

TORQUAY GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

JUBILEE HISTORY

1915 – 1965

Compiled and written by Gwen G Petty, Senior English Mistress and Librarian, 1929 - 1964

Foreword and Epilogue by Margaret C Robertson, Head Mistress, 1957 - 1975

Prologue by Caroline M Wilkinson, Head Mistress, 1934 – 1957

Dedication

To all those who have worked in and for Torquay Grammar School for Girls and have a deep affection for it, this book is dedicated.

G.P.

Foreword



When celebrating a Jubilee one obviously looks back over the stretch of years that one is celebrating. When a whole School is involved, there is so much to remember, and so many people too young to remember, that the writing of a history becomes an inevitable consequence. This is a big task and can only be done really well when the principal author and editor has been closely involved with events herself.

So this foreword is to introduce Miss Petty, who needs no introduction. Her service covers over 35 of the 50 years, and her activities have been so manifold that she has been intimately concerned with much that the history concerns. Modesty prevents her giving to herself the tributes the history should give, but readers will know well where credit is due. There is no end to the generous service she renders, of which this book is one more instance. The School is most grateful to her and to all the other contributors and helpers.

MARGARET C. ROBERTSON

Author's Preface

When Miss Robertson asked me to write the Jubilee History, I was only too happy to undertake the task, but the more I delved into the past the more I realised the difficulties of selection, emphasis and arrangement. It would have been possible to reduce the years to a series of lists which would have lacked colour and atmosphere: it would have been possible to give oneself up to the pleasure of remembering those things which live most vividly in the mind. In striking a middle course between the vagaries of personal recollections and the formality of mere records, inevitably much has been telescoped or even, of necessity, omitted. Moreover, in covering 50 years, the prospect of mistakes - major and minor - cannot be ruled out. For all such sins of omission and commission, I, prologue like, pray your patience, if not gently to read, at least kindly to judge this history!

No work of this type could ever reach book form without the help of many people. I am deeply indebted to Miss Robertson for her unfailing interest and constant help; to Miss Wilkinson, without whose careful reading and most important corrections and suggestions the script would have been faulty and lacking in so many ways; to Miss Andrews, whose tireless co-operation and endless forbearance have made our innumerable sessions of work great pleasure, for, had she not given so generously of her time, this would certainly not have been in print for months; and to the senior staff, past and present, who have made their contributions to the record. Finally, Major Courtney's brilliant photographs of the school today, and the wonders he has worked with the faded but fascinating prints of the past have added greatly to the vividness and reality of this history.

GWEN G. PETTY
July 24th, 1965

Prologue



Little did I dream in May 1915, when still a sixth former, that there had been born in Torquay a school which, from 1934 onwards, would become the very centre of my life. As with all human beings and with human institutions too, life at TGGs did not always run smoothly; there were times of disappointment and frustration, as well as highlights of achievement. Nevertheless, through years of peace and years of war, through joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, we have seen the school grown, not only in numbers, but in strength and usefulness, for the spirit of progress and adventure has been alive in this school since its very foundation.

All who have worked there, staff and girls alike, can now look back with gratitude, affection and humble pride and with the prayer that it may continue to be a place of sound learning, integrity and great happiness.

CAROLINE M. WILKINSON

The Beginnings

Fifty years ago, on April 21st 1915, the Torquay Girls' Secondary School, with Miss Mary Jackson, M.A. (Cantab.) as its first Head Mistress, was officially opened by Mr T Hiern, M.A., F.R.S., Chairman of the Devon County Education Committee. In her speech at the ceremony, Miss Alice Wood, Principal of the Maria Grey Training College, London, suggested 'Summer Sunrise' as a fitting name for the new building, while a sympathetic leader writer of the Torquay Times wished that 'Won by Waiting' could be inscribed in large letters over the front door - a pointed reference to the delays before the long-promised building was a reality!



Hitherto, Torquay boys and girls of academic ability had attended a Teacher Training Centre with Mr W Jackson, B.Sc. (London), later Head Master of the Boys' Grammar School, as its Principal. The building used was at the bottom of Abbey Road and almost opposite the present General Post Office.

The Secondary School, 1915 Devon County Education Committee has bought The Elms, a large house which stood in three and a half acres of beautiful and established garden: the site extended from Newton Road on the south to Barton Road on the west and Oakhill Road on the north. The new



building housed boys and girls, in those days strictly segregated, the boys using, as they do today, the Barton Road entrance, the girls entering from Newton Road and walking up a shady drive towards the main door of the school, which seemed palatial after their previous cramped quarters in the middle of the town.

In reality, apart from the Head Mistress's office and a very small staff room, there were only four or five classrooms allotted to the girls, as well as the

Housecraft room, where school dinners were also served. They were cooked in the little room which divided the girls from the boys; hence the popularity with both sexes of acting as waiters and waitresses! Hall, gymnasium, art room, lecture room and laboratories were shared by careful time-tabling, lessons being strictly for one sex at a time. The Elms still stood, and housed the gardener and caretaker, while some of its rooms were soon used for lessons by the boys, and later by the girls as well.

Pupils were drawn from a wide catchment area, stretching from Dartmouth and Brixham to Newton Abbot, and large numbers of boys and girls travelled daily to and fro by the GWR school trains.



Founding a school has many problems: precedents are all too soon created. Miss Jackson, a keen scholar herself, and a first-rate teacher had the soundest ideas for the good of the pupils. Education for women was still, in many quarters, considered not wholly necessary, and at times not even desirable, but the impact of the first World War had already broken down many barriers. In her letter to the school in the first magazine, published in June, 1916, Miss Jackson wrote: 'A girls' school cannot train soldiers ... but you must now prepare yourselves for filling some place in the state, where your work will be needed. In times of peace it has been found more difficult to instil into the minds of the girls than into those of the boys the idea that education ought to fit us, not only to live easily the kind of life to which we are called, and perhaps to earn our living successfully, but also, according to Milton, "to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." You are fortunate in that you live at a time when all can understand that this definition applies to the education of women as well as to that of men. Work hard and cheerfully at games that you may be physically fit, as well as at your studies. Learn as much as possible of everything, despise nothing, certainly not Housecraft.'



Already, after only a year of existence, the school was vitally active: clubs had been formed, such as the Literary and Debating Society and the more strenuous Rambling Club: everyone was busy sending comforts to the Red Cross Hospital in Torquay and to Base hospitals abroad, to the League of Empire, the Devon and Cornwall Light Infantry and to prisoners of war in Germany. The School put on its first

play, 'She Stoops to Conquer', the proceeds being sent to the Torquay Red Cross Hospital to help towards building an outdoor shelter for wounded soldiers.

But, for Miss Jackson, good scholarship was always the purpose of a secondary school, and she must indeed have been proud that, of the five girls who took the Oxford Senior in July, 1915, one, May Kemp, not only achieved a 1st Class Honours Certificate but, with Distinction in English, was placed first in the whole country for that subject - an augury of the long line of academic successes which lay ahead.

Originally there were 102 girls on the roll: some had come from the Teacher Training Centre: others had taken the scholarship examination and had won coveted 'free places': still others had entered as fee-payers. It is possible also to give the forms. New girls went into Form II and from there went up to IIIA; IIIB was composed of scholarship entries so that they might learn Mathematics and French and be ready in the fourth year to join the main stream. Forms V and VI completed the single-form entry.

By 1920 there were ten forms, so rapidly had numbers increased. To meet this increase in population, five army huts were added to the establishment: two near the cloakrooms were laboratories; three in the playground served as classrooms. Long, long ago they were considered temporary structures: they survive to this day!

Teaching in these huts had its hazards. In summer they were unbearably hot: in winter anyone not near enough the coke stove to roast comfortably lived with ice-cold hands and feet. Miss Slater vividly recalls the thin walls and the difficulty of trying to enlarge on the charms of poetry when abstruse Mathematics were being taught next door, and the infuriating need to conduct a lively dramatisation lesson so as not to upset the sober work of one's immediate neighbours behind the *wooden wall!*

Sports were popular from the start and all games were run in clubs as out-of-school activities. It is interesting to read of the Swimming Club winning the Brenda Crowden Shield for the first time in 1916; of the successes of the Netball Club and of the first Sports Day in 1917. Many of the younger staff played with the teams. The games field was in Cricketfield Road, and no one thought anything of the quick rush up the hill after school. Girls taking part in sack raceThe 1918 magazine records that for the Sports 'smart drill dresses' were worn, and the programme included such races as 'catching the school train', blindfold driving, egg and spoon, skipping, obstacle, balance and crawl, flower-pot and sack races, many of these being so popular that they recurred year after year. The proceedings ended with a drill display, which can have had little resemblance to the gymnastic displays of recent occasions. The first photograph of the hockey team is a delight to see. Girls



dressed in the uniform of dark blue skirt, white blouse and school tie are grouped around Miss Jackson in her gown, long calf-length skirts cover their legs; hockey sticks being artistically 'draped' to form a pretty picture. By the following year, the team were all in regulation tunics and very smart they looked!

Then, as now, the School was divided into Houses. Blue, Green, Red, White remained their names till 1944, when, owing to the increase in numbers, six Houses became necessary, and the School Council, which had started its activities in the previous year, chose the names of Devon castles - Bickleigh, Buckland, Compton, Lydford, Pomeroy, Rougemont - which are still used today (NB this was true at time of writing Jubilee History in 1965 but is no longer the case - houses are now named after former Head Teachers, Beale, Jackson, Robertson and Wilkinson).

A school orchestra began in 1917 and the Choral Society was formed in 1920. Miss Jackson, herself an able musician, taught Music throughout the school. When Miss Southcombe was appointed, she shared the music teaching and took it over completely on Miss Jackson's retirement. She continued teaching some music till Mr Winship became a full-time member of staff.

