returned to the table after marking except when dinner money had been collected. In this case the register monitors queued at the school office, adjacent to the main school door, and waited for their turn to have the money checked by the school secretary.

The School Year

Schools were required to be open for 200 days each year with an allowance for 10 occasional days' holiday, these were not usually taken.

The Week's Lessons

Most teaching took place in double periods.

1st year lessons

6 English	6 Mathematics	6 French
2 Physics	2 Chemistry	2 Technical Drawing
2 History	2 Geography	2 Art
4 Games	1 Religious Education	1 Form Period
2 Nature Studies	2 Music	2 Light Craft

2nd/3rd year lessons

5 English	5 Mathematics	5 French
2 Physics	2 Chemistry	2 Technical Drawing
2 History	2 Geography	2 Art
2 Games	1 Religious Education	1 Form Period
3 Metalwork	4 Woodwork	2 Nature Studies

4th year lessons – these depended on the stream

Upper streams or only 4A

5 English	5 Mathematics	5 French
2 Physics	2 Chemistry	2 History
2 Geography	2 Technical Drawing	2 Applied Mathematics
2 Art	2 Games	1 Religious Education
1 Form Period	3 Metalwork	4 Woodwork

5th year lessons – these depended on the stream

Upper streams or only 5A

6 English	6 Mathematics	5 French
2 Physics	2 Chemistry	2 Technical Drawing
4 Applied Mathematics	2 Art	2 Games
1 Religious Education	1 Form Period	3 Metalwork
4 Woodwork		

The sixth form when Advanced Level General Certificate of Education Examinations were introduced had two classes. Lower Sixth – 1st year A level, Upper Sixth – 2nd year A level

There was also a 6R (later known as 5R), which was an O level retake year.

A level. All pupils took Technical Drawing as a one year course. Pure Mathematics and Physics as a two year course, and a choice between Applied Mathematics and Chemistry. There was a choice between French and Geography as a one year O level course, and in the first year a choice between Woodwork and Metalwork. Included were English, Religious Education Games and a Form Period.

Contributed by Chris Portwine - (1957-65)

Public Transport to School

When I see a queue of buses parked inside the school grounds, ready to take pupils home at the end of the much shorter school day, my thoughts go back to the 1950s and I am indebted to Chris Portwine for his comments about one of the bus services at that time.

Bexley was still part of Kent at that time and it did seem that a significant number of boys came from what is now "over the border".

Chris comments because of remarks made by Martin Salmon in his reminiscences on page 98, where he refers to the scrum to get the 4.10pm bus.

Chris says that "There may have been a bus at 4.10pm. There was a 401 bus that started from Leyton Cross at 4.16 pm. It used to sit on the heath until the appointed time. Two more 401s often came together from Dartford, one timed at 4.28 pm and one at 4.38 pm. The next bus, used by boys in detention and attending after school clubs was 5.12 pm.

Was the 4.16 pm designated a school bus? Did it run on holidays? Why was this bus so early? How was a boy dismissed at 4.10 pm., unless he had English with RDWH, supposed to get to Leyton Cross in six minutes, it could only be done by running up the hill and across the heath. School gate to Leyton Cross 800 yards"

As Chris correctly points out, if a class finished at 4.10pm, there was hardly sufficient time to get out of the school gates and up to Leyton Cross. Interestingly, with the A2 carving across the heath, the old bus stops that we knew at that time are now long gone.

Technical Equipment.

At a time when many lessons involve the use of computers and whiteboards, it is chastening to think back to the time when a tape recorder was almost a novelty.

Chris Portwine also comments upon a point made in an unattributed comment made after the death of Maggie Mountjoy had been announced. The comment suggested that Maggie "commandeered for her lessons the first and only bit of technology in the entire school - the reel-to reel 7" school tape recorder looking majestic in its wooden cabinet."

Chris comments: "The tape recorder was also used in music by (Jake) Clare, and by John Robinson in his French classes. Two boys had to carry the machine round the school. The handles were not ergonomically designed and padding, in the form of handkerchiefs were wrapped round the handles to stop them cutting into tiny hands."

Old Boy's Association

Whilst for some people, school was the best years of their life; others tend to view education as something to be forgotten. Maybe they had a bad experience. For those that wish to remember those formative years and to link up with old school friends, an Old Boy's Association might offer an opportunity.

Records show that the earliest consideration for the founding of an Old Boy's Association for past pupils from the Dartford County Technical School was on 18 October 1956. Mr L V Wall (Headmaster) notes that N Terry was the leading figure and prime mover.

On 14 December 1956, 98 people attended a meeting in a Scouts Hall in Bexleyheath to found the Old Boy's Association. They had their first Annual Meeting on 4 January 1957 when over 100 people attended.

History does not record what might have happened to that association but clearly it declined over time and eventually ceased to function.

In 1961, an Old Boy's Cricket Club was established and in 2011 the now renamed Old Dartechs and Wilmingtonians Cricket Club celebrated its 50th anniversary. An Old Boy's Football Club was also established but this subsequently ceased to exist.

In 1992, John Daley retired after 29 years teaching at the school and the then headmaster – Brian Titterington - asked him to attempt to re-establish an Old Boy's Association for ex pupils and staff from both the Dartford Technical School and the Wilmington Grammar School.

In 1994, a successful dinner was held with over 200 past pupils and staff present. This prompted the formation of an unelected committee of Brian Titterington, John Daley, Len Hollingsworth, Terry Whiffen and Adrian Boyling. They established the present OD & WA. (Further details can be found in the newsletters available on the OD & WA website.

John Daley records how he was very pleased that he had rescued so much paperwork, like the school magazines and the school history entitled – "Jottings from LV Wall" - from being dumped, when the attic of Wilmington Hall was cleared out. Apparently, no one in the school was in the least bit interested in the documents, so he took them home and returned them after the OD & WA was successfully launched. Now they form a valuable archive, which is available for inspection at the time of the Annual Reunion Dinner.

STAFF

Teaching & Administrative.

Boys generally spend no more than seven years at the school but staff often stay much longer.

The following information, largely extracted from articles in the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletters and archives shows that many staff have spent considerable periods at the School.

This table shows some notable teachers. There may be others that deserve a mention and the editor would welcome information.

<i>L V Wall (Headmaster)</i>	<i>1941 - 1963</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Margaret Mountjoy</i>	<i>1942 - 1979 (84)</i>	<i>37 (+ 5 = 42)</i>
<i>Len Gregory</i>	<i>1947 - 1972</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Pearson Black</i>	<i>1947 - 1981</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Gordon Gough</i>	<i>1953 - 1985</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Wally James</i>	<i>1957 - 1989</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Ian Smith</i>	<i>1958 - 1993</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Len Hollingsworth</i>	<i>1960 - 1999</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>John Daley</i>	<i>1963 - 1992</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Sheila Holden (Secretary)</i>	<i>1969 - 1996</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Mike Wesson</i>	<i>1969 - 1995</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Bob Campbell</i>	<i>1978 - 2004</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Mary Frankton (Secretary)</i>	<i>1978 - 2005</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Keith White</i>	<i>1978 - 2011</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>David Knights</i>	<i>1990 - 2015</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Lynda Clarke (Bursar)</i>	<i>1991 - 2012</i>	<i>21</i>

There follows a couple of staff lists, which give an idea how the School was growing and an extract from a note regarding staff from the 1950s and 1960s.

These are followed by some staff snapshots. Some record the passing of a respected member of staff, whilst others merely record their retirement.

1967- 68 Staff

Mr. J. Mogford	Headmaster
Mr. P. Black	Deputy Headmaster
Mr. W. Hodgson	Master in Charge of Junior School
Mr. J. Austen	Master in Charge of Tech. Drawing Dept., Careers Master
Mr. R. Bruce	Head of Physics Dept
Mr. R. Clare	Master in Charge of Music Dept
Mr. J. Daley	Master in Charge of Art Dept
Mr. A. Davis	Modern Languages Dept
Mr. C. Dougal	Modern Languages Dept
Mrs. M. Evans	English Dept
Mr. G. Gough	Handicraft (Wood/Metal), Tech. Drawing
Mr. W. Grason	Head of Mathematics Dept
Mr. L. Gregory	Head of Handicraft (Wood) Dept
Mr. R. Hardman	Head of English Dept
Mr. L. Hollingsworth	Head of History and Economics Dept
Mr. W. James	English Dept.
Mr. A. Lawson	History, Economics
Mr. E. Lewis	Head of Chemistry Dept
Mr. J. Maxwell	Chemistry Dept
Mr. A Moore	Physics Dept
Mrs. M. Mountjoy	Head of Modern Languages Dept
Mr. W. Moyle	Geography, History
Mr. P. Parker	Mathematics, Physics
Mr. D. Pestell	Head of Handicraft (Metal) Dept
Mr. P. Rudman	English Dept
Mr. G. Russell	Head of Physical Education Dept
Mr. I. Smith	Head of Geography Dept
Mr. M. Upton	PE., Mathematics, Geography

Head Boy	S. J. Miles
Deputy Head Boy	S. R. Stubbins

Staff Handbook

The following text is taken from a document found in the archive. Unfortunately, like many other documents it is not dated. However, John Edgeler was headmaster between 1974 and 1983 and Keith White arrived at the school in 1978 so it must have been issued at some time between 1978 and 1984. It is interesting that it starts with a reference that it would prove useful for students. I wonder how many saw it.

Staff Handbook

This handbook is intended as a reference document which should prove useful to staff, students, visitors etc.

It contains outlines of the routines, procedures, responsibilities, rules etc. which form the whole basis of the school, as well as more general useful information.

It is hoped that by this means we can ensure a uniform approach by staff and a genuine sense of working together as a team with the consequent advantages this should bring.

