

# St James's Church of England Secondary School, Farnworth - *The First Four Years*

## (1) 1960 - 1961

To mark the Centenary of St James's Church in 1965 the vicar, the Revd Canon H.O. Fielding<sup>i</sup> produced a splendid booklet, chronicling the history of the parish, which is now available on the internet<sup>ii</sup>. It is packed with fascinating facts and much of it deserves further research by a keen local historian. Perhaps there is a student looking for a school project or a topic for a PhD thesis? Of the school Canon Fielding writes with justifiable pride:

*The creation of this school should prove to be the most significant development in the hundred year history of the parish. Details of the negotiations which led to its establishment would themselves fill a book. It had its beginning in 1936, when the Rev. John Wilcockson, Vicar of St. Thomas's, instituted a movement to secure a "Special Agreement" Church senior school for Farnworth whereby the Government agreed to pay three quarters of the cost as some kind of compensation for the loss to the Church of the senior scholars in her schools. A site was purchased between the Albert Road end of Harrowby Street and St. Germain Street, but when regulations of the 1944 Education Act were published it was found that this site would be too small. Moreover, other Farnworth parishes were too concerned about the expense of retaining their own primary schools to have much interest in supporting a joint Church Secondary School as well. With some foresight and fearlessness, therefore, St. James's at a special Parochial Church Meeting in 1951 undertook alone the responsibility for this school, and in due course persuaded the Local Authority to sanction the site in Highfield Road, chosen for its centrality in the parish and its proximity to those areas not served by St. James's Primary School. The Vicar's position on the Lancashire Education Committee as the Manchester Diocesan Representative helped to further the cause.*

The protracted negotiations must have been incredibly tortuous and someone with easy access to the relevant archives should be encouraged to research all of this. Eventually, on March 31 1959 there was a *cutting of the first sod* ceremony on the site of the new school. This was performed by local man Counc. George Benyon, vice-chairman of the Governors who was Mayor of Farnworth at the time. Apparently the same spade was used by Counc P. Norfield, in February 1964, when he cut the first sod on the site of St Catherine's Church, Highfield Road. Where is it today?

The school Foundation Stone, close to the entrance to the hall, was laid on a hot summer day, St James's Day 1959, by the Revd H.O. Fielding. The inscription reads:

*This stone was laid on behalf of the parishioners  
By the Vicar of the Parish and Chairman of the  
Governors, the Revd H.O. Fielding, M.A. on the  
Feast of St James the Apostle, July 25<sup>th</sup> 1959.*

The historic events were described in *St James's Parish Magazine* and in the *Farnworth Journal*. Let us hope that copies have been preserved. From the photo it looks as though a Bishop was present: maybe Rt Revd K.V. Ramsey, Bishop of Hulme.



Laying the Foundation Stone, St. James's Day, July 25th, 1959.

**Farnworth and Worsley Journal**

The school was scheduled to open in September 1960 but as the building was still under construction temporary accommodation had to be found by the local authority – presumably Lancashire County Council at that time. The disused New Jerusalem School at Kearsley was hastily prepared and during the summer holiday we all received a letter telling us to go there at the start of term. That building had closed as a Day School in 1912, been bought by Lancashire County Council in 1919 and was used by Farnworth Grammar School from 1919 to 1922 until their building in Bolton Road (since demolished) was ready. **So it was that in somewhat basic conditions the school was born at 8.55am on September 7 1960 when Deputy Head Mr L.M. Ball blew the whistle in the walled playground and called us to order.** Two year groups: the First Year (now called Year 7) had come straight from primary schools and the Second Year (Year 8) had voluntarily transferred – with some justifiable alacrity – from Harper Green School. There were six classes and an excellent team of eight enthusiastic teaching staff. I think there were 85 of us in the

Second Year and 91 in the First Year but somewhere there is perhaps an Admissions Register.