Miss Lawrence recalls the time when the Art Room was a sort of 'holy of holies' inhabited by rather odd people, generally considered incapable of anything so mundane as school duties - an ideal state that did not last long! Girls and boys shared the Art Room and were taught by Mr Reade or Miss Lawrence. Juniors had lessons in the lecture room opposite, where desks were tiered so steeply that the model was barely visible to more than a few. When the School moved to Shiphay, all their difficulties disappeared.

"In the early days," she says, "pupils were taught to draw and observe the beauty of line, form and colour and obey certain fundamental laws. When fashion decreed that the only important thing was that children should enjoy uninhibited self-expression in Art as in other fields, with no rules or disciplines, the transition was difficult for teachers trained in a more subtle appreciation of what they observed and made for a more crude and insensitive outlook which was called progress!"

A number of plays followed the first production of *She Stoops to Conquer*: among others, *Twelfth Night*, *The Rivals*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Countess Kathleen* and *Epicene* were performed, the last being the production of the School Dramatic Society, which started in 1926 and which in 1931 acted *The Alcestis*. *Pride and Prejudice*, the last play before Miss Jackson's retirement, was notable because Mollie Tebbutt, then a recent Old Girl, had dramatised Jane Austen's novel for the production and Miss Jackson had composed a setting for Eileen Aroon, sung during the scene at Rosings Park. *The Antigone*, in 1937, was the last play before the move to Shiphay.

Productions were a triumph of ingenuity over difficulties. The stage was small; the curtain temperamental and all too often refused to work at the psychological moment; the gymnasium served as a dressing room. In spite of these inadequacies and the total absence of modern stage



equipment, the standard of acting was high, the casts portraying characters with a sincerity and depth which made for excellent performances, which their audiences fully appreciated.

In 1921, the School added to its charitable activities regular collections for the Torbay Hospital King Edward Cot League, and there is the first recorded collection for Earl Haig's Poppy Fund. Two years later the League of Pity was added to the list and has remained a charity supported by the whole School ever since. In 1926, the League of Nations Union Junior branch under the aegis of Miss Grundy, the Second Mistress, was started and flourished.

The Magazine was published regularly and, in the January 1923 number, there appears *Aude Sapere*, the school song, music and words of which were composed by Mr Lewis E Upcott, and which was sung with gusto by generations of pupils.

On June 7th, 1928 the name of the School was changed to the Torquay Grammar School and the town coat of arms took the place of the former monogram as its badge. Meanwhile, the school was building up a tradition of success in more than one field. The Sixth Form, though small, was doing good and sometimes excellent work.

Outstanding among the academic successes was that of Elsie Phare, who was awarded a County Exhibition, a State Scholarship, and Clothworkers' Scholarship to Newnham College, Cambridge, the Mary Ewart Scholarship while she was there; who obtained Class I with special distinction in Part I of the English Tripos and was the first woman to win the Chancellor's Prize for Verse.

Margaret Wright in 1920 took a London Honours degree in English and French, returned to the school to teach for a period, and left to read Medicine. She studied at University College and Hospital, London, where she was awarded the College Gold Medal in Physiology and Histology and Embryology and, after gaining her MRCS, LRCP, MBBS, she has since had a distinguished career.

Muriel Shepherd took up Electrical Engineering and became AMIEE in 1933. She was appointed Electricity Adviser to Warrington Corporation Municipal Authority in 1941.

In the world of sport, Gladys Luscombe became an International Swimming Champion at the age of fourteen and was a candidate for the World Diving Championship in Paris in 1924. Edith Mayne won World Swimming Championships in the mile, 1000 yards and 1500 metres.

All through its history, the School has been fortunate in its friends. Mr C E Pitman, CIE, Chairman of Governors for so many years, was well known in the County for his interest in education, and the welfare of the School was close to his heart. He was a sound adviser in everything connected with administration, and his frequent visits to the building made him a familiar figure to staff and girls alike. His death in June 1933 was felt as a personal loss by present and past members of the School.

We are proud to think that in its earliest days Miss Pugh, as a student, attended TGSS during the short interval between gaining a place at the University and going to college. Having taken an MA degree, she later decided to enter public life, and today is not only a distinguished member of our own governing body but also Chairman of the South Devon Technical College Governors. She became a County Alderman in 1956 and is a member of the Council of the University of Exeter. It was a great pleasure to have her at the fiftieth birthday party on April 21st and at the School celebration on April 29th, when she recalled her impressions of the first terms and spoke of the education developments in Devon since 1915.

Mrs Caroline Guy left a legacy to be used for scholarships for children in the Borough of Torquay whose parents were unable, in the opinion of the governors, to pay the Grammar School fees, or who had not gained 'free places' from their elementary schools, and these were annually awarded to suitable boys and girls. Over the years, this generosity has given many pupils the opportunity of widening their horizons. Since 1944 when fees were abolished the money has been used for grants for educational courses.

Mr W H Lord left a sum of money to provide prizes for the pupils obtaining the highest marks at public examinations in English, History, Mathematics and Domestic Science. These prizes, instituted in 1922, are still awarded today (at time of writing, 1965), as are the following:-

- The memorial Prize left in 1938 by Rev J Charteris Johnston, a very faithful Governor of the school, awarded now for Science.
- The Abbot Prize, presented by Mrs Abbot in 1956 in memory of her husband Rev E W B Abbott, a former Governor, awarded for English.
- The Bryce Paine prize for French awarded annually, presented by Mrs Bryce Paine, who has been a member of the Governing body since 1926 and is a most welcome visitor at all school occasions.

The Education Authority and the parents had for long been aware of the need for a school for younger boys and girls. The Junior Department was opened in 1918 at Gainsborough House, Newton Road, a stone's throw from Torre Station. Here, under Miss E E Kenwick, the first Mistress-in-Charge, seventeen children were enrolled on the first day. The old house was spacious and stood in a large garden. If the war-time paint was inclined to leave green smudges on the knees of the pupils as they sat at their desks, or the distemper flaked in showers of doubtful blessing, the disadvantages were outweighed by the small classes and the freedom the staff and children enjoyed.

By the time Miss Griffiths succeeded Miss Kenwick, numbers had increased to 98 and Ruth Burridge, the first pupil on the fee-payers' roll in 1915, joined the staff. Towards the end of the school's life in Gainsborough, Miss D M Wyatt became Mistress-in-Charge and, in 1929, joyfully moved with the pupils to St Mary's, Oakhill Road. The school was officially opened by the Mayor on January 20th 1930.

The building and equipment at St Mary's had been designed for juniors and the prospect of working with the best tools gave tremendous impetus to all concerned. Its devoted staff had created for 'the Prep' a wonderful school in which young children could really develop and grow as individuals, and learn to live a corporate life as well. Free activity, then a new experiment in education, now common practice, had paid dividends and parents and staff combined to make the school an outstanding success. Many activities became more or less traditional, whether it was Miss Wyatt's 'gardening' - really a lesson in Natural History - or 'Choose' on Fridays; or again the football on Tuesdays and handwork on Thursdays which one grateful mother said had helped her son in his ultimate career; or again drama, country dancing or Brownies. So popular were the Brownies that Miss Wharton was moved to inaugurate the Torquay 7A Guide Company whose colours were dedicated in May 1934 by Rev H J Petty at their first Church Parade in Tor Church.



To celebrate their coming of age, the School published Cumulation, its twenty first birthday magazine, an intimate record of its past and present life.

In 1944 Miss Wyatt retired after twenty two years as Mistress-in-Charge. Her unfailing love of children, her wonderful imagination and her ability, through her dynamic personality, to stimulate even the slowest of children to a keen interest in the world around them and, in consequence, to increasing self-confidence are qualities for which she will be remembered by her many one-time pupils.

Miss Wyatt was succeeded by Miss K T Wood. By then everyone knew that the school, which now numbered well over 200 and had done so well and which had a waiting list of over a hundred names, was to be closed. The Education Act of 1944 was explicit and final. Every effort was made to keep the school intact but all was of no avail. The top class, boys and girls, however, came to Shiphay to complete their last year as juniors. As always the majority gained places in the Grammar Schools. It is extremely pleasant to remember that five of the senior school's Head Girls started in the Kindergarten at St Mary's!

To commemorate their year at Shiphay, staff and pupils presented cherry trees and these were ceremoniously planted at the east and west doors of the building. Miss Wood, Miss Dakin and Miss Wharton transferred from the Prep to the main part of the School. Miss Wood left in 1952 to take up work in the foreign mission field, after 26 years of invaluable service to the School. It is indeed a pleasure to have Miss Dakin and Miss Wharton with us to celebrate its Golden Jubilee.

Meanwhile, at the 'Big School', examination successes were increasing and academic achievements were deeply gratifying not only to the staff but also to all those whose work and interest had been a



support to the School in its early years. Before Miss Jackson retired in 1934 she had seen her ambition realised. There was much steady creditable work; some girls had obtained the high awards which normally went to schools of longer tradition and lively creative work was being done, while in sport the rank and file were much stimulated by the inauguration, in 1930, of the House

Championships. Miss Jackson left with the gratitude of Governors, parents and School.

Much of her retirement was spent in London, where she lived an active life, enjoying the cultural interests of the city. She visited the school seldom but, after returning to Dawlish in 1962, she spent a very enjoyable day with us at Shiphay. She was to have made other visits; she looked forward to hearing the choir and meeting more pupils whose parents she had taught and known. Sudden illness prevented her from fulfilling this wish; she died on April 4th, 1963. Now a beautiful table, a gift of past and present members of the School, designed and executed by Miss Judith Hughes, stands in the vestibule in her memory.

Full Growth

In September 1934, Miss C M Wilkinson, BA (Manchester), L ès L, became Head Mistress of the 270 girls in the main school and the 120 children in the Preparatory Department. There was every hope that a new girls' school would be built on the site at Shiphay, which Devon County Education Committee had bought in 1929 from Major R P Kitson, then Lord of the Manor.

