

School Memories Julie Smith nee Sharp 1954-1961

My memories start on my first day at school in September 1954. My mother had to hand me over at the classroom door and Miss Windsor sat me at a table with Jane Cawsey, Janet Chalk and Jane Harding and gave us a lump of plasticene to play with. The four of us were together through Infants and Junior school and have remained in contact ever since with Jane Cawsey being my lifelong friend through the ups and downs of family life.

Our next teacher was Miss Swan and then Miss O'Driscoll although at some point we had lessons in a portacabin in the playground with Miss Jenkins (?). This is my only bad memory because she used to stand the milk bottles next to the boiler so we had to drink lukewarm milk at playtime which we hated!

The outside toilets are probably best forgotten and were replaced by the time we were in the Junior school. You had to put up your hand and ask to go outside to the toilet which was quite daunting for a five year old and there was more than one child who went home with damp underwear!

On going up to Junior school our teachers were Miss Binz, Miss Dominy and Mrs Hathaway who I recall as being quite strict! Miss Dominy took us for music which was great fun and I can still remember some of the songs we used to sing.

Mental arithmetic exercises were done every day and we learnt our tables until we knew them backwards which has always stood me in good stead. With Mrs Hathaway there were weekly spelling lists which we had to learn and be tested on. We also had regular class tests, monthly I believe, and our marks determined where we sat in the classroom starting with the highest scorers sitting in the back row and working forward in rows to the front.

I don't imagine that any pupils from Miss Ferrant's era will have forgotten the punishment line. For misbehaving in class you had to spend playtime standing in the corridor facing the wall outside Miss Ferrant's office. No matter how much you tried to look as if you were reading notices on the wall it was quite obvious to everyone streaming past after playtime the reason for you standing there!

The school hall doubled as a dining room and we also had PE in there, trying to avoid stepping in the remains of mashed potato and boiled beetroot with our bare feet!

We were bussed down to the old baths in Southampton for swimming lessons which involved the teacher walking the width of the pool with a long pole and if you could splutter across without grabbing the pole or sinking you were presented with a yellow braid to sew on your costume.

Looking back on my time at Shirley Junior School I can appreciate the varied education we enjoyed. We even learnt to knit seamless socks using open ended needles. Goodness knows how the teacher managed to achieve this in a class of over thirty children but I do remember she had supplies of talcum powder for sweaty fingers!

I've no doubt it wasn't all as happy as I remember but you tend to forget the bad points with the passage of time and I shall always look back with fond memories of my time at Shirley Infants and Junior Schools and the good friends that I made there.

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Shirley Junior Girls - March 1960 3rd year

Left to right from the back:

Julie Crocket, Alison Menzies, (Teresa Saunders?), Margaret Moore, Janet Scanlon, Hazel Wilson, Linda Mace, (Peggy Torode?) ?, Kathleen Fithyan, Janet Robson

Rosemary Melhuish, Kathryn Kemish, Jackie Walker, (Jane Mist?), (Beverley Williams?), Alison Finch, Janet Chalk, Susan Stephenson, (Rosemary Tucker?), Christine Lawrence, Charmian Gay-Pickard, Jean Jackson

Janet Northover, Eileen Kennedy, Pat Curran, Penelope Rabbits, Lindsey Harvey, Janice Smith, Barbara Stewart, Julie Sharp, Jane Cawsey, Jennifer Hucker, Jennifer Fletcher, Julia Best

Nea Snowball, ?, Wendy Head, (Madeleine Jones?), Susan Hornsby, Judith McBride, Dylis Clark, Christine Jurd, Helen Hoof