This handbook is your property and will remain so until you leave the school. Please do keep it handy - and use it.

The whole folder should be handed in to the office during the last week of the summer term to be updated and improved, and will be re-issued to you at the start of the new academic year.

Any suggestions for improvements or for new material etc. which you think would be useful, should be given to the staff association secretary for approval and inclusion in the next issue.

STAFF

J.D. Edgeler, B.Sc.,F.I.M.A.

R. Traves

G. Gough

W. Hcdgson, Dip,L.C

P. Boxall B.A.

L. Hollingsworth B.A.,M.A.(Ed)

Mr. R. Campbell

Mr. A. Costar B.A.

Mr. J. Daley N.D.D.

Mr. A. Hamerschlag B.Sc.

Mrs. E. Hinkley B.A.

Mrs. P. Howell B.Sc.

Mr. W. Jacob B.A.

Mr. W. James

Mr. I. Jenkins

Mr. R. Ladell A.R.I.C.

Headmaster

Deputy Head (Acting)

Senior Master Master i/c Woodwork

Master i/c Lower School

Master i/c Middle School

Senior Sixth Form Tutor

Head of History and Economics

Head of Technology Department

German and History Departments

Head of Art Department

Head of Biology and Chemistry

English and Modern Languages

Head of Mathematics Department

Head of English Department

English Department

Department of Technology

Science Department

Mr. W. Lyons B.A.	English Department
Mrs. J. McKay B.Ed.	Mathematics Department
Mr. K. McNally B.Sc.	Science Department
Mr. S. Message	Master i/c Technical Drawing
Mr. B. Mohamed B.Ed.	Mathematics Department
Mr. A. Moore H.N.C.,A.Inst.P.	Careers Master; Science Department
Mr. P. Murphy B.Ed.	Physical Education
Mr. C. Newberry M.A.,L.T.C.L.	Head of Music. Department
Mr. G. Nicholls B.A.	Head of Modern Languages Department
Mr. I. Smith M.A.	Head of Geography Department
Mr. D. Stelling M.Sc.	Science Department
Mr. M. Wesson Dip.P.E.	Head of Physical Education Department
Mr. K. White B.A.	Master i/c Religious Education
Mr. J. Williams B.Sc.	Head of Science Department

Secretaries	Mrs. S. Holden, Mrs. J. Barrett, Mrs. M. Frankton
Laboratory Technicians	Mrs. M. Miller, Mrs. D. Burman, Mrs. H. Turner
Workshop Technician	Mr. V. Harper
Caretaker	Mr. R. Curtis

School Routines

A. Daily

- Staff should be in school by 8.45 a.m. when the first bell is rung.
- Boys register in form rooms and should be accompanied by members of staff to the hall for assembly by 9.00 a.m. as follows:

Monday, Tuesday -	Full school assembly
Wednesday	Assemblies for 1st and 2nd years and 6th year in Wilmington Secondary School. Rest of school in tutor groups.
Thursday	Full school assembly
Friday	Assembly for 3rd and 4th years in Wilmington School. Rest of school in tutor groups.

All staff are expected to attend assemblies.

- Special arrangements for the first and last days, of term are published on the staff notice-board.

- Times of lessons, breaks etc. are:-

1st period	9.15 - 9.50
2nd.	9.50 - 10.25
Break	10.25 - 10.40
3rd	10.40 - 11.15
4th	11.15 - 11.50
Lunch	11.53 - 12.50
Registration	12.50 - 12.55
5th	12.55 - 13.30
6th	13.30 - 14.05
Break	14.05 - 14.20
7th	14.20 - 14.55
8th	14.55 - 15.30

Staff are reminded about the importance of being prompt in releasing classes - neither early nor late.

5. At lunch time only, boys going home for lunch are allowed off the premises. All other boys line up outside the entrance by Room 10 until called in for school lunch or sandwiches by the duty staff and prefects.

6. Wet break Procedures will be posted on Staff notice board from time to time.

B. Termly

The main general dates for the school year are:

<u>1. At Homes</u>	Jan/Feb.	5th and 2nd years
	March,	6th and 1st years
	April	3rd years
	July	4th years
<u>2. Examinations..</u>		
Internal	Jan	Mock 'O' and C.S.E.
		6th Form
	March	4th year
	June	1, 2, 3, 4, L.6th.
<u>External</u>	Jan.	G.C.E
	Mar/Apr.	C.S.E. Oral and Practical
	May	C.S.E.
	June	G.C.E

2. Uniform

All staff should be constantly on the look-out for deviations from the-accepted school Uniform (Registration is a good time to check) of blazer, blue', 'grey or white shirt, tie, black or grey trousers, grey or dark socks, black shoes and must deal with them immediately. If medical or other genuine reasons for variations arise form tutors should issue a note (dated and signed) to the boy concerned. Persistent (i.e. more than once) offenders must be taken to the appropriate section head immediately.

3. Monitoring progress

There are checks on progress, attitude to work etc. on each pupil regularly throughout the school year and these checks are designed to ensure any problems are spotted and dealt with at an early stage. As well as the formal reports referred to earlier there are two other forms of check:

- Form mark sheets are displayed in the staffroom during the week before each half term. - On these; staff enter red ticks (for good work) or black crosses (poor work lack of effort), or leave a blank space (satisfactory) against the name of each pupil.
- Test marks presented as a percentage are collected in a similar way at the end of each term - the summer term ones being the results of the school examinations.

In both a) and b) completed sheets are checked by form tutor and the appropriate section head. Any necessary steps are then taken by them - complimenting boys for a collection of red ticks or deciding whether a number of black crosses warrant closer regular supervision such as is afforded by the daily/weekly report system.

In extreme cases a pupil can be summoned before the Progress and 'Disciplinary Board, consisting form tutor, plus other appropriate senior staff and the Head of Lower or Middle school who acts as chairman.

The mark sheets in both these checking-systems are kept by the Head of Lower or Middle School for future reference.

4. Report Interviews

Each pupil in the first three years is interviewed once a year, when the second report is issued, by the appropriate section head together with the form tutor at which the year's progress is discussed.

DUTIES

1. Mandatory School -Duties

General Duties - Two members of staff are on duty during morning and afternoon breaks. The duties entail clearing of the buildings and patrol of the play grounds and fields.

2. Voluntary Lunch Time Duties

Dinner Duties - These are done in groups. Each group consists of five staff. They do two lunch duties per week.

The duties to be covered by each group are:

1. Inside duty
2. School supervision duty i.e patrol of the-buildings, playgrounds and fields.
3. Study group supervision.

As additional help there are mid-day supervisors who are responsible to the duty staff and who patrol buildings, fields and playgrounds, between 11.50 and 12.50.

Further details of exact timings within each group will be notified by Mr. Gough.

REPORTS / MARKS.

General dates for reports are detailed elsewhere.

Exact dates will be posted on the staff notice-board and must be strictly adhered to.

1. Report blocks are available from the office.

2. Reports should contain:

- a) Grade for attainment on a 5 point scale:

Outstanding - Good - Average - Poor - Very poor

- b) Grade for effort on the same scale.

- c) Examination percentage (when appropriate) - after school examinations. Marks on 4th and 5th year reports which follow 'set' examinations, must, have regard to public examination potential.

- d) Comment as to progress, attitude etc.

Care should, be taken to ensure that grades and comments match up. Comments should be full and meaningful (satisfactory is not Satisfactory)

3. Reports and a list of attainment and examination (when appropriate)

Marks should be handed to the Form Tutor by the date specified by the Deputy Head. *It is very important to comply with this date.* Form mark lists should be completed and handed to the Head of Lower or Middle Schools.

HOMEWORK

1. Homework time-tables for each class are obtained from the office.

2. The approximate duration of homework should be:

1st / 2nd year -	20 minutes per subject
3rd / 4th year -	30 Minutes per subject
5th / 6th year -	3 hours per night.

3. Homework is regarded here as a necessary part of teaching time and an important habit and discipline for our boys to acquire, and should be set and marked regularly.

4. Each boy should have a Homework Diary and members of staff should ensure that they are properly used i.e. to make a note of the homework set for each night. *These are an important check for home and school* and should be checked regularly by the form tutor.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. General: Staff should regard themselves as always on duty.

The staff notice board should be checked each day by 9.15 a.m. for any immediate notices. Covering for staff absence is notified direct by Mr. Gough.

Staff 1975 / 6

(From Prospectus 1975 / 6)

Mr J.D. Edgeler, B.Sc.,F.I.M.A.	Headmaster:
Mr P. Black, B.Sc.	Deputy Headmaster
Mr G. Gough	Senior Master & Master in charge of Woodwork
Mr W. Hodgson, Dip.L.C.	Master in charge of Lower School:
Mr P. Boxall, B.A.	Geography Department
Mr R. Bruce, B.Sc.	Head of Physics Department
Mr J. Daley, N.D.D.	Head of Art Department
Mr A. Durrant B.Sc.,	Biology Department
Mr A. Hamerschlag, B.Sc.,	Head of Biology and Chemistry Departments
Mrs. E. Hinkley, B.A.,	English and Modern Languages Departments
Mr. L. Hollingsworth B.A	Senior Sixth Form Tutor,
	Head of History and Economics Dept
Mr. W. Jacob, B.A.,	Head of English Department
Mr. W. James	English Department
Mr. I. Jenkins	Department of Technology
Mr. A. Kingsford, B.Sc.	Master in charge of Music, Chemistry Department
Mrs. M. Lodge, B.A.,	Modern Languages Department
Mr. R. Man	Mathematics and Physics Departments
Mr. S. Message	Master in charge of Technical Drawing
Mrs. J. Metcalfe, B.A.	Mistress in charge of Religious Education;
	History Department
Mr. W. Mock	Physical Education and English Departments
Mr. B. Mohamed, B.Ed.	Mathematics Department
Mr. A. Moore, H.N.C., A.Inst.P	Careers Master; Physics Department
Mrs. M. Mountjoy, B.A.,	Head of Modern Languages Department
Mr. G. Nicholls, B.A.,	Modern Languages. Department
Mr. P. Parker, B.A.,	Head of Mathematics Department
Mr. D. Pestell	Head of Department of Technology
Mr. B. Ridley, B.Sc.,	Chemistry Department
Mr. I. Smith, M.A. (Aberdeen)	Head of Geography Department
Mr. M. Wesson, Dip.P.E.,	Head of Physical Education Department;
	Mathematics Dept
Mrs. S. Whyte, B.A.,	English Department
Mlle. R. Breton	French Assistant
Herr W. Neuendorf	German Assistant
Mrs. S. Holden	School Secretary
Mrs. M. Miller	Laboratory Technician
Mr. K. Smith	Laboratory Technician
Mr. J. Joyce	School Caretaker

School Staff in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

*An extract from a note by Mr. W (Jesse) James (Staff - 1957-1989) to Keith Salmon (1957-1965) in November 1993.
(Some information has been subsequently updated / amended [italics] - Ed.)*

You might be interested in what I know of the staff of your years.

