

# Memories of Shirley School 1927 - 1936

by Mrs Freda M Hancock (née Jurd)

These are some of my School memories.

## *INFANTS SCHOOL*

I don't remember very much about Infants School. I started in 1927 when I was 5 years old. The Headmistress was Miss or Mrs Vane (I'm not sure of the spelling). As I lived in Didcot Road, I did not have far to go, just through Shirley Recreation Ground (now called St. James Park) and Bellemoor Road.

I think that my first classroom was on the Wilton Road side of the School; the end room near the cloakroom. I remember a bead frame on a stand and pictures on the wall with their initial letters representing the alphabet for example an apple for A. We had slates and slate pencils on the desk. I had learned the alphabet and two times table before I started school so that gave me a good start. The only teachers I remember are Miss Hawksworth (later Mrs Chalk), who used to sing Land of Hope and Glory on Empire Day. She became Headmistress at Shirley Warren Junior School. The other one was Miss Marshall (later Mrs Whitehead); she became Headmistress at St. Jude's Infants School. The infants were mixed (boys and girls), and were on the ground floor.

I remember at Christmas time, we made paper chains by joining different colour paper strips with Gloy (glue in bottles).

## *SENIOR SCHOOL*

We moved to the Senior School (known to us as the Big Girls School) at the age of 7. On the first day, I remember lining up in the corridor outside the drill hall to go up the stairs to the first floor which the girls occupied, (the boys went up to the second floor). Three classrooms on the Wilton Road side had partitions which folded back where we all went for morning assembly; prayers, hymns and School Notices.

I can remember some of the teachers; Misses Ransome, Carter, Snook, Keeler, Etches, Fryer, Cornish and McCarraher. The Headmistress was Miss Woodland, Sometimes, after School, our teachers played netball against teachers from another school. I think that we had the same teacher for all subjects except singing. We had class monitors. I was ink monitor, putting ink in the inkwells on Monday mornings and removing it on Fridays. Book monitors gave out the books for different lessons that were kept in cupboards with sliding doors, in the corridor outside the classrooms. I had to give out cod-liver oil and malt to the girls who needed it. This was at the end of the corridor past the teachers' and headmistress's room by the window overlooking the boys' playground. At the far end there was a small room with a cooking hob and a sink where I made tea and hot milk for the teachers.

The lessons we had were Arithmetic, English, English Literature, Penmanship and Handwriting, History, Geography, Hygiene, Art, PE, RE, Anthology, Cookery, Laundry and Housewifery. Before the main Arithmetic lesson we had Mental Arithmetic and sometimes we had to stand around the room and be picked at random to recite our x times tables. Before English we had Spelling Tests. We had class readers such as 'Children of the New Forest' and 'Lorna Doone' which I hadn't finished reading, but was allowed to take home to finish before leaving School. We took it in turn to read out loud to the class from these books. I remember sometime before leaving School, reading to the Headmistress in her room.

For Domestic Science we went to Alexander College at Regent's Park School; I'm not too sure if it was one or two days a week towards the end of the year we left School. I think the teacher's name may have been Miss Jack. We had gas cookers and a large three oven range for cookery and a brick copper for laundry.

Here are some examples of our exercises:-

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Home rated at £24, how much paid for:

a. Police protection -  $\frac{1}{2} \times 21 = 10.5$  lb.  $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$  lb.

b. the fire Brigade -  $\frac{3}{4} \times 22 = 16.5$  lb.  $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$  lb.

c. the lighting of the streets -  $\frac{3}{4} \times 42 = 10.5$  lb.  $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$  lb.

d. the cleaning of the streets -  $\frac{3}{4} \times 39 = 11.25$  lb.  $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$  lb.

e. the parks -  $\frac{3}{4} \times 57 = 17.25$  lb.  $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$  lb.

f. the collection of refuse from his home -  $24 \times 8 = 192$  lb.

16s.

Answer a. 15s. 6d. b. 5s. 9d. c. 10s. 9d. d. 9s. 9d. e. 11s. 3d. f. 11s.

7. R.V. of property = £82  
 a. what will be paid as per cent. =  $482 \times 28 = 6105$  s.

£305 - 5s. 4d.

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 1936.  
 S.S.S. applied arithmetic page 23.  
 Local Revenue and Expenditure

Rate per £ changed for yr. = 12s. 8d.

July 1st 1936.