Mr K. Thompson – Headmaster. Teaching Music and English.  
Mr L.M. Ball, B.A.– Deputy Head. Teaching English and French.  
Miss A. Thornley – Senior Mistress. Girls P.E.  
Mr T.P. Entwistle, B.A. – History and Geography.  
Mrs Kershaw – Art and Domestic Science.  
Miss B. Berry – Needlework  
Mr J.C. Blease – Maths and P.E.  
Miss C. Worthington – Religious Knowledge.

In that first assembly we were addressed by the Head Mr Kenneth Thompson, names of each class were read out by Mr Ball and after prayers we adjourned to form-rooms, got our Timetable and school life began. Two additional classrooms were used within Kearsley West Primary School across the street, obscurely located upstairs; this was called the annex. A pleasant surprise for some of us was that French was on the timetable. There were no proper changing facilities but we had P.E. and Games, in the hall, in the cramped playground and sometimes on a wind-swept field some distance away, off Grosvenor Street. R.E. was called R.K. Teachers had to be willing to tackle subjects which were not necessarily their specialism and we had Science with Mr Thompson in a bare classroom completely devoid of equipment. Even so, we learned a lot about air pressure. There was no bell to signal the end of each lesson; Mr Ball blew his whistle. The journey to Kearsley was awkward for some of us and I had the distinct impression that no one had warned the bus company (Lancashire United Transport - L.U.T.) about this exodus. Fortunately I never had to stay for school lunch, unlike most of my classmates, as my aunty lived nearby.

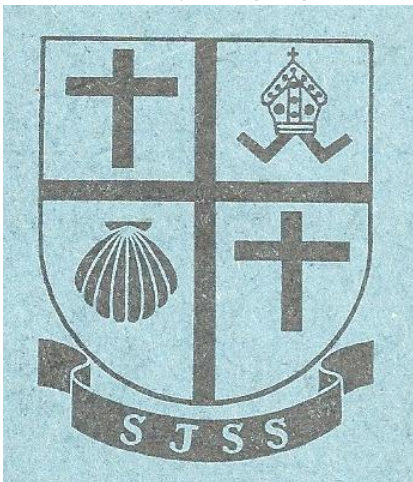


*ONE by one buildings which have been local landmarks are disappearing in the path of progress. The latest is the former New Jerusalem School which had stood in Church-st., Kearsley, near to the junction with the main road, for nearly 100 years. It has been demolished as part of the preliminary work in connection with the construction of the Farnworth and Kearsley by-pass, expected to start in June.*

**Photo – Farnworth &  
Worsley Journal, mid 1960s.**

After the half-term holiday, in November 1960, a section of the new building came into use and we moved in: six south-facing classrooms, the dining room opposite the main entrance, toilets, cloakrooms and administration block with offices and staffroom. Everything was new and spotless. Every desk had an inkwell and “ink-monitors” were appointed to go around school each day, replenishing the supply. This was quite a nice job until the end of the summer term when every ink well had to be washed and emptied of assorted detritus. There were lockers in the corridor and we all took to school a small padlock so that we could safely store our possessions. It was the strict rule from Day One that all pupils had to change their shoes on entering the building, to protect the floor-covering and keep the place clean. There was a National Coal Board depot near the bottom of Highfield Road where Brindley Close is now and a single-track railway line ran alongside the school, backing on to Ramsay Avenue. Steam engines, saddle-tanks with names which I cannot remember, chugged up and down drawing coal trucks. Every time one of these went by every head turned, to follow its progress. Most diverting in the best of lessons and perhaps the teachers were as fascinated as the pupils.