The Sixth Form was steadily growing, as more girls were taking Higher Certificate, and they began sharing lessons with Sixth Form boys in Latin, Science and Mathematics - a staff partnership which was of great value and was to last for some years.

More obvious, perhaps, to the casual observer were the changes in uniform. In 1935, the long black woollen stockings gave way to beige, while up-to-date green and white candy-striped summer

dresses were introduced. Soon after this, senior girls were allowed to wear blouses and skirts instead of box-pleated tunics. Perhaps the most daring innovation of the period was the removing of skirts or tunics for all physical exercises, which were now done in shorts or knickers. Much later, panama hats were scrapped and girls were allowed to go bare-headed in the summer, a most popular wartime measure!

For the first time, too, games became part of the curriculum - a change not only much appreciated but symptomatic of others to follow. Foundations were laid for more advanced work in examination subjects, and a more liberal approach to the arts.

A further innovation was the growth of library activity. Originally two bookshelves, well known to generations of girls at Shiphay as the staff shelves, once part of the furniture of Miss Jackson's office, held a small collection of books, principally English and History and suitable only for Sixth Form study. Early in 1930 one bookshelf was transferred to the Sixth Form hut, where it was accessible at least to some girls, while Miss Rutty and Miss Crawshaw blazed a trail by collecting Geography and Science books of general interest, which they carried in suitcases to classrooms once a week for circulation among the pupils. In 1938 a cupboard appeared on the top corridor, and this housed a varied collection of books for junior and middle school forms. A desk served as a table and library lessons began. So great was the enthusiasm that borrowing was a hazardous business but, once it was over, the juniors sat reading on the floor. It was here that the accessioning of books began, in preparation for the move to Shiphay.

This prospect was in everybody's mind, and made the more vivid by the picnic on the site Miss Wilkinson gave the school early in the Summer Term 1936, to celebrate its coming of age. To mark the occasion the Staff inaugurated a Loan Fund (later to be called the Careers Fund), to help girls leaving school who were in need of some assistance. Over the years a number have benefited from the fund and have not only fully repaid the loan as and when they could, but added a generous gift as well. The girls bought a seat for the new playing field as their birthday gift.

For the staff the most challenging task was to plan, and even design the equipment and furniture for the specialist rooms. The gymnasium, domestic science and needlework rooms, laboratories, geography room and library owe much to the Heads of Departments of the day and though their ideas may now look out of date, at the time they were all the last word in modernity.



The delay seemed endless, but at last in 1937 the foundations were laid and by the summer of 1939 the building was ready to be occupied.



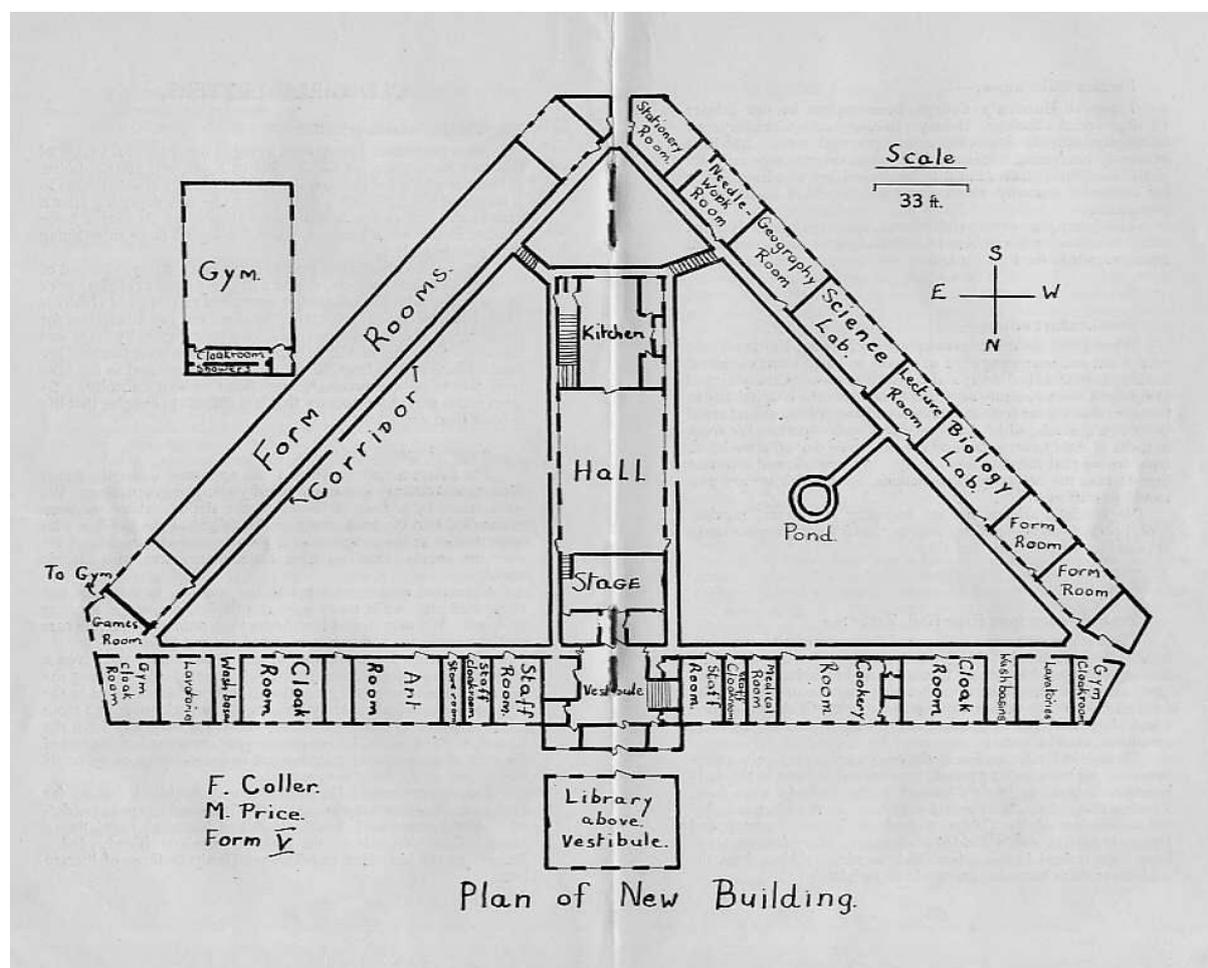
The day before the Summer Term started, staff and senior girls came to Shiphay to unpack joyfully everything so carefully stowed for the move. The building seemed vast and at first confusing. The day began with Prayers in the hall. The thin lines looked a trifle lost, and their voices created a diverting echo which nearly marred the solemnity of the occasion. The acoustics have improved with time and increasing numbers, but a slight oddity remains even now.

By the end of the day all was ready; pots and pans were in the newly designed domestic science room; text books and stationery in their allotted cupboards and the library collection of some four hundred books looking strangely lonely in shelving designed to hold eight thousand.

As in 1915, it was the space that was most impressive: the classroom corridor had rooms to spare; Room 13 was the Sixth Form; 12 the Fifth - in splendid isolation!



The medical room was next to the staff cloakrooms; the present Six North, West and East were used for storage; the present medical room was a hanging place for PT clothes. Storage space abounded and all specialist rooms were in use only for the subjects for which they were intended, while the triangles were oases of grass, except for the goldfish pond in the west triangle, a constant source of interest. School dinners were served in the hall and at one time the staff had their dinner on the platform - a high table indeed!



The outstanding day of the first term at Shiphay was July 12th when Dame Georgiana Buller, OBE, RRC, came formally to open the new school; the girls formed a guard of honour on either side of the drive, while Rev H Every, the Chairman of the Governors, Miss Wilkinson, Mr H V de Courcy Hague, the County Architect, and many members of the Devon Education Committee and of our own Governing Body greeted her at the front door. As Dame Georgiana opened the door with a key presented her by Mr Hague, the Union Flag broke from the flagstaff and the important guests walked to the platform, as the girls marched into the hall for the short Dedication Service in which the Rev I Pugh read the prayers.



Dame Georgiana, in a striking and inspiring speech, emphasised the responsibilities of modern women, not only at home but also in the wider sphere of citizenship. She looked forward to the day when one of the girls would become a Chancellor or Prime Minister and concluded her speech with these words: "Here are the bricks and mortar of your school building and now it is for you to give it that living character which human association always gives to buildings. It is for you to set up a building within a building in this White House on the Hill."

It was a great grief that Mr F Dobson, JP, CC, Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body, Chairman of the Higher Education Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Devon Education Authority, who died on December 2nd 1938, did not live to see the opening of the school for which he had worked so hard. His vision and his drive had made the building a reality. His death, particularly so near the fruition of his hopes, was a grievous loss. In memory, his widow presented the School with a beautiful lectern used for the first time at the opening ceremony, and, in daily use at prayers, it is a constant reminder of another fine benefactor.

To celebrate the move, too, the Sixth Form wrote a play which was to have been produced in the Autumn Term. Three groups produced an act apiece, and *Pilgrimage*, a dramatic presentation of Chaucer's pilgrims on the way to Canterbury and on their arrival at the Cathedral, was the result. On account of wartime difficulties its production had to be postponed till 1941, when for two afternoons it was played to appreciative audiences



The War Years

Few people who started off joyfully on their summer holidays in June 1939 could have envisaged war before the Autumn Term began. Senior staff assembled early and found a vestibule thronged with parents of the voluntary evacuees who had hastily travelled to Torquay to settle their children in schools as far from London as possible. This influx swelled the numbers to nearly 400, everyone was accepted, provided she had a chair to sit on! It was with these strangers that the new term started in earnest.