4. Required to find how much per yr.  
 a. on £30 at 12s. 8d. in £ =  $\frac{10}{2} \times 28 = 580 = 89$

b. 89 per yr. how much for 1qt = 24%

Answer a. £19. b. 24 - 15.

5. How much paid towards:

a. education =  $\frac{38 \times 10}{2} = 190 = 10s. 10s.$

b. Highways =  $\frac{5 \times 92}{2} = 230 = 697 \frac{1}{2} = 58 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 56 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 54 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 52 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 50 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 48 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 46 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 44 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 42 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 40 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 38 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 36 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 34 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 32 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 30 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 28 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 26 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 24 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 22 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 20 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 18 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 16 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 14 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 12 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 10 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 8 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 6 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 4 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 2 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = 0 - 1 \frac{1}{2} = -1 \frac{1}{2}$

c. Pl. Public Assistance =  $\frac{15 \times 209}{4} = 772.5 = 783 \frac{3}{4}$

6s. 3d. = 18 - 5 - 3 = 10

Answer a. 25 - 10s. b. 22 - 18 - 1 = 11 c. 13 - 5 = 8

Wages

Name	Grade	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Total	Rate	Wage
Smith	Builder	7s	8s	5	8s	4s	5s	35s	7s	245
Brown	Labourer	6s	7	4	6s	7s	5s	31s	6s	186
Grey	Carpenter	7s	8s	7s	6s	8s	4s	40s	8s	320

Answer: Smith 22 6s. 9d. Brown 21 17s. 11d. Grey 22 19s. 11d.

English

Sentences changed from the Masculine to the feminine gender

She asked her Aunt what the Duchess had said, when the Queen dismissed her from the court.

Being heiress to a large estate she did not trouble to learn from her mistress those subjects which are learned by most girls in this country.

The negress pleaded for her life and the lives of her daughters.

The prophetess told the witch that her power was gone.

She was the patroness of all the poetesses of her time.

The baroness strode into her hall.

My lady told her niece that she had been appointed sole executrix to her mother's will.

Penmanship

February 24th 1936

Penmanship

One thing stands out above all others in the Oil Report now before the League of Geneva.

It is that the nations of the world are bound together and cannot act as if they were independent of each other. Acting together they can stop the war in Abyssinia; acting separately the whole purpose of the League may be defeated.

It has come about that

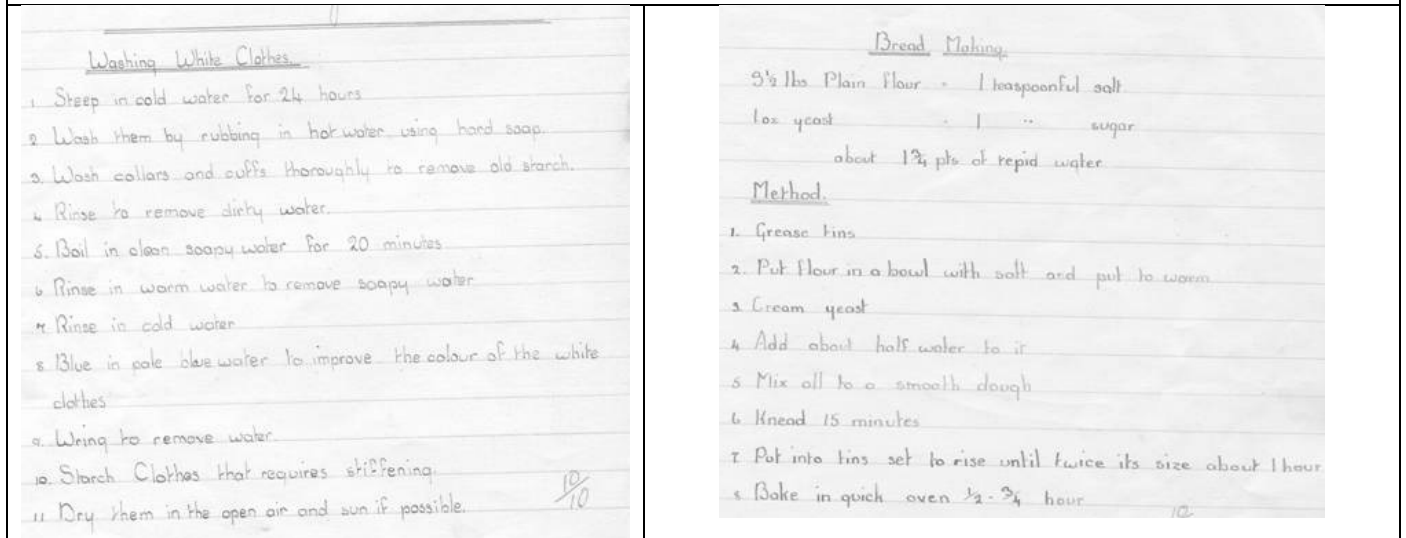
the power to bring peace in Abyssinia rests very largely with America, for even if the League of Nations stop the supply of oil to Italy the oil from America would enable Mussolini to carry on his war.