Soon the kitchens came into use and so meals were cooked on the premises; the lady in charge was Mrs Lucy Guest. The caretaker was Mr John Smethurst and the Secretary Mrs P.M. Birch. The hall, used for assemblies, music, drama and P.E. came into use in May 1961, together with the rectangular changing rooms attached to either side. A folding partition divided hall from dining room. Until then the dining room had been multi-purpose. There was a grand piano, played by Mrs Kershaw, on the stage and very impressive it was too; assemblies were taken with great care and reverence by Mr Thompson and for some reason, inexplicable to me now, we used the hymn book *Songs of Praise*. It was good that we did have a hymn book. Mr Thompson had a very fine singing voice, encouraging us to ever greater efforts. One girl was so impressed she said to me one day: *He sings even better than Harry Secombe!* He was a member of St James’s Church Choir throughout his time in Farnworth. Music was played through the loudspeakers situated at either side of the stage at the beginning and end of assembly, as classes filed in and out. Barry Ribchester was in charge of the record player, somewhere off to stage-right, and among regular pieces were Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto, Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Isobel Bailey singing Let the Bright Seraphim and Handel’s Messiah. We all stood when the headmaster entered and made his progress up the central aisle. Very regularly Barry somehow timed it perfectly so that Mr Thompson entered to a most tremendous fanfare, as if the Queen were entering Westminster Abbey for a great state occasion – only this was better.



Various traditions were established in that first term: a Harvest Festival service in October, examinations in November (although no Reports issued at that time), a Nativity Play in December. Mr Thompson was keen on Drama and throughout his time

produced many plays himself. Also in November a first meeting of parents was held, mainly to discuss a school uniform, which came into use early in 1961. The badge was designed by Graham Dawson and Raymond Warburton. I think there was a design-a-badge competition. The crest was beautifully painted onto the doors at the front of the stage which gives access to the storage area beneath. Geoff Cooper recently told me of a conversation he had with Mr Thompson at that time: “..the headmaster said to me that he thought the crest painted on the front of the stage was incorrect: the 's' after the apostrophe in *St. James's* was missing”.

After the Christmas holiday of 1960-61, in January, as the school was developing there were two additional members of staff:

Mr N. Brash, G.I.Mech.E. – Technical Drawing.

Mr J. Reddyhough – Woodwork.

There was a close relationship with the church from the start. The vicar and curates came in regularly to take assemblies and the occasional R.K. lesson. Confirmation Classes were held in school, after 4.00pm and on February 16 1961 67 pupils were Confirmed at St Paul's, Peel. This continued annually and long lists of names may be seen in the St James's Church Confirmation Register. We went to St James's Church once a term I think, for a service of the Holy Communion, said with hymns. Some boys took a turn at serving at the altar, trained by Mr Reddyhough who was a server at St Philip's, Bolton. I wanted to do it too, and did eventually on Sundays!

In spring 1961 the first Prefects were appointed: Andrew Leatham, J.L.V. (Val) Weaver (who left the school after one year), Ronald Monks, Frank Smith, Dorothy Walker, Jacqueline Dwyer, Sylvia Richardson and Sandra Benson. We were 12 and 13 years old and our year was, for four years, the top/senior year. We had no older role-models. This was not a bad thing. Pupils were consistently given responsibilities which elsewhere would not have come to us at that age. About that same time a House system was instituted and for their names four notable Christians were chosen: Schweitzer, Livingstone, Wilberforce and Wycliffe. Each had an associated colour. On reflection I do not know why those four were chosen: all decidedly protestant individuals and only one a member of the Church of England. However, we were not concerned with the theological basis for the choices but were focused on various inter-house competitions: games, athletics, and a sort of social-improvement programme which was held called *Courtesy Week*, the aim of which was to raise the general standard of speech, behaviour, manners and social responsibility. It speaks volumes that such a programme was deemed necessary. Were we really such a rough lot?

Before the end of the school year Mrs Kershaw left the school to have a baby and was replaced temporarily by Mrs W. Hughes. This was the first staff departure. Poor Mrs 'ughes was soon, unimaginatively, nicknamed Mrs Mees. At the end of the summer term 1961 examinations were held and this time Reports were issued to parents, in a smart blue booklet. I still have mine.

It was an exciting and action-packed first year with many developments and activities, and obviously much work behind the scenes of which the pupils would be quite unaware. We were grateful for an assortment of voluntary activities: a fell-walking and rock climbing club had numerous outings; there was a chess club, recorder group, choir and various sporting activities despite the lack of a playing field. Toys were made to send to orphan children at Christmas. In June – Bolton Holidays still existed then – a group of boys and two teachers departed for a camping holiday in the Lake District. The school was developing in many different ways and all those in positions of authority must have been well-pleased.