Mr Wall retired while you were at school and died after several years of contented retirement.

Mr Mogford remained headmaster until Wilmington Secondary School was built on the school site. He was always keen on comprehensive education and when the decision was made that we would not amalgamate with them and become a comprehensive school he left to become head of a new school in Hextable - a comprehensive. He retired prematurely, forced out by ill-health, due to stress.

Mr Black carried on as Deputy Head until he retired at normal age. Unfortunately, he suffered a sudden heart attack after only a few months and died.

Mr Austen (Eng. Dwg) went to an Essex school as Careers master, and managed to get retirement on full pension while in his early fifties (lucky man), went to live in Hastings and became heavily involved as a chief examiner for one of the exam boards. *He died in 2016.*

Mr Bruce (Physics) retired. He achieved fame or notoriety in the "Daily Telegraph" when his wife divorced him because he would not cut his toe-nails. He went to an R.A.F. retirement home where he died.

Mr Cartwright (Geog) went to Burford Grammar School in Gloucestershire as Head of Geography.

Mr Clare (Music) retired and died suddenly.

Mr Daley took early retirement in 1992.

Mr Gough (Woodwork). After you left there was considerable reorganisation. There became Heads of this and Heads of that; when I left, there were about twenty chiefs and six indians. Mr Gough became Senior Master. He retired at 65 and deliberately kept away from the school.

Mr Grason (Maths) retired and died after several years.

Mr Hodgson (Maths) became Head of Junior School. He took retirement at 60. *He lived in Wilmington but has subsequently died.*

Len Hollingsworth you met. He took over responsibility for exams, which used to be part of the Senior Master's job. He retired in 1999 *and died in 2017*

Mr Lewis (Chemistry) left to become Head of Chemistry at the Girls' school over the road. He retired *and died in 1993*.

Mr Moore (Physics) retired early due to ill health. He had a by-pass operation which gave him a new lease of life.

Mrs Mountjoy (French) retired at 60. For years she came in to school as a relief teacher. *She died in 2000*.

Mr Parker (Maths) left to go to Crayford Secondary School. He came back to us as Head of Maths, but not for long.

Mr Pearce retired not long after you left with cancer. He died *soon after*.

Mr Pestell (Metalwork) retired at 65 and died of cancer after a few years.

Ian Smith retired when I did, but decided to continue to work part-time.

As for me, I retired *in 1989*. The reasons are many but not very varied. One lot centre on the fact that I am too old-fashioned. I just do not understand the language of teaching any longer. The theory, the "philosophy" of teaching is full of jargon and acronyms, and the job was becoming over-burdened with administration.

Teachers were at the mercy of "experts", most of whom had left teaching as soon as possible and who had turned what was once a pursuit of excellence into a frantic rush after mediocrity. The other reasons centre on that last word. The last head but one told me that my standards were too high; an examiner told me that accurate, well expressed, well structured, but dull writing (i.e. the English of real life) was to be marked down, while exciting writing, no matter that it was full of errors and rather incoherent should be marked favourably.... Not for me.

Staff Snapshots - In Memoriam

Mr. Pearson Black

A Master there was, and a worthy man,
Who acknowledged was by both one and all
For maintaining the standards in his school.
And from early days had he played a part
In the discipline which became his art;
In his class there was no idle chatter
But when teaching he was all mirth and matter.
Physics taught he with true contentment;
For us Artists he had no resentment;
But Science was to him his greatest joy,
And he saw it taught to every boy.
In the corridors could he often be seen,
For a Teacher had he a long time been;
Yet throughout his life he had gained respect
From colleagues, pupils and Prefect.
Presiding over the Assembly Hall,
Impressive was he, though he was not tall;
And there was no scholar who'd play the fool
With our stern Mr. Black on high to rule!
This Master had chosen to walk along
To watch his pupils and join the throng,
And adding wisdom and thereto cheer
With lines of lads as the church drew near.
And when inside solemn worship would he seek
And then these boys no words might speak
But those in the Service or of holy thought;
This was the purpose for which they were brought.
What is more, if a wag should dare to lie,
This enlightened judge would the truth espy,
For his enquiring eyes could never fail;
And boys would go packing with cause to wail.
And for sure, he was right to make 'em pay.
But to tell you of this Master's array,
Tweed was his suit, with a gown black as jet;
There hasn't been a finer Master yet.



Mr. P. (Percy) Black
Staff 1947-81

(Mr. Black died in June 1982. He was a master at the School for thirty-four years, twenty-one of them as Deputy Headmaster.

The above is an extract from a longer composition in the style of Chaucer which tells of the School's 'pilgrimage' to the local church at Christmas and Easter. It was written for an occasional School publication in 1979 by Michael Shuff, then a student at the University of Nottingham, studying English). It was published in "The Laurel" - Wilmington Grammar School for Boys. Date believed to be 1982 / 3.

The following is an extract from a letter printed in the newsletter of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association

It was on occasions like this that Percy brought his favourite weapon into play. He was a master of the 'left slap feint' a technique that he perfected on me and one or two others. I pride myself on having assisted in its development, arts the worth of which has been sadly lost to the educational establishment along with all other forms of punishment. When one had been identified, falsely of course, as the perpetrator of some misdeed, Percy would stand in front of you and look up into your eyes (you will recall he was of a quite diminutive stature) and his left arm would swing up rapidly towards your right cheek. This was the feint. The real blow was delivered as one's natural reaction moved the head speedily away from impending impact only to meet Percy's right hand which, by then, was rising even more rapidly towards the left cheek having been dispatched at exactly the precise moment for maximum effect. Those were the days when the teaching profession had real skills. Kids today! Huh! They don't know they're born.

Roger (Wally) Hammond 1956-61

Mr R. D. Pearce, BA 1906 - 66

Written by Mr. I. M. Smith, Staff 1958-93

Although on the staff of Dartford Technical School for only nine years between 1957 and 1966, Mr. Pearce made such a deep impression on those who encountered him, that he is still spoken about by some 'Old Boys' of that generation.

He was described in a career reference as 'an increasingly rare phenomenon, a Schoolmaster with a strong sense of vocation - one who is able to bring a strong influence upon the mind and spirit of the growing boy'.

There can be no argument about the opening phrase of the reference. Whatever the reaction he produced, Mr. Pearce was a remarkable survival of a different world. He was out of sympathy with modern trends and insisted on wearing his academic gown and, when the occasion demanded, a Mortarboard. Such was the aura that he exuded, that on one occasion, when the School was supposedly watching a staff v sixth form Cricket Match, his appearance in full academic dress produced an astounded reaction. As he approached from the building, all signs of inattention gradually faded and an awestruck silence descended on the event, for the rest of the afternoon the game continued in a respectful disciplined atmosphere.

Having such high standards himself, he evoked a response which ranged from admiration to ambivalence. There is no doubt, for example that his final, painful illness was alleviated by the attention of a small number of faithful 'Disciples', (I use the word advisedly) - One or two boys continued to visit him until just before his death in 1966.

As in all the Schools he had served he was Head of English and among other contributions, he established a library in the Old Wilmington Hall. It was there that he was always to be found surrounded by his books, his acolytes and his aura of Distinction. Mr. Pearce was a truly memorable character!

An Obituary written by Mr W H James and published in the 1967 School magazine.

It is with regret that we record the death of Mr. R. D. W. H. Pearce, BA., Head of the English Department, Sept. 1957 to Dec. 1966.

Mr. Pearce and I started our life in the school on the same day. I can, very vaguely, remember my first impression of him: thin lips, cross-cropped hair, precision of language - a martinet! How were we to work harmoniously together?

I was very, very wrong. I found him always courteous and helpful, willing to make suggestions when appealed to, but never with the least hint that he knew best, that his methods were right, and that as Head of the Department his suggestions were, in fact, orders. We had our disagreements, of course. He could never understand my belief in the value of sport 'to the corporate life of the school; and I shall not forget the tone of his voice when he hoped I would not smoke in his car. But these disagreements never affected our ability to work together.

I cannot speak with any authority about how the boys felt about him; but I believe that they regarded him with respect and affection. They may have felt that he was out of touch with their lives in some aspects - as in a sense he was. The permissiveness of life today which adolescents and young men cannot help absorbing offended against his religion, and he could not possibly approve of much of what passes for modern culture without betraying the principles by which he lived his life. He was unable to keep his religion in a separate compartment and bring it out on the appropriate occasion; to him religion and life were inseparable. This was a fact about him that one had to recognize and accept. It made his life very rich, and he could, if given the chance, make life rich for other people.