Analyze February 28th

Subject	Predicate
enlargement	subject
1. Herwards	verb
mighty	extension
2. You	subject
3. White fluffy	verb
4. choice	extension
5. The lonely	subject
Sphinx	verb
sits	extension

through shield and hauberk and body.  
 must come quickly into the classroom at nine o'clock.  
 lazily overhead.  
 in wonderfully coloured vases.  
 near the pyramids

## Domestic Science



In 1935, all the prefects including me went to the laying of the foundation stone of the Shirley Warren School.

Before singing lessons, we all had to face the open windows for breathing exercises.

I can't remember very much about any visitors to the school, but I do remember someone who came and gave us a talk about the League of Nations. I can remember three school outings. One was to the Isle of Wight, and another to Windsor Castle, including a river trip on the Thames to Hampton Court. Miss Fryer, our teacher, was quite annoyed because whoever arranged the outing had not made sure that the Castle would be open that day, and as it was closed, we could only look round the outside!

At the end of the year before leaving school, all the pupils from the top classes in all Southampton schools went on the Beavis or Bevois (not sure which) Treat. Our School went to Bournemouth. During a diphtheria epidemic, we all had to take a mug to school and go to the cloakroom basins and gargle with some kind of medicine. I became a prefect in my last year at school. I looked after Standard 3a including lining them up when the hand bell was rung, usually five minutes before the start of lessons.

We took part in a School Musical - "My Man John" in which I was a gypsy girl. We performed this at the Central Hall in town.

In this photo, taken in the School hall, I am 5th from the right in the third row. I seem to remember that there was a large painting of St. George and the Dragon on the wall behind us, just out of sight.

We had a school Choir and we sang at the Southampton Music Festival, also at Central Hall.

I represented Shirley Girls and ran the 100 yards, at the Southampton Elementary Schools annual athletics meeting which was held at the County Cricket Ground, Northlands Road. I came second!

**The following are references to Shirley School, extracted from Michaela's Oral History Project recording. There is some duplication.**

There were not many cars - doctors and people like that had cars but I don't think anyone not anybody else had cars. Our headmistress did - Miss Knight - when I first started school she was headmistress and she had a little car and she used to drive across the playground every morning. I don't know the name of it - it looked like a little box on wheels (laughs) and she used to drive it across the playground. .. but she was a very strict headmistress. If you were late you had your name taken at the gate and if you were late three times you had the cane - yes she was very strict

**How old were you when this was?**

Well I started when I was five in 1927 so it must have been some time after, because not long after we had a new headmistress - Miss Woodland - and she was much kinder. But the Infants teacher, Miss - it was either Miss or Mrs Vane.

**MLL We might need to mention which school was this?**

Oh Shirley Girls School.

**Vane?**

I suppose Vane - I don't know really how you spelt her name - she was the Infant School Headmistress but I mean I can talk about the teachers .

**How was the school divided in those days?**

It was infants at the bottom and the 'big girls' as we called it in the middle - and the boys at the top. The teachers - there were two teachers - there was a Miss Hawksworth who became Mrs Chalk and she was Head Teacher at Shirley Warren Junior School and a Miss Marshall who became Mrs Whitehead and she was Head Teacher at St Jude's Infants School where my children went to - with Mrs Whitehead.

**So, was she a teacher with you and then she became the Head Teacher later**

Yes they were both teachers at Shirley School.

**Oh - so you must have had good teachers then if they both became Head Mistresses?**

Oh yes - Miss Hawksworth she was the singing teacher and she used to do the .

**Assembly?**

No . no . she used to do the Empire Day - we used to have an Empire Day and she used to sing Land of Hope and Glory on Empire Day out in the school playground and we had our little daisies and flags to wave and there was a tableau - I can't remember but there was a tableau - there is a photo of all the girls dressed.