## (2) 1961 – 1962

**A**fter the summer holiday of 1961 we returned to find that the school had one hundred new pupils, so we now had a First, Second and Third Year (Years 7 – 9), with a total of about 300. There were also four new members of staff; specialist teachers as the subject specialist rooms were now available:

Mrs N. Boothman – Domestic Science

Mrs E. Worthington – Art

Mr B.J. Thompson, B.A., A.T.C.L. – Music

Mr E. Dale – Science

To avoid any confusion amongst us this Mr Thompson was immediately named Mr Thompson Junior. There was a lot of humour in the school and staff-student relationships were good. Mr Dale was an excellent teacher, experienced and capable. He did, though, have a temper and could really scare people, including the pupils, when he shouted. He started a Scottish Country Dancing Club and also Cross Country Running.

The whole of the school building was now complete; only the grounds remained incomplete. There was much mud. Particularly splendid was the library, at the end of the corridor and overlooking the field, with its curving roof and full-length “splayed” window, Additional Prefects were appointed: Stephen Savage, Stephen Brawn, Graham Bromley, Bill Bibby, Barry Ribchester, Anne Hurst, Elizabeth Massey, Mavis Harrison, Teresa Whittaker, June Piper, and later Tony Childs who had a transistor radio through which he could listen to pop music without plugging it into mains electricity!

Miss Christine Worthington started a branch of the Student Christian Movement (S.C.M.) and this met weekly, sometimes after school and sometimes in the evenings. There were also visits to branches at other schools. There was a varied programme of educational, social and devotional events and it was popular. There was much social outreach from the school and service to the community in a variety of ways: produce from the Harvest Festival was taken to the Bolton and District

General Hospital, as it was then called. June Piper went around carrying a box of six eggs and wondered how the patients would cook them. There was carol singing at the hospital in December; on Christmas Day presents donated by pupils were distributed to the elderly people of the parish. Yes, on Christmas Day itself, after the service in church. A Badminton Club was started and Brian Wallwork, in the year below us, soon emerged as a star.

On December 2 1961 the school was officially opened by Mr Kenneth Thompson, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, and Dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Manchester, Rt Revd W.D.L. Greer, and a plaque was unveiled in the entrance hall. Pupils admitted in later years thought that the Headteacher was an MP! About 400 people attended and after the formal events the school was open for inspection by all. The service included a hymn which I have never encountered anywhere since that day: *Christ hath a garden walled around, A paradise of fruitful ground.* The opening was reported in the Bolton Evening News and Farnworth and Worsley Journal. The building was referred to as *The School With Bounce* and *The school you can shake but can't break*, because of the method of construction. My copy of the commemorative brochure/programme, carefully preserved for many years, appears to have vanished but, being enthusiastic, I copied out the following at the time:

“The “Clasp” system of prefabrication has been used to form a single-storey structure, designed to withstand the effects of mining subsidence. The building has no foundations in the generally understood sense. It is built on a flexible concrete “raft”, five inches thick, reinforced against bending due to upthrust or subsidence. The skeleton of the school is a flexible steel framework, the members of which whilst rigid themselves are pin-jointed together to allow movement. Steel spring braces at the corners of the school hold the frame upright and withstand wind-pressures. The internal walls are formed by unplastered patent plasterboard units and the external walls are divided into panels not more than ten feet wide linked by strips of folded copper which will permit movement whilst ensuring that the weather is kept out. The panels are either glazed or covered with cedar wood boardings or special tiles which give the effect of brickwork. The ceilings are suspended from the roof structure and a gap can be observed between the aluminium edging to the classroom ceilings and the walls. This has been formed to permit movement. Even the roof tiles have been designed with settlement in mind, and are fabricated from flexible corrugated fibre glass. The engineering services presented a problem, and specially made flexible joints have been fixed in the heating and plumbing runs at critical points. The school site measures 12.28 acres; 3.46 acres for the building site and 8.92 acres for the playing fields.”