Paddington and Maida Vale High School was officially evacuated to us early in 1940 and its advent increased the numbers in a building designed for 400 pupils to 650. Immediately, specialist rooms, the green room, every store room and odd corners in the building including Hades, the name popularly given to the area under the hall platform, were pressed into service as form rooms. More than one third of the school had no proper desk and no proper class room. None of this really mattered and everyone cheerfully and optimistically accepted the difficulties. Two church halls in

Shiphay helped to relieve the congestion and PMVHS and the school worked a kind of shuttle service to make the most of the extra accommodation, while the PMVHS staff helped our own with the increasing Sixth Form work. In addition to this, Farringtons School, Chislehurst, shared the laboratories and the Domestic Science room was used also by the National College for Domestic Science, Buckingham Palace Road, evacuated to the South Devon Technical College.

Miss Collins has vivid recollections of teaching in the Church Halls: someone was sure to have forgotten something and there was never time to go back for it. Everyone hurried to the hall, only inevitably to dawdle in Water Lane - a history lesson at the very door. Every staff sincerely hoped no one would be ill, for accommodation of all sorts was limited, but no one was: the breed seemed more Spartan than now! Mercifully sirens chose to sound at lunch time, when dinner was eaten in school each plate precariously perched on knees as everyone sat behind the blast-walls. In the church halls, tables had to be put up as improvised desks, and half way through the session there was a five-minute break for the class to move to the other hall for some other lesson, not always ignoring with averted eye the bun and pop shop on the way. No bell marked the end of the afternoon, only the general packing up of impedimenta before everyone hustled back to school. The intricacies of the time table and the difficulty of giving staff time to walk (or run) to and fro during the mid-morning break can scarcely be overrated in these more peaceful days.



The holiday campaign was inaugurated in 1941. Staff and girls went to school and did many forms of useful work. Butter muslin was pasted on the innumerable windows as a precaution against flying glass during air-raids; books were repaired; the library was thoroughly polished and cleaned; the allotment lent by Mr Chappell was cultivated; everyone knitted for the troops and garments for evacuees were made and renovated in the needlework room.

Miss Taylor recollects other activities: members of staff, sometimes accompanied by Sixth Formers, acted as fire-watchers throughout the hours of darkness. In December and January, this meant spending two days and a night on end at school, preparing tea, supper and breakfast on a tiny electric ring in a small blacked-out room - 'Gentlemen', to be exact! Fortunately there were no incendiaries to deal with, but air-raid alarms brought watchers out on the library roof in helmets, to watch the sky anxiously for a tell-tale glow in some other district. What was perhaps more nerve-racking was patrolling the darkened building to discover the sources of mysterious footsteps, as doors had to be left unlocked.

Miss Slater recalls: "Once, when we were fire-watching - this was a real ordeal, because we could never muster more than two each night - not even a stirrup pump party - we were startled by a ring at the front door of the school and, when my companion timidly opened it, she was confronted by a very irate 'major', who barked out, 'A bomb has just dropped into your secretary's office. What are you going to do about it?' Her first reaction was to laugh, but this increased the officer's anger, and he followed it up with 'Where is your nearest water supply?' This she could not answer. We discovered later that, unknown to us, a test had been arranged, that night, of the efficiency of our fire watchers. We failed lamentably.

"One one memorable occasion our school had been appointed as a rest centre for refugees, and a rehearsal had been staged one Saturday afternoon. At a very long staff meeting we had all been allotted different tasks and in an evil moment I volunteered to run the 'nursery'. Things began to happen very quickly for, even on the way to school, we discovered that Tor Station and the Clarence Hotel had been captured by the invading army, for the simple reason that the Home Guard had not been able to finish their dinners in time!

"Judge of my surprise when one of my first formers arrived at the 'nursery' which was our present art room, saying demurely 'A bomb has just been dropped in our road, and I have been directed to the nearest rest centre. I have my emergency rations in my case.'

"Everyone entered most realistically into the rehearsal, but I soon found that, although most of the incidents were imaginary, my children, ranging from 6 months to 14 years of age, were very real, and had to be entertained from two till six pm. Fortunately, some of the mothers with very young children stayed with them, and we were constantly refreshed with cups of tea provided by volunteer staff caterers, who also had to work very hard, as there were over 200 refugees. A further complication arose when we were informed that not only had the mayor been taken prisoner, but also our chief director of operations, who had stated firmly that we must not go home until we had received definite orders! So it looked as if we should be there all night. However, we decided that it was a case of British soldier using his own initiative when the superior officers had gone, and we all went home. I was glad that the next day was Sunday."

Miss Taylor sums up: "For one brief period the school seemed to be the centre of activity, as American troops who were to take part in the D-Day landings camped in the lower field and often enlivened out-of-door lessons in that hot early summer by vociferous comments.

"In spite of the tragedies of war - one girl was killed and others trapped in an air-raid on St Marychurch - it is the incongruous and amusing incidents that are best remembered: diving under desks and tables at the first hint of enemy raids; extra clothing coupons for outsize girls; examinations curtailed for lack of paper; vast quantities of beans from the school allotment to be sliced and salted for the winter; a gift of milk chocolate powder from Canada collected by each girl in a jam-jar to be consumed at home, but leaving tell-tale traces on face and hands during the day; and the never-to-be-forgotten day when the anti-splinter net could at last be torn from the windows."

Societies had had to be suspended as after-school activities were not possible. Wartime charities reflect, as they did in 1915, the desire to help the forces. There was support for the Merchant Navy Comforts League; the Indian prisoners-of-war; the Army and RAF funds and Mrs Churchill's Aid-to-Russia Fund, as well as other relief funds. At this time our first contribution was made to America Lodge, the now well-known Torquay rehabilitation home for the blind.

In 1942 the Red Cross Link was started. In the same year the Magazine became a News Letter recording mainly activities of Old Girls, increasing numbers of whom were entering the forces.

From the beginning the school had had prefects, but in 1944 a School Council was inaugurated. Like so many written constitutions, it required amendment and adaptation to changing conditions as the size of the school increased. Its meetings - impressive in the library surroundings - were often protracted, its subjects varying in importance from the problem of the supplies of doughnuts and buns at break (and who was to have which!) to the consideration of disciplinary action for persistent offenders against the school's code of behaviour. When the period of its usefulness came to an end, the maintenance of sound traditions became the province of prefects and senior prefects, with their varying and clearly defined spheres of responsibility.

In July 1943, Paddington and Maida Vale High School returned to London. A few girls from Dagenham County High School and from Ashford County Secondary School joined us for a short time. In all, during the war years no less than 400 pupils from 150 schools had been evacuated to TGGs, and no less than 120 different school uniforms were to be seen amongst us.

In 1944, 30 girls between the ages of thirteen and sixteen from Senior Elementary Schools in all parts of Devon joined the school as weekly boarders, many going on to take the School Certificate examination, an experiment before time in the Comprehensive system and a fore-runner of the 13+ entry scheme.

The school National Savings Group under Miss Grundy flourished exceedingly, particularly in four 'war weeks' between 1941 and 1944, when special contributions were made. Parents and girls made gigantic efforts to swell the daily collections, with the following results: War Weapons Week reached a total of £365; Warships Week £932; Wings for Victory Week the amazing total of £2,046; and Salute the Soldier Week £1,502.

By a more strenuous and prolonged effort, with immensely useful results, the allotment, under the direction of Miss Darge and Miss King, produced tons of vegetables for the canteen - a wonderful help, especially when, during the evacuation of Maida Vale High School, no less than 700 hot dinners were served every day!

Moreover, in the meanwhile, gifts to the library never ceased. On Opening Day 61 books had been presented. In 1942, 350 volumes were given and in 1943 almost half of the 626 accessions were presentations. This high rate of gifts was maintained for years, and in 1949 nearly half of the 500 new books were gifts. This continuing generosity was touching; the shelves were rapidly filling, to reach the present total of over 12,000 books. The library was steadily becoming effective: all forms used it extensively, while the Public Library lent numbers of books for private study projects. It was the usual practice to introduce all first and second formers to both the main library and the junior library in Lymington Road, by the courtesy of the Borough Librarian. The Sixth Form enjoyed the privilege of studying in the Morse Collection library during school free periods.

VE Day and VJ Day were celebrated with joy. Off came the muslin and out went the school to mark the occasions with suitable jollifications. On May 30th the school went to the Regal Cinema to see Goodbye, Mr Chips as a victory treat, while the Preparatory Department had a wonderful party at St Mary's. October 10th was celebrated as a VJ holiday, when 400 girls went up the Dart, 100 to the Pavilion and another 100 had a fancy dress dance at school, all these treats being made possible by the generosity of Torquay Borough Council.

In more solemn vein, on May 24th, the whole school, including the Preparatory Department, marched in procession to Upton Church for a Thanksgiving Service for Victory in Europe. On September 21st the school joined all other schools of the district at Audley Park for the Thanksgiving Service for Victory over Japan.

Soon the blast walls were pulled down but, if the visible signs of wartime had gone, the need for helping the liberated countries was pressing. Parcels were sent to many parts of Europe and the charity lists reveal the school's various efforts to help. In 1947 one form even 'adopted' a school in Alesund, Norway.

Large numbers of Old Girls had entered the forces or served in other ways during the war. Many, immediately after demobilisation, returned to complete their University and Training College courses.

In spite of the disturbances of the period, work was going on steadily and, though there was little of cultural value in the town by way of theatre or concert, when any good show did come, the artistes were generous enough to visit the school. In one year alone, Cyril Maude, then living in the area, Donald Wolfitt and Andre van Gyseghem lectured and gave recitals; Madame Helena Wolska, prima ballerina of the Anglo-Polish Ballet Company, as well as giving a fascinating talk on ballet, conducted a class in the movements of Swan Lake.

Meanwhile, in 1938, before the move to Shipway, Marjorie Kernick had won an Open Scholarship to read Classics at St Hilda's College, Oxford, a Drapers' Scholarship and a County Exhibition. In 1940, Annie Kershaw qualified as an architect; Freda Gaston became MRCVS in 1943; Patricia Beer, having gained a First Class London Honours Degree in English in 1940, obtained B.Litt., Oxford in 1944, while Stella Crossley spent a great part of the war years as an engineer in the British Power-Boat Company at Hythe.

