

School Memories Jean Scott (nee Brown)

Shirley School 1949-1956

When I went to Shirley Primary School in the 50's all the children walked to school. Although we didn't have a strict school uniform the school colour was green and where possible we were encouraged to wear green. There was a "lollipop" person who saw us safely across Wilton Road. In those days there was a small sweet shop in Wilton Road, where at lunch time or after school if you had a penny to spare you went there. A lot of the children went home for lunch. School dinners were delivered and served in the hall which was also used as a gym and for daily assemblies.

The main school building was divided into three sections. The ground floor was for the mixed infants, the middle floor for Junior girls and the top floor for the Junior boys. The boys played in the front playground facing Wilton Road and the infants and girls on the back playground which had a large wooden opened fronted hut where we could gather on cold days. It also had a couple of Nissen type huts for extra classrooms, outdoor loos and a small climbing frame.

On the subject of outdoor loos, it was with great delight that they froze and the school had to be closed for several weeks during a very cold and snowy winter. In those days all the children had a third of a pint of milk at break time, and during frosty weather the cream on the milk froze into a solid lump and would rise and lift the silver tops off.

Once in the Junior girls we were divided into two classes according to ability. We used the main hall for gym which had a few basic fixed apparatus though we didn't have the luxury of using soft mats, just spiky coconut mats. Once in the Juniors, weekly a double decker bus would take a year group to the swimming baths which is roughly where "John Lewis" is now. The boys would use one bath and the girls the other. There the non swimmers would line up and in turn would be strapped into a harness and pulled across the shallow end and then queue up again. Later on, you were then allowed to tempt to swim. Once you could swim a width you gain a coloured stripe. Then you were allowed a little more freedom to improve your style. For the next coloured stripe you started at the deep end and the attendant held a long pole in front in case you had to grab it, whilst you swam a length. The next target was three lengths and then they began to teach you to dive. After the swim if you had the money you could buy a hot blackcurrant drink and a bun which was great as you were so cold, but as the session lasted all of the morning, no lessons!

In the summer time sometimes we were taken down to the park (rec) for rounder's which was much better than playing in the playground where we also played netball. The boys I believe played football down in the park.

I remember several distinctive smells, the smell of cooked cabbage, carbolic soaps by the sinks and damp coats/macs drying in the cloakrooms. When it was very wet we had to stay in our classrooms and read comics at break time. The prefects and helpers from the top class would come and help even leaving the class in their charge whilst the teacher's went for their break. If it wasn't too wet we were allowed outside and sheltered in the large wooden hut if we wanted too.

The classroom furniture varied from class to class, in most there were double desks, others individual desks where we kept our work and books. There was an ink well in each desk as we used to dip our ink pens for writing. All the desks were in rows and facing the front where there was large blackboard and the teacher's high desk.

Lessons were very structured with everyone facing the front and working individually. We had text books for maths and English. Often for reading we would take it in turns to read from a set book around the class. Though by year five and six we were also allowed to select a book from a book case outside the classroom during silent reading. As we progressed up the schools some lessons were focused towards the eleven plus exam. We would have weekly tests for spelling and mental arithmetic in particular. No calculators then, you learnt your tables (by chanting) and other mathematical facts by heart, and after a monthly test depending on the results we would be placed according to our results, so at least you might sit with someone different and know if you had to work harder. The day the results of the eleven plus were announced the Headmistress came and read them out and if you didn't live too far from school you were allowed home to tell your parents. If you passed your eleven plus there were several schools the girls went to The Girls Grammar in Hill Lane or St Anne's. The boys went to King Edward's or Taunton School. Otherwise you went to Regent's Park or Shirley Warren which were mixed secondary schools. Towards the end of last summer term at Shirley School not only did we enjoy a boat trip to the Isle of Wight to visit Carisbrooke Castle, most of the class went to spend a week down at Calshot. There were very few outings although we did go to the Common to sketch trees one summer.

Often poems were learnt by rote after we had copied them down. We would often listen to the school radio programmes as part of our lessons for singing, music and movement and history. It was often on whilst we did our creative art work. By year six we had all learnt to knit and to sew, make patchwork mats and do a variety of embroidery stitches. We knitted a pair of socks on three needles and learnt to turn a heel and made a rag doll with a smocked dress. Most of us learnt to play the recorder as it taught us to read music.

We enjoyed drama lessons as often we would dress up for our performances and at Christmas time each class put on a play.

For the coronation in 1953 each pupil was given a special glass tumbler in a box and I still have mine.

Like all children we had our favourite teachers, were afraid of some so that made you work hard for fear of getting told off and looked up to the young keen fashionable teachers.



Sally Goater; Penny Phillips



Rachel Drake; Susan Welch
?????; Mrs. Reakin; Mrs. Hathaway.

School outing to Carisbrooke Castle by paddle boat summer of 1956.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHAMPTON EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SHIRLEY JUNIOR GIRLS' SCHOOL

REPORT for Summer Term, 195 4

Name Jean Brown Number in Class 38

Class 5 Position in Class 34th

Position in Year 33rd out of 68

ED/84

SUBJECT	RESULT		REMARKS
	MAX. MARKS	MARKS OBTAINED	
ENGLISH :			
Reading	20	14	
Understanding	10	4	
Spelling	20	12	
Vocabulary	20	25½	
Composition	10	5	
ARITHMETIC :			
Tables			
Mental	20	17	
Sums	30	28	
HAND-WRITING	4	Good	
NEEDLEWORK	18	Good	
TOTAL	120	105½	

Jean will have to work very hard at these subjects.

Good

Y. Tarrant Headmistress

W. Brown Class Teacher

COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHAMPTON EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SHIRLEY JUNIOR GIRLS' SCHOOL

REPORT for Summer Term, 195 6

Name Jean Brown Number in Class 37

Class 9 Position in Class 14th

Position in Year —

ED/84

SUBJECT	RESULT		REMARKS
	MAX. MARKS	MARKS OBTAINED	
ENGLISH :			
Reading	20	—	
Understanding	10	—	
Vocabulary	20	14	
Composition	20	17	
Spelling	20	10	
ARITHMETIC :			
Tables	30	28	
Mental	40	39	
Sums	40	39	
HAND-WRITING	10	Good	
NEEDLEWORK	10	Good	
TOTAL	160	134	

Jan has made astonishing progress in English during the year. She has worked well. Spelling still needs care.

Very good I am very pleased with the work Jan has worked through the year. Keep this up. Jean. Y.T.

Y. Tarrant Headmistress

W. Brown Class Teacher



— — Ruth Pamy Margaret Humphries — Elizabeth ? Joan Hunt — Ivonne Rochard Jean Cargill Sally Crocker

Susan — — Judy Hall — Sheila Tuffin Jenny Jacobs Mavis ? — Rachel Drake

Valerie Miller Penny Phillips — — Valerie Wort Jane Mitchell Ruth Greenwood — Jean Brown

Jean Bates Linda ? Hilary Pike Patsy ?