The playing fields referred to were all on the “school” side of Lucas Road. The area across the road was still farm land. During the November half term holiday several volunteer pupils trundled soil in a wheel barrow from the far end (east) of the

field to the flower bed in front of the main door, to enable the planting of roses or whatever. It is worth recording that the school address was Bradford Road "A" until sometime after 1961; then the road, an unsurfaced, pot-holed muddy track was renamed Lucas Road in honour of one of Farnworth's first Freemen, Dr Victor St Clair Lucas and eventually - in 1963/4 - properly surfaced. Local residents must have been as happy as the car-owning staff-members and delivery men.

A cast aluminium mural – perhaps today worth a fortune(?) - was installed outside to the right of the main entrance, designed by artist and sculpture Geoffrey Clarke, R.A. The keys, interlaced with the cross and aimed at unlocking doors, were said to indicate themes relating to Christian Education. Perhaps an art-student is today looking for a Project? May I suggest the Life and Work of Geoffrey Clarke. A Google search brings up information, but not a sign of the St James's commission!



The photograph was taken in the summer of 1961 and from left we have: Carolyn Westhead, Stephen Brawn, Tony Childs, David Evans, Andrew Leatham, Barry Ribchester and Jaqueline Warburton. All save one individualist/rebel proudly wearing the school uniform. One wicked boy appears to have gone outside wearing his indoor shoes! Taken by Stephen Savage the proud owner of a Brownie camera; only black and white film in those days.

December 1961 also saw the first Annual Prize Distribution and Gift Day, when prizes were presented by the Archdeacon of Rochdale, the Venerable Edgar Stephenson, and this was the first occasion on which most of us had ever seen an Archdeacon wearing gaiters. How we stared. Perhaps such things are no longer worn.



The weather was dreadful. The local press again gave good coverage to the speeches and these annual articles afford considerable valuable information about the development of the school in those happy early days. There was singing by the choir, a gymnastic display, English Country Dancing and a presentation of scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, presumably produced by Mr Thompson, the Headteacher.

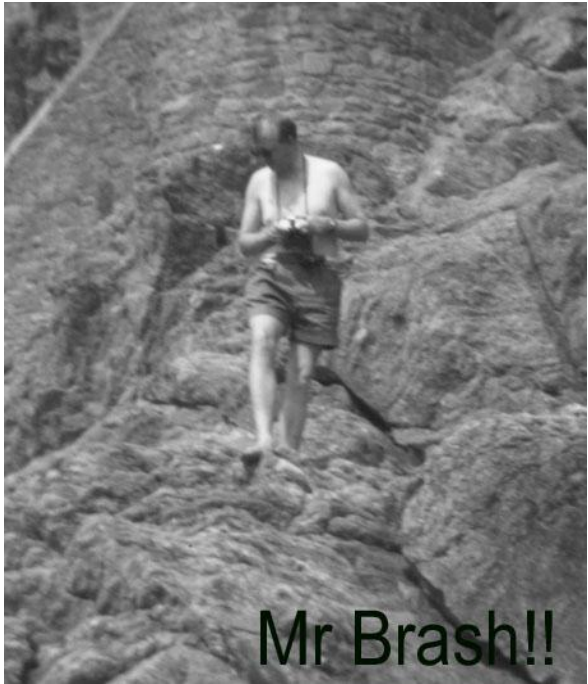
Examinations were held in December and another page completed in our blue Report Book. Confirmation Classes were again held, in preparation for the Confirmation Service to be held at St Thomas's Church in March 1962. There was a large number of candidates and I remember it vividly as I was one of them. The vicar, the curates Mr Braddock and Mr Hicks each had a Confirmation Class. I was with Mr Hicks, a very popular priest in the school and in the parish, and from my point of view he must have done something right.