The school will go on without him, but he left his mark. His success from an academic point of view can be judged by the high percentage of passes at G.C.E. which was achieved under his leadership. And he will remain in the memory of a large number of us, past and present pupils and Staff, who knew him, respected him, and admired him.

Mr Eric Lewis

Written by Mr. I.M. Smith, Staff, 1958-93

One of the outstanding personalities of the school in those days when it was called Dartford Technical School and later Dartford Technical High School for Boys was Eric Lewis.

Eric was appointed to the staff in 1950 and quickly established himself as a prominent member of the community. He had a wide range of interests and in addition to his teaching responsibilities in the Science Department he formed a Christian Union which was by far the largest club or society in the school. When Colin Cowdrey, Kent and England cricketer at the time, came to speak to the CU, for example, a high percentage of the school population were present, and for once, classes were very late in starting that afternoon.

As a dedicated Christian, he was involved in many local activities and he was in constant demand as a preacher in Churches in the district. He had a gift of communication with young and old alike. Having been, by his own admission, a bit of a 'lad' himself when young, he was well aware of the potential for disorder in gatherings of young people. He and his friend and colleague, Pearson Black would often spend break times patrolling the playground, apparently deep in conversation, but in reality making sure that trouble behind the bicycle sheds or the gym, would not arise.

It was a sad day for the school, when in 1970 he left, to become Head of Science at what is now The Grammar School for Girls in Wilmington. One of his more permanent legacies was the Good Will Fund which he was instrumental in starting, and whose purpose was to make contributions to charities. A range of these have benefited over the years and no doubt continue to do so as a result of efforts by the present generation of Wilmingtonians.

Having moved from Dartford to Clevedon when he retired, Eric died in July 1993 aged 75.

Mrs. Margaret Mountjoy

1914 - 2000.

Staff :1942 - 1979, Relief teaching until 1984.

Mrs. Mountjoy (Maggie) was born in Canada in 1914 and passed away on Friday, 14th January, 2000. Mrs. Mountjoy joined the Staff of the School in 1942 and although she retired in 1979, becoming the longest serving Member of Staff, she continued to do relief teaching for another five years.



She was the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association - Guest of Honour on two occasions, the first being a Summer Buffet in July 1995 and the second being in March 1997 at the 4th Annual Reunion Dinner

Mrs. Mountjoy lived in Wilmington, but spent much of the summer at her retirement Cottage in Farnham, Surrey.

Many tributes were received by the editor of the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter and the following are a selection of extracts.

She made a significant difference to my own academic progress and I would have liked to have met her once more.

Like many pupils I will remember her for her strict ways, but then it is often the strictest of teachers who you remember in the fondest ways. Maggie had also started to write school text books at this time and would often be checking pages and adding new items whilst she had set us work.

She was a first class French teacher, I still remember enough to "get by", even after 30 years.

As a pupil between 1980 and 1985 - I was taught by her and the instant memory I have of her was one hot summers day when she took charge of us in Thames Class. It was a stifling day and none of us could be bothered to settle to any work - but Maggie - and I can still hear her saying it now - bellowed out "*Hot we may be - but bothered we are not*". She immediately gained our attention - like some Margaret Rutherford school mistress.

She was our History teacher and always was 'fair, firm and friendly' and was an enthusiastic teacher.

Maggie was not only a very capable tutor, but a very sexy lady. My main memory of her, was trying to get into class first to obtain one of the few seats situated in front of her desk, and together with others drool at her remarkable figure, at all other lessons we invariably tried to sit out of the way at the back. She was very fair, but very strict, and I lost count of the times she sent me on my way to stand outside Mr. Wall's study for the usual punishment.

During the time I was there I believe she retired (and returned) "three" times and received a gift every time.

I was saddened to hear of the death of Mrs Mountjoy and it has prompted me to write to you at long last. If there is one teacher who stands out in my memory it is Mrs M. and without doubt she had a decisive influence on my life. Due to her aggressive methods of teaching and total commitment French was the one subject that I thought I was good at, and it gave me a false impression that I had a talent for languages. My attempts to learn German at night classes after I had left school soon showed me what a lot I had to thank her for. As a schoolboy I assumed that the hours that she put in during her lunch breaks were officially part of her job but since taking up teaching myself I am only too aware of the sacrifice.

I remember French lessons because Maggie had commandeered for her lessons the first and only bit of technology in the entire school - the reel-to reel 7" school tape recorder looking majestic in its wooden cabinet. It was not allowed out of the room and no other department even set eyes on it. Maggie used it a lot and all was well until it broke down. Then, since it was the school tape recorder, Percy Black was wheeled in to put it right.

Do you remember how quite a few of Maggie's French lessons began? Let me see if I can remind you some forty years later:-

Notre Père qui es aux cieux,
Que ton nom soit sanctifié;
Que ton règne vienne;
Que ta volonté soit faite
Sur la terre comme au ciel.

Donné nous chaque jour notre pain Enough.

Not bad for grade C French, eh!

Mr. Allan Hamerschlag B.Sc.(Boston)

For fourteen years this school has benefitted from Mr. Hamerschlag's work as Head of Biology and Chemistry. He came here after a year's teaching in Bromley, seventeen years in various aspects of chemical research and development and three years as a Teaching Fellow in the University of Boston, where he had previously taken his bachelor's degree.

It was he who established Biology and Chemistry as thriving sixth-form subjects. His emphasis has always been on science education as a means of experiencing a process rather than as a way of learning facts: many sixth-formers have therefore come to know for themselves what research is really about and had a taste of true scholarship. His influence on the department will be long lasting, as also on the boys themselves, many of whom have gone on to pursue scientific study and research at University level.

Mr. Hamerschlag is no narrow boffin. He has immense knowledge of art and music, particularly opera; is an expert on interior decoration and has devoted many hours to planning schemes for renewal in inner-city areas. And on his spare (?) time he has been a Samaritan. Such a list fails to convey the depth of personality that was generously at the service of both boys and colleagues on the Staff.

His retirement from teaching will enable him to undertake a number of projects. It is good to know that he will visit us. We join in wishing him well and in expressing our gratitude to him for his contribution to, and influence on, this School.

The above article appeared in the School PTA News of October 1984. Sadly, Alan died in 2006.

Mr Len Gregory

The following appeared in the July 1972 edition of "Gollum" a newsletter published by senior boys. It was part of a longer article entitled Staff Departures where boys had interviewed various members of staff who were leaving at the end of that Summer term.

Perhaps the most senior member of the school, in 'annual rings' at any rate, is Mr. Gregory, who after his first association with the D.T.C. in 1940 has stayed with us ever since, except for the remainder of the war years which he spent at Blackfen Central School and Erith Technical College, respectively. In 1947 he returned to D.T.C. which at that time had Dr E. Gyngell as its Principal.

In 1949 the craft department of the D.T.C. was split up. The woodwork department and Mr. Gregory being at Lowfield Street. A pre-agricultural workshop was then built on the Wilmington site, this now forming Mr. Gough's workshop. This course proved to be a failure and workshop was used for W.W. and M.W. It then became apparent that more space was needed for both subjects, and extra workshops followed, one of them being Mr. Gregory's present workshop, but he was still slaving away at Lowfield Street.

In 1964 Mr. Gregory took up the use of his present workshop here in Wilmington. This posting was a great pleasure to him as he had always adored the grounds of Wilmington Hall. The trees which were his main interest had been planted many years previously by one Mr. Whitehead, who was the 'Lord of the Manor' at the time. Other trees were then added by the following owner, Lord Dudley Gordon, thus making this one of the finest collections of trees in the country.

The trees were not Mr. Gregory's only interest. He also loved the 'old building', which as we sadly know had to be demolished due to the wood rot etc. This apparently came about due to it being bombed with incendiaries during the war, while under the occupation of Vickers Ltd. The building never properly dried out - due to the flooding it was given by the fire brigade. When asked of his views about the present situation, Mr. Gregory termed it as a "necessary evil".

It seems that Mr. Gregory will be fully occupied after his retirement as he wants to continue his hobbies of weaving, spinning, wood-carving, painting, fishing and caravanning. A two-and-a-half month tour of the Continent being made in Spring 1973. He also wishes to continue lecturing at evening school, so he will be well occupied.

Ivor John Jenkins - (Pupil 1943 - 46) / Staff - 1970 - 91

Alias (to quote Mr. Black) 'The Big Fella'

I think most of you know that Ivor was a genuine Old Boy. From Foster's School in Welling he won a place at the Technical School (then a part of the Tech. College) in Essex Rd. and he often reminded me that in those days it was very much a technical institution delivering a strictly technical education (you know, the kind of thing being put forward as the next 'new' idea by the DoE !!!). Some of his fondest recollections of that time revolve around a young Margaret Mountjoy about whom he, and it seems most of the rest of the school, had less than pure thoughts!! He left the school to join the navy as a boy entrant, then an engineering apprentice (an artificer) and transferred to the Fleet Air Arm. He served aboard most of the big Aircraft Carriers such as Ark Royal and finished up as a Chief Petty Officer (the rank that ran the navy, to quote him) in charge of a flight of helicopters on board or in such places as Borneo. Having been responsible for several million pounds worth of defence equipment it understandably came as a bit of a shock when faced with the small minded aspects of the education world which felt it could not trust staff even with the petty cash!!

His introduction to rugby came in the early part of his service career and was an immediate success. He later went on to play for the Fleet Air Arm, the Navy, Combined Services, Hampshire and London Counties (including a match against the touring All Blacks. He also had a 'secret' trial for a League team – highly 'illegal' in those days of course. He was also an England trialist and finished his rugby career coaching for the Navy and the FAA and was the services representative at the RFU. These are some of the background facts of his life before Wilmington. He always felt himself very lucky to have had two careers both of which he enjoyed greatly. What follows are a few of my memories of his 'second life'.