The Years of Peace

In 1945, Miss Grundy, Senior Mistress, retired after twenty-five years of devoted service to the school. It was then decided that this post should be rotatory and Miss Petty, Miss Collins, Miss Andrews, Miss Taylor, Miss Tonkinson and Miss Raikes have all held the office. In 1960, the Devon County Education Authority decided that a permanent appointment should be made, and Miss Raikes accepted the post which she still holds.

Societies, perforce dormant during the war, came to life again, and the Geography and Science Societies were once more active. The School Red Cross Unit 1715 began work under Mrs Osborn in 1945. When she retired in 1954, Mrs Evans first, and then Mrs Cheal carried on the classes. A great number of cadets have reason to be grateful to them for their selfless service.

With the departure of Paddington and Maida Vale High School, the 2nd Camborne and 7A Torquay Companies were amalgamated under Miss Glenister as Captain, with Miss Gudridge as one of her lieutenants. In 1949 Miss Gudridge became Captain and the Company has, through the years, left its mark on the Guide movement in Torquay, ex-members working as Guiders in local companies.

The Post War Society, which started in 1946 and soon changed its name to the Torbay Sixth Form Society, held its first Conference at School in June, 1946. Miss Collins recalls: "Of all the conferences during the intervening years, some stand out in my mind in greater prominence than others. One was a visit to Dartington arranged in connection with our studies on Agriculture during the term. We tramped for miles, it seemed, in heavy rain and over water-logged soil and returned to dine at Totnes High School, apparently more in need of baths than food! Another recollection is of the time when the school hall became a miniature House of Commons and witnessed the thrust and parry of debate on a bill to abolish capital punishment, ending in a division, the result of which was that the bill was defeated by an overwhelming majority - *autres temps, autres moeurs*. (Mercifully, there was no all-night sitting to achieve this result!)

"Yet another occasion comes to my mind when Conference Day was spent mainly in the discussion of case reports, involving lively argument before any conclusion was reached as to how the offenders should be treated and in justifying before a panel of experts the decisions taken.

"Many and varied have been the subjects studied and few have been repeated. The only thing I personally would regret is that, since the Sixth Forms of the member schools have grown so large, it has become no longer possible for all to attend each of the conferences organised."



The Choir, under Mr R E Winship, B.Mus (Oxon), ARCO, appointed in 1941, flourished and by 1946 it included one fifth of the school, so that it had to be split into three groups, the seniors chiefly forming the Madrigal Choir. Its first three broadcast performances were in January, June and December, 1947. In 1949, the Choir gave a Carol Service which was heard not only in this country but as far away as Norway, Germany, Greece and Africa. From then

on, it broadcast many times and finally, in 1954, visited the Wilhelm Raabe Schüle in Lüneburg, Germany, where it gave concerts in the area - a visit to be returned the following year, when Herr Rogge brought his choir to Torquay as official guests of our school Guide company. Mr Winship retired in 1955. During his time the Orchestra also, under visiting conductors, had become an integral part of the school's music. It played at concerts and on Speech Days, and occasionally at Prayers. Before he left, Mr Winship composed the School March which is used on all ceremonial occasions. His deep love of music was a vital part of his life. By his innate skill as a teacher and a

conductor, he gave to the school the power of making fine music together with a delight that communicated itself to their audiences.

He was succeeded by Mr Donald Hunt, who left after a short period to become organist of Leeds Parish Church; the Choir continued to go from strength to strength under him, and continued to broadcast.

Once war was over, foreign travel again became possible. In both 1933 and 1935, parties had been taken to Paris - visits resumed in 1947, 1949 and 1951. Girls learning German accompanied the Choir to Lüneberg in 1954. Groups of girls studying Geography went to Holland. Other parties travelled to Switzerland in 1958, 1959 and 1961. In 1965, members of the Sixth Form have been on an educational cruise in SS Devonian in the Adriatic and Mediterranean. Other girls have been abroad on exchange visits, one for a whole term in a German school, and in addition some have attended holiday study courses in France and Germany. The presence of exchange visitors in school has done much to broaden the girls' horizons.

The Speech programmes and one-act plays of wartime gave way once more to full scale productions, but, owing to the exigencies of the timetable, the cast was chosen mainly, if not entirely, from the Sixth Form. At last it was possible to make full use of the spacious stage, the properly fixed curtains and the footlights - all new and most welcome aids to the producers. Memorable performances include second productions of *The Antigone* and *The Alcestis*; *Tobias and the Angel* by J Bridie; *The Zeal of Thy House* by D Sayers; a most moving *Richard of Bordeaux* by Gordon Daviot and *Saint Joan* by G B Shaw. An experiment in dramatisation was *Interlude*, a brilliant compilation by Patricia Wash, which was performed as part of a Music and Speech programme in the Summer Term, 1956. When, owing to the increase in numbers in the school, the Juniors had their own prize-giving, they also gave an entertainment, in which the First Form play was an important item. Miss Slater, for so many years co-producer of the school play, produced a series of charming junior plays, of which the illustration of *The Butterfly that Stamped* is an attractive record.



Another post-war revival was the Old Girls' Association. Both in Torquay and in London reunions took place, the London group meeting without a break to this day. The life of the Torquay OGA has been less continuous, but for the last few years its meetings on the first Friday of the Autumn and Spring Terms have been fairly well attended. In September 1964, a new committee was elected with Miss Robertson as President; Miss Wilkinson as Vice-President and Miss Petty as Chairman. Mrs Leakey (Emmie Clinnick) became secretary and Mrs Honeywill (Violet Barber) treasurer. It was at Mrs Honeywill's kind invitation that a fiftieth birthday party was held on April 21st, 1965, at Exbury Hotel, Torquay.

Numbers in the school had increased to a peak of 629 in 1946, although in January 1945 we had reached a record number of 807 (583 in the main school and 224 in the Preparatory Department). Overcrowding seemed the order of the day and this was especially noticeable during the dinner hour when, in addition to the hall, the geography and lecture rooms and the biology laboratory became subsidiary dining rooms and cold dinners were eaten in classrooms. Gone were the days when ovens were available to heat food brought by pupils, for the large sum of one halfpenny each!

Mrs Archer was appointed Canteen Supervisor in 1945. As soon as the war was over, extensive structural alterations were made in the kitchens to deal with the ever-growing increase in school dinners and in 1949 the new canteen was completed. Whatever the regrets at the loss of the green triangle, everyone was delighted to feed in comfort. Today the canteen is used for Forms I-V. Form VI dines in the hall and enjoys the extra space and added prestige.

In wartime the rationing of essential foods created a complex of forms to be filled in weekly and this task is still laborious, though the statistics required reflect the more scientific approach to school dinners: calories and other food values, quantities and costs per head are all recorded for the powers that be!

Post-War Developments

If between 1939 and 1945 there had, of necessity, been a break in many normal activities in school life, there had also been a steady expansion of work, probably most noticeable in science. Pure and Applied Mathematics became regular subjects for Higher Certificate: the properly equipped laboratories made further expansion possible. Botany gave way to Biology and Zoology; Chemistry, General Science and Physics-with-Chemistry appear on the timetable and, in 1954, it was necessary to convert the lecture room into a Sixth Form laboratory. In general, the scope and depth of the work increased to a marked degree, each form by 1950 being taught what had hitherto been considered as the syllabus for the following year. All this was on the credit side, but alas, the green fields with their tall trees had gone and even the nuthatches that built regularly in the old oak tree have, for the last two years, given up the unequal struggle.

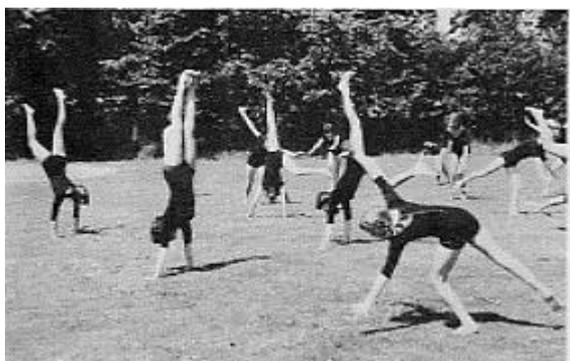
German, like Greek, had for years been available for girls who wished to take the subjects, especially for those proceeding to the university. In 1950, however, German became the second modern language and from then on has been taken by many pupils at O and A Level examinations. In 1964 for the first time, we had a German Assistentin.

In Geography, field work is an essential part of the syllabus in First, Second and Sixth forms, especially where the lessons are blocked for the purpose. BBC programmes and pamphlets, not to mention films and the rear projector, add to the lively presentation of History and Geography alike. In History, too, the ever-widening scope of the syllabus has involved a higher measure of selection in what has to be taught and mastered.

As the number of its accessions grew, the library increased its potential as a teaching tool. After varied experiments, a technique was evolved by the librarian and this, coupled with and enriched by other methods used by specialists on the staff, made for a richer learning than could be achieved in the classroom. Now the constant use of the library for research as well as for pleasure emphasises the value of learning for oneself. For years, English, History and Modern Languages have been taught in and through the library, as have other subjects in the curriculum, and latterly, with great effect, Music. As a result, many girls while still at school have acquired a love of reading and a taste for study which have stood them in good stead in later years.

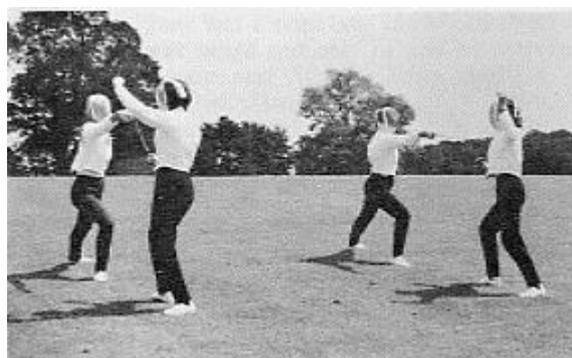
In 1965, the library accessions number about 12,000; the peak weekly issues has reached 700, while the total number of loans could be as many as 1,000 at any one time. Since the middle 1950s the County Library has sent valuable collections of books for special study, as well as regular loans for general reading.