During the Christmas Holiday (1961-62) a slight fire damaged the door to the gym store at the end of the hall, close to Lucas Road. Damage was slight but the fire, started deliberately, could have been far worse. Several years later, after we had left, there was a more serious fire and Mr Thompson gave a most professional performance when interviewed about it on TV (*BBC Look North*). He spoke about the roof spaces above the classrooms allowing the fire to make rapid progress. Geoff Cooper remembered "...that it was caused by a workman on the site; some form of spark started something smouldering but it didn't truly ignite and cause the fire until some time later, after all the workmen had knocked off and gone home. As the site was now empty, there was no-one there to respond quickly making things worse. The fire had time to get a hold before it was spotted and the fire brigade called".

Although the school was yet young some ambitious schemes were undertaken. Bolton "trade" holidays, June Holidays, still existed then and in June 1962 there were two school journeys. One was to Snowdonia for one week camping. The other was to St Malo, in Brittany, and 27 pupils, five members of staff and the two curates Mr Hicks and Mr Braddock, spent an enjoyable ten days. It was the first overseas trip from the school. We had been saving for months, paying instalments week by week, to find the £23.15.0. It was the first time that most of us had been abroad and after a tour of London we sailed from Southampton on the *SS Falaise*. Princess Anne was also on the boat – on her first trip abroad! Mr Ball had organised our trip superbly and he made a cine-film about it. Where is it today? "Anne Goes to France – With St James's Secondary School" was his



title. It deserves a mention in her biography. Typically most of my photographs are lost but maybe there are more, out there somewhere. Here we have Mr Ball, relaxing; Mr Brash, rock climbing; Geoff Syddall with Andrew Leatham admiring the artefacts in a museum; and Barry Tonge (above) admiring a piece of sculpture.



### (3) 1962 – 1963

After the summer holiday we returned to find that 70 new pupils had been admitted to the “First” year (Yr 7) and eleven forms were now accommodated in a building originally designed for eight – two in each of four year groups. Extra cloakroom accommodation was provided in the corridor, near the woodwork room. There were three new members of staff:

Mr J. Corrigan – P.E.

Mrs W. Hughes – i/c Library

Mrs J. Teesdale – Religious Knowledge

There was also a student teacher, there for one week, Mr A. Roberts, and then Miss Joyce Seddon who I think stayed for the year.

Our year group was now in the fourth year of secondary education (Yr 10) and so approaching the school leaving age of 15. Groups were taken out to visit local firms and there were lectures on various trades. There was much careers advice. In December several pupils left as they had reached the age of 15 during that term. Others wished to stay to complete the year and some – with every encouragement – wished to stay on for another year in order to take GCE “O” level examinations, if that could be made possible. After Christmas our Year Group was reorganised so that it consisted of two classes roughly equal in standard and a smaller group – 4E – of eight boys who had elected to study for G.C.E. O-level examinations. These pioneers were: Bill Bibby, Stephen Brawn, Graham Bromley, Dennis Catterall, Geoff Cooper, Andrew Leatham, Barry Ribchester and Stephen Savage. Also, because of the special nature of this arrangement, the small group size and the short time-scale before exams, there was not the luxury of 'options'; we took six subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Geography, General Science and Geometrical Drawing. Again, much planning and negotiation must have gone on behind the scenes to make possible this opportunity. We will be forever grateful as for most, if not all of us, and those who followed, it was a life-changing opportunity.

New Prefects included Robert Foster, Silvia Seddon, Christine Rushton, Christine McLachlan, Lynne stones, Brenda Wilcox, Carolyn Westhead, Jaqueline Warburton and Marilyn Lomax. There always seemed to be a lot going on throughout the school, in many spheres: music, sport, drama and more. Annual events were by now firmly established, including a Nativity Play in December, carol singing to raise money for Oxfam, annual Confirmation Service, a Sports Day in the summer term, despite limited facilities in the early days, and a torturous compulsory cross-country run for every boy in the school; what had we done wrong? A chess club, meeting at lunchtimes and after school, was attracting large numbers. A staff five-a-side football team played the boys and lost! A female staff team played the girls at netball and won. There was a camping holiday in Scotland. A school drama group, led by headteacher Mr Thompson, performed the play *Meet Mrs Beeton* at a schools' drama

festival. At the Prize Distribution that year scenes from *Twelfth Night* were performed.