He was a natural teacher, bringing his experience and skills to the boys and he was always firm but kind and caring. His real skill was his ability to communicate with young people – equally at ease with 6th formers and 11 year olds, whether as a woodwork teacher, a form tutor, games coach or on a school trip.

On the formal teaching side I remember busy workshops where boys produced some outstanding work – many parents and boys still treasure the coffee tables etc. that they made under his encouragement and guidance – and especially the Saturday morning specials as practical exam dates loomed.

But my main memories must revolve around the 'extra-curricular' activities in which he involved himself. He, along with Bill Mock, Graham Nicholls and myself started Friday Club for the Lower School boys – it still continues.

He was one of the driving forces with the PTA – led by Wilf Hodgson in the early days – in particular with the instigation of the May Fairs held on the green specifically for the village and involving all three schools. I still have a vivid picture of Ivor, Bill Mock and Mr. Black struggling with the Swanley market stalls we used in the early days.

As a very high-level rugby player (and a West Ham supporter!!!) he was a remarkably successful soccer coach. One of the School's outstanding teams developed under his guidance. The Willis, Matthew, Carter etc. group won all except one County and district competition from the first year to the fifth. Again there is one picture that has stayed with me – of this big man surrounded by his team of very small boys on a huge grassless pitch at Gillingham in the driving rain – our first County winners.

My other memories have to revolve around the famous canal trips. These were started because we felt that the other trips on offer were of the sightseeing type and were getting expensive. On these of course we were also ably assisted at various times by my wife and family, Bill Mock, Mrs. Holden, even Mr. Nicholls once and of course the Boxall/Jenkins water enterprise was born. The highlight of the first canal trip was closing the River Nene when ours and another boat from the same yard travelling ahead of us simultaneously and independently took off two lock gates. With ingenuity and some railway sleepers, balancing water levels in and out of the locks we actually managed to replace them – much to the water-board engineer's surprise. After that trip we adopted Jack as our driver. He had been born and brought up on the cut in the era of the horse, the 'Fly Boats' and legging it through the tunnels. The boys were amazed when they got back to school and found a picture of Jack and his young family in their history books!!

Other canal memories are of little Benny pulling out and dropping a drawer of cups less than 5 mins after the inventory had been done. Of treating Harris for a small scratch on his face that simply got worse as the week progressed (stopped him pulling all the birds I remember!!) only to find out on our return that he was allergic to the cream we used. Of the stomach bug that went through both boats – literally!! Ivor's superb roast dinners. The two boys – who shall remain nameless of course – caught 'borrowing' from Woolworths in the centre of Lincoln. Watching the boys take the two boats down the 7 locks in the Foxton Flight unsupervised and with absolute precision and to the admiration of all onlookers. Losing the propeller just before the Husband Bosworth tunnel – and replacing it properly in the almost empty lock outside the pub at 11.30pm on a cold and frosty night without any of the boys even realising!

I could go on, as I am sure many of you could. I am writing this article as a memorial to Ivor but also in the hope that if I mentioned enough names and places it would stir a few memories out there.

With Ivor's passing I lost a very good friend (as well as a drinking partner!!) and they are much valued especially as you get older. It is very true that over a lifetime you 'collect' many acquaintances but make only a few friends and so losing one is hard to bear. They can never be replaced and so memories of them become very important.

I think I have enough of the 'big fella' to keep me going for a long time!!!

Mike Wesson.

First published in the Old Dartechs' and Wilmingtonians' Association newsletter.

Ivor Jenkins

By Gary Love 1972 - 77

The news of Ivor Jenkins passing saddened me a great deal. For me, along with Mike Wesson, Maggie, Percy, Jesse James, Ivor was one of a band of teachers for whom there was almost universal respect from lower school pupils to the sixth formers. My father was the same age and attended the same primary school as Ivor. They were reacquainted during my time at the school and in particular on Saturday mornings when Ivor, almost without fail, turned out to referee one of the soccer games. Ironically, my two youngest daughters – twins, are in their first year at the girls school' up the hill', where Mike Wesson still fills in as a relief teacher from time to time. One evening, one of my daughters came home, and said Mike had announced during a lesson that he was writing an article on a dear friend he had recently lost. I assume that this was Mike's contribution that appeared in the latest newsletter.

Make no mistake, Ivor was one of the best. He had the ability to make the lessons both productive and enjoyable and at the same time maintain a high level of discipline if anyone decided to get out of line. You didn't mess with the 'big fella'! I am sure if statistics were available, Ivor's track record in terms of success rate at GCSE, or in my day GCE's, would be very high indeed. He had a knack of creating an environment where most pupils wanted to learn and make a contribution to the lesson. This was also true of those teachers I mentioned earlier, although with Percy there was always the threat of the 'wack' that drove pupils on to greater and higher achievements!!

Although Ivor was not officially part of the sporting staff he was always very keen to involve himself with the various School teams. I shall always remember him refereeing one very tense cup tie where the opposing team constantly refused to move their wall ten yards back from the kick. Ivor soon grew tired of this behaviour and announced that he was applying rugby rules whereby the kick would be moved nearer the goal every time they argued. It didn't exactly endear him to the opposition prompting cries of yet more protest about changing the rules but they soon complied once Ivor drew himself up to his full height and marched menacingly towards their wall. Incidentally, I think we still lost the tie!! A sad loss of a good kind hearted man and first rate teacher.

Keith White

Keith White served the school for 33 years. In October 2010, he discovered that he had a brain tumour and in June 2011 he took early retirement. To mark that occasion, he wrote an article for the school newsletter and this is included below. Sadly, the treatment was a not totally effective and in September 2012 he passed away. The school closed on 12 September to allow both staff and pupils to attend his funeral and say goodbye to a well-liked teacher.

A lifetime experience at Wilmington - by Keith White

On Thursday 25 May 1978, a rather fresh faced young student teacher would have been seen nervously getting off the Greenline bus that would have dropped him at the request stop at the top of High Road, Wilmington and then making his way down Common Lane to what was then Dartford Technical High School for Boys. The advert had said:

Required for September 1978: a teacher of Religious Education throughout the school. A selective school for 500 boys aged 11-18, the school occupies modern buildings in rural surroundings. Applications should be made by letter giving the names of two referees to the Headmaster by May 19.

Mr White recalls: At the time, I was sharing a flat with a friend in London and so I made my application and was pleased to be called for interview. Following a brief tour of the school, and a 30 minute interview (no observed lessons!) I was offered the position and took up the post here in September 1978.

The previous Head of RE had been at the school for 4 years and I remember thinking that I would probably not stay that long at the school. Little could I have imagined that some 33 years later I would still be here, looking back over a lifetime career!

As many of you will be aware, at that time there was no National Curriculum, and it was left very much to the teachers themselves to determine the content of what they taught. There were various projects being proposed in Maths, English and Science, but most staff had a fairly free choice of topics. In a subject such as RE, it was also to some extent determined by the very limited choice of text books available. Multi-cultural education was being talked about, but had not really reached the classroom.

From my very first day I felt very welcome in the school - even though I was told which chairs not to sit on in the staff room as they belonged to certain long-standing members of the English Dept! The Old Boys Association lists just 28 members of staff, with eight members on the non-teaching side during that period. I noticed that all administration and finance tasks were carried out by just three secretaries and there was only one female on the teaching staff!

Although I was grateful for the support and encouragement of many members of staff during my early years at the school, my mentor and inspiration was Percy Black, the Deputy Head, who devoted his life to the school and commanded both the fear and respect of all students. He served the school for some 34 years and is still held in fond memory by many old boys - perhaps a reminder of the contribution that experienced teachers can bring to the profession.

Why did I stay so long? While Dartford may not be the prettiest place in Kent, we enjoy living here and our two sons, Neil and David, have benefitted from a very successful education in the area. Being a small school, I was able to take on additional responsibilities early in my career, and found the school a very happy place to work in. At that stage I used to help with Saturday morning football, followed by a lunch time drink with fellow teachers at the Plough. It was there that I met a local resident, Denis, who kindly introduced me to his lovely daughter Janet. Our eldest son Neil has just got married to Lillie, and I am pleased to say that Janet and I are about to celebrate 25 years of marriage.

There are some excellent accounts about the history of the school - especially during the 1980s when, although maintaining a thriving three form entry, as part of Kent's re-organisation plan, the school was threatened with closure and saw the number of students choosing our school greatly reduced. We are so grateful that the Governors took every measure to keep the school open, eventually taking the decision to opt out of local authority control to become a Grant Maintained School, which meant that we were able to look after our own budgets and soon became the four form entry - even at times five form entry - school that we have today.

As a family we have been so fortunate in the love and support that we have received from so many people. While in the earlier days of my career I did consider a couple of other job opportunities, we remain convinced that the school here does provide a special ethos and character which appeals to staff, parents and students alike, and I have only good memories of my time here. Obviously, things in education are different now, and it is important that each teacher thinks carefully about what they feel about their priorities in life. I hope that in the years to come, Wilmington Grammar School will always have a reputation for providing a caring, supportive and rewarding environment for all who work and study there.

My key memories? As someone who in my earlier years would have been considered one of the younger members of staff, I was able to play quite a large part in the extra-curricular activities provided by the school: helping with school trips - ranging from day and residential visits to France, including the Loire Valley, to canal holidays on basic narrow boats on the Midland waterways, and mountain walking at the Kent Mountain Centre in Snowdonia. There was, as now, a strong Parent Teacher Association which organised large events - I particularly remember the Christmas Dinner Dances, Barn Dances, and the entertaining talks given by a husband and wife team from Wisley Gardens. Looking back I also remember when local schools and organisations joined together each year to put on a May Fair right here on the Common.