**That one? Is that the one?**

That's the one.

[Photograph 8] ..

The teacher there was a Miss Fryer

**Just to facilitate - Miss Fryer on the photograph is to the left of the photograph with the dress and the hat - do you remember these - which one are you on these?**

I'm not in that one.

**Oh you are not in that particular one?**

No I have that photograph because my mother knew a mother of one of the girls.. she is in the middle there..

**Sorry what was her name?**

Eddie Tredger - and she lived in Wilton Road

**And is she the little one in the . which one is she? The one she knew .**

That one.

**Ah the one that looks a little bit like Red Riding Hood with a hood on . so Eddie Tredger -**

And they were on Wilton Road .

**SO they were up near the school?**

Yes, but my mother knew her through the Baptist Church in Shirley.

**Did you know any of the other children?**

No ..

**Were you at the school at that time?**

I might have been in the Infants - I was probably at the school but not in the . no .

**Well shall we have a look at some of the other photographs that you have sent us - if I go back through the file - this is the first picture and it says on the picture 'Hospital Carnival 1933 at the Stadium, Southampton'. Have you got a memory of that that you would like to share?**

We had a school gym team - Shirley School Girls' Team - I think it was all the schools in Southampton that did it.

**And what were they doing on the day - was it a display?**

It was a gym display. Yes it was a gym display and I think we used to go down to Regents Park to gather with some other schools for practice yes but it was a combined Southampton display at the Stadium..

**I know that you told me on the phone, but for the tape - would you mind just saying where the Stadium was?**

Oh I can't remember [RE1] ...

Can't remember offhand - but it is gone now though I believe isn't it? It's not there anymore?

**What did they used to have at the Stadium - was it some sort of track?**

Yes a track - they did some greyhound racing I think - I am not too sure - I think it was near the Ice Rink.

**So can you remember what you had to do then on the day?**

It was just a normal gym sort of display - we also had a skipping team and some of us who did it we had a skipping team in four rows and we skipped backwards to the Keel Row [RE2] if you know the [Cureau] don't ask me to sing it . yes and I practiced and practiced and practiced and I was one of the leaders in the four teams because you know I could do it quite well and I practiced for quite a long time outside of the house in Laundry Rd and (laughs) I was quite annoyed because as we skipped the last one in the school before [RE3] kept coming backwards and stopped my skipping rope so you know I was quite annoyed because I had it perfect and so . but at the end of this day we formed a Union Jack by holding up the three colours - the red white and blue colours - a piece of material - we all had a piece of material and we held it up and it formed a Union Jack which my Aunt said was quite - well I don't know if she used the word 'spectacular' but she meant that. It was quite a thing to see. I still have the other picture goes with that . that one . I am in that one.

**This is the second photograph in the file. That is the actual gym team isn't it and which row were you on? Can you**

**remember?**

I am in the front - Front row. Fifth one along I think .

**Which way are we going? From the right or from the left?**

This way.

**One, two, three, four, five . very nice - there you are smiling away fifth row in .. Have you got any of your friends around you?**

I have . there is one that I still keep in touch with that I haven't seen . we keep trying to get into touch but I haven't seen her for about forty years but we still keep in touch at Christmas but I don't know if I can pick her out now .

**It's hard to see isn't it? Have you got a magnifying glass - that might be useful.. PAUSE .**

Well anyway we still keep in touch but I haven't seen her for some years..

No well they were part of the school (Hollybrook Home children) . well I mean it didn't make any difference - they were just the part of the school . I don't know how many there were in that one but the other one - there were about fifty . fifty girls in the class - five rows of five[RE4] - and so there were fifty in a class - we all were . considering that was 1930's I suppose . no that must have been before I left Didcot Road because I had my hair cut before I left Didcot Road so that must have been . oh . probably eight years old there and .. I can still remember going up from Infants - up to the uuum Big Girls - lining up in a line when we were seven - we went up into the Big Girls - and I can still remember, you know, lining up to go through the Gym Hall because it connected the Gym Hall - it was connected with the stairs - you go in the bottom and go up to the top so you would be connected in that way so I still remember going up. That was when I was seven.

**MLL: You know you said you have got long hair here - and quite a lot of the girls have got quite cropped hair - was there a fashion when you were ..**

Must have been - my mother used to roll it up in rags every night ..

**MLL: to make ringlets?**

Yes.

**MLL: I just wondered if .**

The others were probably all cut ..