In Physical Education, as much as in any other sphere, has the change been marked. Miss Tribe records: "In 1945, gymnastics were of the directed type, all girls doing the same exercise in rhythm and in straight lines or formal patterns. Next came the vogue for using small apparatus: balls, bean bags, hoops and canes seemed a necessary accompaniment to every exercise. Later, freer movement encouraged originality and the building up of sequences of exercises on a particular theme. Movement is now related to time, space and quality. The apparatus work is more varied and includes some acrobatic tumbling, much increased by the recent acquisition of a 'mini-tramp'. Two years ago, a gymnastic club was formed under Miss Mulvaney's direction. This takes a combination of modern educational gymnastics and the competitive Olympic gymnastics which border on dancing.



"Swimming is open to the whole school and a number of girls gain Royal Life Saving Certificates each year. Country dancing is run as a club for enthusiasts; girls in the upper school play badminton and Sixth Formers learn fencing. Everyone is eligible for a posture girdle, though the qualification is far removed from that of the one-time department class! A few girls widen their physical activities by learning Judo and are encouraged to join courses run by the Central Council of Physical Recreation.

"Sports Day, too, differs from the leisurely garden-party atmosphere of the past. With the introduction of the running track and the use of the lower field, discus and javelin throwing and shot putting are possible and the event is a technical athletes meeting. As a result of inter-schools and area meetings, girls are regularly selected for county and area teams.



"In the post-war years, some girls have gone further in physical activities: Margaret Turner, when only 13, won the Western Counties 50 yards Swimming Championship in record time; Elissa Lackey, having won the West of England under-16 tennis championship, played at Junior Wimbledon, as did Jennifer Trewby and Christina Harris. Christina also won the girls' singles under-16 Nestlé's championships. Doris Bond, after a special course of instruction at Loughborough College, took part with June

Knapman, in the National Swimming Championships. Diane Hancock represented Devon in the 150 yards National Championships of the English Schools Athletic Association, while Susan Hahn trained at Lilleshall for the half-mile with a view to possible selection for a future Olympic team. Margaret Gurney captained Devon and played in the England Reserve hockey team. In addition to their training at school, these girls benefited much from membership of various clubs in the area."

'Mens sana in corpore sano' used to be a mere cliché. Today the task of the head of a PE department is little short of a nightmare. Quite apart from the ordinary duties of her office, she has

to arrange for and supervise an unending series of inspections by school doctor, dentist, and nurses; draw up lists of an ever-growing procession of girls for ear and eye tests and injections, familiarly known as 'jabs', and any other stratagem science devises for the health of the body of man. It is not only the policeman whose lot is not entirely a happy one!

The essential task of the School Secretary has not changed much during the years, but, with the growing numbers in the school, the amount of work has inevitably increased. Miss Bashford looks back over the last twenty years, in which time she has amassed a wealth of information about the intricacies, quite baffling to the uninitiated, of the mysterious ways of education authorities, health services, transport regulations and their like, not to mention which order book to use for what, and when and how to use (or not use!) the telephone switchboard.

The year 1950 saw the retirement of Miss Ruddy, Mrs Seath and Miss Kilroe, all of whom had been on the staff for years, with their roots in the old building. They had helped to shape tradition; their departure created the first gap in the Old Guard since Miss Grundy's retirement, and they were very greatly missed.

Early in 1952, Mr and Mrs Locock retired after twenty years as caretakers. They had served the school well and faithfully and, with Mr Nickels, the groundsman, took a deep personal interest in everything that went on. Mr Benjafield succeeded Mr Locock. He records the changes in his department since January 1952. Then, with the help of five part-time women cleaners, but without mechanical appliances, the work was hard and continuous. Now, with the growth in numbers and in buildings, his department includes a deputy caretaker and extra staff. Even though they still contrive to use the very small room next to the secretary's office, and store most things under the stage, up-to-date appliances increase the ease and efficiency of the work, which, even so, has its lighter moments. Once, when a plumber was working in Miss Wilkinson's private cloakroom, Mr Benjafield, entering the vestibule, spotted him, garbed in Miss Wilkinson's academic cap and gown, admiring himself in the mirror. The poor fellow, greeted with the words, "Hail, O Master of the Plumbing Arts", nearly collapsed.

'Happy is the country that has no history' might be an apt summary of the 1950s, which appeared to go placidly on with a few highlights. Five hundred girls visited the SS Campania, the Festival of Britain Exhibition ship, docked in Plymouth. In 1953, Coronation year, the School went to Newton Abbot to see the Queen arrive for her visit to the Royal Show at Stover, which numbers visited on the following day. In 1956, the school again turned out in force to welcome Her Majesty and Prince Philip on their visit to Torbay.

In 1951, pupils entered for the new General Certificate of Education examinations at Advanced and Ordinary Levels, instead of the London Higher Certificate and Cambridge School Certificate. While the standard of the higher examinations was much the same, the Ordinary Level was considerably harder to gain, but had the merit of removing the former age restriction and of allowing candidates to take a few subjects at a time. Though the examinations had changed, the results continued to be pleasing.



In 1952 the School had its third general inspection, the others being in 1915 and 1935.

During this period the Sixth Form increased in number; a high standard of scholarship was maintained and more and more former pupils travelled abroad for extended periods. Many, having qualified, took a series of posts to gain wide experience in the countries they visited; others married and settled abroad. Venturers of the New Elizabethan era, they travelled; they nursed; they did all manner of jobs; they became mothers of families in countries other than their own, thus following in the footsteps of their Devon forefathers.

During the years, three staff from abroad joined the School. Miss M Howland came in 1935 on a year's exchange from Albany Academy, New York State; Miss H Carter in 1953 from Roosevelt High School Fresno, California, and also in 1953, Miss Fienberg from Australia. We greatly enjoyed having them and in no time they became part of the School. We worked with them, played with them, and learnt from them.

In 1954, another link with the past was severed. Miss Lawrence, appointed as early as 1919, retired. An artist to her finger tips, she inspired with her love of form and beauty all those she taught and stimulated them with the desire to create lovely things.

Two years later, Miss Battersby, Head of Biology, retired after 31 years in the school. Her deep interest in her subject encouraged many to take their first steps in scientific investigation and the evidence of her teaching is seen in the long list of students who went on to successful careers in science. After an interval in which she travelled widely, Miss Battersby returned once more to her familiar haunts to help for a time in the department which she had created.

The lists of awards and successes reveal increasing numbers of places gained and many first occasions among the Old Girls: the first lawyer, the first barrister, the first stage designer, the first FLA: others have followed them.

A change is to be noted in the focus of charities supported by the school. The girls took an increasing interest in collecting for the blind, the deaf, the maimed and the deprived, and this in no way affected amounts sent to the established school charities, while money was always found for the relief of unexpected disaster.

All through its life, the Governors have been deeply interested in the School's welfare. The Reverend H Every, MBE, succeeded Mr Pitman as Chairman: Mr R Butland, Councillor H J T Cruse and Mr F Lee followed in turn, and in 1957 Mr G L Abraham, BA, JP, became the Chairman. The School owes its thanks to all of them, and especially in this Jubilee year, to Mr and Mrs Abraham, who for so long and so generously have attended functions of all kinds and taken the greatest personal



interest in all the School does. Councillor H S B Hore's services to education were recognised by the award of an MBE. Mrs Bryce Paine, appointed a Governor in 1926, has the longest record of devoted service to the School. Among other governors who gave long and valued service during their life time, the names of Rev J Charteris Johnston, Rev Isaac Pugh, Mr F J Marnham and Mr Denys Phillips are remembered with affection and gratitude.

In July 1957, Miss Wilkinson retired. Twenty three years before she had come to a comparatively small school with necessarily limited prospects of scholarship. She was faced with the major task of maintaining and developing the school's essential character while welding it into a large County School. In doing this, she was immensely successful. By infusing into it her own standards of integrity and her sense of purpose, with loving care she saw to it that everyone had a chance to do and be her best. She carried into her retirement the warm gratitude of generations of girls and the knowledge that, through her devoted work, she had helped considerably towards laying the foundations of their success.

New Trends

In 1957, Miss M C Robertson, MA (Oxon), for seven years Head Mistress of the Falmouth County High School for Girls, succeeded Miss Wilkinson and became the Schools third Head Mistress. Her appointment coincided with a period of change all over the country: educational theory and practice were in a state of flux. The idea of comprehensive education was gaining ground, as the secondary modern schools demonstrated their ability to send pupils in for GCE successfully and, subsequently, to see them go to Advanced Level and to the University. Apart from experiments in secondary schools, social changes had to be faced: greater sophistication led to early marriage: part or whole-time holiday jobs gave a hitherto unknown independence to girls, often when they were still at school, and this in its turn diversified their interests at a far earlier age than hitherto. In addition, primary schools were covering much more ground, while, at the other end of the scale, the increasing competition for places at the university necessitated a far higher standard in the quantity and quality of work done in the Sixth Form. To meet the new situation, 'expressing' was introduced, first experimentally in Form V, then from the second year throughout the school. From a scheme which entered girls for O Level GCE six months early, progress has now been made towards entry at the end of the fourth year in a number of subjects, leading to a fifth year of an interesting mixture of A and O Level work.

The Sixth Form ceased to wear school uniform and acquired in consequence something of the status of students. To house their increasing numbers, new accommodation became necessary, and the Sixth Form block, comprising a large classroom, which could easily be divided into two by folding doors, and an up-to-date cloakroom, was built in the west triangle, together with a new Biology laboratory. Greater responsibility fell to the prefects, as the school grew, and six senior prefects were appointed with special duties.