Although we didn't have sufficient people to put out a staff football team, there was an informal staff badminton club on a Friday evening, followed again by drinks at the local hostelry. It's good to see that social aspect of school life continuing here. Some members of staff (including myself) even took part in a 5 km race in London for charity.

But I suppose the most important thing for me has been the friendship and support that as a family we have received throughout my time here. As most of you will be aware, at the end of last October I was taken unwell and further investigations revealed that I had a brain tumour. Although there was a successful operation to remove the tumour, I have had to continue with the treatment and will need to do so for the foreseeable future. Again we have been so grateful for the love, support and prayers of so many people - they have meant so much to us.

The move to retirement has come much easier than expected. I do enjoy gardening, and we have been able to devote more time to that this year. We have always tried to be involved in the life of our local church, Dartford Community Church, and have a particular interest in supporting those who go out to visit and encourage people working in other countries.

Keith White

A comment by Darren Aylward (1977-1983)
Written in June 2007 following that year's Dinner.

This year Keith White (staff: 1978-present) accompanied us on the pre-meal school tour. Keith is the only remaining member of staff that was teaching when I was at the school, albeit as a newly qualified one. I took the opportunity to ask him whether he remembered a rather amusing incident that occurred in one of his French Lessons c. 1979. Back in those days Mr White taught both French and R.E. in room CP3 (as it is now known) opposite what is commonly known as "Maggie's room".

Before describing the incident, it is worth noting that this particular room is on the second storey of the building. I recall it being a rather warm, summer's day and we were all working (I would say "hard" but that probably wasn't the case!) on whatever exercise Mr. White had given us when suddenly our concentration was broken by a rattle at one of the windows. Looking toward the noise we were surprised to see the huge form of an older lad named Kestle squeezing himself – with some difficulty – through the now open window and into the classroom. Kestle, for the uninitiated, was a larger than life character that in many respects could loosely be described as the Billy Bunter of the school. As you can imagine, this surreal sight had the effect of totally mesmerizing both the pupils and Mr. White alike – silence reigned supreme! The calm, but profusely sweating Kestle then brushed himself off, greeted Mr. White and sauntered out of the door as if this insane act was nothing out of the normal! Mr. White took a good few seconds to shake himself from his stupor and eventually pursued the offender out of the classroom and down the corridor. By this time a long overdue furore of laughter finally erupted in the class. Needless to say not much work was done for the rest of the lesson!

I never did get to the bottom as to why this event occurred or what it was in aid of. I would be interested to hear from anyone that knew Kestle and what his motives were on this occasion – I suspect it was for some kind of dare or bet? Back to the present and I was surprised to learn that Keith White did not remember this particular incident. He did however admit that at this time he was a newly qualified teacher fresh out of college and this type of incident was a fairly regular occurrence. Being somewhat wet-behind-the-ears, the boys tended to subject him to more than his fair share of torment. On one occasion a lad named Longhurst even went as far as locking him into the class storeroom cupboard! Apparently, Teacher Training College never taught him how to handle situations like these!

However, I have warned my son Connor – who now frequents the school – not to try any like this. Keith is now Assistant Head Teacher and has another 25 years' experience of handling wayward pupils!

Staff Snapshots - Appreciation for those who are still with us.

Mike Wesson - 1969 - 95

By Ivor Jenkins - 1943-46 Student, 1970-91 Staff

Mike Wesson retired from full time teaching at the end of the Autumn term 1995, after a long and loyal career at Wilmington Grammar School for Boys.

I have known Mike for twenty five years plus and regard myself as a close friend, therefore it might be thought that this appreciation might earn me a few pints! This could not be further from the truth, he will probably kick my Arris (a woodworkers term meaning a sharp edge formed by two curved surfaces) if he could reach that high.

The reason that I am writing this is because I do not think that enough has been said of his 25 + years service to the school. Probably, in some ways, it is his own fault, He does not like a fuss and in many ways he is a very private person. Some of the more recent members of Staff, and of course most of the present pupils do not know how much Mike has contributed to the Ethos of the School. Apart from being a first class teacher of P.E., Games and Maths, he has spent a great proportion of his time in un-salaried extra curricula work.

Most of his time as 'Professor of the Muscle Faculty' he stood as the only qualified teacher, only supported by enthusiastic 'amateurs' like Nicholls, Boxall, Costar, Hollingsworth et al. Despite this he managed to organise thirteen football competitions, and produce seven football teams every Saturday. Coping with referees - dirty strips - pumping up 14 footballs, cleaning up surplus mud from changing rooms and the yard, not to mention fighting a futile battle with plumbers and heating engineers to provide hot water for the showers.

In the summer he organised an enjoyable two-day athletic meeting. The second and 'finals' day was a family affair with parents taking teas in the dining hall, strawberries and cream no less - just like Wimbledon! He also organised the district Athletics when the School was host. The teams he selected for the district brought the School no little success, despite competing against bigger and better staffed (PE) Schools. During the holiday Mike organised trips to the Welsh National Park (Snowdonia) and Ski Trips, both of which he needed to gain leader qualification from K.C.C. He passed on the knowledge he gained to the squads, teaching them the secrets of the Primus Stove and putting up tents in howling Welsh gales. He taught them how to get knotted and how to climb up the (gym) wall. A skill almost all teachers have to learn.

A more leisurely pursuit, during school holidays, he co-managed Inland Waterway trips on Narrow boats on the Middle England Canal systems.

Mike also served the School in a more serious role as one of the first Teacher Governors and also as Chairman of the Staff Common Room Association. Probably his worse job was the organisation of staff cover. He did this for the last ten years, taking telephone calls from staff who were sick or needed time off at the last moment

for domestic reasons. How he managed to give cover slips to staff at 08.30 without provoking ripe language I do not know.

I have not finished yet, there are many more aspects of Mike's career that I have not mentioned, but there is one more that is not appreciated. That is the role of acting, unpaid, deputy caretaker second class!

The burglar alarm goes off - call Mike!

The gates are locked for some function - call Mike!

A window/door is left open - call Mike!

A School party is late back from a School trip

Some ropes/stakes/notice boards needed for a Christmas/Summer Fete - call Mike!

Unexpected vans arrive at 7a.m. for a Boot Fair - guess who!

If all this sounds O.T.T., I can assure that it is not. There are many other stories people could relate. Mike Wesson has helped to form the character of this School. He has helped to shape it as others like Mr. Black; Mrs. Mountjoy; Wally James and Peter Boxall did.

The School will miss him. I hope that they appreciate the work that he has put in over twenty five years of loyal service.

Teaching Staff - 1954 - 57

Some quick sketches (adapted) from Christopher Lee - 1954 - 57

Headmaster LV Wall, at one point wanted prefects to wear tassels on their caps. I suppose he was trying to make his school what it was not.

Mrs Hammond in the office was probably much younger than a teenager thought she was. She was very kind. LV Wall made an announcement in assembly that when addressing her; we should always begin with "Please, Mrs Hammond..." The please came first he insisted. It was a protocol of manners I've remembered.

Chick Lewis taught chemistry rather well (this from one who came top a few times, so he would say that wouldn't he). But as far as I remember, he did not have a degree which for some of the staff, so I heard from a relative, mattered.

Sam Austen was a magnificent character (still is?) who forced us to think for ourselves. Draw a foundation bolt, he said. What's a foundation bolt I asked? That's for you to find out. Another lesson in a spoon-fed society.

Mr Burchell taught geography and made it as boring as possible. He had an ambition to get the school to play rugby (his real interest). He would have been better in a minor prep school

Mr Pearce wore bespoke suiting and was the best English teacher I ever came across – including my time at Cambridge. His insight in modern authors, especially Conrad, was brilliant lit crit – but I'm not sure we knew that. Although one boy called Williams who said 'actually' and 'surely' quite a lot, seemed to understand.

Andrews was Czech and had had a painful war. He had been very good with a sniper's rifle according to my late father who had been in the same trade after Dunkirk. He taught French better than Maggie, or rather, I remember everything he taught and nothing Maggie 'taught' - maybe my eyes were elsewhere.

Clare heard me playing the clarinet one day and insisted I turn up to play in the Dartford Symphony Orchestra. Percy Black heard me playing and told me to stop that racket. Percy was right.

French taught maths, but was too clever to understand that we still lived in a generation that had been told you were either good at maths or would never get a grip of it. He mocked the never-goods and would never have understood that he had failed them. He left too many behind and would have made a better headmaster than classroom teacher.

The unsung genius of the teaching staff was Edgington. He was a fine historian with I think a Cambridge 2-1. He was the classic example of an inspiring teacher who taught far more than his subject. Years later when I was a history fellow at Cambridge, I talked about him in a lecture on the characteristics of a good history teacher. He had the first and foremost qualification – he was a thoroughly nice man so raised the curiosity level to a height others didn't understand.

Terry Moyle's Memories of DTHS for Boys (1966-1972)

Terry Moyle who taught at the school between 1966 and 1972 has kindly submitted this article.

It was 1966. I was a student at Goldsmiths College in my final year doing a PGCE following a three year degree course. I had been on an interview in Bexley but didn't get the job when I saw an advert for a Geography teacher at DTHS for Boys. I didn't know anything about Dartford or the Dartford area but, as I wanted to stay in the London area so that I could still go to Saturday First Division football, I decided to apply. I cannot remember whether the advert was in the TES or on the notice board in the Geography Department at Goldsmiths though I think the latter.