**MLL: they wouldn't have had it cut because they were at the Homes or anything?**

No .

**MLL: it was more of a fashion .**

No, no most of them had short hair didn't they?

**MLL: Looking at it - a lot of them have got short hair haven't they? Whereas if that had been five or ten years before all them would probably have had long hair - like you say - ringlets in their hair - yes there's not many of you with long hair actually ..**

No.

**MLL: very interesting .**

Probably why I wanted mine cut I expect.

**MLL: yes that's probably why you did have yours cut - because they'd all got it done and cut short..**



## SCHOOL NURSE

Our school nurse used to come and look at our hair - she was Nurse Cambridge - and she lived in Wordsworth Road - she was the school nurse who used to come in.

**MLL: whereabouts in Wordsworth Road did she live - do you remember?**

Somewhere between Didcot Road and Stratton Road, along those houses .

**MLL: oh yes, there - in the row of terraces there . Nurse Cambridge.**

Yes, Nurse Cambridge.

**MLL: what did she have to do when she inspected you then? How did she do it?**

She used to just, I suppose she must have had some sort of solution she used to put - I don't know what it was - and she used to lift up the hair and you had to line up you know - it did happen [RE5] - I mean I can remember quite well kneeling in front of my mother with the newspaper on her lap and going through my hair with the fine toothed comb so it did happen to us . but talking about things like that - we used to dish out cod liver oil and malt to the children - and I was one to do it (laughs) went in the corridor by the headmistress' and the teachers' room - they used to come there and they had these cartons of cod liver oil and malt and I dished them out .

**MLL: was that daily?**

Yes .. . of course teachers then most of them were on bicycles and the bicycle shed was in the girls' playground - we used to come in and walk across there to go over into the school that way either through the Infants' School opening or the Girls School that was on Bellemoor Road side - the Infants. was into the playground more, I think . but Miss Wood . Miss Cornish . Miss Friar was my last teacher - she wasn't actually - she took a lower class when I first went into the top class 7a - it was 7a and 7b it was or 7 Removed it was called for the children who weren't quite so up to the higher standard so we had 7a and 7b and Miss Friar - she was a lovely teacher - I have a letter upstairs that she wrote when my father died - she wrote me a very nice letter but ah she was a very good teacher - in her class she could come into the room and you wouldn't hear a pin drop and she was fascinating - she made everything so interesting. Miss Cornish - I think they shared a house together in Wilton Gardens - I used to go and visit her sometimes - and Miss Cornish - she was the singing, music teacher and she was the one who used to do our musical - My Man John it was - she did the musical for that .. and a Miss McCarraher who played the piano - I don't know how you spell her name - Miss McCarraher . but I was a gipsy ..

**MLL: fantastic..**

I must have been twelve or thirteen maybe and we did it at the Central Hall in Southampton - I think that was another school's - Southampton Schools Festival kind of thing I think . and you know umm . I used to love singing - singing and painting and drawing were my favourite lessons . we did have cookery - we used to go to Regents Park to the old Alexander College was it . I think it was called that.. and we used to go down there for cookery . the last three months of school we used to go down on Fridays - Friday mornings and afternoons and I have been trying to think of the teacher's name and the one that keeps coming into my mind is a Miss Jack who took us for cookery and for housewifery - and I enjoyed that . the only thing is that the first lesson we had was making coconut buns and I had been making coconut buns or cakes for my brothers more or less every week before I went to cookery classes because I used to do a little bit of cooking for my brothers when I was still in Laundry Road - you know bring the cakes down for them, but umm . I quite enjoyed the singing and the cookery and painting - the others I got on alright with - I was in the top row anyway because as I said we had five rows and I was in the top row - we were allowed to get on with something on our own - but I wasn't very good at mental arithmetic (laughs) its improved since I have been watching Countdown - but Miss Friar, as I say, she was a lovely school teacher - but the first lesson I had with her was mental arithmetic and my mind went completely blank - nothing would come in to my head at all - and she knew - she had me out in front - I never did get on with mental arithmetic but the other lessons I did quite well



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[RE1]It was at Bannister Park. Also used for speedway. Closed in 1963, now housing (off Hulse Road).

[RE2].the 'Keel Row'. A traditional Tyneside folk song/tune first published in 1770 but said to be much older.

[RE3]ie the last girl in the school team...

[RE4]Five rows of five double desks.

[RE5]Nits!