Another feature of this period is the increasing number of men on the staff. In 1941, Mr Winship was the sole representative of his sex. After the war the school had to accept a small quota of men teachers who had returned from the forces. Today more men than women apply for each vacancy, and they are to be found teaching in nearly every department.

The quickening pace created an impetus in many ways: some of the changes in physical education and in other subjects have already been recorded. Mrs Evans comments on the stimulus for self-expression which art provides today - a stimulus greater, perhaps, than at any other time. Variety of materials, including the newly-acquired electric kiln, gives the opportunity, by means of experiment, to develop one's personality through creative processes. The variety of media may call for painstaking draughtsmanship or free expression bordering on abstraction in large scale painting; it may take the form of modelling crude shapes in wet clay, or of the more carefully executed ceramics, plaster carving and mosaics. Whatever the mode of expression, providing it does not degenerate into mere imitation of an earlier age, it will help to fulfil the need of every human being to extend their personality.



But perhaps the impetus was felt as much as anywhere in the renaissance of musical activity throughout the school. Under Miss Pringle's direction, the Choir was to reach, and even surpass, its former excellence and popularity. It accepted invitations, as before, to sing on special occasions at Church services in the town: it has given a series of broadcasts; it was especially invited to sing at evensong in Exeter Cathedral and it plays a major part in the School's annual Carol and Thanksgiving services. Its rendering of the first part of the Saint Matthew Passion and of Behold the Man, a meditation for Easter, compiled by Miss Pringle, who also composed the setting, will remain as highlights of achievement and impressive acts of worship.

For many years the girls had taken part in the Torquay Festival of Music and Drama. In 1961, Miss Pringle organized the school's own Music and Drama Festival, run on a House basis - a move so popular that the whole school became involved and house representatives were entirely responsible for coaching their entrants. Soon French, German and Latin classes were added: in 1964 there were no less than 650 entries: practically everybody took part.

There had been an annual concert, one of the gayest programmes including Haydn's Toy Symphony performed by the staff, to the wholly unrehearsed background of a violent thunderstorm! Now the successful festival entries provide the programme.



Two operettas, A Statue for the Mayor by Hug Cole, and Florette or The Goose Girl by Agnes Bartlett, broke new ground - successes which encouraged the performance in Jubilee year of Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado - a truly gala production and a real highlight of achievement for all concerned!

While the recorder group flourished continuously, the orchestra, re-formed in 1958, numbered ten, two of whom were staff. Violin and 'cello classes were started and progress was rapid. Under the direction of Mr R Spearing, Devon County peripatetic strings teacher, the orchestra now includes a woodwind section and has recently added a group of percussion instruments - glockenspiel, cymbals and triangle. The latest acquisition, tympani, made their first striking appearance on the first night of The Mikado.

Sixth Form plays have ranged from second productions of G B Shaw's Saint Joan and James Bridie's Tobias and the Angel to the attractive fantasies of Nicholas Stuart Gray's Imperial Nightingale and

Toad of Toad Hall by Kenneth Graham. Of the remainder, Cyrano de Bergerac by E Rostand and Midsummer Night's Dream stand out as productions, notable among other very good things for the charm of the set and the skill in manipulating large numbers on the stage, as well as for the imaginative use of the enlarged lighting panel.

The play which aroused most curiosity was the staff performance, in 1961, of 1066 and All That. The secret was kept till the last possible moment, the prefects alone being 'in the know'. The surprise and delight of the audience equalled the staff's enjoyment of their triumph after weeks of hilarious, if exacting, rehearsals.

During the half century, there have been comparatively few producers: Miss Everitt, Miss Lewis, Mrs Breach, Miss Slater, Miss Petty; in the last few years, Miss Russell, and in Jubilee Year, Miss Pringle and Miss Stone. Though their number is small, their work could not have been successful without the generous co-operation of a whole succession of staff who have helped with the stage management, the wardrobe, make-up, and latterly, with the lighting. The last few years have seen tremendous technical advances: the acquisition of stage blocks, extra curtains, up-to-date lighting equipment and a more specialised division of labour for the production team. It is pleasant to record that, with this more professional approach to school plays, the tradition of a high standard of acting is maintained, and that the 1965 actresses are true descendants of their forbears of fifty years ago.

In addition to all this activity, whenever good orchestras or plays come to the area, girls are taken to as many performances as possible. In this way many juniors and seniors have the chance of listening to first-class music and a number of girls, for the first time in their lives, watched ballets of outstanding beauty. Parties have gone to Dartington, Plymouth, Bristol and London, while visits to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, have become regular events of the school year. For the first time, too, a small party of fifth formers enjoyed a short exeat from school in London, and arrived back exhilarated, if exhausted, after their packed few days.

More and more girls travel abroad during the holidays, some to attend courses arranged by universities for foreign students; others to stay on exchange terms, and still more merely to enjoy a holiday with their parents and friends. In addition the number of Old Girls who now travel and settle in countries abroad has steadily increased: missionaries, doctors, teachers, nurses, secretaries from TGGs are to be found in places as diverse as Abyssinia, the Congo, America, New Zealand, South Africa and in Geneva, as well as in other parts of Europe.

It is always a pleasure to welcome Old girls and their families when they visit school, as it is to see the parents of present girls on an increasing number of occasions. Parents' meetings, established in Miss Wilkinson's time, are well attended and the recurring contact and co-operation with the staff is most encouraging. Less business-like in import, but none the less important are the Open Afternoon and the At Homes.

For the first two years under Miss Robertson, Speech Days followed the traditional pattern and at one of these the school was much honoured, when Miss M F Adams, OBE, MA, Head Mistress of Croydon High School for Girls, GPDST, and of international repute, came to address the girls and present the prizes. With the increase in numbers, however, and the inability of many parents to attend afternoon ceremonies, evening At Homes were arranged to take the place of senior and middle school prizegivings.

It was felt that such formal prizegivings gave very little opportunity to many girls and parents to join in actively, and also that girls did other most commendable things, as well as distinguishing themselves in academic work. Still further, that achievements outside school should be a matter of interest to the School. As a result, many girls are now presented to the Chairman of Governors for one reason or another, and a social evening is actively enjoyed by everyone.

The pattern of the former Open Afternoon has been extended to include, in addition to folk dancing and physical education displays, a dress parade representative of the needlework of every form, art

and cookery classes in action, science experiments and exhibitions of work done in every department.

Parents are also welcome at the annual Carol and Thanksgiving services, but the Harvest Festival service, modified in character to meet the changing need of the times, continues as a service for the school alone. A notable contribution to the Christmas fare of some elderly people was that made by one or two Houses in 1963, when they went in a body with their parcels in a wheelbarrow, and presented them to surprised but delighted old people, whose names Miss Crossley, General Secretary to Torquay Council of Social Service, had supplied.

Among the ever-lengthening list of charities several reflect trends of the times. The deep interest in Refugee Year resulted in a school collection of over £300 and our contribution towards Devon's gift of a farm institute to Tanganyika exceeded the £100 target for the school, while gifts to the Winston Churchill Memorial Fund came to £40.

The Christian Fellowship has held a series of meetings since its inception. Like so many other school activities, it began under the aegis of staff and it is always sure of staff interest and co-operation. For some time now the girls have organised and conducted their meetings and, as ever, have the generous help of outside speakers.

Clubs are numerous, too: the Field Club, started in 1955, still continues its biological-geographical expeditions, one of the most interesting a visit to lake Thun and Locarno in 1958. Chess, bridge, table tennis were regular dinner-hour activities, which have been more recently ousted by record clubs. The stamp club appears sporadically but ballroom and folk dancing are regular attractions. Two Sixth Form societies, the Film Club and the Debating Society, had their vogue, the members of the former mastering the techniques of using the projector, while the Science Society revived for a period.

The campaign for road safety has been much to the fore, first under the direction of Miss Southcombe and then of Major Courtney. The girls now have their own representative on the committee. Cycling proficiency tests are held regularly. In these our teams have been successful and in 1965 one of our girls was awarded a bicycle as a prize.

In 1961 a number of girls in the Middle and Upper School, helped and encouraged by various members of staff, began to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. From the outset, hikes on the moors to help girls train for the 'Adventure' section of the scheme have been organized at all seasons and in all weathers. There have been several camps at Ponsworthy during the summer months. Recently some girls have been able to take advantage of weekends at the new Dartmoor Youth Training Centre at Prince Hall.

A feature of the first two years' activities was the aged car, the gift of Mr Stokes, bought to enable the older girls to learn to drive. Its registration letters being HUB, it was affectionately known as 'hubby' and both Mr Stokes and Mr Elsbury took many girls for their first driving lessons. Among the other numerous interests which Miss Brewster records the girls have taken up, are judo, photography, astronomy and helping in a theatre workshop. They have followed courses in grooming and poise, hairdressing and make-up, floral decoration, the uses of electricity in the home and have learnt about the service rendered to the community by the Police Force and the Fire Service.

Three girls have received their Gold Award from the Duke of Edinburgh; about six others, who have gained the Silver Award, are working for the Gold, and many others have received or are working for the Bronze Certificate.

As soon as the girls reach their fourteenth birthday, they can take part in the scheme, joining in the activities already being organized in the school and in the town, and numbers are increasing yearly.

A study of this history will reveal the ever widening opportunities available to the girls while they are still at school and the many responsible positions in this country and overseas held by former pupils

of Torquay Grammar School for Girls, but we have yet to produce from our distinguished Old Girls a member of the Cabinet or a Prime Minister as prophesied by Dame Georgiana Buller in her speech at the Opening Ceremony in 1939.