I sent in my application and was called for an interview. I came to Dartford from New Cross on the train and then caught a bus to Wilmington post office. However, I missed the post office stop (didn't expect the PO to be a Co-op) and eventually got off the bus as it neared Hextable. I walked back to Wilmington and eventually arrived for the interview. The Head (John Mogford) and the Deputy (Percy Black) met me and Mrs. Norman made me a coffee. I cannot remember much about the interview, the questions asked or the trip around the school, but I was offered the job. I might even have been the only applicant!! I was replacing Pip Cartwright and working in the Geography Department with Ian Smith, the HOD.

My first timetable was interesting – as a Geographer, I found myself also teaching some History, RE and PE. This is what happened to NQTs in those days – you were expected to teach several subjects so it wasn't too much of a shock. I was delighted to see that I had quite a lot of AL work. Despite only being four years older than the Upper Sixth Geographers, the prospect didn't daunt me. I was teaching both Physical and Human Geography, including a regional paper that had the options of Brazil and Western Europe, my specialist areas of knowledge. I was happy with both History & RE but PE was a different matter. I was not really a sportsman though I enjoyed playing tennis and watching football.

I don't remember much about my first year of teaching (1966-1967) except that the atmosphere in the Staff Room was very friendly – all male except for Mrs. Mountjoy who seemed to take me under her wing. Staff meetings were fabulous compared to more recent years – Mr. Mogford would come in at break, say "Good morning Mrs. Mountjoy, gentlemen" and proceed to make his announcements. At the end he thanked us and went. They were always held at break time so there was always a time limit.

Ian was a great Head of Department and was happy for me to teach in my own way as long as I covered the syllabus. I was warned by Clive Dougal not to sit in front of Mr. Lawson at Assembly (staff were on the stage) as he was inclined to pull the chair away from under you at the end of the hymn. I always had school dinners and took my turn on duty by saying Grace. Reggie Bruce always said his grace in Latin but mine was simple – For food, friends and fellowship, we thank you Lord. Looking back, what great students we had – they came in for lunch, stood up in silence for the grace and then went to collect the food.

For probably the wrong reasons, I remember the Wednesday afternoon Games lessons with the Sixth Form. On one dreadful occasion, Gavin Russell gave me a basketball match to referee in the gym. I knew absolutely nothing about basketball so he gave me a lesson on the rules beforehand but it was still a disaster.

Fortunately, the boys were sympathetic to my plight and helped out with refereeing decisions! On another Wednesday afternoon, the PE Department (Gavin Russell and Mike Upton) had gone to another school for a cup match, leaving me in charge of all the Sixth Form games. It was pretty horrendous from what I can remember as one student (cannot remember his name) decided to play the fool and me up.

After my first year, Games disappeared from my timetable and gradually History and RE also went. However, at the end of my probationary year, Mr. Mogford called me into his office and told me that he was pleased with my work, including and especially my AL teaching, and as a result was going to reward me with a scale post. Those were the good old days when teachers could be rewarded simply for good teaching. I didn't have to take on extra responsibilities as has happened in more recent years within the profession.

In my second year of teaching I was given a Form to look after – Mr. Black told me that I would have a good form so he gave me 3M, who had been brought up by none other than Mrs. Mountjoy (hence the M). I really enjoyed the pastoral work and took 3M right up through the school as 4M, 5M and into the Sixth Form. When they left in 1972, it was time for me to go as well but that will come later.

DTHS was a great school in which to start my teaching career. I regularly went to Mrs. Mounjoys for dinner though I was expected to be the cabaret by singing for my supper. She was always keen for me to look after the French Assistants and introduced me to Mlle. Danielle Destinay. Danielle and I enjoyed our social life but after her year at the Tech went back to France. I also went around with Pat Rudman (English) and Mike Upton (PE). On Fridays we all went to the Dart pub in Chastilian Road where we met up with other staff including Mr. Black (and Mrs. Black), Paul Parker and several others. I got involved with supporting the First team and regularly went to Saturday morning football matches both at home and away. The lovely long lunch hours meant that the staff could play tennis and I managed to play as often as the weather allowed. This involved a number of staff and Sixth formers. I also started up a Sixth Form tennis team and for several years arranged fixtures with other schools. We had a good team and they won far more matches than they lost.

Paul Parker roped me in to help with the running of the school tuck shop. We were doing this at the time that decimal coinage was introduced so had to be trained ourselves and train the boys who helped. I also started a Dance Class on a Wednesday after school for the Sixth Form – I had been going on a Friday evening to dance classes at Welling so knew the steps to pass on to the boys. Before you get too worried about boys dancing together, we “imported” the Sixth Form girls from up the road who came along with Mrs. Sheila Wakeford from the Girls Tech. The classes were a great success after the initial shock of the boys actually holding a female partner for some ballroom dancing.

Jim Joyce the school caretaker ran a dance band so we held Sixth Form dances at the end of every term. They were well attended and any boys who had not been to the classes were given a quick lesson or two in the lunch hour on the days before the end of term dance. What a success they were, including several romances that led to wedding bells!!!!

Geography field trips were something special – the OL groups did field work locally and on the South Coast but the Sixth Form AL groups always went on residential trips with Ian and myself. We went to Pitlochry (Scotland), Slapton Sands (Devon), Pembrokeshire, Whitby (twice) and Shropshire. These were a good mixture of hard work and fun. In Whitby on one occasion Tim Newton went missing quite late in the evening so we went out searching for him in a nearby graveyard. On another trip MR (Mike Richardson) got embroiled with a female student from another school so Ian had to give him some man to man advice.

I also went on School Trips with Len Hollingsworth for several years – we went to the Netherlands (staying in The Hague) in March/April 1967, to the Rhinelands at Easter 1968 (staying in Bad Honnef) and to Scandinavia in the summer of 1969. The Rhinelands trip turned out to be a real adventure. On our fourth day there Len was rushed to hospital with severe appendicitis in the middle of the night and had to have an emergency operation. He was our only driver for the minibus as I was in charge of cooking and was not down on the Green Card as a driver. Fortunately, after spending a day at the British Embassy in Bonn trying to sort out money, insurance and the Green Card, I was able to drive the minibus for the rest of the stay. We left Len in the hospital and he flew back to the UK about a week later. This was really a baptism of fire for me – I was only just 25 and eligible for driving a hired minibus abroad and I had never driven on the continent before. Having got clearance from the KCC, the school and the Insurance co., I went out on a test drive remembering to drive on the right and to negotiate roundabouts the wrong way around. Len also had to pay up front for his operation so we had a whip around before the op and then had money sent out to cover the rest of the costs. On the way home in the minibus we only went wrong once – at Aachen we went into the Netherlands instead of Belgium so had to do a quick U turn, come back into West Germany and try again. In those days passports had to be stamped as you crossed political boundaries so we had extra stamps. These Sixth Form trips were in theory field trips for Geography / Economics students where they had to write up an account of the journey but in practice they were a lot of fun as well. Trips around car factories and shipyards, visits to cathedrals and HEP stations and cooking our own meals were all part of the enjoyment. When we were in the Rhinelands we met up one evening with the DTHS football team in Koblenz who were out in West Germany on a football tour. When we were in Scandinavia, we were based in southern Sweden but went into Norway and had a couple of days in Denmark.

I also managed to go on a school journey which was led by Mr. Black – the visit to Switzerland at Easter 1969 when we got stuck in the snow on the way to Interlaken. We spent hours on the coach as we had to come back to our base at Vitznau, near Lucerne, on a very circuitous route via Berne as we could not get over the mountains. There were never any problems with Mr. Black in charge.

I have good memories of colleagues on the staff. Mrs. Mountjoy was unique in many ways as the only female member of staff although her nose was put out when Mrs. Mary Evans came into the English department for a while and then Doris (forget her surname but it could have been Peacock) came to teach Music – Maggie had competition. Messrs Dougall, Hollingsworth, James and I played tennis regularly and Pat Rudman was always up for a laugh. This reminds me of one occasion when I was walking by his classroom – there was absolute mayhem and no sign of Pat. I opened the door and shouted, the boys went quiet and suddenly Pat appeared from the cupboard. On one evening out Pat, Mike Upton and I went to Bingo in Kent Road (in what is now the nightclub) – how sad was that??!!!! A group of the staff always went out on a Friday evening ending up in the Dart. Ian Hugh who taught Physics for a couple of years and I went around together as he and I were part of the “unwilling” PE teachers on Wednesdays – we could never take Games seriously. (Sorry Gavin). We also took Ian Smith to the cinema in Sidcup on one occasion to see “Here we go round the Mulberry Bush” which was rather a racy film at the time, though very tame by today’s standards.

I remember one summer lunchtime in particular, probably in about 1970/1971. We had a bomb alert at school and everyone had to assemble on the tennis courts for a register check to ensure that the building had been completely evacuated. However, most of the Upper Sixth boys were missing so Mr. Mogford asked me to scout around for them. I knew exactly where they were – in the Foresters up the road. I went into the public bar and there they were. I ordered them in my best school teacher voice back to the school immediately – they went without drinking up and the bar was empty in seconds. What power!

In those days when I was on duty or it was cold in my room, I always wore my gown. This had an amazing affect on the boys – they always thought that I was in a bad mood when I wore it (when lining up outside the room, the boy in the front would shush the others saying “he’s got his cape on so be quiet he’s in a bad mood”). I remember many of the boys and still enjoy hearing from them on social websites or even meeting them. I actually met Bill Stoneham in 2009 when he came to my school as an Ofsted inspector, the first time I had seen him since he and I left DTHS in 1972. Whenever we met in the corridor or on the way to a classroom we talked non-stop about the good old days at the Tech.