During the summer term there were various staff-changes leading to some temporary appointments. Mr Corrigan left teaching and removed to Edinburgh. A retired R.A.F. Flight-Lieutenant was appointed, Mr D.H.I. Lewis, BA., B.Sc. His classes were somewhat tumultuous. A young man named Mr Binks came, who was obviously very capable but did not aspire to a teaching career; he moved on to Customs and Excise. In April Miss Brenda Berry left to be married. Soon afterwards Mrs W. Hughes left. A Miss Monroe was at the school for a short time during that term. There were obviously some real problems but numerous activities continued, standards were maintained and perhaps even improved. G.C.E. work had begun. There was help with reading for those requiring it, special provision, in “sets” for the teaching of mathematics and it all speaks of tremendous dedication and great devotion to meeting the needs of all the pupils. Actually a visit to the staff room could be most unpleasant as it was enveloped in a dense fog; the harmful effects of smoking were not yet known.

#### (4) 1963 – 1964

**I**n September 1963 we returned to school to find that there were 78 new pupils and four new members of staff:

Miss Doreen Tonge – Needlework, Mathematics

Miss Sheila M. Buxton – Domestic Science

Mr F. Smith – i/c Library

Mr C. Wilkinson – P.E.

Also Mr John Boulter, the famous international runner, son of Farnworth’s Chief Librarian, was at the school during the autumn term, presumably as a student. During the summer term there were three students on teaching practice from Padgate Training College, as it was then called: Mr J. Wilkinson, Miss Hankey and Miss Jaques. Presumably they are now retired.

This year the school had a Fifth Year (now called Year 11), the class of eight boys listed earlier (page 11), staying on at school voluntarily to take G.C.E. examinations. At the Third Annual Prize Distribution and Speech Day held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1963 Mr Thompson spoke about this development and the *Farnworth Journal* reported in detail, under the headline: *Eight Boys, Keen to get on, set example to younger pupils*. The class following them had 20 pupils.

The office of Prefect remained important and this was just one of the ways in which pupils were given responsibility. The first Head Boy was Stephen Savage and the first Head Girl was June Piper. (Followed the next year by Jack Hall and Brenda Wilcox). The library was developing and “librarians” were appointed to facilitate its

running. The first ones were: Eric Halliday, Barry Tonge, Jack Hall, Deborah Minshawl, Christopher Sharman, Harry Hamer, Alice Boot and Christine Newsham. We were growing up, presumably, and at least once a term a dance would be held in the school hall, in the evening, mainly organised by pupils to raise money for a variety of good causes. There were a lot of sporting activities, although to me this was an unknown sphere. In December another staff/pupil football match took place and the boys were soundly beaten. The neutral Referee was Bill Bibby. Staff team members were: Mr B.J. Thompson (in goal), Mr L.M. Ball, Mr C. Wilkinson, Mr J.C. Blease and Mr N. Brash. The boys were: Clive Parker (in goal), Stephen Brawn, Albert Mather, David McIlwraith and Geoff Syddall. A School Sports Day was held in the summer term, I think at the Harper Green Playing Field. The school took part in the "Divisional School Sports" held there in July and a photograph of Chris Sharman winning the High Jump appeared in the local newspaper. On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1964 the S.C.M. group vigorously promoted World Children's Day. There was much publicity to draw the attention of everyone in school to the tremendous needs of less fortunate children throughout the world.