Special Assemblies

Recently the school has assembled in the hall on a number of unusual occasions. The first of these was to receive formally the table designed and executed by Miss Judith Hughes, a Devon craftswoman, the gift of past and present members of the school as a memorial to Miss Jackson. A spontaneous gasp of admiration greeted its unveiling on the platform on December 13th, 1963. Miss Hughes explained her design, the woods she had used and the way she had worked to create so beautiful a piece. It now stands in the vestibule and is the first thing to catch the visitor's eye, as he enters the building.



On April 24th, 1964, there was a short programme to commemorate the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth and, through his poetry, to pay due honour to Saint George of England as well.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the school's transference to Shiphay also fell in April 1964. Once again the School assembled, the focus of all eyes being a grand tiered cake, made and iced by Mrs Archer and Miss Bamber, and adorned with 25 candles. Before these were lit by the Head Girl and the Deputy Head Girl, a programme compiled by Miss Petty with their help of excerpts from former magazines forged a link with the present, while past and present staff brought vividly to life incidents, grave and gay, of the last quarter of a century. All watched as the candles were solemnly lit and then blown out expertly, by the youngest and the newest girls in the school. Whereupon staff and pupils trooped out to enjoy a slice of the delicious cake on the very spot where their predecessors had celebrated the school's coming-of-age on the site of the building-to-be.



In April 1965, another celebration - this time the Golden Jubilee when Miss F M Pugh, CA, talked about her experiences as a student in TGSS in 1915, her recollections of the old building and the striking changes which had taken place since then in education in Devon. Speeches over, the cake, beautifully decorated with real yellow flowers to suit the occasion and this time with one large candle, lit and blown out in the traditional manner, was rapidly cut and distributed to the forms who once again had migrated to the terrace.

Retirements

The School has been fortunate in having on the staff many who have chosen to stay till the end of their teaching careers. In July 1959, the School reluctantly said goodbye to Miss Slater, who had been on the staff for 36 years, and to Miss Southcombe, whose TGGs age was 34! Both had taught vividly and variously. In the early days, Miss Slater taught French before she concentrated on her own subject, English; Miss Southcombe taught Music, French and Games before she, too, was able to give all her time to her special subject, French. Both gave generously of their gifts and hundreds of Old Girls remember them with gratitude and deep affection.

In this year, too, Mr Nickels, groundsman since 1939, retired. For twenty years he had kept the grounds in beautiful order, the pitches and tracks always ready to use. His interest in the school and the pride he took in the standard of his work were unflinching. Mr Cox follows in Mr Nickels' tradition in caring for the grounds and the gardens which flourish gloriously under his expert eye.

In 1961, Miss Andrews retired: a scholar of note and a woman of wide and varied interests, she taught Classics with distinction for 21 years and twice served as Second Mistress. Whatever the occasion or the emergency, she contrived to meet it with the calm and ease so characteristic of her personality.

Miss Keslake, on the staff from 1949, in 1962 retired, or so everyone thought with very real regret that so gay and widely read a teacher should leave the profession. However, she surprised School once more: like the Cheshire cat with its provocative smile, she turned up to our delight in unexpected places, teaching not only History, but Mathematics and swimming as well, but as a part-time member of the establishment!

Miss Petty, appointed Head of the English department in April 1929, retired in July 1964, after over 35 years on the staff. She dug her roots deep in the life of the school and thoroughly enjoyed, in addition to the exhilaration of teaching, producing plays, first with Miss Slater's invaluable help and, later on, assisted by a more complex team of staff as productions became more elaborate. Under her care the library grew from small beginnings to become large enough to meet most of the school's needs and was ever her 'dearest child', while editing the magazines year by year kept her in touch with many Old Girls, so many of who remain her friends today.

Mr Waller, Head of Chemistry, retired in December 1964. Quite apart from work, he will long be remembered also for the pleasure he gave to very many girls who travelled to Switzerland in the parties he organised so well, and for his unending interest in lighting for the school plays.

As this script goes to press, Miss Gudridge, Head of Science since 1943, and Miss Thorp, Head of Mathematics from 1954 to 1965, are to retire at the end of the term. Miss Gudridge, in addition to supervising the teaching in her department at a time of unprecedented change and growth, took an untiring interest in the Torquay 7 A Guide Company, of which she was Captain for many years. Those whom she had trained responded to her own enthusiasm and have played an important part in the Guide movement in the town - a fitting tribute to her years of service in this field. Miss Thorp retires at a time when methods of teaching mathematics are in the melting pot. After years of successful teaching and of introducing pupils to the fascination and intricacies of advanced work, she leaves behind her numbers of girls whose minds are the more alert and the more philosophical for her teaching.

The school is the richer by the generosity of its friends, so many of whose gifts have already been recorded. Not only in the building but in the grounds as well are evidence of the kindnesses of governors, staff, parents and pupils. When we came to Shiphay, much looked bare and bleak. Numbers of people rose to the occasion and, as a result, cherry and rose trees, laburnums and hawthorns, shrubs and flowers were planted and flourish exceedingly.

The walls of the vestibule hold the Honours and Head Girls Boards, while the antique oak settle and a beautiful copper ewer help to furnish it. The hall has its mementos: the lectern, like the Bible, was

used on the Opening Day for the first time and has been in daily use at Prayers, as are the hymn book, the hymn board and the small reading desk; the beautiful cut glass jug and tumblers make their appearance on special occasions, as do the wonderful array of trophies, which are kept in cases at the back of the hall. The stage spotlight and the ever-increasing collection of long-playing records add to the school's treasures.



The west triangle has two garden seats, an attractive sundial and its latest acquisition - a fountain in the fishpond - to add to its pleasures, while the library houses on its shelves many hundreds of books presented to it, in addition to its pictures (among them a lovely Italian print of Botticelli's Primavera), a portrait, and a library trolley.

It would be as invidious as it would be difficult to mention donors by name; no record of this sort could be exhaustive, nor is this meant to be. It merely records with pleasure some of the visible reminders of those who have been at school, or have been attached to it, in one capacity or another.

Epilogue

And now, after 50 years of existence, where are we, what kind of a School have we got? In numbers we are about 600, with an ever-growing VI of well over 100. There are 32 full time staff and a number of part-time staff, and these include a number of married women and masters. We teach Scripture, English, Latin, French, German, occasionally Greek, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Art, Music, Cookery, Needlework and Craft. The number of subjects has probably not been so greatly increased, but how content and method and emphasis have altered! Fewer girls now do Latin; more time is spent on Science: Atomic Physics is now included in the syllabus, and computers are beginning to enter the teaching of Mathematics, although they have not yet reached our School.

In the field of Physical Education girls do gymnastics, athletics, sprinting, long distance running, jumping, throwing discus, javelin and shot, fence, play netball, hockey, tennis, badminton and rounders, and swim. What a contrast from 1915! But the tradition of success is maintained. We can expect to send ten or more girls to the University each year, as well as to many other careers, and we have from time to time girls who excel in scholarship, Music and Athletics.

In our activities the School Choir continues to enjoy a deservedly high reputation for its singing, giving a considerable amount of local service as well as broadcasting, in addition to its school programmes of Services and Operatic productions. The tradition of the Sixth Form play is maintained; the School Guide Company and Red Cross Link flourish; Form and School Charities keep up their good work, and Orchestra, Folk Dance Group, Recorder Group and Field Club carry on. The Christian Fellowship continues, and a more recent development has been the School's active interest in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and such challenging exercises as marathon walks and Ten Tors expeditions. Visits to Stratford are still a regular feature, and if there are fewer School parties going abroad, it is largely because so many girls now go abroad with their families and have exchanges.

Continuity is also pleasingly shown when we contemplate the number of Staff who, either still teaching here, or retired but closely connected, have seen long service in the School. It would be invidious to attempt a complete list - where should the line of long service be drawn? But one must

mention Miss Lawrence, Miss Ruddy, Miss Slater, Miss Southcombe, Miss Battersby, Miss Petty, Miss Andrews, Miss Collins, Miss Gudridge, Miss Wood, Miss Dakin and Miss Wharton. And it is wonderful to think how nearly Miss Jackson survived to see the Jubilee! Equally continuity is felt in the number of girls whose parents were pupils in the School and even grandparents. And the record is perpetuated in the unbroken series of Magazines produced each year from the very start. Photographs of Miss Jackson and Miss Wilkinson hang in the Vestibule; a memorial table to Miss Jackson stands in the centre, and the table from which Miss Wyatt read Prayers in the Preparatory School is there also, as a memento of a vital part of the School's history.



Traditions are there, but there are inevitable changing patterns and attitudes. The 1965 schoolgirl is socially older for her years and more outward looking, with a greater variety of interests and more than one loyalty. This tends to reduce her interest in School community activities, both because she finds a more sophisticated social life outside, and because she is more of an individual. There is rather less enthusiasm, therefore, for team games, clubs, Houses and leadership in School than there used to be. The Sixth Form has now ceased to wear uniform, and some come to School in cars! Even the Second Year are known to have boyfriends, and to be eager for part-time jobs in order to save up for the expensive possessions now regarded as normal for a schoolgirl - transistor radios, record players, tape recorders and so on. We must be aware of clinging to traditions for traditions' sake, when they no longer fit the girls for whom they exist. Speech Day and the Sports are good examples of spheres where we are adapting ourselves to a changing world.

But what of the future? It is interesting and relevant that the year of our Jubilee should have coincided with the declaration of policy both of the government and of Devon in favour of comprehensive education. It is impossible to forecast the extent and speed of the change-over and it seems unlikely that Torquay Girls' Grammar School will lose its individuality within the next few years, yet the clarion call of change has sounded and it is odd to reflect that by the time this goes into print the Head Mistress of Torquay Girls' Grammar School will be the only County Grammar School headmistress in Devon.

Even more recently the big decision has been made that the Torbay area shall become a County Borough in two years' time. This will certainly bring the School even more closely into the life of the town. And so one looks forward to the next 50 years in the knowledge that their inception must coincide with great changes.

MARGARET C ROBERTSON