After spending six very happy years at DTHS (1966-1972) I decided that I should move on to further my career so I decided to look for other posts and was appointed Head of Geography at a school in Chislehurst. I was sorry to leave the Tech but the time had come for me to move on. I could not have wished for a better school in which to start my teaching career. As I have now retired after 43 years of teaching (was I mad or dedicated?) I look back on my time at DTHS with great affection. I even have all my mark books from those days so that the names of students that I taught are still with me in writing if not in actual memory, though I am usually able to put faces to names when I see them.

Pupils - Old Boys and latterly Girls!

It is difficult to calculate exactly how many people have received part or all of their senior education at the school but if we assume that an average of 80 new boys started each September, over a period of 60 years, that makes nearly 5,000 old boys.

The school magazines, the O D & W A newsletter and latterly the internet - in particular Friends Re-United and Facebook - include many comments from Old Boys about their life after school - and what a range of lives that those Old Boys have lead.

In the 50's and early 60's there were cheap assisted passages to Australia and so it is perhaps not surprising that there are a number of Old Boys living in the antipodes.

Careers have been many and various. In those early days of the Technical School it was unusual for Old Boys to go directly to University from the sixth form. Many started with engineering apprenticeships and through diligence and evening classes carved out an illustrious career.

However, it is not within the perceived scope of this volume to dwell to much upon those Old Boys but we cannot end without remarking upon the careers of some of the most famous or infamous Old Boys.

Keith Richards (Rolling Stones) was a pupil between 1955 & 1959. His Wikipedia entry records that he was expelled in 1959 for truancy but the article by Peter Mucci - [Memories of Keith Richard](#) - suggests another reason.

Mackenzie Crook famous as Gareth in "The Office" and Ragetti in "Pirates of the Caribbean", amongst many other screen productions, was a pupil in the mid 1980s when he was known as Paul Crook, before he dropped his first name.

At school, whilst in the Lower Sixth, he helped set up ESP Graphics with three other A level art students. This lead to him being one of the sub editors for the then school magazine – Orion.

Simon Beale, who presents Heartbreakers on London's Heart on 106.2FM, was according to his Wikipedia entry in the same class as Paul Crook.

His Wikipedia entry notes – "Simon attended Wilmington Grammar School for Boys and was in the same class as the actor Mackenzie Crook and politician Tony Martin."

Memories of Keith Richard

A contribution from Peter Mucci (1955-61)

Firstly, I would like to put the story in context. For me, the school was terrific. It was unusual in the skills and interests it offered. It had excellent music, literature, sports, language, science, arts and technical resources including wood and metal workshops, a model farm and superb sports facilities of which all were very proud.

The school had been a fine country house and stood in several acres of land stocked with a wide range of exotic plants and trees collected by previous private owners. The headmaster L V Wall was himself a distinguished scholar of insects and plants. I remember the occasional visits of important-looking people to look at the flora and fauna in the school grounds which had been carefully nurtured by him and a small enthusiastic group of his staff. These grounds were guarded fiercely from the impact of destructive schoolboys. Just throwing a stick up at a conker tree was punished by Saturday morning detention (I know, I got one!) On the other hand, it could be guaranteed that any student excelling in either the study of the natural world or in any of the classical sports (or both) would be favoured by Mr Wall. This sets the scene for the story....

Keith and the Precious Plant

This was around 1959 and Keith and I were in 5B and kicked around together. Neither of us had the slightest interest in scholarly subjects or sport. Furthermore we had been labelled 'smart Alecs' by Mr Wall for corrupting our uniforms to meet current fashion trends (narrow ties, drainpipe trousers etc) but keeping the alterations just within the written rules.

Basically we were both rebellious and not inclined to teamwork or academic excellence, although we both had some artistic skills. So to keep busy and out of the way, Keith and I were permitted to do 'extra art' on our own whilst others in the class were charging around the playing fields or peering at plants in the woods.

We'd find ourselves wandering into various art classes attended by the lower years. The trouble was, we often couldn't see the object or model being drawn because we had to stay right at the back of the class (for fear no doubt of corrupting the little darlings with our talk of War and Rock and Roll). So we started painting from our own imaginations.

On the occasion in question, Keith was busy with a very lively painting of war in the air with American Sabre jets shooting down the enemy MIGs with the paper liberally covered in 'BAMS' and 'SPLATS' (I guess it was about the Korean War) I was doing a more sedate rendering of a flight of Spitfires. Anyway, the art master, who was a bit of a peacenik I recall, saw what we were up to and got a bit worked up. (The War was still very recent and heaven knows what some of our masters had been through) He told us we were supposed to be doing 'still life', attending his class was our last chance to behave, we had abused the privilege etc etc.

Keith said that there wasn't any still life for us to draw, so the teacher told us to go and get some. When I asked what 'still life' we should get (we were of course engaged in a typical bit of schoolboy feigned innocence) the teacher by now beginning to lose patience, shouted 'go and get a flower or something'.

'Where from?' enquired Keith, "Anywhere you like, we're surrounded by them!" was the explosive reply. (We were aware of a division in the staff between those who embraced the tyranny of the surrounding botanical collection and hence membership of an inner circle of devotees, and those like the art master who didn't and therefore wasn't).

As we set off into the school grounds making for the various boring flower beds, Keith spotted a spectacular bloom on a bush right outside the headmaster's office. The sight triggered an irresistible urge in both of us but mine was to remain firmly rooted in my imagination, whereas, and here perhaps was a clue to his future path in life, Keith knew exactly what he wanted to do. My cautionary remarks were futile, and Keith, already developing a fine sense of logic, reminded me that we could pick a flower from 'anywhere we liked' - so the deed was done, and we trotted back to the class with our prize.

All would have been well had it not been for two facts brought to our attention fairly quickly after the event. The first was that, unseen by us, L V Wall was in his office at the time of the acquisition, and secondly, the bloom in question was not only rare but had been nurtured to its climactic blooming by the great man himself.

We were both in trouble, Keith for doing The Deed and me for being an Accomplice and we never got to paint the precious bloom, I was given detention and forced to admit the error of my ways, but Keith stuck his ground on the basis that he had Permission to Pluck. The special art classes were cancelled immediately, and since I do not recall Keith being around at the end of that Summer term, I have a feeling that he either got the push or was encouraged to leave.

And that was the last I saw of him - that is, until my struggling student R&B band saw the Stones and I realised that their Keith Richards was one and the same.....

Keith Richards

It seems fitting that perhaps the most famous or infamous ex pupil of the school should be specifically mentioned, as his time at the school was not without incident. The following is loosely based on extracts taken from *Keith Richards* - the unauthorised biography by Victor Bockris and *Life* - his autobiography

In 1954 he took the 11+ plus examination and in his words - "I got into that middle ground of technical school, which is, in retrospect, a very nebulous phrase, it means you didn't make grammar, but there's something worthwhile in there. You realize later on that you're being graded and sifted by this totally arbitrary system that rarely if ever takes into account your whole character"

In 1955, the music teacher and choirmaster - Jake Clare - decided that the 12-year-old Keith Richards possessed a beautiful soprano voice and recruited him for the school choir along with Spike and Terry - who were to become his close friends.

According to Keith this "choirmaster was a genius who had forged this little flying unit out of such unpromising material. He hammered us into shape to the point where we were clearly one of the best choirs in the country. And he picked out the three best sopranos that he was given."

The trio were singing so well they started entering interschool competitions. On several occasions they ended up singing in London at the Royal Festival Hall, and, in an astonishing crowning achievement, walking up the aisle at Westminster Abbey singing the 'Hallelujah' chorus from Handel's *Messiah* for the young new queen, Elizabeth II,

Keith said - "We won quite a few trophies, which hung in the assembly hall. I've still never played a better gig prestige-wise than Westminster Abbey. The choir was wonderful. You got coach trips to London. You got out of physics and chemistry, and I would have done anything for that. That's where I learned a lot about singing and music and working with musicians. I learned how to put a band together - it's basically the same job - and how to keep it together."

Unfortunately, this did not last for long. His voice broke and he was no longer in Jakes Choir. What was of greatest concern to Keith was that because he had missed so many lessons whilst on choir duties, he was made to retake a year. He says that this lead him to dislike school even more.

Strangely he appears to have been keen on art but hated technical drawing.

Although Peter Mucci suggests a possible different reason for him to leave the school in 1959, Keith says that he was expelled because he decided not to go to assembly on the last day of the school year. It seems hardly a reason for expulsion and he does admit that it was the probably the final nail in the coffin of getting him expelled.

The unauthorised biography suggests that in one final fit of disobedience, half an hour before the end of school on the final day of his fourth year, he went over the wall with some mates, hopped onto a motorcycle, and took off "in search of chicks!" He didn't find any. What he did find was a very irate headmaster greeting him with the school's final condemnation: "That's it, you're expelled!"

Later the headmaster had to admit that Richards' drawings showed talent and he arranged for Keith to get a place at Sidcup Art College. (It closed years ago but according to reports was situated where Morrison's supermarket now stands.)

Keith says that "the person I have to thank at this point - who saved me from the dung heap, from serial relegation - is the fabulous art instructor Mrs. Mountjoy. She put in a good word for me to the headmaster. They were going to dump me onto the labour exchange, and the headmaster asked, "What's he good at?" "Well, he can draw." And so I went to Sidcup Art College, class of 1959 - the musical intake."

It was whilst on his way to Sidcup one day, that on Dartford Station, he met an old acquaintance from primary school - Mick Jagger.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Work in Progress

As indicated in the opening pages, this history is an ongoing project.

Whilst it was originally conceived as a record of the first 60 years at Wilmington between 1950 and 2010, it now starts from the origination of the school in 1941 and continues to be updated beyond 2010

The flexibility of publishing on the internet means that it can be regularly updated and amended as new information is received.

This update published May 2017.

If you have a story to tell or a comment to make, please do send an email to the editor:

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