The school Drama Club inspired by Mr Thompson, the Headmaster, was very active. They presented a Nativity Play in December 1963 and a Pageant explaining the origin of Christmas customs. This involved a large number of pupils. Later they performed *The Pedlar's Progress* for the school, at the end of the Easter term 1964, and then again as part of a concert presented by both St James's Schools and also at the Farnworth Schools' Drama Festival. There was also participation by the school choir in the Farnworth Schools' Music Festival. The dramatic performance that I remember most vividly is *Androcles and the Lion*, by G.B. Shaw, which was one of our English Literature set books. The eight members of 5E were compulsorily involved in the cast or back stage, joined by others who I suspect had a bit more freedom of choice. It was performed for the school, then for parents and guests at the Prize Distribution on November 1 1963. Woodwork teacher Mr Jim Reddyhough built a wonderful set - which perhaps is still stored beneath the stage together with that realistic lion costume? The play appeared to be a success, even if some participants, like me, were less than enthusiastic about their involvement. Fortunately it would appear that no photographs were taken. The cast was:

Androcles – Eric Halliday	Emperor – Stephen Savage
The Lion – Valerie Barrow	Captain & Metelus – Philip Hughes
Ferrovius – Jack Hall	Spintho – Geoffrey Cooper
Editor – Graham Bromley	Call Boy – Brenda Wilcox
Secutor – Stephen Brawn	Retarius – Barry Ribchester
Menagerie Keeper – David Flanagan	Megaera – Bethan Barnes
Lavinia – Christine Roberts	

In June the whole school was involved in examinations. For us in 5E it was G.C.E examinations for which we had been prepared by Mr Thompson, Mr Blease, Mr Dale, Mr Brash and Mr Entwistle, and we were based in the Library. When the

results came out in August Mr Blease must have been “over the moon”, for everyone had passed in Mathematics.

When in July 1964 St James’s Day was celebrated at the end of the summer term it was referred to as Founders Day. One wonders if this was continued? This was the first occasion on which a service of the Holy Communion was celebrated *in* the school for the school. Also, it was the first serious outing for the cross and two candlesticks that had been turned, out of rosewood, by Geoff Cooper. Are they still in use? We were leaving, the last of the pioneering year group and there were other changes. Miss S. Buxton left the school to be married and removed to Malvern. Mrs E. Worthington removed to Canada. Miss Christine Worthington – no relation - was married at St James’s Church on August 5, returning to school as Mrs Ainsworth. The happy couple did a strange thing. Before the service they had parked their car in Daffodil Road. Was it meant to be hidden? On an estate populated by so many pupils? Or was it meant to be found? Her colleagues soon discovered where it was, and when later in the day Mr & Mrs Ainsworth went to it to depart for their honeymoon they found that it had been well and truly decorated. The wheels were still on.



Mr L.M. Ball, the school’s first Deputy Head and an inspirational teacher, was appointed Head of King Harold Secondary School, in Waltham Abbey, Essex. He had worked tremendously hard and deserved a good send off – which he got. At the end of the last day of term he went out to find that his car had been cleaned by grateful pupils – and adorned with a large red sash bearing the names of scores of pupils and *Good Luck Mr Ball* in large letters. Where did it come from and did he keep it? The bonnet of his white Vauxhall Victor Deluxe was decorated with a large, red bow. There was obviously a good deal of staff involvement in all this high jinx. Almost the entire school was gathered to see him off. Always good with words, he made a short impromptu speech of farewell, did a circuit of the forecourt and then

drove away for the last time, to resounding cheers and the strains of *For he's a jolly good fellow!*

Of the “eight”, three went into employment, three returned to school for a short time to repeat examinations in November and two entered the Sixth Form of Farnworth Grammar School to take “A” level examinations. Those aspiring to higher education were given every encouragement. A pattern had been established and others would follow. Subsequently, Geoff Cooper went to Durham University and Stephen Savage went to St John’s College, York. Achievements and future careers were made possible by the fact that we were able to attend St James’s School at that particular time and opportunities were offered to us that we would not have had elsewhere. We were just so lucky!

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<sup>i</sup> He became an Honorary Canon in 1965.

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.fivesaints.talktalk.net/st\\_james\\_centenary\\_magazine.pdf](http://www.fivesaints.talktalk.net/st_james_centenary_magazine.pdf)